

Teen Victims of Cyberbullying More Likely to Abuse Drugs and Alcohol



Teens who are cyberbullied are more likely than their peers who are not harassed online or through cell phone messages to develop symptoms of substance abuse, depression and Internet addiction, a new study concludes.

Spanish researchers found victims of cyberbullying are at higher risk for psychological and behavioral health problems, including substance abuse, after six months of bullying, *Health Behavior News Service* reports.

Manuel Gamez-Guadix, PhD of the University of Deusto in Spain surveyed 845 teens, and found 24 percent had been a victim of one cyberbullying behavior, 15.9 percent had experienced two such behaviors, and 8 percent had experienced cyberbullying three times.

The researchers note in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* that cyberbullying is a growing problem among teens.

It can include hurtful and harassing messages, rumors, inappropriate or fake photos and videos posted on social networking sites, or in text messages or emails. Gamez-Guadix said, "It is important to include strategies to prevent cyberbullying within interventions for behavioral problems during adolescence. Mental health professionals should pay special attention to these problems in the treatment of victims of cyberbullying."