

**SCHOOL BASED BULLYING IN IRELAND –  
A CAUSE FOR CONCERN?  
A REVIEW OF RESEARCH FROM NORTHERN  
IRELAND AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

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**ABSTRACT**

Both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have, over the last 20 years, changed dramatically in response to a range of economic, political and social factors. One area of continuing social concern within both countries is that of bully/victim problems among school pupils. The present aim was to provide a review of research on the prevalence and social-psychological correlates of bully/victim problems among school children within both countries. Data are presented from a total of 15 studies located in Northern Ireland and 13 studies located in the Republic of Ireland. The findings suggest that, across a range of samples, measures, and sub-types of bullying behaviours, bully/victim problems among school children continues to remain a problem in schools across Ireland. The social-psychological consequences are considerable.

**Keywords:** Anti-Bullying, Bully, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Disablist, Disability, Health, Ireland, Post-Primary School, Primary School, Secondary School, Well-being, Victim, Victimization.

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## INTRODUCTION

Bullying in schools is an international problem (see Smith & Morita, 1999). Smith et al., (1999) present a cross-national perspective on the nature, prevalence and correlation of school bullying that encompasses specific reviews from each of the Scandinavian countries (Finland: Björkqvist & Österman, 1999; Denmark: Dueholm, 1999; Norway: Olweus, 1999a; Sweden: Olweus, 1999b); the U.K. and Republic of Ireland (Ireland: Byrne, 1999; Scotland: Mellor, 1999; England & Wales: Smith, 1999), Latin countries (France: Fabre-Cornali, Emin, & Pain, 1999; Italy: Fonzi et al., 1999; Spain: Ortega & Mora-Merchan, 1999; Portugal: Tomás de Almeida, 1999), central Europe (Switzerland: Alsaker & Brunner, 1999; Poland: Janowski, 1999; The Netherlands: Junger-Tas, 1999; Germany: Lösel & Bliesener, 1999; Belgium: Vettenburg, 1999), North America (Canada: Harachi, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1999a; USA: Harachi, Catalano & Hawkins, 1999b), the Pacific Rim (Japan: Morita, Soeda, Soeda, & Taki, 1999; Australia: Rigby & Slee, 1999; Aotearoa/New Zealand: Sullivan, 1999), and the developing world (e.g., Palestine, South Africa: Ohsako, 1999). Subsequently, comparable reviews have been provided on Northern Ireland (Mc Guckin, in press; Mc Guckin & Lewis, 2003).

The aim of the present chapter is to build on the foundational work of Mc Guckin (in press) and Mc Guckin and Lewis (2003) on Northern Ireland and Byrne (1999) on Ireland, by providing a contemporary review of school bullying in both the Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. No attempt was made to revisit the “contextual” description of these countries provided by Byrne (1999) and Mc Guckin and Lewis (2003), as it is argued that these original descriptions are still relevant. Instead, the chapter provides an exhaustive review of the nature, incidence, and correlates of bully/victim problems among school children in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

## BULLY/VICTIM PROBLEMS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

At present there have been 15 studies undertaken on school based bullying in Northern Ireland.

### Large Scale Studies

To date, there have been three large-scale research studies funded by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI): (i) Collins, Mc Aleavy, and Adamson (2002, 2004), (ii) Livesey et al. (2007), and (iii) RSM McClure Watters (2011). The strength of these studies rests in their sampling methodology (representative samples of school children from 120 schools: 60 primary; 60 post-primary) and use of the “gold-standard” Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1989, 1996), thus allowing for cross-national comparisons. Two central questions from Olweus’ questionnaire are of interest for comparison to previous research: “How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of months?” and “How often have you taken part in bullying others at school in the past couple of months?”

### **Study 1. Bullying in Schools: A Northern Ireland Study (Collins et al., 2002, 2004)**

The first of these studies (*Bullying in Schools: A Northern Ireland Study*: Collins et al., 2002, 2004) employed the Revised Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (1996), and found, among a sample of 1,079 primary school pupils, that 40.1% reported being bullied in the past couple of months. In relation to being a victim of bullying, 26% claimed that it happened “once or twice in the last couple of months”, 6% stated it happened “two or three times a month”, 5% reported that it was “about once a week”, and 4% experienced it “several times a week”. Among the post-primary school sample of 1,353, a lower rate of victimisation (30.2%) was reported by the pupils (20.3%: “once or twice”; 3.4%: “two or three times a month”; 3%: “about once a week”; and 3.5%: “several times a week”). Furthermore, in relation to experiencing bullying for several years, 5% of primary school pupils and 2% of post-primary school pupils reported that this was the case. With regard to bullying other pupils at school, whilst 24.9% of primary school pupils reported that they had participated in this behaviour (22%: “occasional”; 3%: “frequent”), a higher rate (29%) was reported by post-primary school pupils (26%: “occasional”; 3%: “frequent”). A further group of bully-victims were identified: 15% among the primary school pupils and 12% among the post-primary school pupils. Questionnaires were also completed by staff within the participating schools, in relation to attitudes to and awareness of bullying, school anti-bullying policies, and procedures and their training needs. From their analysis of both pupil and staff questionnaires, Collins et al. (2002, 2004) concluded that bullying was occurring in all schools, even in the best regulated ones, was not specific to age or gender, and at times it was underplayed by the schools and teachers.

