Victimisation, depression and suicide

Understanding interlinkages among youth in North India through structural equation modelling

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> Among college-going youth in North India, victimisation predisposes to suicide. The effect is mediated by physical violence and depression. Each of these constructs is a potential target for preventive interventions.

BACKGROUND

- Suicide and violence: important causes of death among youth
- Youth victimisation may predispose to suicide and aggression, but there is limited literature from India on this issue.
- **Aim**: To understand relationships among victimisation, physical violence, depression and suicide among young adults in Chandigarh, a North India city.

Table 1 Participant characteristics (n=752)

Characteristic	n (%) or median (IQR)
Age in years	19 (19, 21)
Female gender	484 (64.4)
Experiences in past 12 months	
Involved in physical fight	125 (16.6)
Depressive symptoms	182 (24.2)
Attempted suicide	3 (0.4)

METHODS

- Cross-sectional study
- Multistage stratified random sampling of college students aged 18–22 years
- Data collection with structured questionnaire in English
- **Data analysis**
  - Structural equation model, specified based on prior theory
  - Victimisation: latent construct, indicated by dating violence, campus bullying and cyberbullying
  - Suicide: ordinal variable with five levels from 'did not consider suicide in last 12 months' to 'had a suicide attempt requiring medical treatment'
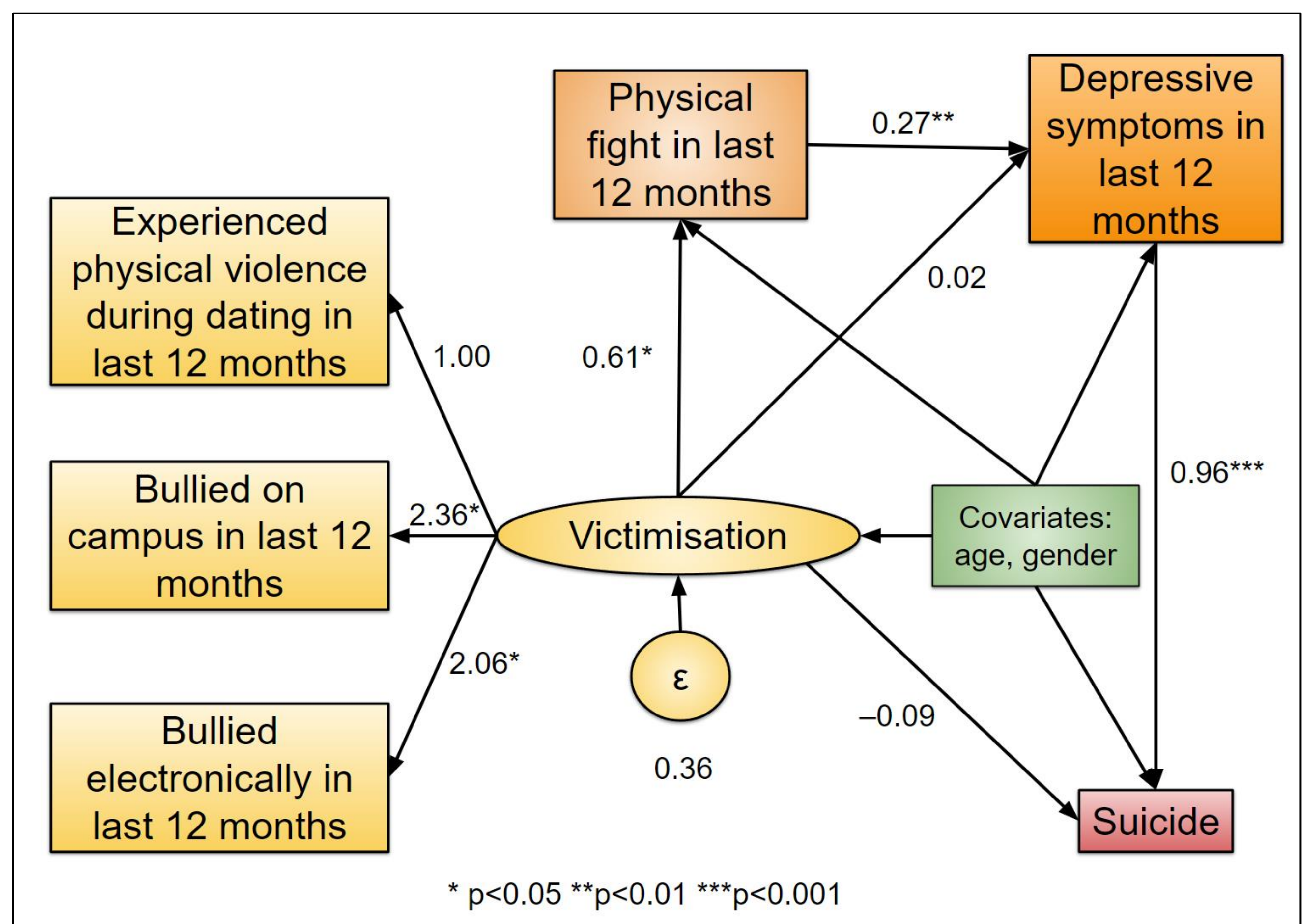 - Model assessment: χ^2 test and other global fit measures

Figure 1 Structural equation model of victimization, depression and suicide among college-going youth in Chandigarh, India (n=752)

RESULTS

- Depression and engagement in physical fights mediated the influence of victimisation on suicide.
- Victimisation had negligible direct effect on suicide
- Global model fit was acceptable: χ^2 p=0.036, RMSEA 0.034, SRMR 0.073, CFI 0.967, TLI 0.956.

CONCLUSIONS

- The data support the model that youth victimisation initiates an orderly sequence of violence, depression and suicide.
- Violence may reflect a form of 'acting out', occurring when healthy coping mechanisms are exhausted.
- Prevention of suicide among youth requires multi-level action, including bullying prevention, life skills education for enhanced coping, and treatment of underlying depression.

ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION

Abbreviations: IQR, interquartile range; RMSEA, root mean squared error of approximation; SRMR, standardised root mean squared residual; CFI, comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker–Lewis index

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