



Predictors of peer victimisation in the context of secondary school

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emphasised [1]. Research supports the need of studying protective and risk factors for victimisation in light of the ecological model, once it highlights the connection between individual characteristics, family, school and community [2]. Two main objectives will be analysed: (a) the risk factors associated with four global types of victimisation (overt, reactive overt, relational and reactive relational) and seven subtypes of victimisation behaviours that the adolescent's might experience (e.g. social manipulation, social exclusion) using the ecological model; (b) discuss how the study of risk factors contributes to the strategies to be outlined in the context of an intervention program.

Materials and methods: 584 high school adolescents participated in this quasi-experimental study, aged between 12 and 19 years ($M = 15.20$; $DP = 1.90$). The participants completed: School aggression and violence: Victimization symptoms and behaviours Questionnaire [3], Perception of Social-Family Support and Perception of Peer Support Scales [4], Parental Support Questionnaire – Short Form [5], and School Climate Questionnaire [6]. Ethics committee approved the investigation and informed consent was obtained from parents. The questionnaires (anonymous and confidential) were completed in a classroom context. Using Hierarchical Linear Regression, two models were built, in which the qualitative variables (e.g. age, gender) were first inserted, followed by the factors peer support, family and school climate.

Results: The global types of victimisation were better explained by reactive relational victimisation (18.60% of total variance) while the specific types of victimisation by the harassment model (19.30% of the total variance), both by the factor social support from family and friends (respectively 13.80% and 10.70% of the variance). In short, boys showed a higher risk of overt victimisation, while girls reported more relational victimisation. Perceiving a poor support from family and friends places the adolescents at a higher risk of peer victimisation by harassment, but also by exclusion/social isolation, coercion, intimidation, threats and aggressiveness. The higher the perception of a school climate characterised by violence, the higher the risk of peer victimisation, specifically by harassment. No cases of victimisation per bullying were identified.

Discussion and conclusions: The risk factors found were indicative that these adolescents would benefit from a universal intervention model. These are developed in the classroom context for all students and do not include a selection of subjects with a specific need for intervention. Strategies should be oriented towards socio-emotional interventions, which include emotional management and interpersonal conflicts. These have shown good results in reducing violence in young people, including bullying, but also in reducing disruptive behaviours in the classroom. Greater knowledge of teachers and administrative staff, but also parents, and using rules that promote social inclusion, would facilitate the identification and signalling of students at risk. School administrations should adopt more integrated prevention policies and not only sanctioning measures, promoting a school climate perceived as protective and without violence.

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The impact of childhood abuse on adult self-esteem and emotional regulation

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The occurrence of traumatic experiences in childhood can lead to a disruption in the development of secure internal representations, with a negative impact on self-esteem [1]. In addition, child victimisation may compromise their emotional regulation skills [2] and it has been shown that individuals with lower self-esteem have less emotional regulation skills [3]. Studies with adults showed that those who suffered several types of abuse during childhood tend to have worse interpersonal relationships [4]. This research has the main goals, to identify the relationship between the impact of childhood abuse on adult self-esteem and emotional regulation, and the relationship between self-esteem and emotional regulation. This is the first study in a Portuguese sample that integrates those variables.

Materials and methods: The study design is descriptive, observational, and cross-sectional. The sample was composed of 96 Portuguese adults (over 18 years old) ($M = 27.95$ years, $SD = 11.60$). The participants answered online to a sociodemographic questionnaire, Portuguese versions of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) [5], the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) [6], and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) [7]. The link to the study was disclosed by e-mail and in social networks. The study was conducted in accordance with all the ethical principles.

Results: We found significant statistical positive correlations between the total score of the CTQ and the total score of the DERS ($r = 0.422$, $p < .001$) and the sub-scales of DERS: the not acceptance of emotional responses ($r = 0.311$, $p = .002$), difficulties engaging in goal-directed behaviour ($r = 0.243$, $p = .017$), impulse control difficulties ($r = 0.431$, $p < .001$), limited access to emotion regulation strategies ($r = 0.465$, $p < .001$), and lack of emotional clarity ($r = 0.209$, $p = .041$). Furthermore, we observed statistical negative correlations between the total score of RSES and the total score of the CTQ ($r = -0.319$, $p = .002$), the total score of the DERS ($r = -0.561$, $p < .001$) and the sub-scales of DERS: the not acceptance of emotional responses ($r = -0.413$, $p < .001$), difficulties engaging in goal-directed behaviour ($r = -0.336$, $p = .001$), impulse control difficulties ($r = -0.373$, $p < .001$), limited access to emotion regulation strategies ($r = -0.508$, $p < .001$), and lack of emotional clarity ($r = -0.542$, $p < .001$).

Discussion and conclusions: In our study, traumatic experiences in childhood were associated with emotional regulation difficulties in adults, which is corroborated by other studies [2]. Additionally, we found that individuals who were victimised in childhood tend to have a perception of lower self-esteem in adult life. The relationship between child abuse and self-esteem and also between child abuse and the emotional regulation difficulties proves the need to develop psychological intervention aiming to enhance the positive self-esteem and the adaptative emotional skills in adulthood. This research highlights the importance of developing intervention programs in victimised children, to reduce the impact of victimisation on self-esteem and emotional regulation.

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Elder abuse: the hidden face of domestic violence

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