### **Study 2. The Nature and Extent of Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland (Livesey et al., 2007)**

The second of these studies (*The Nature and Extent of Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland*: Livesey et al., 2007) employed the Revised Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996), but with the addition of questions in relation to Section 75 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* (The Stationery Office, 2003) which related to opinions on equality in relation to ethnicity, religion, and disability. Among the primary school sample of 993 pupils, 43.3% reported that they were a victim of bullying in the past couple of months (26.2%: “once or twice”; 7.9%: “two or three times a month”; 4.3%: “about once a week”; 4.9%: “several times a week”). A lower rate of victimisation (28.8%) was reported among the 1,319 post-primary school pupils (21.1%: “once or twice”; 2.6%: “two or three times a month”; 2.3%: “about once a week”; 2.7%: “several times a week”). With regard to bullying other pupils, 22.1% of primary school pupils indicated they had done this (17.1%: “once or twice”; 2.7%: “two or three times a month”; 1.4%: “about once a month”; 0.9%: “several times a month”). One fifth (21.9%) of post-primary school pupils stated that they had participated in bullying other pupils over the past couple of months (19.1%: “once or twice”; 1.1%: “two or three times a month”; 0.9%: “about once a week”; 0.8%: “several times a month”). Pupils

were also categorised to one of four categories: (i) not bully or victim, (ii) victim, (iii) bully, or (iv) bully-victim, based on their answers to the two key questions, as per Solberg and Olweus (2003) and Ahmed and Braithwaite (2004). Among the primary school pupils, 80.4% were not involved in bullying and were classified as “not bully or victim”, 14.6% were categorised as a “victim”, 2.5% as a “bully” and 2.5% were considered “bully-victims”. In the post-primary sample, 90.3% were assigned as “not a bully or victim”, 6.9% were a “victim”, 2.1% were classified as a “bully” and 0.7% were categorised as a “bully-victim”.

Furthermore, in relation to cyberbullying, 12.9% of primary school pupils and 7% of post-primary school pupils reported being “bullied with the use of mobile phones”. In relation to being “bullied with the use of computers”, 7.4% of primary school pupils and 4.4% of post-primary school pupils stated that it had happened to them. In relation to bullying others, 3.4% of primary school pupils and 6.9% of post-primary school pupils admitted that they had done this using a mobile phone, and 2.1% of primary school pupils, and 4.6% post-primary school pupils stated that they used a computer to bully others.

Questions were also asked in relation to having a disability and being involved in bully/victim problems. In relation to having a disability, 16.3% of primary school pupils reported that they did have a disability. Livesey et al. (2007) reported that there was a significant association between whether a pupil had a disability and frequency of victimisation. When compared to their non-disabled peers (40.4%), a larger percentage (58.5%) of those with a disability reported that they were a victim of bullying behaviour. A significant association was also found in relation to bullying other pupils, with a greater percentage of pupils with a disability (37.7%) reporting that they had bullied other pupils in comparison to those without a disability (19.1%). Amongst the post-primary sample, 5.9% reported having a disability, with similar significant associations being found in relation to reporting of having a disability and being a victim of bullying behaviour: 29.7% of those with a disability reported being a victim in comparison to 27.7% for those with no disability. Similarly, significant associations were also reported for reporting of a disability and involvement in bullying others, with a greater percentage (35.4%) of pupils with a disability admitting bullying other pupils in comparison to those pupils (21.2%) with no disability.

In comparison to the findings of Collins et al. (2002, 2004) from 5 years previous, the rates of reported bullying behaviour by victims, bullies, and bully/victim were similar in nature. Livesey et al. (2007) concluded that schools still faced challenges in terms of creating an anti-bullying culture and preventing bully/victim problems among school pupils and protecting children who had experienced this problem.

### **Study 3. The Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland (RSM McClure Watters, 2011)**

The third funded project (*The Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland*: RSM McClure Watters, 2011), built upon the strong methodological and empirical base set by the previous two projects. Similarly, it examined the nature and incidence of school bullying, but it also included questions relation to cyberbullying (like Livesey et al., 2007) and a survey of staff (like Collins et al., 2002, 2004). Questionnaires were completed by a representative sample of 904 primary pupils and 1,297 post-primary pupils, along with

58 primary teaching staff, 57 primary non-teaching staff, 56 post-primary teaching staff, and 58 post-primary non-teaching staff.

For consistency with the previous research, the Revised Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (1996) was utilised, with further questions asked in relation to cyberbullying, pupils' awareness of, and use of, available resources to help with dealing with incidents of bullying. As before, questions relating to Section 75 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* (The Stationary Office, 2003) on equal opportunity and good relations were also included (e.g., race or skin colour, disability, religion). Furthermore, in an extension to the previous research, one senior teaching member of staff who had specific responsibility for "pastoral care" and one non-teaching member of staff were interviewed in each school sampled.

Within the primary school sample, 39.3% (n = 352) of pupils had been victimised in the previous two months (22.1%, n = 198: "it has only happened once or twice"; 7.7%, n = 69: "2 or 3 times a month"; 4.6%, n = 41: "about once a week"; 4.9%, n = 44: "several times a week"), with 9.5% (n = 85) of these pupils experiencing bullying once a week or more often. Amongst post-primary school pupils, the rate of victimisation was 29.5% (n = 380: 18.4%, n = 238: "it has only happened once or twice"; 4.3%, n = 55: "2 or 3 times a month"; 3.3%, n = 42: "about once a week"; 3.5%, n = 45: "several times a week").

In response to the question about bullying others, 21.5% (n = 193) of primary school pupils admitted being involved in this behaviour (17.6%, n = 158: "it has happened only once or twice"; 2.2%, n = 20: "2 or 3 times a month"; 1.1%, n = 10: "about once a week"; 0.6%, n = 5: "several times a week"), and 1.7% (n = 15) of these pupils engaged in this behaviour once a week or more often. Among the post-primary school pupils, 17.8% (n = 230) reported that they did this "once or twice", and 3.4% (n = 44) reported that they bullied others on a more frequent basis (1.6%, n = 21: "2 or 3 times a month"; 1.1%, n = 14: "about once a week"; 0.7%, n = 9: "several times a week").

Similar to the previous iteration of the study (Livesey et al., 2007), pupils were categorised as "not a bully or victim", "victim", "bully", or "bully-victim" based on their answers to the two key questions. In relation to primary school pupils, 80.2% were classified as being "not a bully or victim", 15.8% as a "victim", 2.6% as a "bully", and 1.3% as a "bully-victim". Among the post-primary school pupils, 86.6% were categorised as being "not a bully or victim", 9.9% as a "victim", 2.3% as a "bully", and 1% as a "bully-victim" (Note: whilst percentage values were reported for these groups, the numbers of pupils in each category was not reported).

