Parental mediation, peer norms and risky online behavior among adolescents

# Details

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## Sample

495 participants aged 10-18. Students in grades six through eleven in 13 different schools in a large city in Israel.

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

Previous studies have shown that parental mediation of adolescents online is associated with the latter’s participation in risky behavior online and being a victim of online harassment and bullying. However, there is a paucity of studies investigating the differential contribution of peers' norms and parental mediation on adolescents’ engagement in risky online behavior. To fill this gap in the literature, we collected data from a representative sample of 495 sixth to eleventh grade students in a large city in Israel. Participants responded to an online survey measuring three types of parental mediation: active guidance, restrictive supervision and non-intervention. We measured risky behavior online with items indicating the frequency of posting personal details, sending an insulting massage and meeting face-to-face with a stranger met online. In addition, respondents reported their perceptions about their peers’ attitudes toward various risky online behaviors. Multivariate findings show that after controlling for age, gender, time spent online and online activities, only restrictive parental supervision had a significant effect. However, such supervision actually increased adolescents’ risky behavior online. Perceptions that one’s peers approve of such behavior reduced the effect of restrictive parental supervision, leading to increased risky actions online. The results emphasize the importance of peer networks in youngsters’ engagement in risky online activities

# Outcome

The results presented by Sasson and Mesch (2014) indicate that youngsters who are involved in dangerous online behaviors are a distinct group with special characteristics. Typically, this group consists of older boys who make frequent use of platforms that facilitate communication with strangers, come from families with little cohesion, have parents who have little if any control over their children and have peers who support these behaviors