

LEARNING HOW TO BULLY? ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN PARENTAL PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE AND BULLYING BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL IN ADOLESCENTS

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Introduction: Parenting behaviors and discipline play a critical role in children's socialization and self regulation skills.

Objectives: To investigate whether parental practices, especially punitive discipline, are associated with adolescents' bullying behavior at school.

Methods: This is a community based sample with 247 adolescents from five public schools, between 10 and 15 years of age. Bullying was measured by a self-administered instrument Brazilian modified version of the Olweus Bully Victim Questionnaire. The Dimensions of Discipline Inventory Parental - Child Report measured parental practices. Parental practices were analyzed using two main subtypes: power assertive/punitive (psychological aggression, corporal punishment, deprivation of privileges, and penalty tasks) and inductive (explaining, rewarding and monitoring). Associations between parental practices and bullying were controlled for potential confounders such as age, sex, and whether the parental figure was biological in a logistic regression analysis.

Results: Power assertive/punitive practices by either mother or father were significantly associated with bullying behavior by their children. Mothers who most used power assertion and punishment as discipline were 4.36 (CI_{95%}: 1.87-10.16; $p < .001$) times more likely of having a child who bullies others at school. Inductive discipline was not overall associated with bullying ($p > .05$). Examining each specific parental method within power assertive/punitive discipline scale, mild forms of corporal punishment, such spanking, and psychological aggression either by mother or father, had the more consistent associations.

Conclusion: The results underscore the potential and promising importance of advising parents about appropriate discipline strategies in order to prevent bullying perpetration at school.