In relation to being a victim of cyberbullying, 15.5% (n = 140) of primary school pupils reported that they had experienced this in the past couple of months, with "I received a threatening message via IM, text, email" (6%, n = 54) and "I received a message that showed people were talking about me nastily online" (6.1%, n = 55) being most commonly reported. Similar trends were reported amongst the post-primary sample, with 17% (n = 221) reporting cyberbullying and "I received a threatening message via IM, text, email" (5.3%, n = 69) and "I received a message that showed people were talking about me nastily online" (5.5%, n = 71) being the most reported options. Text message (primary: 8.1%, n = 73; post-primary: 9.6%, n = 124) and social networking (primary: 5.9%, n = 53; post-primary: 10.6%, n = 138) were two methods of bullying most commonly reported by a victim, to bully them using a mobile phone or computer.

When answering the question about involvement in cyberbullying other pupils in the past couple of months, 5.2% (n = 47) reported that they had engaged in this behaviour. Similar to

the victim focused question, the most frequent reported responses were: “I sent him or her a threatening message via IM, text, email” (1.7%, n = 15) and “I sent him or her a message that showed people were talking about him or her nastily online” (1.8%, n = 16). Similarly, 6.6% (n = 85) of post-primary school pupils reported being a cyberbully, with “I sent him or her a message with insults calling him or her gay (whether true or not)” (2.1%, n = 27) and “I sent him or her a threatening message via IM, text, email” (1.9%, n = 25) the most common responses. Similarly, text message (primary: 3.4%, n = 31; post-primary: 2.7%, n = 35) and social networking (primary: 2.1%, n = 19; post-primary: 3.2%, n = 42) were the two methods most commonly reported by a bully.

Similar to Livesey et al. (2007), analysis was also conducted regarding the relationship between involvement in bully/victim problems and disability. Overall, 12.1% of primary school pupils and 6.2% of post-primary school pupils reported having a disability (Note: whilst percentage values were reported for these groups, the numbers of pupils in each category was not reported). Among the primary school pupils, a large percentage of those that reported having a disability also reported that they had been victimized (44.3%, n = 47) compared to their non-disabled peers (38.6%, n = 300). A similar trend was evident among the post-primary school pupils, with 44.9% (n = 35) of those with a disability reporting being bullied compared to 28.2% (n = 337) for those without a disability. Furthermore, a greater percentage of those primary school pupils who had a disability reported being involved in bullying other students (27.8%, n = 30) than those without a disability (20.8%, n = 162). Similarly, 29.1% (n = 23) of those in post-primary school with a disability reported that they had bullied other pupils compared with 20.5% (n = 245) for those without a disability.

As mentioned previously, staff surveys were also conducted. In relation to the incidence of bullying over the past “two or three years”, the majority of primary school teaching (60%, n = 35) and non-teaching staff (65%, n = 37) considered it to be “about the same”. Within the post-primary sample, the incidence was also considered to be “about the same” by teaching (54%, n = 30) and non-teaching staff (52%, n = 29). In relation to cyberbullying, 17 primary school teaching staff and 18 non-teaching staff stated that cyberbullying and problems with *Facebook* and phones were becoming more common. In the post-primary school setting, almost three quarters of teaching staff and one-third of non-teaching staff noted that cyberbullying was increasing.

In comparison to the two previous studies, the incidence rate in relation to victimisation and involvement in bullying others for primary school pupils and post-primary school pupils remained consistent, with only slight changes occurring. All three studies reported victimisation rates of approximately 40% among primary school pupils and 30% among post-primary school pupils, and participation in bullying others for both school groups of approximately 20%. Based on their research findings, RSM McClure Watters (2011) made some key recommendations, such as reminding schools to update their policies and involve parents and pupils, that DENI should provide guidance on the roles of staff in dealing with school bullying, and provide guidelines on addressing cyberbullying for schools.

### **Smaller Scale Studies**

In addition to the three large-scale and methodologically robust studies (Collins et al., 2002, 2004; Livesey et al., 2007; RSM McClure Watters, 2011), there has been a number of

smaller scale studies that have explored the nature, incidence, and correlates of involvement in bully/victim problems amongst school pupils in Northern Ireland (Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Collins & Bell, 1996; Espey, Duffy, & Mc Guckin, under review; Mc Guckin & Crowley, in press; Mc Guckin, Cummins, & Lewis, 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Mc Guckin & Lewis, 2006; Mc Guckin, Lewis, & Cummins, 2010; Purdy & Mc Guckin, 2011; Schubotz, 2010). However, unlike the DENI supported large scale studies reported above, there was no consensus among the authors of these smaller studies regarding methodological issues.

#### **Study 4. Callaghan and Joseph (1995)**

Callaghan and Joseph (1995) examined the relationship between victimization and mental health among a sample of 120 10-12 year old pupils at two post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. The 18-item Birlson Depression Questionnaire (BDQ: Birlson, 1981), the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC: Harter, 1985), and the Peer Victimization Scale (PVS: Neary & Joseph, 1994), and one standalone question (“Are there any children who are bullied in the classroom?”) were completed by the pupils. In response to the standalone question, pupils were also asked to list the names of those children who they thought were being bullied and to include their own name if it was appropriate. Seventy pupils (58.33%) including 13 (10.83%) self-reported victims were identified by at least one of the pupils as being a victim. In relation to scores on the PVS (Neary & Joseph, 1994) and the BDQ (Birlson, 1981), the 70 peer-nominated victims had significantly higher scores than those that were not identified as victims by their peers. In relation to the SPPC (Harter, 1985), this group also had significantly lower scores than non-victims on the Social Acceptance sub-scale, the Behavioural Conduct sub-scale and the Global Self-worth sub-scale. This trend was similar for the self-reported victims, with this group having significantly higher scores on the PVS (Neary & Joseph, 1994) and the BDQ (Birlson, 1981), and significantly lower scores on the Social Acceptance and the Global Self-worth sub-scales of the SPPC (Harter, 1985) than those not identified as victims.

#### **Study 5. Collins and Bell (1996)**

Collins and Bell (1996) also utilised the SPPC (Harter, 1985) but assessed bully/victim problems by employing the Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (BVQ: Olweus, 1989) among a sample of 118 8-10 year old pupils from three Belfast primary schools. They also assessed aggressive-disruptive behaviour using the Revised Class Play Method (Masten, Morison, & Pellegrini, 1985). Nearly one-quarter (24%) were reported as bullies. However, similar data were not reported for victims, bully/victims, or bystanders. Significant positive associations were found between self-reports of bullying and peer-nominations of these bullies on the Revised Class Play Method (Masten et al., 1985). In relation to the SPPC (Harter, 1985), bullies scored significantly higher on all sub-scales, except for the Behavioural Conduct and Self-competence sub-scales than everyone else. It was also reported that bullies' scores were lower on the Behavioural Conduct sub-scale than victims and bystanders. Also, victims had lower levels of self-esteem on all sub-scales of the SPPC (Harter, 1985).

