

THE ASSESSMENT OF THE SPREAD OF AND THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST 11-18-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

Project implementation period: 2012

Aim of the study: to assess the spread of and the factors influencing the violence against 11-18-year-old children in Lithuania.

Tasks: to determine the spread of violence against 11-18-year-old children, the psychosocial reasons of violence and to assess the links between the violence prevention programmes conducted at schools and the spread of violence against children.

Methodology.

An anonymous questionnaire was prepared for the study. It was prepared by using the youth attitude, violent behaviour, and inclination towards violence assessment tool guide, international Healthy Lifestyle Research protocol, and additionally selected questions from the questionnaires for the spread of violence in schools and pupil studies. 39 closed questions are provided in the questionnaire. The target population of the study are 11-18-year-old pupils, who study at general type classes at secondary schools. The questionnaire is prepared in Lithuanian, so the pupils studying in Lithuanian were selected as the target population.

Results.

2167 questionnaires were received. It was determined that 20.5% of the respondents suffered physical violence, 27.2% - psychological violence. The main abuser group were peers, 16.4% caused physical violence, 21.2% caused psychological violence. 3.0% and 7.8% of the respondents - parents, teachers, and other adults - suffered physical and psychological violence respectively. Boys suffered more physical violence than girls.

The spread of psychological violence (80.2%) is wider than physical violence (60.3%), irrespective of age. The following psychosocial violence factor groups were determined: individual risk factors (negative attitude towards studying, positive attitude towards the use of violence, low self-assessment, bad habits), family risk factors (bad relations with parents, poor financial situation of the family, life in families where one of the parents is not biological), social risk factors (communication with delinquent friends, bad relations with pupils and teachers), and community risk factors (low feeling of security at schools and in other environments).

In assessing the efficiency of violence prevention activities/programmes in place, their positive effect on the reduction of violence was not determined. The yearly event "Week without Bullying" raises awareness and the ability to recognise psychological violence. It is recommended to introduce evidence-based complex violence and bad habit prevention programmes according to the peculiarities of age spans. Special attention is to be paid to observing and assessing the efficiency of permanent preventive programmes. Skill development programmes, oriented towards families living in poverty and having bad habits are to be implemented. Parents are to be involved in school/child life, and programmes promoting healthy and safe environment for children are to be implemented. More efficient work is to be carried out with victims of violence. The establishment and development of non-governmental organisations, public institution and crisis centres across Lithuania is to be encouraged, victims' and third persons' awareness of coercion, seeking help, and reporting of such cases to certain institutions is to be promoted.

The early preventive and educational activity is to be improved and expanded, while education, awareness and other preventive measures forming non-violent culture in the family and inside the society are to be organised.

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