

Differences between bullies and victims, and men and women, on aggression-related variables among prisoners

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This study assessed how behavior indicative of bullying in prison settings is related to a variety of measures associated with aggression. Adult offenders (728 men and 525 women) from 11 prisons in the UK completed a 99-item check-list measuring behavior indicative of 'bullying others' and of 'being bullied', as well as a range of other behaviors. They also completed a 43-item Response to Victimization Scale (RVS), asking about their responses to a scenario involving bullying, and measures of impulsiveness, and attributions about their aggression. Those classed as bullies showed, in response to the scenario, higher scores than non-bullies on direct verbal and physical aggression, indirect aggression, verbal and physical displaced aggression, and revenge plans and fantasies; and lower values for fear/avoidance; they also showed higher impulsiveness and instrumental and expressive attributions. Those classed as victims showed higher scores than non-victims for fear/avoidance, and for displaced physical aggression and impulsiveness. These findings all represent main effects of bullying or victimization, with no interactions, and they are discussed in relation to hypotheses derived from a previous four-category classification of those involved in bullying. Sex differences across the measures indicated large differences in the female direction for fear/avoidance, and in the male direction for direct physical aggression. There were smaller differences in the male direction for revenge, indirect aggression, and direct verbal aggression.

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