

A three-year examination of victimisation and wellbeing correlates among children from low affluent areas

Introduction:

Previous research has examined the associated correlates of victimisation among primary schoolchildren, with higher victimisation associated with lower physical and psychological well-being, negligible social support, unsupportive school environment, and depression. However, such research has focused on general primary school samples, with little specific focus on children from lower affluent areas. This research investigated victimisation, depression and health-related quality of life (HrQoL) across three years, among schools from lower affluent areas, designated under DEIS-Band 1.

Methods:

Primary schoolchildren (N=458), aged 7-12 years, attending DEIS-Band 1 schools, participated in a longitudinal cohort design to examine victimisation and associated correlates over a three-year period. Data relating to the incidence of victimisation, depression and HrQoL were measured from Baseline to Wave 2.

Result:

Decreases in the number of children experiencing victimisation and the frequency of the behaviour were reported from Baseline to Wave 2. Despite this, 28.2% of children were reported as victims during one of three academic years, with 11.7% reporting experiences of longer duration (9.2% across two years; 2.9% across all three).

Victimisation resulted in greater psychological impairment relating to depression and HrQoL for all three years. Longitudinally, physical wellbeing was the only outcome to significantly interact with long-term victimisation, with greater impairment over time.

Discussion:

Although this decreasing victimisation rate shows some promise with sample considered at-risk for psychological impairment, there are still long-term victims of bullying. Strategies are needed to buffer the impact of victimisation, especially with a focus on long-term prevention.