Reviewer's report

Title: Is all bullying the same? Evidence from Canada

Version: 1 Date: 19 December 2013

Reviewer: Michal Molcho

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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.

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 my 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 an heighten 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests