

# Peer Aggression in Middle Childhood and Child and Maternal Well-Being in Adolescence

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## Background

- Peer aggression is a public health issue
- Negative consequences for child's developmental outcomes (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996)
- Development in research in the past two decades
- Use of longitudinal data (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001)

## This Study

- Life Course Perspective (Elder, 1994)**
- What are longitudinal patterns of peer aggression involvement from third to sixth grades?
- How do *duration* and *timing* matter in the association between peer aggression and child outcomes?
- Linked Lives*: Is children's peer aggression involvement related to maternal well-being?

## Data and Measures

- The NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD) (1991 - 2008)**
- Cohort of children born in 10 cities in 1991
- Grades 3, 5, & 6, and Age 15 interviews (N= 901)
- Peer Aggression: Self report in Grades 3, 5, & 6**
- Victims**: "Sometimes" or greater in any of the following 4 items: Does anyone (a) pick on you, (b) say mean things to you, (c) say bad things about you, (d) hit you at school?
- Bullies**: "Sometimes" or greater in any of the following 4 items: Do you (a) pick on, (b) say mean things, (c) say bad things about, or (d) hit other kids in your class at school?
- Bully-victims**: Victims and bullies
- No involvement**: Neither victims nor bullies
- Child and Maternal Well-Being at Age 15 (1<sup>st</sup> Grade)**
- Externalizing and internalizing problems (YSR)
- Math test percentile (WJ-R)
- Mother-child relationship conflict (ACRS)
- Maternal depression (CES-D)

## Descriptive Results

Figure 1. % Peer Aggression Involvement: Third, Fifth, and Sixth Grades (N= 901)

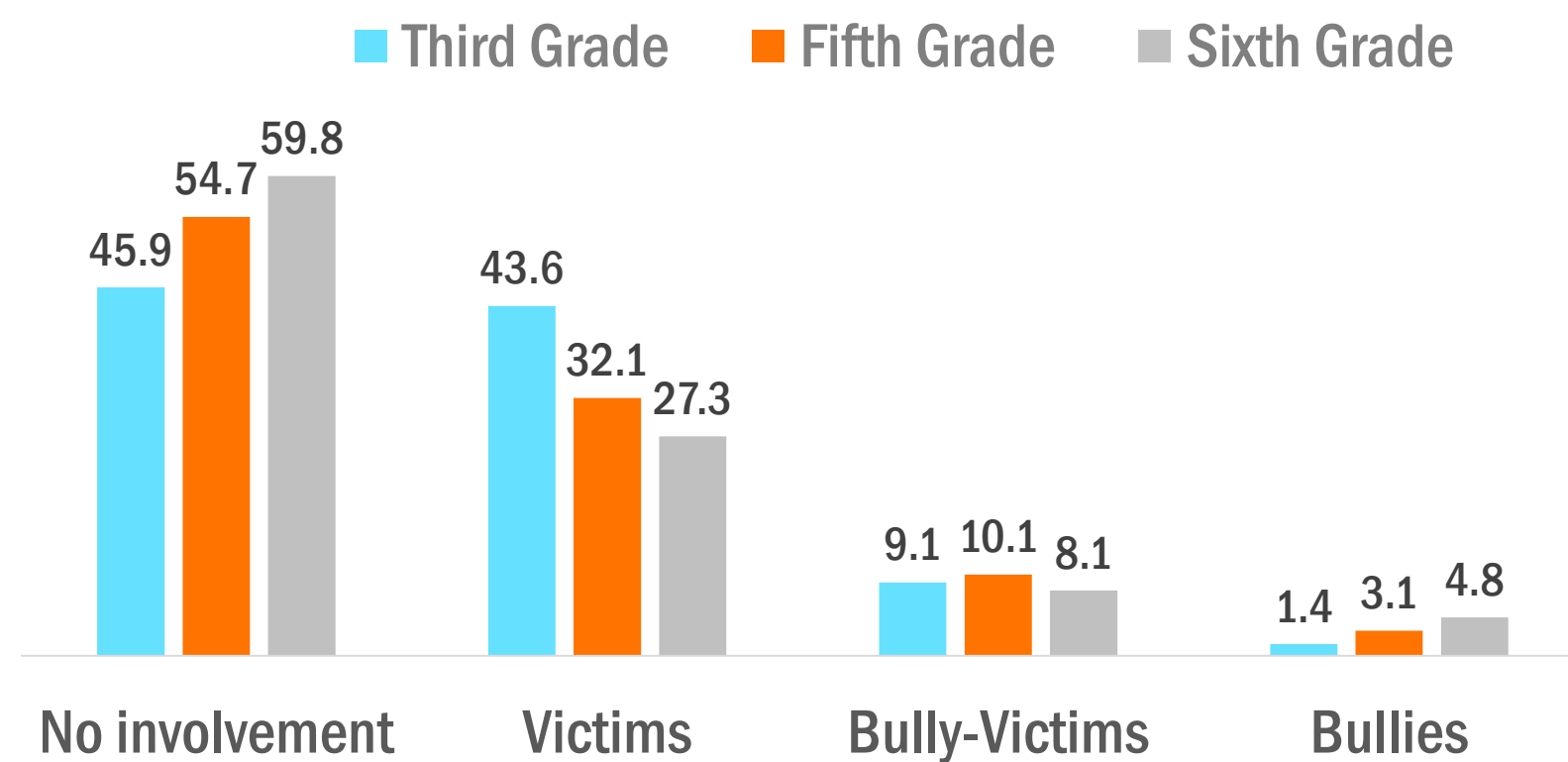
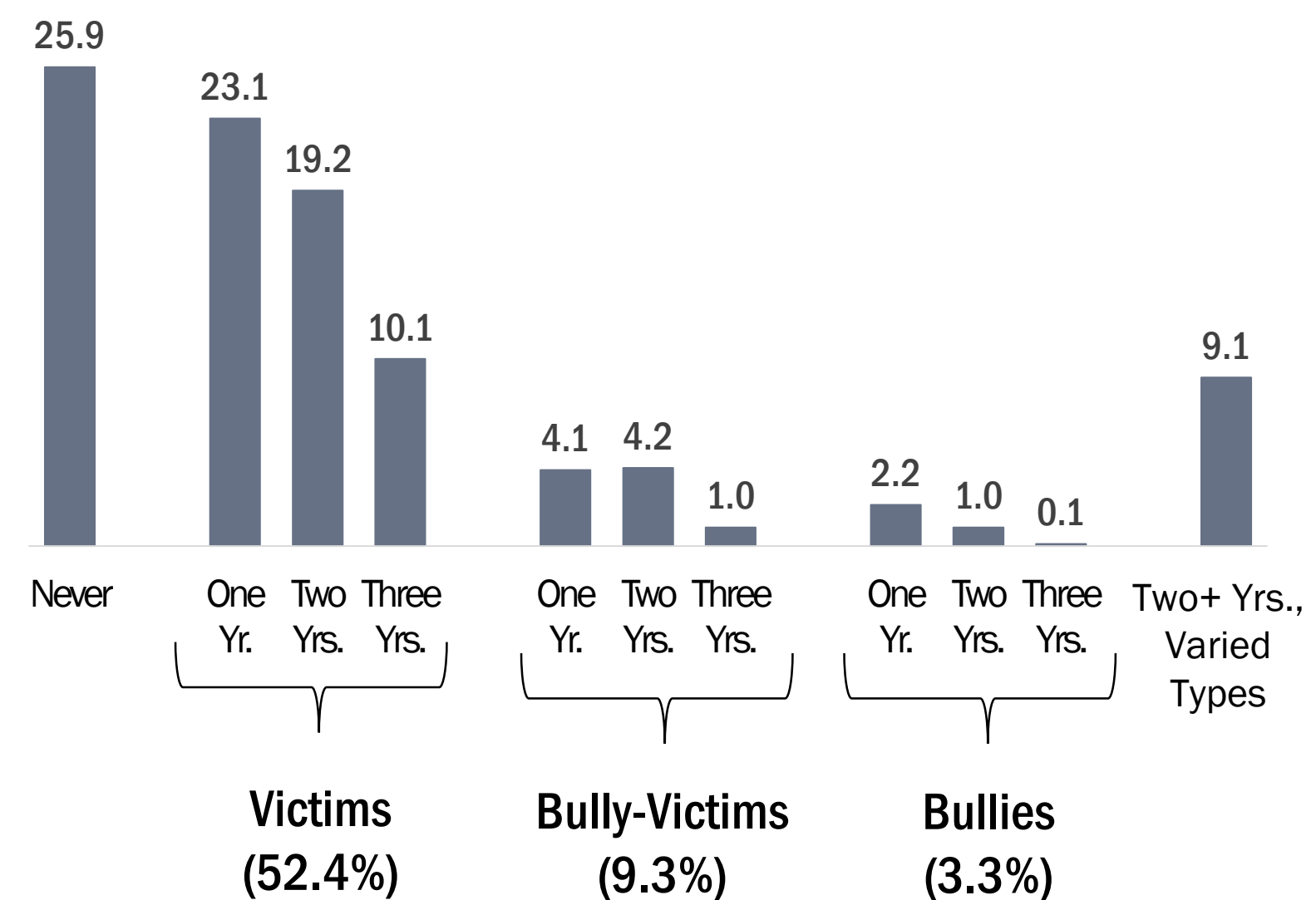


Figure 2. % Peer Aggression Involvement Across Third, Fifth, and Sixth Grades (N= 901)



## Descriptive Statistics

Child's and mother's well-being at age 15		Background characteristics	
	M (std.)	M	M (std.)
Externalizing problems	49.24 ( 9.82)	Mother's race/ethnicity	Mother's marital status, G1
Internalizing problems	47.24 (10.18)	White	Married
Math test percentile	54.48 (26.66)	Black	Cohabiting
Mother-child conflict	2.50 ( 0.92)	Hispanic or other race	Single
Maternal depression	10.31 ( 9.69)	Mother's education at birth	Mother's age at birth
Peer aggression during grades 3, 5, & 6		< High school	28.75 ( 5.51)
# of waves victims	1.03 ( 0.98)	High school	Mother's work hours, G1
# of waves bully-victims	0.27 ( 0.59)	Some college	28.85 (18.95)
# of waves bullies	0.09 ( 0.33)	College degree	Family income, G1
# of waves non-involvement	1.60 ( 1.08)	Advanced degree	67.59 (52.14)
			Number of children, G1
			2.38 ( 0.92)
			Girls
			0.50
			First child
			0.45

## Multivariate Results

	Externalizing Problems			Internalizing Problems			Math			Mother-Child Conflict			Maternal Depression		
	#	# & Type	Timing	#	# & Type	Timing	#	# & Type	Timing	#	# & Type	Timing	#	# & Type	Timing
# of waves victims	+			+			-			+					
# of waves bully-victims	+			+											
# of waves bullies	+														
One victim only <sup>a</sup>															
One bully-victim only <sup>a</sup>															
One bully only <sup>a</sup>		+													
Two victims <sup>a</sup>		+			+										
Two+ bullies or bully-victims <sup>a</sup>		+			+										
Two+ varying		+					-								
Three victims <sup>a</sup>		+			+		-			+					
Third grade <sup>a</sup>															
Victims															
Bully-victims															
Bullies															
Fifth grade <sup>a</sup>															
Victims															
Bully-victims										+					
Bullies										+					
Sixth grade <sup>a</sup>															
Victims										+					
Bully-victims										+					
Bullies										+					+

OLS regression models, controlled for mother's age, race/ethnicity, and education at birth, mother's marital status, # of children, paid work hours, family income at first grade, child's gender, birth order, and DV at first grade.

<sup>a</sup> Reference group was never involved.

## Summary of Findings

### Overall patterns

- 3/4<sup>ths</sup> of children were involved in peer aggression during the third, fifth, & sixth grades (Fig. 2)
- Most children did not switch their roles: either stayed in the same role or not involved (9.1% changed roles, Fig. 2)

### Victims

- Most common in third grade (43.6%, Fig. 1); rarely persisted (10.1%, Fig. 2)
- The # of waves and later occurrence were related to:
  - More externalizing and internalizing problems
  - More mother-child relationship conflict
- The # of waves and earlier occurrence were related to lower math scores
- Sixth grade occurrence only was related to more maternal depression

### Bully-Victims

- Small % and rarely persisted
- The # of waves and later occurrence were related to more externalizing and internalizing problems

### Bullies

- Very small % and rarely persisted
- Just one wave of involvement was related to more externalizing problems

## Conclusions

- Children's peer aggression experiences have implications for mother-child relationship and maternal well-being as well as child well-being
- It is important to examine duration and timing to better understand consequences of children's peer aggression