



SPR 18th Annual Meeting

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Location: Imperial Ballroom (Grand Hyatt/2nd Floor)

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Category/Theme: Epidemiology

“What Would Make You Fight:” A Measure of Motivation for Aggression

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Citing limitations of existing aggression measures, a working group from the CDC-funded Academic Centers of Excellence in Violence Prevention developed a measure of motives to behave aggressively for use in prevention research. Following review of aggression measures and questions used informally by practitioners, the group developed a pool of items about the circumstances under which a child would behave aggressively. This poster will report on the development and evaluation of the "What Would Make You Fight" measure.

Initial item development produced a pool of 72 items, half tapping motives for aggression against youth of each gender.

This poster reports the results of a pilot study of the measure with data from 426 fifth grade students from 9 schools. The sample was 54.8% male and of mixed ethnicity. Students rated the "What Would Make You Fight" items on a four-point Likert-type scale anchored by "never," "I might," "I probably would," and "Yes, for sure." The items tapped physical, verbal, and relational aggression as both provocation and response. The stems for the three types of aggressive responses were "Would you hit, slap, or shove a girl/boy if...", "Would you yell or say mean things to a girl/boy to her/his face if...", and "Would you spread rumors or say mean things about a girl/boy behind her/his back (including on the internet) if...".

Initial factor analysis suggested that items about aggression toward a boy and items about aggression toward a girl should be analyzed separately. Examination of eigenvalues and screeplots clearly showed two dimensions for each gender which were labeled "provocation" and "internal motives". Item Response Theory (IRT) analysis using a Rasch model evaluated the rating scale and permitted reduction of the number of items. The final scales consisted of 48 items (24 each for aggression against boys and girls, divided between provocation and internal motives).

Internal consistencies ranged from .87 to .97. Each scale correlated significantly with responses on a widely used aggression measure, the Problem Behavior Frequency (PBFS) scale and on a measure of bullying. Multiple group confirmatory factor analysis suggested gender differences in scale structure, and additional analyses suggested that female and male participants responded to items differently depending on the gender of the target.

The "What Would Make You Fight" measure has good psychometric properties and evidence for validity, and produced evidence of gender differences in structure and same or opposite sex targets. Future studies will include tests of the measure against parent and teacher reports and analysis of responses by youth admitted to emergency rooms for violence-related injuries.