



Fighting Behavior among early adolescent African Americans: What are the personal and environmental factors?

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Session 4061.0, Health Promotion
in Minority Populations

8:30 AM-10:00 AM

11/06/07



Background

Youth Violence

- Self report of youth violence has remained at an all time high

Fighting

- Fighting can be a predictor of future violence
- Youth are more likely to fight than other violent behaviors such as carry a weapon

Background cont.

Personal Attributes Associated with Adolescent Fighting are:

- Age
 - Middle School vs. High School
 - Youth Held Back
- Gender
 - Males vs. Females
- Drug Use
 - Under the Influence

Background cont.

Environmental Attributes Associated with Adolescent Fighting are:

- **Parents**
 - **Parental Expectation of Violence**
- **Peers**
 - **Peer Fighting Behavior**
- **Natural Non-Parental Adult Mentor**
 - **Associated with Positive Youth Behavior**



Gaps to be Addressed

- Limited Research Focused on Early Adolescent Fighting
- Emerging Field of Mentoring Research
- Research on African American and low income youth has been gained mostly by exploring the differences when comparing them to other groups
- Persistently Dangerous Schools



Steppin' Up

SU is an educational intervention that includes a facilitated curriculum in group-mentoring sessions.

- Five year study
- Funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development



Research Design

- Research Design Steppin' Up
 - randomized longitudinal prospective cohort design
- Research Design for the Current Study
 - Cross sectional utilizing baseline data



Study Aim 1

Describe the characteristics of youth who fight among early adolescent African Americans who live in a low income neighborhood and attend schools on probation for “persistently dangerous” designation.



Definition:

A Persistently Dangerous School is “a school in which each year for three consecutive years the total number of student suspensions for more than 10 days or expulsions for violent offenses equals 2½ percent or more of the total number of students enrolled in a school.”

(Maryland State Department of Education, 2004)



Definition Washington DC:

A Persistently Dangerous School is a school where the annual number of officially reported violent crimes against students, on the school grounds, during school operating hours, or during an approved school-sponsored activity over a period of two consecutive years is equal to or greater than:

1. 5 for schools with enrollment of 500 students or less, or
2. 1% of the school's official membership, for schools with enrollments of 500 students or more.

Violent crimes must be substantiated by an official police report that documents the offense as a "crime of violence" under section 22-4501(f) of the DC Code.

