



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Child Abuse & Neglect



Research article

The prevalence of childhood victimization experienced outside of the family: Findings from an English prevalence study

Vicki Jackson^{a,*}, Kevin Browne^a, Stephen Joseph^b

^a Centre for Forensic and Family Psychology, Division of Psychiatry and Applied Psychology, University of Nottingham, YANG Fujia Building, Jubilee Campus, Wollaton Road, Nottingham NG8 1BB, UK

^b Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Nottingham, Dearing Building, Jubilee Campus, Wollaton Road, Nottingham NG8 1BB, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 27 April 2015
Received in revised form 31 July 2015
Accepted 7 August 2015
Available online xxx

Keywords:

Extrafamilial victimization
Community violence
Peer victimization
Prevalence
Poly-victimization
Child

ABSTRACT

There has been little research carried out in the United Kingdom (UK) aimed at providing a holistic exploration of the victim experiences of young people within the school and community environments (extrafamilial victimization). This study therefore examined the prevalence of 24 different types of extrafamilial victimization experienced by a sample of 730 young people, aged 13–16 years (mean 13.8 years), from one county in the UK. The findings show that the vast majority of young people experienced some form of extrafamilial victimization over their lifetime (84.1%) and past year (67.2%). Looking at individual categories of victimization experienced over the lifetime, 7 out of 10 young people witnessed or experienced indirect victimization, 1 in 3 experienced property victimization, more than 1 in 4 physical victimization, almost 1 in 2 experienced bullying, 1 in 28 dating violence and 1 in 7 experienced sexual victimization. The findings also suggest that victimization is not an isolated event; participants experienced an average 2.8 different types of victimization across their lifetime. These research findings are compared to those from national victimization surveys in the USA and UK to compile a picture of the victimization prevalence rates across studies. The findings highlight the importance of adopting a holistic approach to the exploration of extrafamilial victimization in future research, assessment of victim experiences, and prevention of extrafamilial victimization.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Young people are vulnerable to violence and abuse from family members, adults, and peers in the home, school and community. Commonly split into two main categories: family-based victimization (intrafamilial victimization) and victimization experienced outside of the family (extrafamilial victimization), research findings have repeatedly shown that victimization within one setting significantly increases the risk of victimization within another (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Holt, 2009; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Radford, Corral, Bradley, & Fisher, 2013). However, research has also highlighted distinct differences between intrafamilial and extrafamilial victimization in terms of: the developmental characteristics of victims (Ray, Jackson, & Townsley, 1991); victimization characteristics (Fischer & McDonald, 1998); risk factors for and protection against victimization (Black, Heyman, & Smith Slep, 2001; Fischer & McDonald, 1998); and the impact of victimization on the young person (Clemmons, Walsh, DiLillo, & Messman-Moore, 2007).

* Corresponding author.

The research into extrafamilial victimization has risen dramatically since 1990 yet it lags behind that exploring intrafamilial victimization and the majority has been carried out in the United States of America (USA). Knowledge of extrafamilial victimization in the United Kingdom (UK) is, on the whole, based on official reports and small studies focussing on a limited range of experiences. As such, prevalence rates often differ due to differences in definition, survey design and methods (Radford et al., 2013), and there has been a failure to recognize the interconnection between different types of victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005b). Additionally, limited attention has been given to the characteristics of the perpetrators of extrafamilial victimization against young people, thus limiting our knowledge in this area. As such, more information is needed on the age and gender of these perpetrators, the number of perpetrators who commonly commit each category of victimization, and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

Two national victimization surveys carried out in the USA show that 61% and 71% of 2–17 year olds ($N=2,030$ and $N=4,549$, respectively) experienced some form of victimization within the past 12 months of the survey (Finkelhor et al., 2005b; Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2009), which increased to 87% for lifetime exposure (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2009). This included; child maltreatment, physical victimization, sexual victimization, property victimization, and indirect and witnessed victimization experienced within the family, school and community. In the UK, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has reported preliminary findings from a similar UK national survey of child maltreatment (see Radford et al., 2011, 2013). Their findings showed that 84% of the 11–17 year olds in their sample ($N=2,275$) reported some form of victimization within their lifetime (LT), 57% within the past year (PY; Radford et al., 2013).

USA and UK findings also suggest that childhood victimization is rarely a one-off event, with children and young people reporting having been victimized, on average, 3.7–5 times over their LT (including intrafamilial victimization) (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2009; Radford et al., 2013, respectively) and 3 or 2 times in the PY (Finkelhor et al., 2005b; Radford et al., 2013, respectively). Additionally, a small number of children and young people appear to experience a multitude of different types of victimization on many different occasions by the same or a different perpetrator. These are known as poly-victims and have been found to represent 24% of young people when looking at PY victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007), and 10% when looking at LT victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2009). Of these LT poly-victims, 59% had experienced victimization at the hands of both family (intrafamilial) and non-family members (extrafamilial).

Further research suggests there may be differences in the individual (age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, special educational needs, lifetime adversity), familial (parental learning needs, single-parent families) and neighbourhood characteristics of poly-victims compared to lower-level victims (Finkelhor et al., 2007, 2009b; Radford et al., 2011), yet findings are mixed. Poly-victims also experience the highest level of trauma symptoms compared to non-victimized youth and those with less victimization experiences (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005a). Understanding more about this group of young people may help to indicate possible areas for intervention following initial victimization, and help identify those most at risk of repeated victimization.

With a more holistic description of the levels and types of extrafamilial victimization experienced by young people in the UK, schools, communities, families and policymakers may be better informed to make decisions on how to respond to these threats and increase preventative efforts. The current research therefore has three main aims:

- 1 to investigate the prevalence of extrafamilial victimization amongst a large sample of English young people,
- 2 to explore the characteristics of the victims and perpetrators of extrafamilial victimization,
- 3 to investigate the prevalence and characteristics of PY and LT poly-victims.

The definition of victimization is crucial to a study's findings, and a number of different definitions have been developed for the various victimization types. The current definition of extrafamilial victimization includes: acts of violence (often referred to as 'community violence'); peer victimization; criminal victimization; dating violence; sexual victimization; and indirect or witnessed victimization (see Appendix 1). This is the same as the definition used in the national surveys by Finkelhor (Finkelhor et al., 2005b; Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2009) and Radford et al. (2013), with the exception that all references to family-perpetrated victimization were excluded. However, these definitions may differ to other studies in this area and this should be noted when interpreting and comparing the findings. Of note, the definition of bullying used in the current study includes direct (physical and emotional, including mobile phone and Internet harassment) and indirect (relational) forms of bullying, as recommended by Olweus (1991). However, some aspects of relational bullying are not explicitly asked about (e.g., rumour spreading).

Restricting the focus of this paper by excluding intrafamilial victimization means a large proportion of childhood victimization will be ignored. However, the benefit is that a more thorough exploration of extrafamilial victimization can be achieved.

Methodology

Pilot Studies

Two independent pilot studies were carried out ($n=27$ and $n=30$) to test the research procedure and the suitability of, and ability to independently complete, the research measures. These pilot studies informed the decision to use paper copies of all measures instead of electronic versions, due to observed privacy concerns when using computers.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6832450>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6832450>

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