



## Research article

# Socioeconomic trends in school bullying among Finnish adolescents from 2000 to 2015

Noora Knaappila<sup>a,\*</sup>, Mauri Marttunen<sup>b</sup>, Sari Fröjd<sup>a</sup>, Nina Lindberg<sup>c</sup>,  
Riittakerttu Kaltiala-Heino<sup>a,d,e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Faculty of Medicine and Life Sciences, 33014 University of Tampere, Finland

<sup>b</sup> University of Helsinki and Helsinki University Hospital, Adolescent Psychiatry, PO Box 22, FI-00014 Helsinki, Finland

<sup>c</sup> Helsinki University Central Hospital, Department of Adolescent Psychiatry, PO Box 590, 00029 HUS, Finland

<sup>d</sup> Vanha Vaasa Hospital, Vierinkiventie 1, 65380, Vaasa, Finland

<sup>e</sup> Tampere University Hospital, Department of Adolescent Psychiatry, 33380, Pitkänieni, Finland



## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Bullying  
Schools  
Adolescent  
Epidemiology  
Surveys and questionnaires  
Population surveillance  
Socioeconomic factors

## ABSTRACT

Bullying at school has far-reaching impacts on adolescent well-being and health. The aim of this study was to examine trends in bullying at school according to socioeconomic adversities among Finnish adolescents from 2000 to 2015. A population-based school survey was conducted biennially among 14–16-year-old Finns between 2000 and 2015 ( $n = 761,278$ ). Distributions for bullying, being bullied and socioeconomic adversities were calculated. Associations between bullying involvement, time and socioeconomic adversities were studied using binomial logistic regression with results shown by odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals. At the population level, the likelihoods of bullying and being bullied varied only slightly between 2000 and 2015. Bullying and being bullied were associated with socioeconomic adversities (low parental education, not living with both parents and parental unemployment in the past year). Unlike in the general population, the likelihoods of bullying and being bullied increased markedly among adolescents with most socioeconomic adversities. The increased socioeconomic differences in bullying involvement observed in this study add to the mounting evidence of polarization of adolescent health and well-being. Socioeconomic adversities should be considered in the prevention of bullying at school. In addition, socio-political measures are needed to decrease socioeconomic inequalities among Finnish adolescents.

## 1. Introduction

Bullying is defined as intentional harm-doing that is carried out repeatedly over time and involves a power imbalance between perpetrator and victim (Olweus, 1994). According to the WHO survey Health Behavior in School-aged Children involving 40 European countries, 26% of all young people reported having been involved in bullying during the past two months (Craig et al., 2009). In recent decades, the prevalences of bullying and being bullied have remained the same or even decreased in many European and North American countries (Chester et al., 2015; Cooc & Gee, 2014a; Finkelhor et al., 2014; Molcho et al., 2009; Perlus, Brooks-Russell, Wang, & Iannotti, 2014; Vieno et al., 2015). This study aims to examine socioeconomic trends in bullying at school among

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [knaappila.noora.x@student.uta.fi](mailto:knaappila.noora.x@student.uta.fi) (N. Knaappila), [mauri.marttunen@helsinki.fi](mailto:mauri.marttunen@helsinki.fi) (M. Marttunen), [sari.frojd@uta.fi](mailto:sari.frojd@uta.fi) (S. Fröjd), [nina.lindberg@hus.fi](mailto:nina.lindberg@hus.fi) (N. Lindberg), [riittakerttu.kaltiala-heino@uta.fi](mailto:riittakerttu.kaltiala-heino@uta.fi) (R. Kaltiala-Heino).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.09.011>

Received 25 April 2018; Received in revised form 11 September 2018; Accepted 14 September 2018  
0145-2134/ © 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Finnish adolescents between 2000 and 2015.

Bullying at school is a significant cause of psychological, physical and social suffering. Bullying victimization is a major risk factor of mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety disorders and substance use problems (Kaltiala-Heino, Fröjd, & Marttunen, 2009; Reijntjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie, & Telch, 2010). Also bullying perpetration is associated with the development of mental health problems, such as personality disorders (Copeland, Wolke, Angold, & Costello, 2013; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2009). Both victims and perpetrators of bullying suffer from physical health problems, such as headaches and accidental injuries, more than adolescents not involved in bullying (Srabstein, McCarter, Shao, & Huang, 2006). In addition, bullying perpetration also predicts criminality later in adolescence (Barker, Arseneault et al., 2008).

