

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH VICTIMIZATION IN SPAIN: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES

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In order to obtain an overall view of the research carried out in Spain on child victimization, we have conducted a systematic review of the publications that provide rates of victimization from the adolescents' own self-reports. We searched the electronic databases Medline, PsycINFO, SciELO, Scopus and Latindex using terminology related to childhood, victimization and the geographical origin of the study sample. We selected 61 articles, published between 1994 and 2010 in different national journals, most of them assessing peer victimization experiences. The Spanish studies are focused, mainly, on one specific form of victimization affecting children. Different instruments have been used to obtain the data, and they have not been adapted to our social and cultural context. This makes it difficult to determine the incidence of other types of violence in Spanish children and to conduct comparisons with other international studies.

Key words: Victimology, Childhood, Adolescence, Epidemiology, Review.

Con el objetivo de conocer el estado de la investigación en España sobre la victimización de menores, se ha llevado a cabo una revisión sistemática de aquellas publicaciones que hayan proporcionado tasas de victimización de menores españoles, a partir de los propios reportes de éstos. Se realizó una búsqueda electrónica en las bases de datos Medline, PsycINFO, SciELO, Scopus y Latindex mediante terminología relativa a la infancia, la victimización y la procedencia geográfica de la muestra de estudio. Se seleccionaron 61 artículos, publicados entre el año 1994 y el 2010, en diversas revistas nacionales y, principalmente, sobre experiencias de victimización por iguales. Los trabajos españoles se centran, de forma mayoritaria, en una única forma de victimización, evaluada con instrumentos diversos y no adaptados a nuestro contexto sociocultural, lo que dificulta conocer la incidencia de otros tipos de violencia y la comparativa con trabajos internacionales.

Palabras clave: Victimología, Infancia, Adolescencia, Epidemiología, Revisión.

Interpersonal victimization, defined as harm that occurs to individuals because of other human actors behaving in ways that violate social norms (Finkelhor, 2008), affects a large group of children and adolescents in all of the societies in which it has been studied. In 1996, the World Health Assembly expressed particular concern about the high levels of violence faced by children (resolution WHA49.25), which is becoming one of the public and community health problems most difficult to overcome (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002).

Although there is now greater social awareness, more specialized training by professionals and significantly developed programs to prevent and detect these cases, children continue to be particularly at risk of experiencing violence and its adverse effects. This child vulnerability has motivated a recent line of study called developmental victimology (Finkelhor, 2007), through which it has been found that children suffer the same kinds of victimization as adults but they are, at the same time, in a position of greater risk for directly or indirectly

experiencing many other types of victimization mainly related to their level of dependency and lack of autonomy (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994).

In this context, there has been a growing general interest in the phenomenon of child and adolescent victimization (Kendall-Tackett & Giacomoni, 2005), although most studies have focused on a single type of victimization, ignoring the fact that victims of a single form of violence are rare (see Finkelhor, Ormrod & Turner, 2007) and fragmenting the research in the field of developmental victimology. The studies that take into account a wide range of victimizations obtained considerable victimization rates, with between 60.6% and 67% of the children surveyed reported having experienced one or more victimizations in the past year (e.g., Ellonen & Salmi, 2011; Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2010; Romano, Bell & Billette, 2011). Studies focused on the evaluation of various forms of abuse and severe sexual abuse found prevalence rates around 20% (Radford et al., 2011).

It is noteworthy that focusing on a single form of violence, as has been done in the majority of cases, prevents the consideration of frequent and severe cases of poly-victimization, or the accumulation of different types of victimization in the lifetime of a child and the serious consequences that this can have throughout the child's development (Turner, Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2010).

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In Spain, the studies published to date are mostly surveys aimed at adult age groups over 16 years (Luque Reina, 2006), or they have been carried out, in most cases, with data obtained from the child protection services of the various autonomous regions (see for example, Saldaña, Jiménez & Oliva, 1995; Sanmartín, 2002) there being widespread social ignorance about the extent of victimization in children and adolescents based on their own responses. Therefore, determining the incidence of various forms of victimization in younger age groups is a critical need in our country. The importance of this information, obtained directly from the children themselves, and not from official records or professional reports, lies in the lack of awareness that often exists on the part of government agencies regarding such situations (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2001).

