Author's response to reviews

Title: Is all bullying the same? Evidence from Canada

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors-in-Chief,

I am writing on behalf of my co-authors, Lars Osberg and Shelley Phipps, and myself to resubmit our manuscript entitled “Is all bullying the same? Evidence from Canada” for your consideration of publication in the Archives of Public Health.

We are grateful for the opportunity to improve our paper in the revision and for the constructive comments provided by the reviewer, Professor Michal Molcho. Below we have provided a point-by-point response to the concerns raised by Professor Michal Molcho. Enclosed please also find our revised manuscript.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lihui Zhang

Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy
University of Regina
Reviewer's report

Title: Is all bullying the same? Evidence from Canada

Version: 1

Date: 19 December 2013

Reviewer: Michal Molcho

Reviewer's report:

1. The background is well written and covers most of the relevant literature in Canada and beyond. The research question is relevant and well defined. Identifying characteristics and determinants of different types of bullying could add to existing knowledge. To date, only minor attempts to investigate this were undertaken, mainly by Craig and colleagues. This work has been referred to in this paper. However, the definition of bullying in the paper that is attributed to UNICEF is not UNICEF's definition even if it was used in the UNICEF report card. The origin of this definition is found in the work of Dan Olweus and I strongly recommend citing him as the source of the most acceptable definition of bullying currently used in the scientific world. The text cited is used in Olweus items as an introductory text that need to be used as an introduction to the items, to ascertain that all children understand the term bullying appropriately.

Response: The source of the UNICEF definition has now been credited to Dan Olweus. Please see the 2nd paragraph on page 3.

2. Methods: Self report of bullying behaviour is an acceptable method; The NLSCY is a well known and widely acceptable longitudinal survey, and is an appropriate tool for the question under research. Sufficient information about the methods, items and analyses is provided and the data are sound.

3. However I do have one major concern. The items describes collate information on abuse and threats both in school and elsewhere. Most studies to date focused on school bullying, primarily since most incidents of bullying occur in and around school (with, of course, the exception of
cyber bullying). When the questions here, that do not include the introductory text, are also asked about other settings, including home, I fear that they may cover more than bullying. While bullying can occur in the home, incidents of verbal and physical abuse, as well as threats, coming from the carer (parent, for example), fall under child abuse rather than bullying. Child abuse has different, and more severe, consequences, and puts the victim of abuse at a heightened risk bullying victimisation. Yet, as phenomena, these are two different ones and should not be considered together. I would argue that the exposure to threats/abuse 'elsewhere', because it may measure more than one thing, should be removed from the paper.

**Response:** We concur with Professor Molcho’s concern here, thus have removed the results on victimization elsewhere (including at home) from the paper. Please see Endnote 2 on pages 13-14.

4. I am also concerned about the proxy used for cyber bullying. Indeed, exposure to computer increased the risk for exposure to harmful sites and to bullying but they cannot serve as a valid measurement.

**Response:** We did not intend to use time spent by the child on computers as a proxy for cyber-bullying. Rather, we include time spent by the child on computers as an explanatory variable for being bullied. Our writing might have been imprecise, which has led to confusion. The sentence has now been reworded to be more precise. Please see the 2nd paragraph on page 7.

5. The results are well written and clear although some elements that more mentioned in the methods section are missing. For example, the authors state that the aim to look at time trends in bullying but was not reported. The authors need to make sure that all they have 'committed' to in the methods section, paper in the results.

**Response:** As we state in the 2nd paragraph on page 4, “The NLSCY, which started in 1994 and ended in 2008, is a longitudinal survey of factors that influence Canadian children’s social, emotional and behavioural development.” Though the NLSCY provides the potential for the
examination of time trends, this is not the focus of this paper. Thus, we do not pursue this in the ensuing empirical analysis. This point has been clarified in the newly added Endnote 1 on page 13.

6. For me Tables 4 and 5 are hard to follow. I suggest reformatting them.

Response: Tables 3 and 5 in the previous draft have been deleted because they were about victimization elsewhere (including at home). Table 4 in the previous draft is now Table 3 in the revised paper. It has been re-formatted for ease of reading.

7. The discussion in and conclusion are well balanced and supported but unfortunately there is too little on the research questions. Yes, the types of bullying are different, but a stronger statement on the determinants and implications is required.

Response: We have expanded the discussions and conclusions to tie back to our research question and to provide more on the determinants and implications.