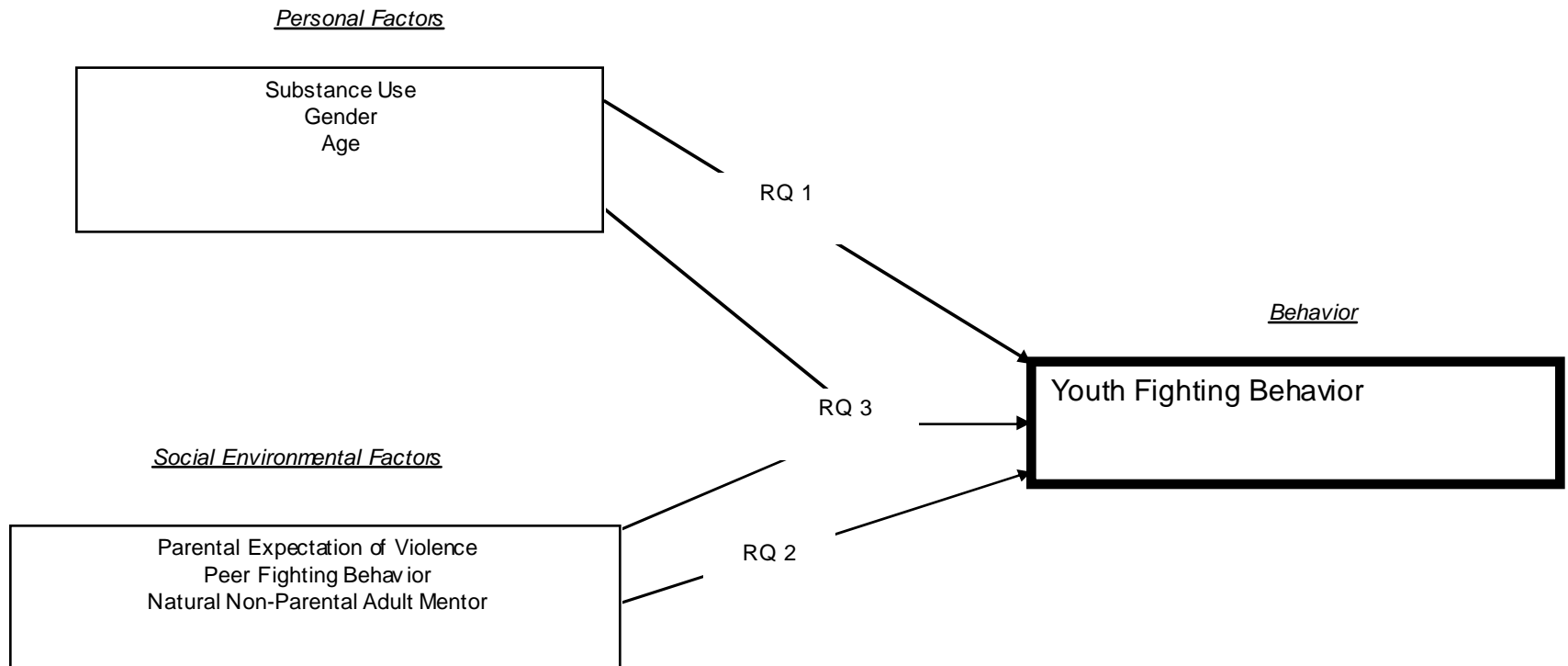


Study Aim 3

Examine fighting behavior among early adolescent African Americans based on personal and environmental factors

Conceptual Model

Figure 1. Conceptual Model Of Fighting Based on Personal and Environmental Factors



Adapted from Social Cognitive Theory: Bandura, A (1989) Human agency in social cognitive theory. Am Psychology (44) 1175-84

Sample Population

- Sixth Graders
 - Participating in Steppin' Up (SU)
- Urban Middle Schools
- Predominately African-American
- Over 80% receive free or reduced lunch at school



Methods

- Data Collection
 - Computer Assisted Survey Instrument (CASI)
 - Designed to occur in two half hour sessions



Results

Two schools were included in this study (N = 211)

- one school contributed 72 responses (34%)
- other 139 responses (66%)



FIGHTING

	School 1 n = 72 (100%)	School 2 n = 139 (100%)	Total N = 211 (100%)
<i>Fighting in the Last 30 days</i>			
No	41 (57)	82 (59)	123 (59)
Yes	31 (43)	57 (41)	88 (41)
Home/Neighborhood	8 (26)	26 (46)	34 (39)
School	10 (32)	15 (26)	25 (28)
Both	13 (42)	16 (28)	29 (33)



Personal Characteristics	
	Total N = 211 (100%)
<i>Age</i>	
<=11	52 (25)
12	128 (61)
>=13	31 (14)
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	113 (54)
Female	98 (46)
<i>Substance Use</i>	
No	184 (87)
Yes	27 (13)



Environmental Characteristics	
	Total N = 211 (100%)
<i>Natural Non-Parental Adult Mentor</i>	
Higher	89 (42)
Lower	122 (58)
<i>5 closest Friends who Fight</i>	
0	66 (31)
1-2	72 (34)
3-4	22 (10)
5	52 (25)
<i>Parental Expectation of Violence</i>	
Low	51 (24)
Mid Low	57 (27)
Mid High	48 (23)
High	55 (26)
<i>Live with Parents</i>	
Mother only	132 (63)
Father only	9 (4)
Mother & Father	48 (23)
Neither Parent	22 (10)