### **An Agenda for Change (Mc Guckin & Lewis, 2003)**

These previous two studies (Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Collins & Bell, 1996) were relatively small in nature and employed different means to assess bully/victim problems among school pupils. In attempts to overcome the sporadic nature of research exploring such issues among school pupils in Northern Ireland, Mc Guckin, Lewis, and colleagues have been working in earnest to bring theoretical and methodological consensus to the area (Mc Guckin & Lewis, 2003). For example, the review of the following studies demonstrates how the team have been working with other researchers and agencies to improve the quality and consistency of the questions posed in large-scale studies among the Northern Irish school pupils. The outcome of this work has been that a consensus has now been reached whereby all future research exploring bully/victim problems should be comparable, not only with the DENI supported research, but also (and importantly), be comparable with the international literature on the issue.

### **Study 6. Mc Guckin and Lewis (2006)**

The first of these (Mc Guckin & Lewis, 2006) reported upon a sample of 397 12- 17 year olds across Northern Ireland who were involved in the 1998 iteration of the Young Life and Times Survey (YLTS). The YLTS is administered by ARK, the Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive - managed jointly by the University of Ulster and Queen's University Belfast ([www.ark.ac.uk/yлт](http://www.ark.ac.uk/yлт)). A victimisation rate of 76.8% was recorded from responses to the question „Would you say that students at your school get bullied by other students?’ A further five questions were posed to the pupils with regard to young people's experiences of bullying behaviour and being a victim of bullying, school policies on bullying, and the staff helpfulness in relation to bully/victim problems. Mc Guckin and Lewis (2006) concluded from the responses to these questions, that although schools were mainly proactive in the management of bully/victim problems, the rate of help-seeking behaviour amongst students was low.

### **Study 7. Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2008)**

Similar analyses of a different Province-wide survey were reported by Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2008): the Young People's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2000). Among a representative sample of 6,297 11 to 16 year olds in Northern Ireland, a victimisation rate of 43.3% (n = 2,470) was reported from answers to the question “Have you ever been a victim of the following – Being bullied?” Responses linked to bully/victim problems emerged in other areas of the survey, such as personal experiences of school meal-times, sporting activities and perceptions of personal safety. As previously, whilst the sampling procedures employed were robust, little was gained in terms of comparable knowledge about the nature, incidence, or correlates of involvement in bully/victim problems.



**Study 8. Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2009)**

Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2009) reported findings from the 2003 version of the YPBAS (NISRA, 2003), on three key questions relating to bully/victim problems (N = 7,223 11 to 16 year olds). Self-reports of being a victim of bullying was admitted by almost one-fifth (17.2%, n = 1,026) of the sample, and 8.1% (n = 492) admitted that they had “picked on” or bullied another pupil. The victimisation rate recorded was lower than that of the previous iteration (i.e., in 2000). Similar to the 2000 version of the survey, bully/victim problems emerged as a factor in personal experiences of school meal-times, sporting activities, and perceptions of personal safety.

**Study 9. Mc Guckin, Lewis, and Cummins (2010)**

Mc Guckin, Lewis, and Cummins (2010) analysed data from the 2004 iteration of the YLTS. Among a sample of 824 16 year olds a rate of victimisation of 13% (n = 107) was recorded from responses (frequency = “sometimes or more often”) to the statement “I was bullied at school”. This victimisation rate was lower than that reported by Mc Guckin and Lewis (2006). This version of the survey also included questions in relation to stress and the 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12: Goldberg & Williams, 1988) was included to assess psychological health and general well-being. In relation to answers relating to stress and scores on the GHQ-12, 65.7% (n = 541) reported being stressed, and 23.8% (n = 189) had scores that were considered high enough on the GHQ-12 to be a “case” (utilising a cut-off score of 4: Mc Whirter, 2004). Furthermore, involvement in bullying behaviour was significantly related to increased stress and impairment in psychological well-being.

**Study 10. Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2010a)**

Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2010a) analysed the 2005 YLTS (N = 819 16 years old pupils). A victimisation rate of 30.5% (n = 244) was reported - higher than the previous version of the survey. Similar to the previous version of the YLTS, 64.7% (n = 522) reported being stressed and 21.4% (n = 172) had scores on the GHQ-12 (Goldberg & Williams, 1988) that were high enough to require psychiatric referral (utilising a cut-off of 4: Mc Whirter, 2004). Again involvement in bullying behaviour was significantly related to stress and impaired mental health.

**Study 11. Schubotz (2010)**

Schubotz (2010), in the analysis of the 2008 YLTS reported a victimisation rate of 37% from a sample of 941 16 year old pupils. From the GHQ-12 (Goldberg & Williams, 1998), 29% were within the “at-risk” group of a psychiatric disorder and answered questions relating to stress, where 39% reported that they were stressed often or very often. This version of the

survey was expanded with the inclusion of questions on mental health and self-harm. Fifteen percent of pupils reported that they had thought seriously about self-harm and 10% had self-harmed (5%: once; 5%: more than once). Those pupils who had experienced bully/victim problems reported higher levels of stress than those that had not been involved in such problems. Furthermore, involvement in bully/victim problems was also related to mental and emotional health problems and self-harm, with 65% of those who had self-harmed reporting that they had been bullied at school. This was the first year of the presentation of questions relating to self-harm, and the rate of bullying and self-harm are a cause for concern. Furthermore, as the YLTS has progressed through the years, the questions being asked are becoming more streamlined in line with international and national research, allowing for cross-national comparison.

