

Effects of parental internet supervision on online victimization of early adolescent boys

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Teenage boys are just as likely to be victims of cyberbullying as teenage girls, prompting a timely reminder for parents to be on top of internet usage and access.

A recent study conducted by Griffith University academics looked at the conditional effects of parental internet [supervision](#) on online victimization for early adolescent boys.

School of Psychology's Ph.D. candidate Molly Speechley and Senior Lecturer Dr. Jaimee Stuart researched a cohort of 13-year-old boys from a single-sex school, their [internet usage](#) and availability of internet-enabled devices in the home.

Ms. Speechley said when [parents](#) decide to become involved in their children's internet use to counteract risks like cyberbullying that they need to do so mindfully.

"Parents need to be aware of the contexts and motivations for their children's online engagement," she said.

"The strategies parents use should be personal to the family and their child's needs, but our paper suggests that when using a more autonomous approach, parents should be ensuring their advice and strategies are relevant, up-to-date and well-reinforced.

"If parents prefer limiting access to devices then they should be cognizant of the potential downsides of such a strategy, especially if their boys are highly motivated to go online, and adapt or shift their approaches to better meet their child's specific needs as necessary."

Dr. Stuart said the purpose of the study was to better understand the key risk factors facing contemporary young men.

"We know that parental internet supervision is thought to be an effective means of mitigating these risks for both boys and girls, but the efficacy of supervision for young men specifically is unclear," Dr. Stuart said.

"Ultimately, positive or negative associations between internet supervision and cyber victimization must be considered in context.

"This means looking at the adolescent's social context, their access to technologies, and how, when, or why parents are choosing to employ parental internet supervision.

"Investigating forms of internet supervision without considering these contextual factors may lead to inappropriate or incorrect conclusions for the efficacy of internet supervision within distinct adolescent populations."

The study is published in the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*.

More information: Molly Speechley et al, The Conditional Effects of Parental Internet Supervision on Online Victimization for Early Adolescent Boys, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (2022).
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