

Pouring with Gasoline and Fire

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ABSTRACT

The most horrific form of child abuse occurred this summer in Dnipro, Ukraine. The media reported that several hooligans of an eight-year-old boy were pouring with gasoline and then set him on fire. Instead of helping him, the hooligans laughed and then fled. Fortunately, the hooligans were quickly identified and brought to police.

Keywords: Boy, Hooligans, Fire, Damage.

INTRODUCTION

Every year, many parents pass on a simple, sound instruction to their child: 'If you are nice to people, they will be nice to you [1].' But some children get the wrong idea. They don't know how to be nice effectively—they are nice but vulnerable, or they seem polite but are more concerned with how they feel or appear than with showing genuine care for others. Naturally, other children may sense this lack of interest, and bully them in retaliation.

Children respect children who are friendly and real, who say what they think and feel, who stand up for themselves. But even if a child is friendly and real, some others may still bully him or her. The result is that many children will arrive at school each day feeling cared, frustrated and powerless. And sadly, the impact of bullying boomerangs back on the bully, who also suffers.

Bullying in school has always existed, and many regard it as a 'part of life'. But our community has received a wake-up call in the form of the number of suicides, violent attacks and murders that bullying creates. Bullying is a symptom of a dysfunctional social system.

The definition of bullying has been debated in the research literature, and many view bullying as a subset of aggressive behavior [2]. However, to differentiate bullying from aggression, the bullying behavior includes an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target, is intentionally harmful, and occurs repetitively.

The imbalance of power means that the perpetrator of bullying is stronger in some way (e.g., more popular, physically bigger, smarter, high social status) than the target. In addition to aggressive behavior, bullying includes other forms of aggression that cannot be readily observed. For example, bullying may include one person making threats to another without actually being physically aggressive. Bullying can also be perpetrated via computer or cell phone (i.e., cyberbullying) and may include relational and social aggression. Thus, the use of either observable or nonobservable aggressive behavior, the imbalance of power, and the repetitive nature of bullying differentiates bullying behaviors from other forms of aggression. According to the dictionary of the American Psychological Association, bullying is "persistent threatening and aggressive behavior directed toward other people, especially those who are smaller or weaker".

CAUSES

There are many different causes of bullying [1]. History and psychology have proved the power of the group to alienate and abuse those who are vulnerable or different. Bullying occurs within a context of intertwining systems. Basically these include the state system, which reflects local laws and culture, the school system and the family system. The result is that people learn how to remain aggressive or become powerless and passive.

Children are competitive. They copy adult role models to be the best and get the best. They

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exclude and devalue to maintain their power in the tribe. Bullying has long been regarded as part of growing up. In fact, 'bully for you' is a form of support for an act of bravado. Bullying is evident in the animal kingdom, in parliament and in sport, and is known as 'survival of the fittest'. It reflects the adversarial masculine approach of the hunter and the hunted, not the collaborative, feminine approach of the gatherer.

The paradoxical attitude of prizing and protecting bullies while simultaneously condemning them fosters a conspiracy of silence. Bullying becomes secret, invisible and condoned by society.

It appears that most humans are social animals who survive in their tribe when they subscribe to group norms. If they are in a tolerant tribe, they behave with respect and empathy. But if they are forced to survive in a hostile environment, they collude with the leaders, sacrifice the moral values and sabotage their peers. Most kids are affected by where they are, not who they are.

DAMAGE

The body responds to extreme stress by 'releasing a cascade of cortisol, adrenaline and other hormones that can damage brain cells, impair memory and set in motion a long-lasting and worsening dysregulation of the body's complex biochemistry' [1]. Many targets pollute their bodies with surplus stress hormones when they deny their anger, fear and sadness. This is reflected in their behaviours. They develop defence mechanisms and psychological symptoms to cope, such as panic attacks, butterflies in their stomach, perspiration, blushing, obsessive thoughts and behaviours. These symptoms can lead to severe anxiety disorders and other psychological or pathological damage. The following problems are often seen in bullying targets:

- School refusal and school phobia
- Shyness and social phobia
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Learned helplessness
- Depression, suicidal tendencies, suicide and murder

SCHOOLS

Every child has the right to feel safe at school [1]. Thus, although schools should become bully-free zones, this is totally unrealistic. Firstly, the lack of knowledge, skills and

resources to plan, implement and monitor bully-free programmes means that few professionals can bullyproof a school and reduce all forms of bullying, especially the subtle types.

Secondly, schools are excellent environments for children to develop the basic life skills of emotional and social resilience. Once a child leaves school for the day or for good, bullies can still be countered. There is research into workplace bullying indicates that more than 15 percent of employees are seriously bullied at work, and many suffer devastating injuries. So bully-blocking skills can be very useful later on.

