

Understanding Children and Adolescents' Victimizations at Multiple Levels: An Ecological Review of the Literature.

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Source

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Abstract

This article examines children and adolescent exposure to violence in various contexts. A systematic review of the literature was conducted to identify the definitions and types of violence reported in studies on victimization using the ecological systems framework. Sources included research studies and/or reports from scholarly journals ($n = 140$), books ($n = 9$), conference/workshops ($n = 5$), and web sources, such as Uniform Crime Reports ($n = 23$). The findings indicated that research differed in terminologies, conceptual and operational definitions, sample sizes and age group classification for children and adolescents. Further, studies lacked focus on the co-occurrence and inter-relatedness of victimization, and how these factors might affect the outcomes. Many studies employed a cross-sectional design, which limits strong conclusions about the temporal order of victimization experiences and outcomes. Future research efforts need more consistency among researchers in conceptual and operational definitions and the use of more rigorous designs. Increased holistic assessments are critical for effective prevention and intervention strategies for at-risk children and adolescents.

KEYWORDS:

adolescents, children, ecological systems theory, victimization, violence

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