



Years after Bullying, Negative Impact on a Child's Health May Remain

Longitudinal study shows negative, compounding effects of bullying

BOSTON, Feb. 17, 2014 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The longer the period of time a child is bullied, the more severe and lasting the impact has on a child's health, according to a new study from [Boston Children's Hospital](#) published online Feb. 17 in *Pediatrics*. The study is the first to examine the compounding effects of bullying from elementary school to high school.

"Our research shows that long-term bullying has a severe impact on a child's overall health, and its negative effects can accumulate and get worse with time," says the study's first author [Laura Bogart, PhD](#), from Boston Children's Division of General Pediatrics. "It reinforces the notion that more bullying intervention is needed, because the sooner we stop a child from being bullied, the less likely bullying is to have a lasting, damaging effect on his or her health down the road."

Bogart and the team collected data for the study by following a group of 4,297 children and adolescents from fifth to tenth grade. The researchers periodically interviewed them about their mental and physical health and their experience(s) with bullying.

The researchers found that bullying at any age was associated with worse mental and physical health, increased depressive symptoms and lower self-worth. Participants who experienced chronic bullying also reported increased difficulties in physical activities like walking, running or participating in sports. Those who experience ongoing bullying (both in the past and the present) showed the lowest health scores.

According to the authors, the study reinforces the importance of early intervention to stop bullying and to be aware of the need to intervene again, even if the bullying is not ongoing, to address the persistent effects. Bogart and colleagues are calling for increased research to better develop and clinically test bullying prevention and intervention methods.

"There's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to addressing bullying," Bogart says. "But providing teachers, parents and clinicians with evidence-based best practices, they would be better equipped to assist those at the frontlines helping children cope with this serious problem and lessen the damage."

Additional authors of the study from Boston Children's include Mark A. Schuster, MD, PhD, David J. Klein, MS, and Elizabeth Schink, BA.

About Boston Children's Hospital

[Boston Children's Hospital](#) is home to the world's largest research enterprise based at a pediatric medical center, where its discoveries have benefited both children and adults since 1869. More than 1,100 scientists, including seven members of the National Academy of Sciences, 13 members of the Institute of Medicine and 14 members of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute comprise Boston Children's research community. Founded as a 20-bed hospital for children, Boston Children's today is a 395-bed comprehensive center for pediatric and adolescent health care grounded in the values of excellence in patient care and sensitivity to the complex needs and diversity of children and families. Boston Children's is also the primary pediatric teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School. For more information about research and clinical innovation at Boston Children's, visit: <http://vectorblog.org>.

CONTACT:

Meghan Weber, Boston Children's Hospital

617-919-3110

meghan.weber@childrens.harvard.edu

SOURCE Boston Children's Hospital

RELATED LINKS

<http://www.childrenshospital.org/>

Find this article at:

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/years-after-bullying-negative-impact-on-a-childs-health-may-remain-245781631.html>