Thirdly, many schools are riddled with different types of bullying, from teacher to student, parent to teacher, student to teacher, teacher to teacher and so on. When parents complain, the school lawyers usually deny and bully back. In an Australian study, about 50 percent of teachers were bullied – usually by colleagues, but also by parents and students. It is futile to reduce school bullying for students while exposing them to other bullying role models. This will sabotage anti-bullying programmes.

Schools need to view bullying as an abuse of the human rights of the target, bully, onlookers, parents and teachers. They have a responsibility to handle all forms of violence as it is dealt with in their community. Ideally, schools need to regard bullying as a symptom of dysfunction, a relationship breakdown that requires respectful resolution (i.e. a win-win situation). Unfortunately, many schools reflect the broader society in adopting an adversarial approach whereby someone wins and someone loses.

Although human rights and ethical values could guide schools in establishing anti-bullying policies, in reality many schools are influenced by risk management issues, legal perspectives, police action or the media attention attached to suicides, murders and successful legal outcomes. These factors have, however, led to the establishment of state and national anti-bullying legislation or legal guidelines.

Anti-bullying programmes generally contain some common elements [3]. They recognise the need for the school community and especially the teaching staff to be aware of the prevalence and seriousness of the problem of bullying in schools. To this end, time is spent discussing these matters with teachers and in some cases with parents and students.

It is widely accepted that countering bullying requires a 'whole school approach' in which the

elements and initiatives in a programme are carefully co-ordinated. Co-ordinated action, it is often said, is needed at different levels: namely, the school, the classroom, and the individual student. How this is to be done is typically incorporated in a school anti-bullying policy that describes the stand that is being taken against bullying and the procedures and actions that are to be taken in its implementation. This is sometimes described as the indispensable core feature of an antibullying policy. The policy may also provide guidelines on how bullying behaviour is to be discouraged and how victims of school bullying can be helped.

The area in which there is most variation between programmes is that of working with students who have been identified as bullies. The most commonly used procedure employs rules against bullying and consequences for breaking them. These may take the form of non-physical penalties or sanctions, such as the withdrawal of privileges or, in extreme cases, suspension from school. Parents of the bullies may be asked to come to the school to discuss how the bully's behaviour can be changed. This approach has been incorporated into anti-bullying programmes adopted in a number of European countries and in North America. In some programmes responsibility for investigating charges of bullying and recommending sanctions has been delegated to students who function as members of so-called bully courts. Such punitive measures are seen by some as not only likely to discourage bullying behaviour but also to 'send a message' to deter others who might otherwise engage in bullying. However, it is often difficult to devise and apply clear rules relating to some forms of bullying such as excluding individuals from groups and rumour spreading. A miscarriage of justice resulting in resentment on the part of the bully may lead to a redoubling of efforts to continue the bullying in less detectable but equally damaging ways.

In cases of extreme bullying, community conferences are sometimes held. Victims are encouraged to express their grievances in the presence of those who had bullied them, and also with the relatives, friends, or supporters of those involved in the bullying incidents in attendance. Here the aim is to evoke in the perpetrator(s) a sense of shame about what they had done; but to do so in circumstances in which they feel accepted as persons by their supporters and can be effectively reintegrated into a caring community.

School-wide antibullying interventions developed in Scandinavian countries aim to change the pro-bully culture of schools [4]. Youth are taught how they contribute to the problem of bullying as bystanders. This can be accomplished by discussing stories about bullying (or also about discrimination, persecution, or genocide). Films that help youth take the perspective of the victim and highlight the role of bystanders are used to initiate discussion. These empathy-inducing and consciousness-raising exercises are then complemented with explicit instruction of behavioral strategies that help youth not only to defend themselves but also to stand up for others. Program evaluations show about 50% decrease in the number of students reporting being bullied or bullying others. Also, overall increase in satisfaction with school climate suggests that the social dynamics of the collective are changed. Although not assessed in program evaluations, we predict that students would also report decreased compliance pressures as bullying incidents decline.

BURN INJURY

The tissues of the body, including the skin, can sustain burn injuries by several mechanisms [5]. The most common types of burns are related to thermal damage, which occurs when a tissue's cooling ability fails to compensate for externally applied heat. The extent of damage depends on the applied temperature, the ability of the tissue to conduct away excess heat, and the time for which the heat is applied. With these concepts in mind, it should be evident that thermal burns can occur very quickly when contact is made with very hot objects/substances. Conversely, objects/substances that are hot, but not extremely hot, can still cause thermal burns so long as contact with the object is long enough to overcome the tissue's ability to cool itself. Another important concept is that skin surfaces of different body regions, and skin from individuals of different ages, can vary greatly in their ability to withstand thermal insult.

