

2009 Annual Meeting APHA, Philadelphia, PA, November 7-11, 2009

Where Does Bullying Take Place Among Adolescents When They Are at School?

H. Wesley Perkins, Ph.D.
Department of Anthropology
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Geneva, NY 14456

Jessica M. Perkins, M.S.
Department of Health Policy
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138

David W. Craig, Ph.D.
Department of Chemistry
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Geneva, NY 14456

www.YouthHealthSafety.org

Presenter Disclosures

H. Wesley Perkins, Ph.D.
Jessica M. Perkins, M.S
David W. Craig, Ph.D.

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

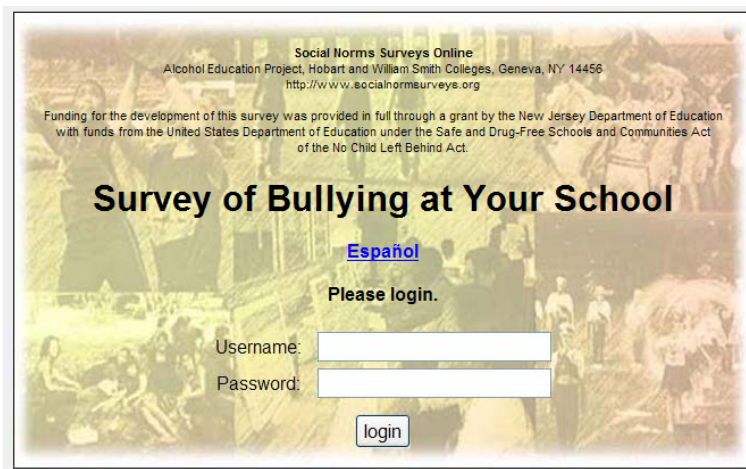
No Relationships to Disclose

Abstract

Bullying is a significant public health concern for adolescents in the United States and in many other countries. Both engaging in bullying behavior and being a victim are associated with negative health outcomes. Not much is known, however, regarding where various types of bullying take place within the school context. Anonymous online surveys were conducted to assess the prevalence of being bullied and location of victimization in school contexts among youth in 20 middle schools (grades 5 to 9) from 2006 to 2008 in New Jersey and New York (n= 10,668). Students reported if they had experienced any of seven types of bullying-related behaviors (physical violence, being physically threatened, belongings taken or damaged, being forced to do something, being teased unkindly, called hurtful names, rumors spread) and all the places where each type of bullying was experienced (classroom, lunchroom, hallways, gym, playground, bus, or bathroom). Prevalence of specific types of victimization ranged from 4% to 38% depending on the location. Overall, prevalence of victimization was equally or more likely to occur in the classroom as compared to other locations and victimization in the classroom was the experience most likely to produce feelings of being unsafe at school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The authors wish to thank the staff of the Center for Addiction Studies, Rowan University, for their work enlisting New Jersey schools and coordinating local school participation in this research. Funding for the development of this survey was provided in full through a grant by the New Jersey Department of Education with funds from the United States Department of Education under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Web-Based Survey Instrument



Social Norms Surveys Online
Alcohol Education Project, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY 14456
<http://www.socialnormsurveys.org>

Funding for the development of this survey was provided in full through a grant by the New Jersey Department of Education with funds from the United States Department of Education under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Survey of Bullying at Your School

[Español](#)

Please login.

Username:

Password:

School Characteristics

Number of Schools	19 NJ + 1 NYC area 9 conducted surveys multiple times 35 school cohorts surveyed
Percent on free lunch - mean (range)	23% (1% – 81%)
Percent White - mean (range)	59% (1% – 96%)
Percent Hispanic - mean (range)	16% (1% – 75%)
Percent Black - mean (range)	20% (0% – 47%)
Percent Asian - mean (range)	7% (0% – 41%)
Student/Teacher ratio - mean (range)	12 (8 – 18)

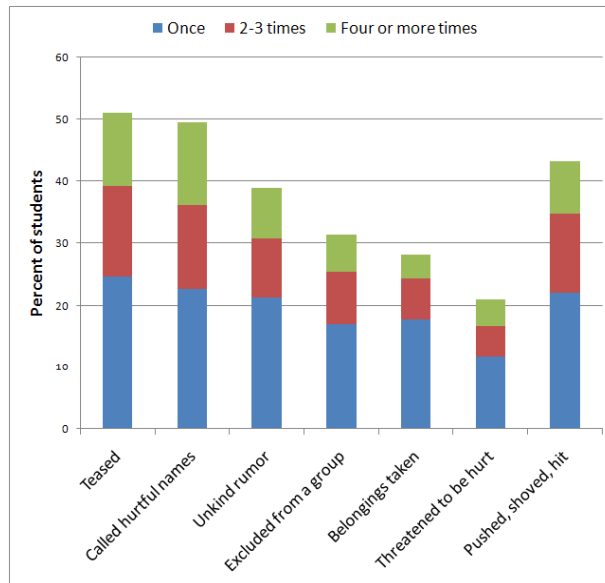
School Characteristics

Middle School Grades	Number of Schools	Middle School Population Size Range
5-6	1	680
5-8	1	427
6-8	13	14 – 1221
7-8	4	121 – 764
7-9	1	947

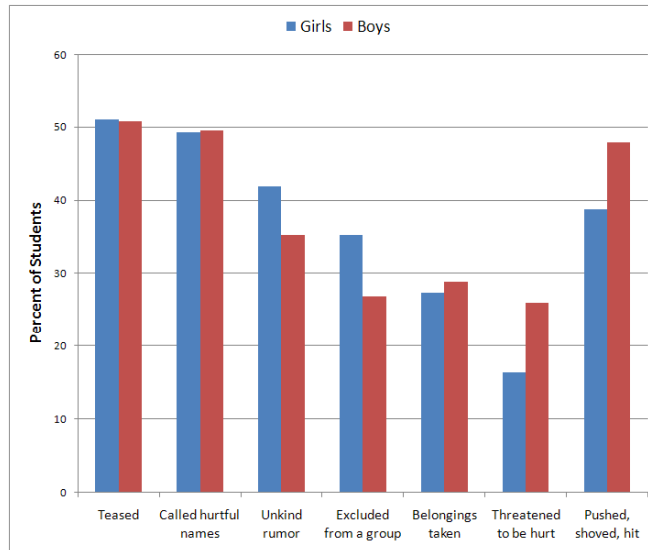
School Sample Demographics

Number of Respondents	10,668
Sample Sizes - mean (range)	305 (10 – 799)
Cohort Response Rate - mean (range)	54% (11% – 91%)
Males / Females - %	48% / 52%
Grade Levels	
5-6	36%
7	32%
8-9	32%
Age – mean (range)	12.6 (9 – 16)
Geographic Area	
Suburban	52%
Urban/suburban	38%
Rural	10%
Race	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%
Asian	12%
Black/African American	6%
Hispanic/Latino	8%
White/Caucasian	61%
Other	11%

Prevalence and Frequency of Bullying Victimization Types in the Last 30 Days



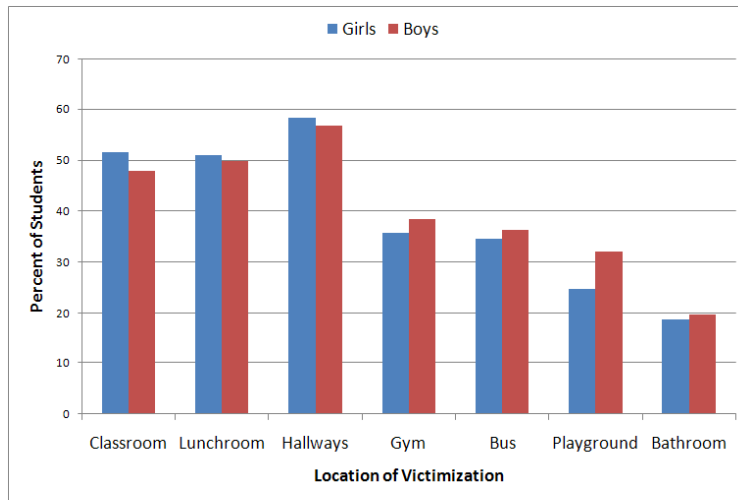
Prevalence of Bullying Victimization Types During the Last 30 Days by Gender



Scope and Effects of Middle School Bullying Victimization

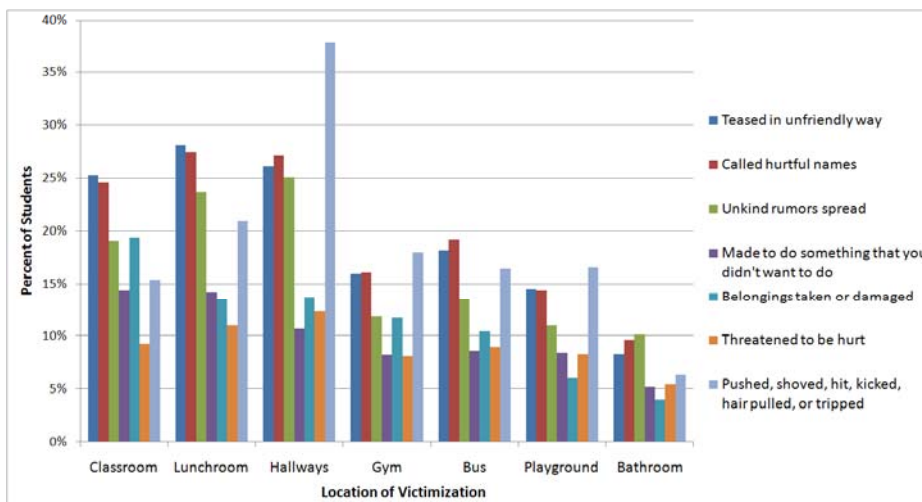
- **66%** had been the victim of multiple bullying behaviors during the last month
- **25%** skipped recess, not gone to the bathroom, lunch or class, pretended to be sick and went home, or avoided a hallway or some other place a school to get away from a bully
- **8%** had skipped school at least once due to fear of others during the school year

