Aggressive and stressed? Youth's aggressive behaviors in light of their internet use, sensation seeking, stress and social feelings

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408 females between 20 and 24 years of age

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Stepping up awareness and empowerment

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Healthcare

# Abstract

Aggressive behavior and its consequences are a serious mental health problem for youth all over the world. In this study we investigated how problematic internet use, sensation seeking and social/dispositional factors are related to three forms of aggression: physical, verbal, and anger in a sample of Hungarian youth. In total 408 (50% females) aged between 14 and 24 years (M= 20.8 years, SD=2.6) completed an online survey (between January and June 2014; different online social networking sites and online forums, such as university groups on Facebook and Hungarian writing sites) assessing these constructs. Multiple linear regression analyses (stepwise method) revealed a mixed pattern of predictors of each type of aggression, with boredom, age (as negative predictor), stress, lack of shyness and internet-associated neglect accounting for significant variance in verbal
aggression. Obsessive internet use, disinhibition, stress and loneliness each accounted for significant variance in anger. Finally, after controlling for gender, internet-associated neglect, disinhibition and loneliness were associated with physical aggression. These findings suggest that interventions targetting aggression need to focus on different behaviors and attributes, depending on the type of aggression exhibited. Learning effective aggression management techniques should be a part of complex health education programs that would help with prevention of social conflicts, substance use, problem behavior, psychological and mental health problems as well as problematic internet use.

# Outcome

Multiple linear regression analyses (stepwise method) revealed a mixed pattern of predictors of each type of aggression, with boredom, age (as negative predictor), stress, lack of shyness and internet-associated neglect accounting for significant variance in verbal
aggression. Obsessive internet use, disinhibition, stress and loneliness each accounted for significant variance in anger. Finally, after controlling for gender, internet-associated neglect, disinhibition and loneliness were associated with physical aggression. These findings suggest that interventions targetting aggression need to focus on different behaviors and attributes, depending on the type of aggression exhibited. Learning effective aggression management techniques should be a part of complex health education programs that would help with prevention of social conflicts, substance use, problem behavior, psychological and mental health problems as well as problematic internet use.

"When we looked at the various forms of aggression and their correlates, we found that (1) (male) gender, the problematic internet use dimension of neglect, disinhibition as a form of sensation seeking and loneliness each accounted for significant unique variance in physical aggression; (2) age and shyness (negatively), the problematic internet use dimension of neglect, stress, and boredom susceptibility as a form of sensation seeking each accounted for significant variance in verbal aggression; and finally, (3) obsessive internet use, disinhibition, stress, and loneliness each accounted for significant unique variance in anger. These findings are broadly consistent with findings of previous studies' identification of a relationship between problematic internet
use and physical and verbal aggression. (Bettina F. Piko, Dora K. Prievara, David Mellor: Aggressive and stressed? Youth's aggressive behaviors in light of their internet use, sensation seeking, stress and social feelings, Children and Youth Services Review Volume 77, June 2017, Pages 55-61, p: 59)

"We may conclude that the first hypothesis was supported: although bivariate correlations suggested several interrelationships between subscales of PIU and the types of aggression, there were differences according to the types of aggression in multivariate analyses. The second hypothesis relating to the role of disinhibition was also supported. Third, stress was associated with anger as had been anticipated, as well as with verbal aggression, whereas physical aggression did not show a similar relationship. However, the final hypothesis was only partially supported: loneliness was related only to anger and physical aggression, whereas shyness did not show a
relationship with aggression, moreover, the association with verbal aggression was found to be negative." (Bettina F. Piko, Dora K. Prievara, David Mellor: Aggressive and stressed? Youth's aggressive behaviors in light of their internet use, sensation seeking, stress and social feelings, Children and Youth Services Review Volume 77, June 2017, Pages 55-61, p: 60)