The skin is the largest organ, consisting of different layers [6]. Loss of skin integrity and skin functions due to injury or illness may acutely result in a substantial physiologic imbalance with long-term morbidity or even death. The most common cause of severe skin loss is thermal injury. Over the past decades, extraordinary advances have been made in the understanding of cellular and molecular processes of wound healing. This knowledge

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has led to wound care innovations and new developments in burn care, having even improved survival of severe burn injuries. The trend in current treatment regimens is beyond the preservation of life; the ultimate goal is to turn burn victims back into society, as full participants into their families and communities.

One of the milestones resulting in improved outcome was a more aggressive surgical approach to burn injuries; early wound debridement and early wound coverage has led to higher survival rates but also to a higher number of patients requiring postburn reconstruction.

In the past, pediatric burn injuries were devastating and often fatal [7]. With improved burn resuscitation techniques in children, multidisciplinary approach to burn management and early excision and grafting, survival has become the norm. Now, with better survival, burn reconstruction has taken on a major role in the management of these patients. The basic concerns in pediatric burn reconstruction are function, comfort, and appearance. Normal and hypertrophic scarring, scar contractures, loss of anatomic structures, loss of function, and changes in color and texture of injured skin are common concerns among all burn patients and yet unique to each. To understand burn reconstruction, one must have a good understanding of wound healing and scar maturation in order to plan for adequate timing and reconstructive technique. The reconstructive ladder principle of starting simple when possible and progressing to more complex techniques is the basis for pediatric burn reconstruction.

In all instances, the burn injury is assessed for the deficiency of tissue and distortion of anatomy. Traditionally, if there is no deficiency and local tissues are easily mobilized, excision and direct closure or Z-plasties can be performed. However, if there is deficiency in tissue, the need for skin replacement becomes critical.

With advances in burn reconstruction, tissue expanders have become a great option not only for improved cosmetic results, but also for decrease in donor site morbidity. Tissue expanders are useful, particularly in the head and neck, especially in correction of burn-associated alopecia. This, however, involves multiple visits for expansion and a final surgery, weeks to months later for the reconstructive phase. Tissue expanders also have a high incidence of complications, including infection,

tissue ischemia, and even extrusion of the expander, requiring removal and restarting the reconstructive process.

VICTIMIZATION

Bullying is a form of aggression in which one or more children repeatedly and intentionally intimidate, harass, or physically harm a victim. Bullying includes making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone verbally or physically or excluding someone from a group on purpose [8]. With the increasing use of socialmedia, more bullying is occurring in this setting, and schools are increasingly taking to monitoring social media forums. Victims of bullying report more sleep disturbances, headaches, and feeling sadder than other children. Recent studies indicate that youth who have been bullied and youth who have bullied others are at increased risk of suicidal ideation and attempts. PCPs can serve as helpful advocates in situations where a child is being bullied. They can assist parents in recognizing and reporting bullying. They can advocate that the school intervene and monitor the students involved. PCPs will also need to follow-up with kids who've suffered from bullying to see if the situation has improved and the student is recovering and feels supported.

Social learning theorists have argued that a person learns bullying behaviours through exposure to and experience of bullying victimization [9]. Violent homes, in particular, have been regarded as one of the highest risk factors for the development of aggressive and antisocial behaviour. So children exposed to domestic violence are at higher risk to developing short- and long-term negative consequences (such as using aggression to solve problems). Studies on bullying show the way the child's interaction with their family, and their perceptions of such interactions, strongly affect later bullying behaviour. Exposure to parental violence and child abuse, for example, has been found to be a 'strong predictor' of bullying behaviour. Likewise, authoritarian parenting styles, involving maladaptive behaviours such as corporal punishment and hostile and rejecting parenting, have not only been found to strongly influence bullying behaviour but also contributes to the development of the child's poor self-image and emotional dysregulation.

Criminological inquiry regarding juveniles has primarily focused its attention on the misbehavior of young people and societal

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response to such conduct [10]. Although there is ample reason to believe that young people are the most vulnerable and victimized populations of any society, especially from a global perspective, little criminological attention has been directed to explaining the victimization of children and juveniles. In part this is understandable given that it is the criminality of individuals that has traditionally been the primary concern of the discipline.

Yet, virtually any form of child victimization constitutes criminal behavior and is typically so designated by international and national law. Acts that victimize young people are as legitimate subjects for criminological inquiry as any other form of criminality. The same kinds of efforts to prevent and control victimizing acts against the young are essentially those we might use to prevent and control any criminal activity. In this regard, we do actually know as much about the causes and control of child-victimizing activity as we do about crime and delinquency.

