

# An understudied form of intra-family violence: Sibling-to-sibling aggression among foster children

L. Oriana Linares \*

*New York University Child Study Center, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States*

Received 7 January 2005; accepted 7 July 2005

Available online 31 August 2005

## Abstract

Foster children are at high risk for perpetrating and for being victims of sibling aggression and violence. This article proposes an integrative, multidimensional model for studying risk and protective factors of sibling violence. In the model, exposure to sibling violence (perpetration and victimization), child mental disorder, and placement characteristics are risk factors for impaired psychological functioning (internalizing and externalizing symptoms) and for disruptions in school competence (scholastic and social competence with classmates). Sibling positivity, quality of the foster care giving, and foster rejecting care giving are proposed as moderating processes in the linkage between exposure to sibling violence and impaired psychological functioning. Preliminary data are presented in support of the proposed model.

© 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

**Keywords:** Sibling aggression; Violence; Foster children

## Contents

1. Introduction . . . . .	96
2. Heuristic model . . . . .	97
3. The nature of sibling relationships . . . . .	98
4. Sibling conflict . . . . .	98
5. From normative conflict to sibling violence . . . . .	98
6. Exposure to past familial violence and sibling violence . . . . .	98
7. Mental disorders and sibling violence . . . . .	99
8. Placement characteristics and sibling violence . . . . .	99
9. Sibling violence and internalizing problems . . . . .	99
10. Sibling violence and externalizing problems . . . . .	100
11. Sibling violence and peer competence . . . . .	100
12. Sibling positivity as a moderator . . . . .	100
13. Quality of foster care giving as a moderator . . . . .	101
14. Rejecting foster care giving as a moderator . . . . .	101
15. The sibling bonds project at the NYU child study center . . . . .	101

\* Tel.: +1 212 263 8847; fax: +1 212 263 3690.

E-mail address: [Oriana.linares@med.nyu.edu](mailto:Oriana.linares@med.nyu.edu).

16.	The sample . . . . .	102
17.	Measures . . . . .	102
18.	Summary of findings . . . . .	103
19.	Sibling relationships . . . . .	103
20.	Co-occurrence of negativity and positivity . . . . .	103
21.	Sibling conflict . . . . .	103
21.1.	Incidence of sibling conflict . . . . .	103
21.2.	Incidence of verbal vs. physical sibling fights . . . . .	104
21.3.	Sibling vs. peer fights . . . . .	104
21.4.	Correlates of sibling conflict . . . . .	104
22.	Sibling conflict and outcomes . . . . .	105
23.	Initial level of behavior problems. . . . .	105
24.	Behavior problems across dyads . . . . .	105
25.	Behavior problems by level of sibling conflict . . . . .	105
26.	Preliminary evidence for moderation . . . . .	105
27.	Summary of findings . . . . .	106
28.	Conclusion . . . . .	106
	Acknowledgments . . . . .	106
	References . . . . .	107

## 1. Introduction

In 2003, there were 538,000 children in the foster care system in the United States (USDHHS, 2004). Although foster children represent a small percent of the child population, they have high rates of medical, mental health, and educational problems and represent a substantial public health burden. For example, while foster children comprised 1% of the children in California in 1988, they accounted for a 41% greater expenditure rate than all other children covered by Medi-Cal (Halfon, Berkowitz, & Klee, 1992). In the state of Washington, mental health services were used by 25% of foster children compared with 3% of AFDC children; and twice as many foster children as AFDC children used medical equipment or specialist services or were hospitalized (Takayama, Bergman, & Connell, 1994). Among 255 randomly selected foster children from three CPS service areas in California, 80% were given a psychiatric diagnosis, and about one-half received mental health (51%) and special education services (52%) (Zima et al., 2000).

Foster children served in the child welfare care sector comprised a population of substantial public health burden due to high mental health services, special education services, and overrepresentation in the juvenile justice sector. A key to decreasing the toll of familial victimization during childhood is to prevent transmission of other types of familial violence, (i.e., sibling violence among victimized children). Yet in order to exercise prevention efforts to deter future familial violence, it is necessary to identify the association of sibling violence with other risk factors, the iterative processes between exposure and consequences, and the influence of resilience factors unique of the foster care population.

To date, no attention has been given to understanding the ways by which sibling processes may affect the well-being of urban African-American and Latino maltreated children raised in foster homes. The overwhelming majority of studies of foster children have focused on single children. Such a focus has ignored the fact that the majority (62%) of children in NYC (and elsewhere) enter foster care as sibling groups (New York City Administration for Children's Services, 2000), thus exerting a continued influence on each other after they are removed from their homes and placed in substitute care. This article reviews current foundational knowledge about the enduring influences of siblings on each other, with a focus on factors that may contribute to increased risk for sibling aggression and violence among highly vulnerable maltreated siblings entering foster homes. In this article we review what is known about sibling relationships and mutual aggression and violence and discuss the possible impact of sibling violence on child outcome for an understudied high risk population for the continuation of familial violence. Preliminary results of a pioneering study of exposure to sibling

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/95057>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/95057>

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