

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CYBERBULLYING, CYBERVICTIMIZATION AND DEPRESSION: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Cyberbullying is an electronic bullying has been linked to negative mental health like depression. Few studies examined the prevalence of cyberbullying and cyber-victimization among school students in Qatar, there were no studies that have been conducted among college students in Qatar.

Methodology: A cross sectional study by self-administered close-ended online questionnaire was used to assess student's cyberbullying, cyber victimization (RCBI-II and depression symptoms PHQ-9).

Results : Both cyberbullies/cyber-victims (35.8%) were the highest group among other groups who had cyberbullying experience. 50% of the students were depressed (PHQ9-score ≥ 10); moreover, a significant associations were found between cyberbullying experiences and gender ($p=0.030$), depression and gender ($p=0.46$), and between cyberbullying experiences and depression ($p<0.001$)

Discussion and conclusion: This study can be used as a start for further studies since it is the first in Qatar. Also, it maybe used to plan for public health programs that address cyberbullying and cyber-victimization among different age groups.

INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying is "a language that can defame, threaten, harass, exclude, discriminate, disclose personal information or using aggressive comments about people" (Webber & Ovedovitz, 2018). Cyberbullying has been considered as a new health related behavior and it emerged as a public health concern which is related to mental health issue such as depression (Nixon, 2014).

Furthermore, a cyber-victim is a term that describes people who are affected by cyberbullying and it has also emerged as a new concern in the field of mental health (Fridh, Lindström, & Rosva, 2015). The study aims to investigate the relationship between cyberbullying, cyber-victimization, and depression symptoms among Qatar university students.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study self-administrated close ended online questionnaire, were disseminated among the participants. The overall sample size was 836 students. Demographic information including age, sex, nationality, college and college level and the revised cyber bullying inventory –II questionnaire were the independent variables for this study. The dependent variable was the depression measured by using Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9). The variables (independent and dependent) were analyzed using a Pearson Chi-Square and Binary Logistic Regression Data was collected after receiving the approval from the Qatar Institutional Review Board. The survey includes Arabic and English languages within the consent form that was sent through email to all Qatar University students using "Qualtrics". The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 25 software. Ethics approval number QU-IRB 1057-E/19.

RESULTS

The results shown that students have been involved at least in one of the cyberbullying experiences (cyberbullies 6.8%, cyber-victims 29.2%, both cyberbullies and cyber-victims 35.8% or not involved 28.2%) . (figure1). Moreover, a significant relationship were found between cyberbullying and gender ($p<0.030$). When assessing depression among students, only 3.7% of the students reported that they were not depressed, while the rest of them showed different severity of depression symptoms (figure 2) . By using Chi-square test,, the results showed a significant association cyberbullying experiences and depression ($p<0.001$). A positive significant association were found between gender and depression ($p = 0.046$). Female students had an odds for depression that is 1.498 higher than male students. (aOR 1.489 [95% CI 1.007–2.228]).

