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An analysis of the comorbidity between children's depression and aggression symptoms: self-esteem and oppositional misbehavior as mediators

M<sup>a</sup> Victoria del Barrio Gándara, Francisco Pablo Holgado-Tello, Miguel Ángel Carrasco & María J. González-Calderón

Resumen:

Children with dysphoria symptoms have an increased risk of aggression problems. However, previous research has found that when the confounding effect of other depression characteristics, such as self-esteem and oppositional misbehavior, is taken into account, levels of aggression problems tend to be reduced to a great extent. This observation prompts questions as to the mediating effect that self-esteem and oppositional misbehavior may have on aggression problems. In this study, a sample of 1774 school children from the general population (49.7% boys), ranging in age from 7 to 12 years, was examined to test this mediating model using Structural Equation Models. Two self-reports were used to evaluate symptoms: The Children Depression Inventory (CDI), and the Physical and Verbal Aggression Scale. The results showed significant mediating effects through two paths, namely from dysphoria to physical aggression via oppositional misbehavior, and from dysphoria to verbal aggression via self-esteem and oppositional misbehavior. The mediational model was invariant by gender. For both gender, oppositional misbehavior was the strongest mediator of the relationship between aggression and depression. The implications for understanding the comorbidity of depression and aggression and the prevention of symptoms based on potential mediators are discussed.

Acceso al documento: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12144-021-02131-6#data-availability>