Prevalence of Any Bullying Victimization* During the School Year by Location and Gender

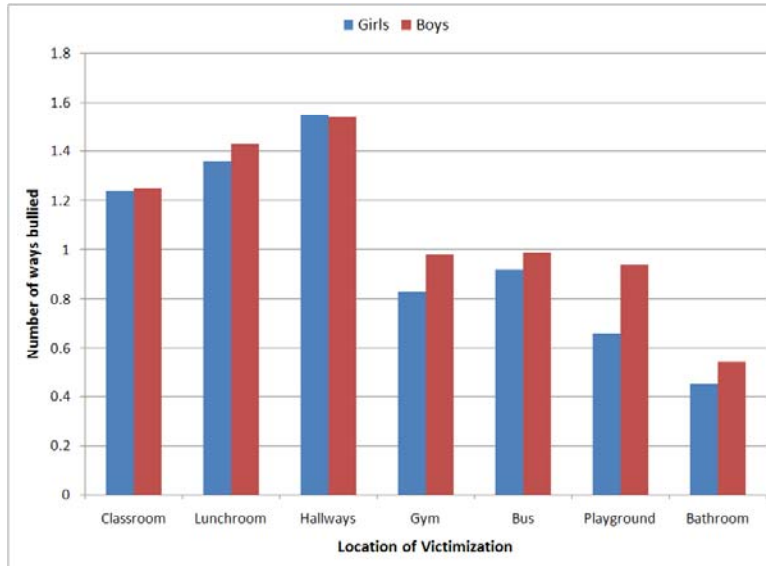


*Victimization includes any of 1) teased in an unfriendly way, 2) called hurtful names, 3) unkind rumors spread, 4) made to do something that you didn't want to do, 5) belongings taken or damaged, 6) threatened to be hurt, or 7) pushed, shoved, hit, kicked, hair pulled, or tripped.

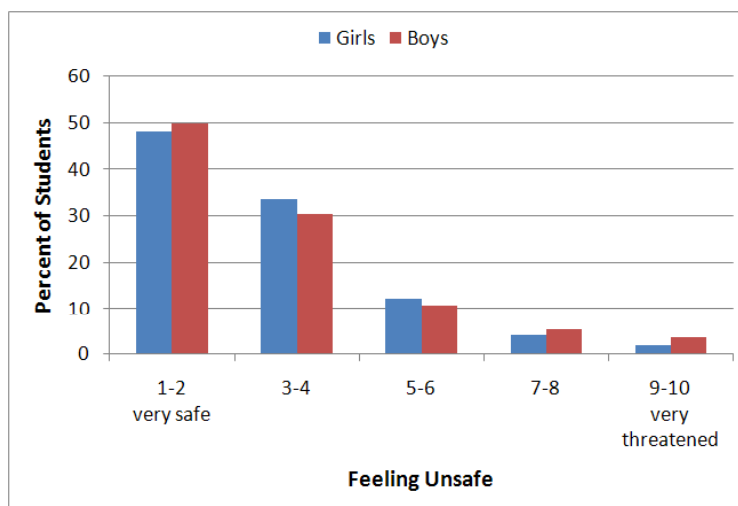
Prevalence of Victimization Types (Ways Bullied) During the School Year by Location



Mean Number of Ways Bullied During the School Year by Location and Gender



Feeling Unsafe at School (on a scale from 1 “very safe” to 10 “very threatened”)



Regression Coefficients Predicting Feeling Unsafe at School

Independent Variables	Girls (N=5,394) Unstandardized (Standardized) Coefficients	Boys (N=4,885) Unstandardized (Standardized) Coefficients
Number of ways bullied in classroom	.173 (.15) *	.181(.15) *
Number of ways bullied in lunchroom	.006(.01) ^{ns}	-.010(-.01) ^{ns}
Number of ways bullied in hallways	.110(.11) *	.105(.10) *
Number of ways bullied in gym	.114(.09) *	.138(.11) *
Number of ways bullied in bus	.042(.04) ^{ns}	.082(.07) *
Number of ways bullied in playground	-.052(-.04) ^{ns}	.021(.02) ^{ns}
Number of ways bullied in bathroom	.035 (.02) ^{ns}	.005(.00) ^{ns}
Age	.144(.08) *	.042(.02) ^{ns}
Race (white vs minority)	-.028(-.01) ^{ns}	-.147(-.03) ^{ns}

Note: Dummy variables representing each school were also included in the regression analysis to control for school specific effects.

*Coefficient is significant at $p < .001$; ^{ns} Coefficient is not significant, $p > .01$.