### **Study 12. Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2010b)**

Mc Guckin, Cummins, and Lewis (2010b) examined the experiences of 11 year olds in Northern Ireland as recorded by the first two administrations of the annual Kids Life and Times Survey - the children's version of the YLTS (KLTS: 2008 [N = 3,440], 2009 [N= 3,699]). The surveys explored both traditional / face-to-face (f2f) and cyberbullying, along with the KIDSCREEN (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2005; The KIDSCREEN Group Europe, 2006) to assess psychological well-being, and a World Health Organisation measure of family financial circumstances. The 2009 version also included further questions relating to Internet usage, Internet access, and appearance. In 2008, 22% (n = 750) of children reported being *physically* bullied at school either "a little" or "a lot", 38.8% (n = 1,328) reported they had been bullied *in other ways*, either "a little" or "a lot", and 10.3% (n = 353) reported that "yes" they had "been bullied by someone sending nasty texts or putting up bad things about you on the Internet". In relation to bullying others in a physical manner, 7.8% (n = 265) reported they had done this "a little" or "a lot", 12.8% (n = 437) admitted to "bullying children in other ways at school" either "a little" or "a lot", and 3.4% (n = 115) admitted that they had "taken part in bullying someone by sending nasty texts or putting up bad things about them on the Internet". A similar set of results were found in the 2009 survey, with 21.8% (n = 793) of children reporting being physically bullied at school either "a little" or "a lot", 36.2% (n = 1,311) being bullied in other ways either "a little" or "a lot", and 12.9% (n = 470) "been bullied by someone sending nasty texts or putting up bad things about you on the Internet". In relation to bullying others in a physical manner, 8.5% (n = 307) reported they had done this "a little" or "a lot", 13.1% (n = 476) admitted to "bullying children in other ways at school" either "a little" or "a lot". The question relating to cyberbullying other children was not, unfortunately, asked in the 2009 survey. Furthermore, across both years of the survey, involvement in bully/victim problems were associated with impaired psychological well-being.

As becomes evident through each iteration of these large and representative surveys, the key questions relating to experience of involvement in bully/victim problems, including cyberbullying and disablist bullying, reflect the influence and intervention of the present authors. Through their analyses and discussion of the datasets and methodologies employed, basic – but important – methodological issues have been addressed in subsequent surveys, leading to the collection and possible analysis and interpretation of new data to previous work

in Northern Ireland and beyond. Thus, survey content regarding personal involvement (or not), and associated issues (e.g., health and well-being, help seeking) is now theoretically and methodologically much more robust.

### **Study 13. The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (2007)**

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (2007) explored cyberbullying in Northern Ireland using the Olweus derived questionnaire developed by Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, and Tippett (2006) among a sample 163 11-18 year old pupils in one post-primary school. The traditional / f2f victimisation rate was 14% (n = 22; 10%, n = 16: “once or twice”; 2%, n = 3: “2 or 3 times a month”; 2%, n = 3: “several times a week”) and the rate of experiencing cyberbullying was 8% (n = 13; 7%, n = 11: “once or twice”; 1%, n = 2: “about once a week”). These rates of victimisation are similar to the previous studies mentioned.

### **Study 14. Espey, Duffy, and Mc Guckin (Under Review)**

Espey, Duffy, and Mc Guckin (under review) also assessed involvement in cyberbullying by utilising Smith et al.’s (2006) questionnaire among 757 Year 8 and Year 11 pupils in Northern Ireland. In relation to cyberbullying, a rate of involvement of 19.3% was reported, with 11.9% categorised as victims, 3.1% as bullies, and 4.3% as bully-victims. Traditional / f2f had a rate of involvement of 52.1%, with 31.6% of the sample classified as victims, 6.8% as bullies, and 13.7% as bully-victims. In terms of cyberbullying, the most common form was via text message, with videos via mobile phones being perceived as the form with most amount of harm associated with it. Also, over one-quarter of cybervictims reported that they did not know their cyberbully(ies). In terms of the best coping strategy, blocking the messages or telephone numbers was recommended by the pupils. In comparison to previous research, these rates of victimisation are a cause for concern.

### **Study 15. Purdy and Mc Guckin (2011)**

Previously, it was highlighted within the DENI supported research of Livesey et al. (2007) and RSM McClure Watters (2011) that bullying in relation to a disability (i.e., disablist bullying) is becoming more prevalent – perhaps due to a more inclusive society and school system, with disabled and non-disabled pupils studying side-by-side. In a rare study encompassing samples from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (supported by the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South: SCoTENS), Purdy and Mc Guckin (2011) examined trainee teachers’ knowledge of, and confidence with, dealing with (i) traditional / f2f bullying, (ii) Special Education Needs (SEN), and (iii) the nexus of these two areas - disablist bullying. The results of their study highlighted that although trainee teachers placed high importance on the need to understand and respond proactively to issues relating to bullying and SEN, their confidence in relation to both was low and they had not received any training in relation to disablist bullying. Furthermore, 35.3% of the sample

reported that they would revert to “natural instinct” if they had to deal with an incident of disablist bullying.

Utilising a similar methodological approach, and supported by SCoTENS, Purdy and Mc Guckin (in press) have explored teachers’ (Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland) knowledge of the legal issues regarding cyberbullying. The research was designed to produce clear guidance to schools on their legal responsibilities regarding cyberbullying through the publication and dissemination of a teacher-friendly pamphlet and increased knowledge and confidence regarding cyberbullying and legal remedies for the phenomenon.

## **Conclusion**

Until recently, much of the research in Northern Ireland that has explored school bullying has been sporadic in nature, focusing on the incidence, nature, and correlates of bully/victim problems. Evident among these studies was a lack of methodological agreement in terms of definition, the time-reference period for the bullying to have occurred (e.g., previous week, previous two months, previous year) and whether the methodologies utilised (e.g., interview, questionnaire) allowed for comparison to the international literature. In addition, there is inconsistency in the reporting of findings, with some researchers reporting in percentages, some in numbers, and others choosing to categorise the respondents.

## **BULLY/VICTIM PROBLEMS IN REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

Research efforts regarding bully/victim problems in the Republic of Ireland have been influenced by the internationally recognised work of O’Moore and colleagues at the Anti-Bullying Centre in Trinity College Dublin. Indeed, O’Moore’s Anti-Bullying Centre has been at the centre of much of the applied research regarding bully/victim problems across the lifespan and in schools, the workplace, and community settings in the Republic of Ireland and internationally.

