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Perpetration of violence against peers and teachers: An ecological perspective.

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School violence has been a major concern for students, parent, school staff and the general public. Previous studies examined what factors contribute to students' use of violence. Many of these past studies have focused on one level of analysis—either determining who the more violent students are or which are the violent schools. Drawing on a nationally representative sample of 16,860 students in grades 7-11 in 327 schools across Israel, an ecological perspective was used to predict school violence from a number of variables describing the students, their families and the schools. Self-administered anonymous questionnaires that included a scale for reporting violence against students, and violence against teachers were filled out during class. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) examined the relationships between students' reports of violence and bullying and student level characteristics (gender, age, and perception of school climate) and the school level variables – cultural affiliation (Jewish vs. Arab), the socio-economic status (SES) of students' families, school and class size, school level (junior high vs. high) and school climate (policy, intervention, teachers support, and student participation).

There is a high overall prevalence of violence: more than 50% of students reported that they used at least one form of violence against another student during the last month, and 21.7% reported on using violence against teachers.

Schools with clear and fair rules against violence have lower levels of violence. Furthermore, schools with poorer students' families showed higher levels of violence. The discussion highlights the importance of improving school climate and the need to allocate more resources to schools in low SES contexts in order to protect students from school violence.

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