How well can we predict which children will be bullied? An examination of childhood factors related to adolescent bullying victimisation

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Bio:
Tara is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She has previously held research and teaching positions at QUT and The University of Queensland and was a Research Officer at the former Criminal Justice Commission.

Tara has a strong background in designing questionnaires and administering large scale survey design research. She has worked with the Mater University Study of Pregnancy (MUSP), a large scale longitudinal study, for over ten years. Her PhD research focused on persistence and desistence of antisocial behaviour across childhood and adolescence and used data from the Mater University Study of Pregnancy (MUSP): http://www.ansoc.uq.edu.au/research/musp

More recent research extends her PhD findings to examine and compare the outcomes of antisocial behaviour in early adulthood. Tara has also been working with colleagues to examine individual antisocial behaviour in the context of family and neighbourhood factors.

In 2007-08, Tara was a British Academy Visiting Fellow at the Cambridge University Institute of Criminology. Her ongoing work with Prof David Farrington examines adult-onset offending in the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development (CSDD). During her time in Cambridge, Tara was also a visiting scholar at Wolfson College.

Abstract:
There is a body of research that shows that some children are more likely to be bullied than others. Characteristics of bullied children that have been identified in previous research include: non-intact marital family; lower socioeconomic status; poor mental health; poor academic performance; being less attractive; and having unusual mannerisms. Although these factors are correlated with bullying, from a prevention standpoint, it is interesting to examine whether bullied children can be prospectively identified. This research uses data from the Mater-University Study of Pregnancy and its Outcomes (MUSP); a prospective longitudinal study of mothers and their children which began in Brisbane, Australia, in 1981. A wide range of childhood factors were examined to see which factors predict bullying victimisation in adolescence. We find that relatively few characteristics distinguished children who were being bullied from those who were not, including: gender; social and thought disorders; school performance; BMI; and pubertal development. To examine this further we developed a cumulative risk model but it was not useful in identifying those who were more likely to experience being bullied.