

Camaraderie of sports teams may deter bullying, violence

5 May 2013

As schools around the country look for ways to reduce violence and bullying, they may want to consider encouraging students to participate in team sports, according to a study to be presented Sunday, May 5, at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) annual meeting in Washington, DC.

Researchers analyzed data from the 2011 North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey to see if athletic participation was associated with violence-related behaviors, including fighting, carrying a weapon and being bullied. A [representative sample](#) of 1,820 [high school students](#) in the state completed the survey, which also asked adolescents whether they played any school-sponsored team sports (e.g., football) or individual sports (e.g. track).

Results showed that half of the [students ages](#) 14-18 years reported playing a school-sponsored sport: 25 percent were on a team, 9 percent participated in an individual sport, and 17 percent played both individual and team sports.

Girls who played individual or team sports were less likely to report having been in a physical fight in the past year than girls who didn't participate in sports (14 percent vs. 22 percent). [Female athletes](#) also were less likely carry a weapon in the past 30 days than non-athletes (6 percent vs. 11 percent).

However, there was no difference in reported physical fighting in the past year or weapon carrying in the past 30 days between boys who played sports and those who did not. Approximately 32 percent of boys reported physical fighting, and 36 percent reported carrying weapons in the past 30 days.

"Athletic participation may prevent involvement in violence-related activities among girls but not among boys because aggression and violence generally might be more accepted in boys' high

school sports," said senior author Tamera Coyne-Beasley, MD, MPH, FSAHM, FAAP, professor of pediatrics and [internal medicine](#) at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Coaches, [school administrators](#) and parents should be aware that students who participate in sports might still be at risk for fighting and carrying weapons, added presenting author Robert W. Turner, PhD, research associate and Carolina postdoctoral fellow for faculty diversity at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Survey results also indicated that boys who played team sports were less likely to report being bullied than boys who played individual sports.

"Though we don't know if boys who play [team sports](#) are less likely to be the perpetrators of bullying, we know that they are less likely to be bullied," Dr. Coyne-Beasley noted. "Perhaps creating team-like environments among students such that they may feel part of a group or community could lead to less bullying."

More information: To view the abstract, "2011 North Carolina YRBS: Athletic Participation, Violence, and Bullying" go to www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view...p?nu=PAS13L1_2195.11

Provided by American Academy of Pediatrics

APA citation: Camaraderie of sports teams may deter bullying, violence (2013, May 5) retrieved 2 July 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-05-camaraderie-sports-teams-deter-bullying.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.