At present there have been 13 studies undertaken on school based bullying in the Republic of Ireland.

### **Study 1. Byrne (1987)**

The first key study on the nature of bully/victim problems in Ireland was conducted by Byrne (1987). Among a sample of 323 12-16 year old post-primary school boys, 5.2% were identified as victims and 4.9% were involved as bullies. Furthermore, among pupils in remedial classes, 13.7% were categorised as a victim and 9.1% as a bully. These rates were based on teacher ratings, so it is a possibility that the incidence rates may be underestimated. This was highlighted by O’Moore and Hillery (1991) where teachers nominated those that were involved in bullying behaviour. They identified 22% pure bullies (never been bullied) and 25% bully-victims. They reported that teachers did not identify a quarter of the total number of bullies present in the sample. They also reported that bullies and victims

experienced lower levels of self-esteem (as measured by the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale: Piers, 1984) in comparison to those not involved in bully/victim problems.

### **Study 2. O'Moore and Hillery (1989)**

O'Moore and Hillery (1989), among a representative sample of 783 seven to thirteen year old primary school pupils in Dublin, utilised Roland and Munthe's (1989) 14-item self-report questionnaire. A victimisation rate of 63% (n = 493) was reported with 54.9% (n = 430) reporting that it happened occasionally and 8% (n = 63) of these reporting that they had been bullied on a frequent level ("once a week" or "more often"). In relation to the current school term, 34.4% were bullied occasionally during that term and 7.7% were bullied frequently. In relation to bullying others, 56% (n = 359) admitted to doing this, 43.3% of these did so occasionally ("once or twice" or "sometimes") and 2.5% bullied "seriously" ("once a week" or "more often"). In relation to bullying in the current school term, 27.4% reported bullying others occasionally and 1.8% (n = 14) did so to a serious level. Of those respondents that were bullied occasionally during the term (55%: "once or twice" or "sometimes"), 42.8% (n = 115) reported that they had also bullied others occasionally, and 3.3% (n = 9) had bullied others frequently. Of those that had been bullied frequently during the term, 40% (n = 24) had bullied others occasionally and 5% (n = 3) had bullied others on a frequent level. Furthermore, 109 of the sample attended remedial classes and 67.9% of these reported being a victim of bullying and 54.3% reported participated in bullying others.

### **Study 3. Byrne (1994)**

Byrne (1994), among a sample of 1,302 primary and post-primary school pupils and 44 teachers (primary and post-primary) explored the incidence of bully/victim problems through teacher- and peer-ratings, class questionnaires, and interviews. Ten per-cent (10.4%) of the total sample reported being involved in bully/victim problems as either a bully (5.3%) or as a victim (5.1%). Furthermore, similar to O'Moore and Hillery (1991), when compared to those not involved in bully/victim problems, bullies and victims reported lower levels of self-worth. Bullies also reported higher levels of aggression, hostility, and a domineering nature towards their peers along with low levels of anxiety and insecurity. Conversely, victims reported higher levels of depression, worry, fear of new situations, and a withdrawn nature. In relation to early school completion, bullies showed the highest rate of 36.6% in comparison to 13.8% for victims. In addition, whilst 80.5% of teachers rated bullying as a major problem in schools, only 39% reported it as a large problem in their school. Moreover, just 5% of teachers felt that their teacher training prepared them to deal with bullying in schools.

### **Study 4. O'Moore, Kirkham, and Smith (1997)**

A nationwide study of bully/victim problems in primary and post-primary schools in Ireland was conducted in 1993 by O'Moore, Kirkham, and Smith (1997), utilising a modified version of the Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1989; Whitney & Smith, 1993)

among a sample of 20,442 pupils. In relation to being a victim of bullying, 31.3% (n = 3,064) of primary school pupils (18.6%, n = 1,777: “once or twice”; 8.4%, n = 807: “sometimes”; 1.9%: “once a week”; 2.4%: “several times a week” [n = 480 for these last two combined]) and 15.6% of post-primary pupils, reported that they had been a victim of bully/victim problems within the last term (10.8%, n = 1,172: “once or twice”; 2.9%, n = 316: “sometimes”; 0.7%: “once a week”; 1.2%: “several times a week” [n = 207 for these last two combined]). In relation to bullying others, 26.4% (n = 2,524) of primary school pupils (20%, n = 1,904: “once or twice”; 5.1%, n = 482: “sometimes”; 0.7%: “once a week”; 0.7%: “several times a week” [n = 138 for these last two combined]) and 14.9% (n = 1,606) of post-primary school pupils reported that they had been involved with bullying others in school within the last term (11.5%, n = 1,239: “once or twice”; 2.4%, n = 264: “sometimes”; 0.3%: “once a week”; 0.7%: “several times a week” [n = 103 for these last two combined]). Pupils were further categorised as pure bullies, pure victims, and bully-victims. Among the primary school sample, 12.3% were categorised as pure bullies, 17.1% as pure victims, and 14.1% as bully-victims. In the post-primary sample, the percentages for each of the categories were lower, with 10.8% classified as pure bullies, 11.5% as pure victims and 4.1% as bully-victims. (Note: whilst percentage values were reported for these groups, the numbers of pupils in each category was not reported).

### **Study 5. O’Moore and Kirkham (2001)**

In a follow up study in 1994, O’Moore and Kirkham (2001) examined the relationship between self-esteem and bullying behaviour among a sample of 8,429 eight to eighteen year old pupils (primary and post-primary) who completed a modified version of the Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1989; Whitney & Smith, 1993) and the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984). Those pupils that were involved as a bully, as a victim, or both had lower levels of Global Self-worth than those not involved in bullying behaviour. For victims, as the frequency of victimisation increased, levels of self-esteem decreased. Also, on the different dimensions of the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale (Piers, 1984), they rated themselves with significantly higher scores on Behaviour and Anxiety, and significantly lower scores on Popularity, Physical Appearance, and Intellectual and School Status in comparison to those that had not been bullied. However, they had significantly higher levels of Global Self-worth than bully-victims. Among those primary school pupils that were categorised as pure bullies and bullied on the most frequent level, they reported significantly lower scores on the dimensions of Behaviour, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance, Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction than those that did not bully. Furthermore, post-primary school bullies rated themselves with significantly lower scores on Behaviour, Intellectual and School Status, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction. O’Moore and Kirkham (2001) found, across both primary and post-primary pupils that compared with pure bullies, bully-victims that bullied moderately and frequently and were bullied moderately and frequently, reported significantly lower levels of Global Self-worth, with lower scores of Behaviour, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction, but higher scores of Anxiety.

