**BACKGROUND**

- Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are known to be frequent targets of bullying and victimization (Little, 2002). Klin et al. (2000) describe individuals with ASD as “perfect victims” for bullying due to their social deficits.
- Despite their tendency to be victimized, adolescents with ASD may actually be more likely to bully others in return, and are often found to show increased levels of aggressive behaviors (Matson & Nebel-Schwalm, 2007; McClintock et al, 2003). Adolescents with ASD may also have limited insight in social processes (Frith & Hill, 2004), so they may not be aware of the consequences of their own behavior, and may bully others, without being aware of it.
- While much of the current research in this area examines the relationship between self-concept and peer victimization among typically developing youth, little is known about this relationship among adolescents with ASD.

**RESEARCH AIM**

- To investigate the relationship between adolescent self-report of peer victimization and self-concept among teens with ASD. Correlations between adolescent’s self-perceived victimization of self and others and self-concept on three standardized measures were examined.

**METHODS**

**PARTICIPANTS**

- 47 adolescents with ASD ranging from 11-17 years of age
- Participants included families receiving social skills treatment through the UCLA Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) Clinic
- Adolescents were diagnosed with high-functioning autism or Asperger’s Disorder
- Age: M = 13.62 years, SD = 1.71; Range 11-17 years of age
- Gender: 65.9% male (n=31), 34.1% female (n=26)
- Ethnicity: 53.2% Caucasian (n=25), 8.5% Hispanic/Latino (n=4), 6.4% Native American (n=2), 6.4% African American (n=2), 2.1% Asian (n=1), 2.1% Middle Eastern (n=1), 21.3% Other (n=10)
- Educational Placement: 53.2% General Education (n=25), 34% Special Education (n=18), 12.8% Other (n=6)

**MEASURES**

- Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale- Second Edition (PHS-2; Piers, E.V., Harris, D.B., & Herzberg, D.S., 2002)
- Total score and subscale scores
- Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS; Gresham & Elliot, 2008)
- Bullying subscale
- Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ; Olweus, 1996)
- One question explicitly inquiring about how often the adolescent had been bullied

**PROCEDURES**

- Pearson correlations in order to understand the relationship between adolescent self-perceived peer victimization and self-concept.
- Upon entry in the UCLA PEERS Clinic, adolescents completed several social skills questionnaires
- Adolescents completed:
  - PHS-2 to assess for overall self-concept
  - SSIS to assess for self-perceived victimization of others
  - OBQ to assess for self-perceived victimization by others
  - Pearson correlations were conducted in order to understand the relationship between adolescent self-perceived victimization and bullying of self and others, and self-concept.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1. Pearson Correlation of adolescent self-perceived self-concept (PHS-2) and victimization of others on the SSIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Concept (Piers-Harris-2)</th>
<th>Bullying (SSIS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept Total Score</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Adjustment</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual and School Status</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Appearance and Attributes</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom From Anxiety</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness and Satisfaction</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULTS (CONTINUED)**

- Results show a significant correlation between:
  - Overall self-esteem on the PHS-2 and self-perceived bullying of others on the Bullying subscale on the SSIS, particularly in the areas of:
    - Behavioral Adjustment
    - Admission or denial of problematic behaviors
    - Freedom from Anxiety
    - Anxiety and dysphoric mood
    - Happiness and Satisfaction
  - General feelings of happiness and satisfaction with life.
- Results show no significant correlation between:
  - Self-esteem on the PHS-2 and Bullying subscale of the SSIS in the areas of:
    - Intellectual and School Status
    - Physical Appearance and Attributes
    - Popularity

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors would like to thank Shannon Bates, M.A., Lara Tucci, M.A., Jennifer Sanderson, Psy.D., Clare Gorospe, Jilly Chang, Ph.D., Yasamine Holourian, M.A., Mina Park, Ph.D., and the research assistants in the PEERS lab for their contribution to this research. We would also like to thank the families for their participation in this study.

**REFERENCES**