Longitudinal and reciprocal relationships between sexting, online sexual solicitations, and cyberbullying among minors

# Details

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## Topics

* Risks and harms
* Other
* Online safety and policy regulation
* Social mediation

## Sample

The initial sample consisted of 1924 participants at time 1. The participants were students from 11 secondary schools in central Spain. The schools were randomly selected and included both public and private schools. From the initial sample, 1497 participants between the ages of 12 and 14 years completed the measurements at both times of the study (average age = 13.65, standard deviation [SD] = 0.79; 53.2% girls, 45.9% boys; 0.9% did not report their sex).

## Implications For Parents About

* Parental digital literacy
* Parenting guidance / support
* Other

## Other Parent Implication

The need for parents to be informed regarding Internet risks that might affect their children

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

* Stepping up awareness and empowerment
* Creating a safe environment for children online
* Fighting against child sexual abuse and child exploitation

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Other

## Other Stakeholder Implication

Youth organizations

# Abstract

This study examined the longitudinal and reciprocal relationships between sexting and two types of online victimization among minors: sexual solicitations by adults and cyberbullying. The sample consisted of 1497 minors between the ages of 12 and 14 at time 1, who completed measures on sexting, sexual solicitations, and cyberbullying at the beginning of the study and again at the follow-up, one year later. The prevalence during the previous year was 7.6% and 17.5% for sexting at times 1 and 2 (respectively), 7% and 15% at times 1 and 2 for sexual solicitation, and 49.4% and 46.4% at times 1 and 2 for cyberbullying. The results show that minors' participation in sexting at time 1 predicted a significant increase in both sexual solicitations and cyberbullying during the follow-up; sexual solicitations and cyberbullying were both related to increased participation in sexting behavior one year later. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

# Outcome

Results show that sexting predicts increased sexual solicitation over a one-year period and sexting predicts increased cyberbullying victimization over a one-year period. On the other hand, online victimization predicts increased sexting after one year. The results indicate a bidirectional relationship between sexting and both sexual solicitations and cyberbullying among minors. The authors remark that given that sexting is a relatively frequent form of sexual interaction among adolescents and that this type of behavior progressively increases from the beginning of adolescence to the beginning of adult life, and advise that "it is crucial to develop strategies in order to educate minors in the responsible use of ICT, and this programs for the prevention of cyberbullying should integrate issues related to education about sexting and sexual solicitation" (Gámez-Guadix Mateos-Pérez, 2019: 75). The authors also advise that education programs in schools should address sexting, as it seems to be a new avenue through which adolescents express their sexuality, pointing out that: "educators and parents should be informed about Internet risks in order to educate their children on the responsible use of ICT" (Gámez-Guadix Mateos-Pérez, 2019: 75).