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**Study 6. Guerin and Hennessy (2001)**

Guerin and Hennessy (2001), among a sample of 940 primary school pupils in fifth and sixth class, utilised a questionnaire designed by the researchers to measure the nature and incidence of bully/victim problems in schools. The questionnaire posed questions related to pupil's experiences of school, their involvement in bullying, and their attitudes to, and definitions of, bullying. The focus of the research was on the involvement in bully/victim problems. Involvement in bully/victim problems was reported by 31.2% (n = 293) of the sample, with 15.6% (n = 147) being classified as a victim, 6.1% (n = 57) as a bully, and 9.5% (n = 89) as a bully-victim.

**Study 7. Connolly and O'Moore (2003)**

Connolly and O'Moore (2003) examined the role of personality and family relations in bullies, utilising The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Junior (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) and the Family Relations Test (Bene & Anthony, 1957) to assess the direction and intensity of the young person's feelings towards each of their family members and their estimation of the reciprocal feelings towards them. The sample consisted of 228 six to sixteen year olds, with 115 categorised as bullies and 113 as "controls". Categorisation as a bully or a control was based on a modified version of the Bankside Boys' School and Lamont Girls' Schools Questionnaire (Keise, 1992). In relation to personality, bullies scored higher in terms of Extraversion, Psychoticism, and Neuroticism in comparison to the controls. In relation to family relations, bullies reported higher scores in terms of emotional inhibition and had assigned significantly more negative statements to themselves compared to the controls. They also reported ambivalent relationships with their siblings and both parents whereas the controls portrayed positive relationships with their family members. Based on these findings Connolly and O'Moore (2003) recommend early identification of bullies and the involvement of their family in the intervention.

**Study 8. James, Sofroniou, and Lawlor (2003)**

James, Sofroniou, and Lawlor (2003), among a sample of 1,068 post-primary school second year pupils utilised a modified version of the Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1993). Pupils were selected from participating schools in the "Cool School Programme" (an anti-bullying programme). Data were also collected in relation to the emotional reaction to being bullied (e.g., feeling sad, angry, isolated, afraid, fed up, depressed, suicidal, humiliated, hopeless, insecure, unsure of themselves, and afraid of school). These items represented experienced emotions of young people that attended a Child Psychiatry Clinic. In relation to being a victim, 15% (n = 169) of pupils reported that they were a victim. Some cases of these were excluded from analysis due to missing data (gender, type of bullying, emotions response) which lowered the percentage of victims with full data to 11% (n = 120; 5.6%: "once or twice"; 2.4%: "once a week or more"; 3.1%: "several times"). In relation to the type of bullying reported, name-calling was more frequently reported followed by having rumours spread about them, being threatened, and then being physically

hurt. Following factor analysis on the various items relating to emotional response, two key factors emerged: Sadness-Anxiety and Anger-Frustration. In relation to these two factors, as the frequency of bullying increased, so did the victim's feelings on the sadness and anxiety factor, and victims reported feelings of anger/frustration irrespective of the frequency of the bullying behaviour. Those victims who reported that rumours were spread about them reported significantly higher scores on both factors of emotional response. Those victims who reported that no one talked to them (exclusion) reported significantly higher scores on the sadness-anxiety factor. Suicidal feelings due to bullying were reported by 21% of victims.

### **Study 9. Mills, Guerin, Lynch, Daly, and Fitzpatrick (2004)**

Mills, Guerin, Lynch, Daly, and Fitzpatrick (2004) report on data collected as part of a larger piece of research (Lynch, Mills, Daly, & Fitzpatrick, 2004) that investigated the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in a community setting sample of young people, aged between 12-15 years, and located in eight secondary schools in North Dublin. After a screening process involving the use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) and the Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1985, 1992), the final sample for analysis were the 209 (97 male, 112 female) students who presented for interview post-screening. The post-screening interview involved the use of the Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia for School Aged Children Present and Life Time Version (KSADS-PL: Kaufman, Birmaher, Brent, Rao, & Ryan, 1996, 1997), the Scale for Suicide Ideation (SSI: Beck, Kovacs, & Weissmann, 1979), and the Suicide Intent Scale (SIS: Beck, Schuyler, & Herman, 1974) where required. Within the KSADS-PL, respondents were asked if they had ever experienced being bullied by their peers. The researchers had no predetermined criteria for what constituted an episode of bullying, instead relying on the respondent's own descriptions of experiences that they considered to be bullying. The victimisation rate was 34.5% (n = 72), with three quarters of these (n = 54) reported previous victimisation, and the remainder (n = 18) reporting that they were currently being bullied. Being a victim was associated with depression (past episodes and not current depressive episodes), suicide ideation, and more likely to have attempted suicide, and more likely to be referred to psychiatric services. Against expectations, victimization was not associated with anxiety or previous behaviour problems.

### **Study 10. O'Moore and Minton (2005)**

O'Moore and Minton's (2005) work related to the effectiveness of an anti-bullying programme across 22 primary schools, using a modified version of the Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1989; Whitney & Smith, 1993), before and after the programme. Questionnaires were completed by 525 third and fourth class pupils in 1998-1999 prior to the implementation of the anti-bullying programme to establish the rate of bullying behaviour in the schools. One year after the programme had been implemented, questionnaires were distributed again to the same students who were then in fourth and fifth class, yielding a sample of 520. Teachers also completed questionnaires (Rigby, 1997) at the two time points regarding their knowledge and feelings regarding bullying. Results highlighted that prior to



the implementation of the anti-bullying programme, 36.7% of respondents were categorised as victims and 27.1% of pupils were classified as bullies. Following the implementation of the anti-bullying programme, the percentage of victims fell to 29.5% and the percentage of bullies dropped to 22.4%. This reduction in the percentage of victims and bullies was significant in nature, thus highlighting the effectiveness of the anti-bullying programme. (See Farrington & Ttofi, 2009 for a scholarly review of the efficacy of this and noteworthy intervention / prevention programmes from across the world.)