The victimization of children has a unique quality about it. Their vulnerability and dependence makes their victimizations more condemnable, especially when the acts are committed by the very people upon whom the young are dependent. However, criminology has not included youthful victimization as a separate realm of scientific inquiry. Indeed, investigations of its global nature have largely fallen outside the realm of the discipline.

Probably no other crimes are more emotionally laden than those involving children as victims [11]. Police officers and investigators often speak of the intense emotion associated with viewing innocent children as victims of crime. Unfortunately, incidents of crime against children have increased dramatically during the past decade. Today, their prevalence seems to have reached epidemic proportions. It takes little effort to find reports of child abuse and assault in newspapers, on television, and from other media sources. As a result, increasing numbers of police departments have investigators who are assigned exclusively to the investigation of crimes against children.

Crimes perpetrated against children occur in many forms and contexts. Children may experience abuse, for example, that results in burn injuries; yet deliberate burning often goes unrecognized. It is especially important in such cases that investigators establish good rapport with hospital workers and, particularly,

emergency medical technicians, who probably are the first persons to see the child's injuries.

FORENSICS

Fatal and nonfatal exposure to heat and cold (thermal injury) is seen in the form of accidental injury as burns and scalds, as well as in the case of deliberate exposure with homicidal intent or for the purposes of concealing a homicide, e.g., homicidal arson vs. arson to conceal homicide [12]. Approximately 10–20 % of all abused children demonstrate heat-induced thermal injuries. Cold injuries, on the other hand, are rarely the result of a criminal act. In forensic medical practice, hypothermic fatalities raise the question of how the deceased came to be in a situation in which fatal hypothermia could occur. Most forms of thermal injury produce clearly differentiated findings.

Fires involving naked flames tend to damage primarily unclothed areas of the body (head, hands, and legs). Flames traveling upwards will singe the hair, turning the ends yellowish gray and crinkly. Hot fluids, on the other hand, are absorbed by clothing, causing more severe injury to the skin in those areas where clothing is more fitted (upper body and belt area). Singed hair has never been seen in cases of scalding.

Unfortunately, scalding by hot liquids is a common childhood injury [13]. Not only the temperature of the fluid counts toward the severity, but the clothing worn, too. Scalding with close-clinging clothing cause more serious morphological changes, because the effect of the fluid is prolonged by being held in the cloth. The damage can be classified as previously into first, second and third degree burns, but fourth degree burns are never seen. The area affected is irregular, being scattered about the skin surface, and not uncommonly a child who has sat in hot water will show a "trousers-like" form to the damaged area of skin from below the waist.

Varying degrees of violence against children and adolescents is an age-old phenomenon in many countries and cultures [12]. The boundary between acceptable violence in the context of so-called necessary educational measures by parents or as part of accepted tradition, such as genital mutilation, and unacceptable violence leading to death or severe injury is not always clear. The association between chronic suffering in adults as a result of abuse suffered in childhood and adolescence is well known. A definition of child abuse could be formulated as follows:

Child abuse is non - random physical and / or mental damage inflicted on a child, either wilfully or through neglect, within the family or institutions, which causes injury and/or impaired development and which, in individual cases, may cause death.

Although the term “battered child” is often used to describe physical child abuse, the recent literature refers to non-accidental injury (NAI) and abusive or inflicted injury. The spectrum of violence against children covers blunt force (blows), thermal injury (burns, scalds), particular forms such as shaken baby syndrome, as well as the effects of psychological violence and neglect. The forensic clinical examination of children and adolescents (including the preservation of evidence) is subject to the same requirements as those for the examination of adults. Although police criminal statistics in numerous countries show several thousand cases of child abuse every year, the number of unknown cases is estimated to be far higher.

It should be determined whether the suspect had a cause of action [14]. By occasion we mean the condition that immediately precedes the consequence, which creates the reciprocal effect of a larger range of conditions, and which immediately precedes the action, apparently manifesting itself as its actual cause. Furthermore, was the suspect's character highly inclined to commit such acts, or was the motive so strong that it broke the suspect's resistance? In fact, the question is, how did the motivation affect the suspect? Also important information is how much time has passed between the cause, the instigation of the act and the perpetration of the act.

The nature of the perpetrator is accessory to all other criteria in determining the intent to kill. In doing so, no abstract rules can be created because human nature is so created that it is often unpredictable. On the basis of the most banal reasons, conflicts arise in the overall constellation of interpersonal relationships that could least be expected.

CONCLUSION

The unhappy boy has burns on 35% of his body, and doctors and nurses are doing everything he can to recover as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the psychological consequences will not go away.

This assault on an unhappy boy cannot be treated differently than as an attempted murder. The perpetrators, although several years older

than the victim, due to the weight of this crime, deserved to be severely punished. The final decision on this will be made by the competent prosecutor from the Dnieper.

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