Some risk factors for bullying have been identified in the scientific literature. Boys are more often involved than girls in bullying both as perpetrators (de Oliveira et al., 2016; Jansen, Veenstra, Ormel, Verhulst, & Reijneveld, 2011; Vieno et al., 2015) and victims (Aho, Gren-Landell, & Svedin, 2016; Cooc & Gee, 2014b; de Oliveira et al., 2015; Due, Damsgaard et al., 2009; Due, Merlo et al., 2009; Hong et al., 2016; Menrath et al., 2015; Nordhagen, Nielsen, Stigum, & Kohler, 2005; Vieno et al., 2015). Age and developmental stage are associated with the means of bullying: physical bullying is most often seen among young children, whereas verbal bullying becomes more common along with the development of verbal skills. As social skills improve and socialization proceeds, the more subtle indirect forms of bullying become dominant. (Bjorkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1992)

In addition to sex and age, socioeconomic status (SES) has been examined as a risk factor for bullying involvement. SES is an aggregate concept comprising resource-based (such as material and social resources) and prestige-based (individual's rank or status) indicators of socioeconomic position, which can be measured at both individual, household, and neighborhood levels (Krieger, Williams, & Moss, 1997). It can be assessed through individual measures, such as education, income, or occupation (Galobardes, Shaw, Lawlor, Lynch, & Davey Smith, 2006a, Galobardes, Shaw, Lawlor, Lynch, & Davey Smith, 2006b), but also through composite measures that provide an overall index of socioeconomic level. Of the SES indicators, low parental education has been associated with bullying perpetration and victimization in several studies (de Oliveira et al., 2015; Jansen et al., 2011, 2012; Nordhagen et al., 2005). Living with both parents, on the other hand, has been observed to protect adolescents against bullying involvement (Aho et al., 2016; Jablonska & Lindberg, 2007; Nordhagen et al., 2005), whereas living in a single-parent family or a blended family have been observed to be risk factors for bullying involvement (Jablonska & Lindberg, 2007; Nordhagen et al., 2005). In addition, parental unemployment has been associated with bullying victimization (Delfabbro et al., 2006). However, not all studies observed the association between SES and bullying involvement, and the scientific evidence is stronger on the association between SES and bullying victimization than SES and bullying perpetration (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). The results vary according to how SES is measured, and there is no consensus over whether single SES indicators or an overall index of SES is associated with bullying involvement.

Socioeconomic disparities have increased in many countries around the world in recent decades (Keraudren & Rizzo, 2010; Rotko, Aho, Mustonen, & Linnanmäki, 2007). The Nordic countries, including Finland, have traditionally been considered to be welfare states where socioeconomic inequalities are minimal. However, in the past decades, socioeconomic disparities have increased in Finland as well: for instance, child poverty has tripled from 1995 to 2008 (Rotko et al., 2007). Scientific evidence suggests that socioeconomic disparities have also increased in the area of adolescent health and well-being: Frederick, Snellman, and Putnam, (2014) found that socioeconomic disparities in the prevalence of overweight have increased among adolescents in the US since 2002. Torikka et al. (2014, 2017) observed that the differences in the prevalences of depression, heavy drinking and drunkenness between socioeconomic groups increased among Finnish adolescents from 2000 to 2011. Therefore it can be hypothesized that socioeconomic inequalities have increased in bullying involvement as well. However, no studies have so far been conducted on the subject. The aim of this study was to examine trends in bullying at school among Finnish adolescents between 2000 and 2015 and differences in these trends according to the socioeconomic adversities. Our research questions were:

- (1) Did the prevalences of bullying and being bullied change between 2000 and 2015?
- (2) Are bullying and being bullied at school associated with socioeconomic adversities (low parental education, not living with both parents and parental unemployment)?
- (3) Did the trends in bullying and being bullied at school differ according to the socioeconomic adversities?

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Data and participants

The School Health Promotion Study of the National Institute for Health and Welfare is a survey that examines the health, health behavior and school experiences of Finnish adolescents. The survey has been conducted biennially since 1996 among 8th and 9th graders with pooled 2-year-data (2000–2001, 2002–2003, 2004–2005, 2006–2007, 2008–2009, 2010–2011, 2012–2013, 2014–2015). The data was collected anonymously during a school lesson under the supervision of a teacher, who did not interfere with the responses. Participants were informed about the voluntary nature of the study in both oral and written form, and returning the survey was considered consent to participate. The survey took about 30–45 min to complete. After this, the surveys were put in an envelope, sealed and returned directly to the research center. The timing of the study, sampling and data collection methods were held constant in each survey. More information on the study is included in the Appendix A. Altogether, 761,278 (50,404–109,127 biennially) 8th and 9th graders participated in the survey. The 8th graders were 14–15 years old and the 9th graders 15–16 years old at the time of the surveys. The biennial cohorts covered between 43–82% of the whole age cohort of the country. This study was

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11024063>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11024063>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)