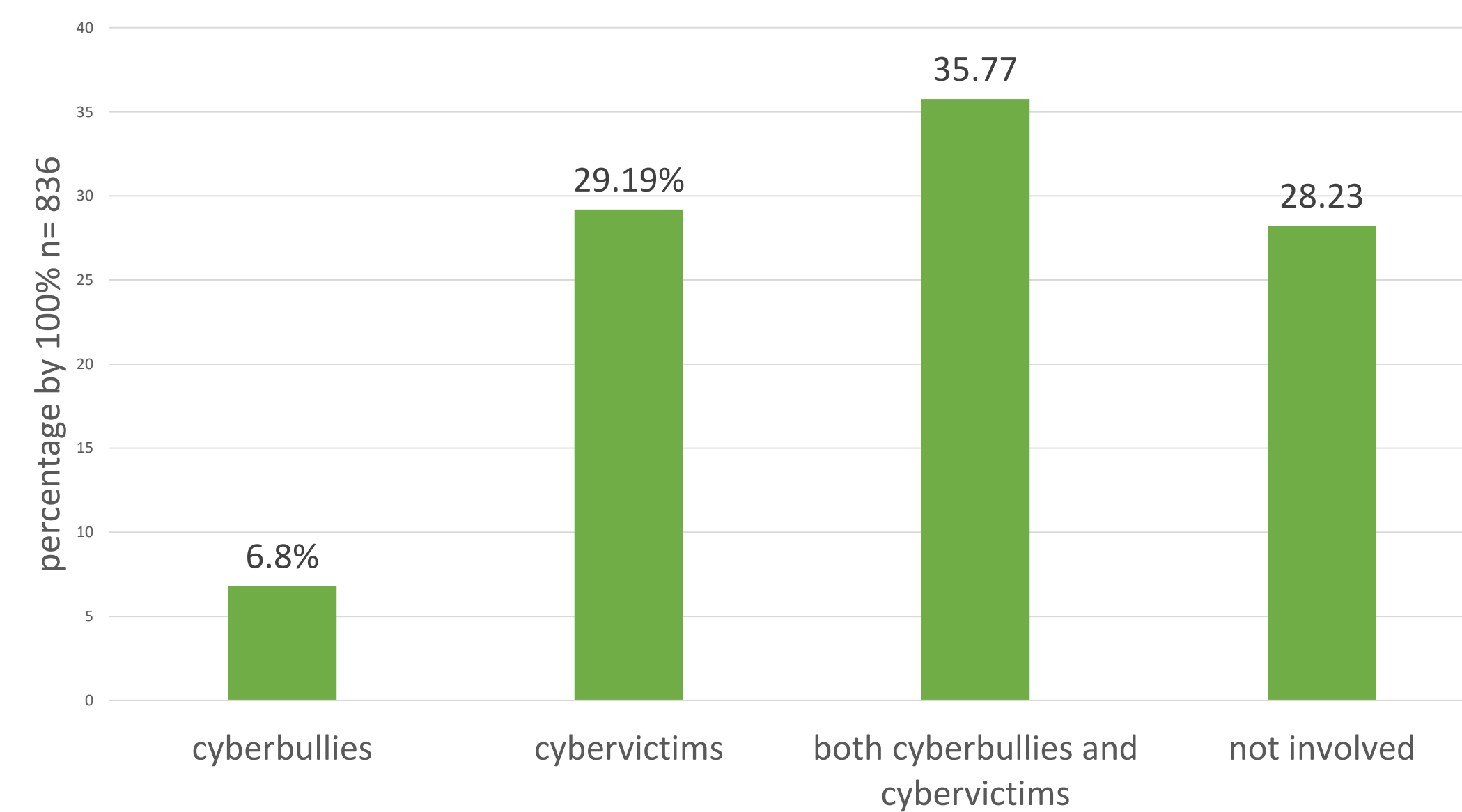


Figure1: Cyberbullying Experiences among Qatar University Students

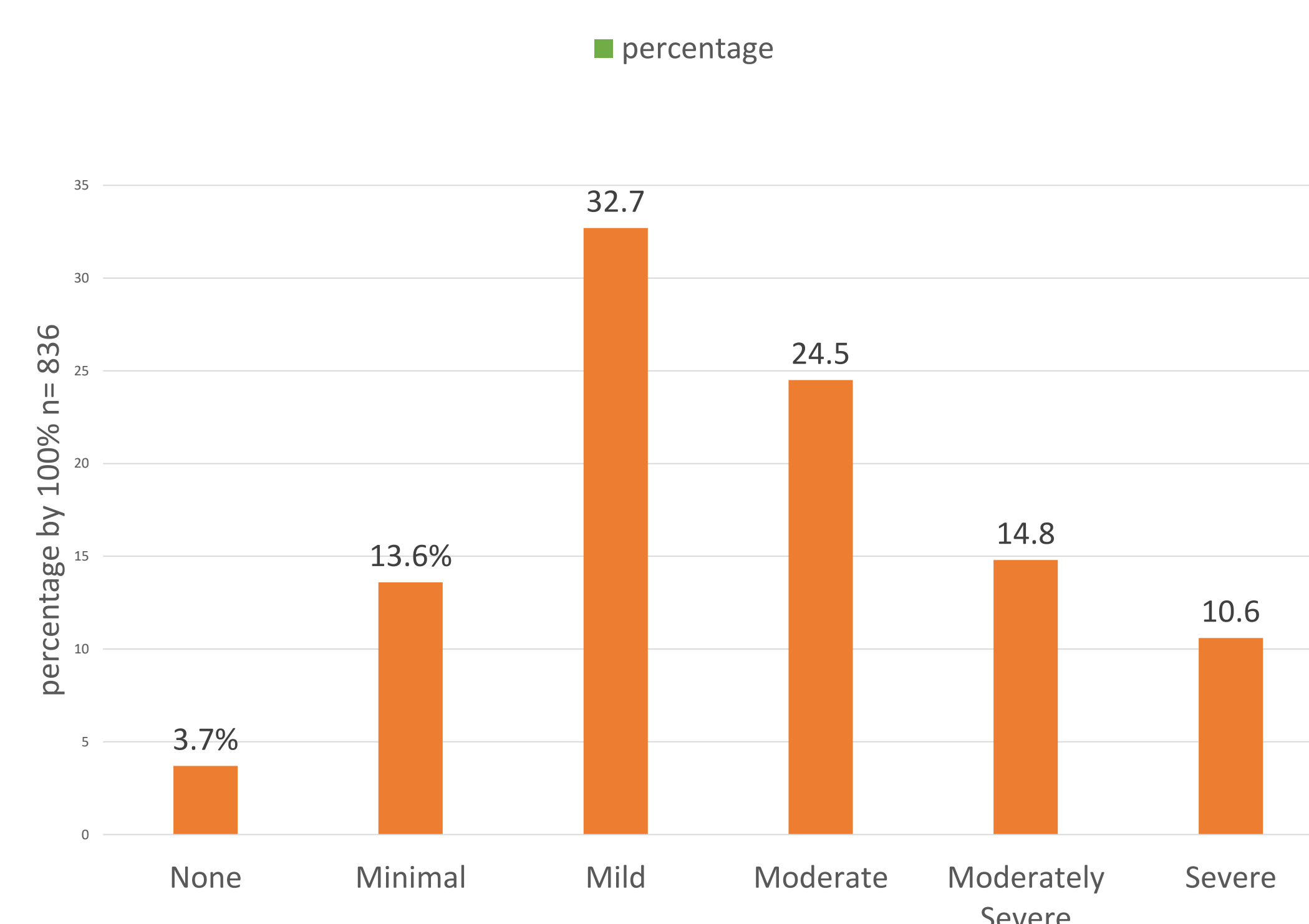


Figure 2 : Prevalence of Depression among Qatar University Students

CONCLUSION

Students in Qatar University showed a high prevalence of cyberbullying and victimization. Also, they had an alarming prevalence of depression rates . There was a positive association between cyberbullying, cybervictimization and depression. In addition, a positive significant association between gender and depression was found as female had a higher rate of depression than males. This study can be used as a start for further studies since it is the first in Qatar. Finally, we recommend that more research studies should be conducted on the effects of cyberbullying among different age groups specifically younger adults. Most importantly, universities should offer mental health resources to those affected by bullying in general and those in need of such services.

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