STUDY AIM 1- RESULTS

Fighting Behavior by Youth Factors- Unadjusted and Adjusted Analysis Controlled for School (N=211)

		Unadjusted Model			Full Adjusted Model*			
Youth Factors	<i>n</i>	N (%) Who Fight	OR	P	95% CI	OR	P	95% CI
<i>Age</i>								
<=11	53	22 (42)	1			1		
12	129	52 (41)	.93	.63	.70-1.25	.90	.75	.61-1.13
>=13	31	14 (45)	1.12	.06	.99-1.26	.91	.00	.89- .92
<i>Natural Non-Parental Adult Mentor</i>								
High	89							
Males	44	16 (36)	1			1		
Females	45	11 (24)	.57	.22	.23-1.42	.60	.11	.32-.1.13
Low	124							
Males	70	32 (46)	1			1		
Females	54	29 (54)	1.38	.88	.68-2.81	1.41	.00	1.41- 1.42
<i>Living with Parent(s)</i>								
Mom or Dad	143	61 (43)	1			1		
Both	48	20 (42)	.94	.53	.76-1.15	.81	.00	.79-.83
Neither	22	7 (32)	.61	.11	.33-1.13	.60	.02	.40-.92

*Adjusted for all other factors



STUDY AIM 2- RESULTS

The Odds of Fighting by Youth and Environmental Factors -Full Model Controlled for School (N=211)					
		Adjusted Full Model*			
		N (%) Who Fight	OR	P	95% CI
Covariates (n)					
<i>Substance Use</i>					
No	187	11 (9)	1		
Yes	27	16 (59)	1.71	.00	1.22-2.38
<i>“Of my 5 closest Friends the Number who Fight”</i>					
	0 67	17 (25)	1		
	1-2 72	25 (35)	1.46	.00	1.27- 1.67
	3-4 22	13 (59)	4.31	.00	3.50-5.56
	5 52	33 (63)	5.15	.00	2.82-9.43
<i>Parental Expectation of Violence</i>					
	Low 52	16 (31)	1		
	Mid Low 57	18 (32)	.97	.90	.63-1.50
	Mid High 48	26 (54)	1.99	.00	1.69-2.34
	High 56	28 (50)	1.77	.00	1.35-2.36
*Adjusted for all other covariates including age, Natural Non-Parental Adult Mentor, Gender, Natural Non-Parental Adult Mentor*Gender					



Discussion

- In this study, 41% of students fought, indicating fighting is a common behavior among this population. This is in the 30 to 50 percent range reported by other researchers measuring fighting behavior among early adolescents.



Discussion Cont.

- Age
 - In the current study, youth who were younger than the average age of a sixth grader was more likely to fight.
 - These findings are in contrast to the findings of other researchers.



Discussion Cont.

- Natural Non-Parental Adult Mentor
 - Similar to other research, youth in this study who had a significant non-parental adult were less likely to fight than those who did not.
 - Girls who reported lower mentor access fought more than their male counterparts.



Discussion

- Substance Use

- In the current study supports research that suggests that youth who use drugs engage in higher rates of fighting.



Discussion

- Peer Fighting

- The current data support existing research that having peers who engage in violent and aggressive behavior is correlated with an individual engaging in similar behavior



Discussion

- Living With Parents
 - The current study found that youth who lived with only one parent were more likely to fight than those who lived with both parents.



Discussion

- Parental Expectation of Violence
 - The current study supports the association between youth perceptions of parental expectations and their behavior.



Study Limitations

- Self-Reported Data
- Cross Sectional Design
- Convenience Sample



Study Strengths

- Youth who attend “persistently dangerous” middle schools
- Youth perceptions
- Focuses on early adolescents who live in low income areas
- Persistently Dangerous School Lable



Conclusion

Personal and environmental characteristics of the child provide an understanding as to why some African American youth who live and attend school in low income neighborhoods engage in violence while others do not.



Thank You