

# Bullying and self-harm among adolescents in Denmark

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## INTRODUCTION

This study is part of the ongoing project *The CASE Study* (Childhood and Adolescent Self-harm in Europe). Since 2001, the study has examined the prevalence of vulnerability, self-harm and suicidal behaviour among adolescents aged 13-19 years in Denmark. Furthermore, factors that decrease or increase the risk of self-harm and suicidal behaviour are identified.

The project is financially supported by The Ministry for Children and Social Affairs.

## GOALS

The goal is to raise awareness of how different types of bullying can affect adolescents. With this information, preventive actions can be taken.

## METHOD

Data is collected through a questionnaire administered to schools in Denmark. The questionnaire is web-based and included 44 questions in 2016. Eleven questions concerned bullying. Calculations were done by multiple regression analysis to control for gender, age and household variations.

## RESULTS

In total, 7,949 adolescents aged 13-19 years from 67 different schools completed the questionnaire.

	At school	86 %
	On the Internet	26 %
	On the phone	15 %
	At leisure activities	14 %
	At home	4 %
	Other places	6 %

**Table 1:** Places where adolescents experience bullying (n=2,561)

One third of the adolescents had experienced bullying one or more places (see Table 1 for more details).

Adolescents bullied at school had a two times higher risk of committing self-harm compared to the group that was not bullied (reference group). Cyber bullying increased the risk of committing self-harm nearly three times while bullying at home increased the risk of self-harm fourteen times compared to those who were not bullied (See Table 2 for more details).

Place bullied	Self-harm (OR)	Confidence interval
Not bullied	1	-
At school	<b>2.3***</b>	[1.9 – 2.7]
On the Internet	<b>2.7***</b>	[1.7 – 4.2]
On the phone	<b>2.3*</b>	[1.2 – 4.5]
At leisure activities	1.1	[0.3 – 3.8]
At home	<b>14.4***</b>	[5.3 – 39.2]
Other places	<b>3.6***</b>	[2.2 – 6.0]

**Table 2.** Risk of self-harm compared to place bullied  
\*p<0.05 \*\*p<0.005 \*\*\*p<0.0001

If the adolescents had been bullied more than one place (any combination) they would have a six times higher risk of committing self-harm compared to the reference group (OR 5.8, p<0.0001).

## CONCLUSION

Bullying is a well-known risk factor for self-harm, but the place of being bullied also affect adolescents in different ways. Research shows that especially bullying at home and cyber bullying have a negative impact on adolescents regarding self-harm, and therefore it is important to pay special attention to these types of bullying.