### **Study 11. James et al. (2006)**

Similarly, James et al. (2006) examined the experiences of staff and students of one school's participation in an anti-bullying programme (the "Cool School Programme": CSP) and impact of the programme. The sample consisted of 174, 13-17 year old pupils and 32 teachers. Students were administered a non-standardized questionnaire devised by the CSP team. The questionnaire focused on: (i) teacher ability to manage bullying, (ii) telling a teacher if you experience bullying, (iii) safety in school, (iv) has the CSP made a difference?, and (v) were there any changes since CSP started? Answers were collapsed, where possible, into themes. The findings were that 91% (n = 159) of the students felt that teachers took bully/victim problems seriously, 89% (n = 155) reported that they thought that the teachers knew how to deal with bullying, and 75% (n = 131) thought that they would be able to tell a teacher if they were bullied. Furthermore, 87% (n = 151) reported that their class had a better atmosphere and 93% (n = 162) felt safe at school. In relation to teachers, 72% (n = 23) felt a greater confidence in their abilities to deal with bullying, 84% (n = 27) reported that they were more vigilant, 94% (n = 30) thought students felt safer at school, and 69% (n = 22) thought it the atmosphere was better in the school. The majority (94%, n = 30) reported that they felt the programme had become part of the schools culture and that it would continue (97%, n = 31). James et al. (2006) highlight the need for anti-bullying programmes to focus on helping and supporting victims of bullying, to empower bystanders to intervene and work with those involved, along with reporting of bullying. They also advocate that staff, students and parents should work together to manage this on-going problem in schools.

### **Study 12. Minton and O'Moore (2008)**

Minton and O'Moore (2008), in their 2004-2005 "ABC" study, utilised a modified version of the Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1989) among a sample of 2,312 8 to 12 year old primary school pupils across 33 primary schools and 3,257 12 to 16 year old pupils across 12 post-primary schools. Almost one-third (29.2%) of primary school pupils reported that they had been bullied (22.7%: "once or twice" or "sometimes"; 3.4%: "once a week"; 3.1%: "several times a week") and 22.9% of post-primary students reported that they were a victim of bullying (18%: "once or twice" or "sometimes"; 2.8%: "once a week"; 2.1%: "several times a week"). Pupils were also "categorized" based on their answers. Amongst the primary school pupils, 21.2% were involved as a victim only, 6.8% were involved as a bully only, and 7.3% were involved as a bully-victim. With regard to post-primary school pupils, 15.2% were involved as a victim only, 13.5% were involved as a bully only, and 7.7% were

involved as a bully-victim. This was a rate of involvement of 35.3% for the primary school sample and 36.4% for the post-primary school sample. Whilst the rates reflected a decrease in the primary school sample when compared to the 1993 nationwide survey (O'Moore et al., 1997), there was an increase for the primary school sample. Minton and O'Moore (2008) reported that the primary school pupils were overall significantly less likely to report that they were involved in bully/victim problems and that they had bullied others, but they were significantly more likely to be a "pure victim". Furthermore, pupils from post-primary schools were overall significantly more likely to be involved in bully/victim problems, and to be classified as a "pure bully", "pure victim", and "bully-victim" than their counterparts in the 1993 nationwide study (O'Moore et al., 1997).

### **Study 13. Sentenac et al. (2011)**

Sentenac et al. (2011) explored bullying behaviour among 12,048 students aged 11, 13, and 15 years, who had a disability or chronic illness (D/CI) in Ireland and France, as part of a cross-national study: 2006 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children. Within the survey, bullying was assessed through questions from the Olweus Bully/victim Questionnaire (1993). Other questions were also asked in relation to family affluence (the Family Affluence Scale: Currie et al., 2008), quality of social network on the communication with same-gender friends and social support from classmates, and family factors through family structure and communication with parents. Questions were also asked to identify if the student had a disability. Respondents were categorised as non D/CI children, D/CI without restriction in participation, and D/CI with restriction in participation. Restriction referred to where children had a D/CI that restricted their participation or attendance at school. In relation to having a D/CI, Ireland had a significantly higher rate of 20.6%, than that of France (16.6%), whereas France reported a higher incidence of bullying (34.2%) than Ireland (25.9%). Furthermore, in both countries, irrespective of D/CI status, younger students were significantly more likely to be victimised and there were no significant gender differences. Moreover, children with D/CI were significantly more likely to be victimised in both Ireland and France. Irrespective of country and D/CI status, being a victim of bullying was related to low levels of classmate support and difficulty with communicating with fathers, and this was stronger for children that reported D/CI.

### **Conclusion**

Like research undertaken in Northern Ireland on school bullying, much of the research carried out in the Republic of Ireland has been sporadic in nature, focusing on the incidence, nature, and correlates of bully/victim problems. Similar methodological shortcomings were also apparent (i.e., definitions, measures employed, time-reference period and reporting of findings).

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the present chapter was to build on the foundational work of Mc Guckin and Lewis (2003) on Northern Ireland and Byrne (1999) on the Republic of Ireland by providing a contemporary review of school based bully/victim problems in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Data were presented from a total of 15 studies located in Northern Ireland and 13 studies located in the Republic of Ireland. The findings suggest that, across a range of samples and measures, traditional bully/victim problems among school children continues to remain a problem in schools across both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The findings also suggest that cyberbullying is an emerging and important area of further attention (see Mc Guckin, in press; Mc Guckin, O'Moore, & Crowley, 2011), as is research on disablist bullying (see Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum, 2010; Purdy, & Mc Guckin, 2011; Sentenac et al., 2011).

The value of the present review is that it brings together data reported on school bullying in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland from a variety of different sources, including reports, as well as peer reviewed articles, therefore making the work more accessible to future researchers. As evidenced in this review, research since the pioneering studies of Callaghan and Joseph's (1995) work in Northern Ireland and Byrne's (1987) work in the Republic of Ireland research has continued to grow in terms of theoretical and methodological sophistication. Future work is now required to build on this growing body of research, with specific focus on the employment and evaluation of validated interventions (e.g., Jimerson, Swearer, & Espelage, 2010).

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