

Understanding the characteristics of child victims of violence

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The Home Office is the lead government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, fire, counter-terrorism and police. This summer I undertook an internship with the Crime and Policing Analysis Unit for 8 weeks. During my time here I was involved in a variety of projects including analysis of child sexual abuse and child violence.

Objectives

The aim of the analysis was to understand what factors may increase the likelihood of violence against child victims. Violence against children was, until recently, an under researched area. This is a sensitive topic so the analysis had to be handled with care and sensitivity. The data set used was from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) which contained victim level data on crime incidents. CSEW provides data on crime experienced by adults and children between 10-15 years old. Specifically for this analysis I looked at children and their experiences of violent behaviour. The analysis would then be used in order to influence further research and possible policy changes.

Key Findings

The data suggests that personal characteristics are more significant risk factors than any of the other subgroups (lifestyle and environmental). Variables such as sex, age, ethnicity, gang membership, cannabis use, parental income and ACORN categories were analysed on a descriptive level and statistical significance tests were run to further understand what variables may predict violence on children. The final model revealed that -

- Being cyber bullied is associated with 5.5 times more chance of experiencing violence and was the most significant predictor.
- Being male is associated with 2.3 times greater chance of experiencing violence than females.
- Being aged 10-12 was associated with 2.5 times more chance of experiencing violence than 13-15 year olds.
- Having a disability was associated with 80% more chance of experiencing violence, as was having had an alcoholic drink in the last 12 months.

Conclusion

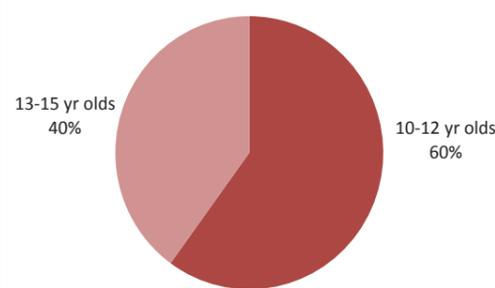
When comparing two models (the one containing all factors and ones containing the only significant predictors), it was found that the simpler model performed better on unseen data and was therefore the preferred model. It can be concluded that being male, aged between 10-12, having a disability, drinking alcohol and being cyber bullied are significant predictors of violence across different samples.

Method

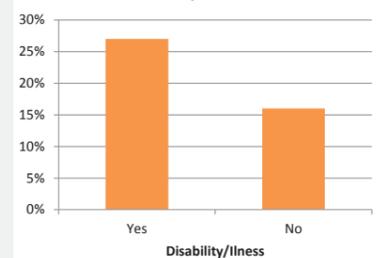
The dataset contained over 900 variables. Variables were chosen based on three categories; lifestyle, environmental and personal factors. This helped to clearly set out the results of different logistic regression models and to identify what type of factors can help predict violence against children. Initial descriptive statistics were carried out before significant testing to distinguish which variables make a significant prediction for experiencing violence. Each category was then placed into a logistic regression model together to assess the factors when controlling for other similar factors. The highly significant factors from these models were then placed into a model together to produce the final model.



Victims of Violence by Age



Percentage of disabled or ill children who reported being a victim of violence compared to those without a disability or illness



Used to be a gang member

	Female	Male
Not a Victim of violence	51.3%	48.7%
Victim of violence	35.5%	64.5%

