



2. BURDEN OF BULLYING FOR MENTAL HEALTH STATE IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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Introduction. School bullying constitutes a complex and alarming societal issue that negatively impacts students worldwide. The term "bullying" refers to repeated behaviors of intimidation, aggression, or verbal and physical violence among students, resulting in an unequal power dynamic between the aggressor and the victim. This form of destructive behavior can have long-term consequences on the emotional and academic well-being of children and adolescents, adversely affecting the school atmosphere and creating an environment where learning becomes challenging and stressful. The incidence rate of bullying is on the rise, largely due to the indifference of adults, as some mature individuals persist in bullying behavior towards other adults and, especially, towards children.

Aim of study. Aim of study was to evaluate incidence rate of bullying among schoolers of 10-15 years old and to analyze their perception about its influence on their mental and physical well-being.

Methods and materials. I conducted a descriptive incidence study, which included a sample of 102 students from Chişinău. The research protocol was based on the method of surveying children and adolescents from various schools in the municipality of Chişinău. The study was conducted in January 2024 as part of a collaborative project between the Society of Pediatrics of the Republic of Moldova and school entities.

Results. In this survey, 5% of participants were 10 years old, 23.5% - 11 years old, 14.7% - 12 years old, 19.6% - 13 years old, 22.5% - 14 years old, and 14.7% - 15 years old. The gender distribution shows an approximately even split, with girls at 52.9% and boys at 47.1%. Most students (94.1%) are familiar with the concept of bullying. They understand physical abuse as a form of bullying (82.4%), followed by various forms of verbal abuse. Children most commonly perceive verbal bullying (51.5%) as the most prevalent, followed by social and online bullying, each at 17.2%. It's noteworthy that children perceive online bullying as equally serious as offline bullying (62.7%). Overall, the incidence rate of bullying is alarming among students, with 63.7% witnessing bullying acts, and 50.5% of students having been victims at least once. In the past year, 29.4% of children have been victims of bullying by multiple peers several times, 8.8% repeatedly, and 4.9% almost every day. Most children are likely to seek help from a family member (52.9%). Additionally, approximately 8% of children may not seek help, which could have repercussions on their mental health.

Conclusion. The study on the incidence rate of bullying among students aged 10 to 15 reveals a concerning social reality. The analysis of collected data highlights that a significant percentage of schoolers face various forms of bullying in their school environment. This finding emphasizes the need for a proactive approach to prevent and manage this phenomenon.