

### Self-reporting discrepancies of bullying victimization and perpetration measures

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**Purpose:** To evaluate the relationship between grade in school and the prevalence of bullying victimization and perpetration. **Methods:** Longitudinal survey data were obtained from 4,297 children at three waves (5th, 7th, and 10th grade) in three United States cities. Bullying victimization and perpetration were measured two ways: 1) single-item recall measure; and 2) multi-item measure with specific indicators of behaviors indicative of bullying. Regression models were used to evaluate the relationship between grade in school and the likelihood of bullying victimization and perpetration, stratified by measurement type. **Results:** In 5th grade, 4% of children identified as a victim using the single-item and not the multiple-item measure, 27% reported being a victim using the multiple-item and not the single-item measure, and 17% of children identified as being victim using both measures. Three percent of children identified as a perpetrator using only the single-item, 18% reported being a perpetrator using only the multiple-item, and 4% of children identified as being a perpetrator using both measures. The odds of victimization significantly decreased in 7th and 10th grade compared to 5th grade, regardless of measurement type. The odds of perpetration significantly decreased among children in 10th grade compared to 5th grade using the single-item; however, the odds of perpetration significantly increased over time using the multiple-item measure. **Conclusions:** Bullying prevalence rates are highly sensitive to the structure of questions. Future research should identify whether prevalence variability is attributed to a lack of awareness of types of bullying and/or cognitive variability in answering survey questions.

Diversity and culture Epidemiology

