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BULLYING OF INDIVIDUALS WITH CLEFT LIP AND PALATE: FREQUENCY AND PREVENTIVE PROCEDURES

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to verify the prevalence of bullying among children and adolescents, the consequences on the social development and educational process, evaluating the public policies for prevention or punishment of this negative behavior. **METHODS:** The study group comprised 121 patients with cleft lip and palate in the process of rehabilitation in a single center from both sexes with age varying from 6 to 35 years. The control group comprised 121 siblings of these patients born without cleft lip and palate. A questionnaire with objective questions on bullying and its consequences was answered by one of the parents or tutors. Preventive procedures were discussed with the parents. The prevalence of bullying was calculated for each group. Intergroup comparisons were performed using Chi-square and Fisher exact tests ($p < 0.05$). **RESULTS:** Bullying was reported as a frequent occurrence in the group of individuals with cleft lip and palate (50.4%). A higher frequency of bullying against individuals with CLP was found compared to the group of siblings without CLP (22.3%) ($p < 0.01$). The most common type of bullying was oral offense (78.7%) followed by physical with oral offense (19.7%). The school was the most frequent place of bullying occurrence (86.9%). Most of the parents/tutor reported the desire for educational procedures and public policies to prevent this type of aggression. **CONCLUSIONS:** Bullying was more frequent among individuals with cleft lip and palate in comparison with noncleft individuals. Public policies should be implemented for educating and preventing this violence against human being.