OBJECTIVE

Given these needs, the objective of this study is to analyze the epidemiological research conducted in Spain regarding the victimization of children using the self-report method to provide a critical view of this area of study through a review of the literature on the subject. The ultimate goal is to make a diagnosis of this field of research, providing indicators that enable us to assess its methodological quality, as well as to determine which typologies arouse more interest in the scientific community and whether the studies consider the identification of poly-victimization among their results.

METHOD

Inclusion criteria

In line with the objective of the present study, the studies that met the following inclusion criteria were selected: (a) the studies were original articles published in scientific journals, in English or Spanish exclusively, with a date of publication up to December 2010; (b) the participants were recruited in Spain, in whole or in part; (c) the study sample included mostly participants under the age of 18 and, if the study included adults, the mean age of the total sample was less than 18; and (d) studies interested in the rate of victimization (e.g., incidence, prevalence) directly reported by the child. In this sense, studies were excluded if they did not show these rates or if it was impossible to estimate them with the data presented or if the person reporting the victimization was a source other than the child themselves (e.g., records, parents or caregivers, social services professionals).

Location and selection of documents

An electronic search was performed in *Medline* and *PsychINFO* databases through the *Web of Science* and also in *SciELO* and *Scopus* (up to 2010 inclusive) using a comprehensive search strategy that included terminology relating to childhood, victimization and the geographical

location of the study sample. In parallel, a manual search was conducted from journals indexed in *Latindex*. As a result, 61 scientific articles were included in this systematic review, and they are indicated in the list of references preceded by an asterisk (see flowchart in Figure 1). Readers interested in obtaining further information about the search can apply to the authors of this paper.

Encoding of the data

Various study characteristics were coded in relation to four different aspects. Firstly, in terms of bibliometric indicators, the following were recorded: (a) the title of the journal, (b) the year of publication of the article, (c) the names and number of named authors, and (d) the institution of affiliation of each. Secondly, regarding the design and procedure for data collection, primarily information relating to the following aspects was codified: (e) the type of sampling (non-probability or probability), (f) the geographical origin of the sample (province and/or autonomous region), and (g) the center of origin of the participants (school, population survey, mental health center or social services). Thirdly, with respect to the sample of participants, the following characteristics were encoded: (h) the size of the Spanish sample, (i) the mean age and range, (j) the percentage of males and finally (k) the composition (only children and adolescents, or children, adolescents and adults). Finally, with regard to victimization, the following characteristics were recorded: (l) the categories of victimization as proposed by Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod and Turner (2005) (conventional crimes, victimization by caregivers, victimization by peers and/or siblings, sexual victimization, witnessing or indirect victimization and electronic victimization), (m) the instrument used to assess the victimizing events, and (n) the time period used to assess these events.

The set of articles compiled was divided into three blocks and coded independently by two of the authors of this study. If the article did not directly provide a piece of information, it was deduced or estimated wherever possible from the data provided in the article. The respective encodings were compared in order to determine the degree of inter-coder agreement and a Kappa coefficient $k = 0.964$ was obtained. In the few cases where there was disagreement (1.82% encodings), the documents were reviewed and a consensus agreement was reached.

It should be noted that the results of five studies were published based on the same sample as another of the selected studies. In this sense, the results based on bibliometric indicators include all articles ($n = 61$), while those relating to the characteristics of the data collection, participants and victimization are based only on 56 studies with the aim of avoiding the duplication of information regarding the characteristics of the five studies.



RESULTS

Bibliometric indicators

After a thorough review of the titles and abstracts of the papers that were located, a total of 61 articles published between 1994 and 2010 (inclusive) were selected for this study. Table 1 shows the characteristics of these studies.

The time evolution regarding the number of articles is presented in Figure 2 and, as can be seen, the peak in productivity is found in the year 2008, when 21.31% ($n = 13$) of the articles were published, followed by 2010, when 12

articles were published, which corresponds to 19.67% of the documents.

This production refers to the participation of 183 authors with a contribution of between 1 and 10 studies. A considerable percentage of authors (59.56%) contributed only occasionally to the study of victimization in Spanish children, while only three authors have published five or more papers on this subject. The mean number of authors per paper is 2.92 ($SD = 1.73$) and the median 3.00 ($IQR = 2.00$), with a range of between 1 and 9 authors per article. Most articles ($n = 50$, 81.97%) are signed only by authors from Spanish institutions, mainly universities.

The articles were published in 36 scientific journals, highlighting the contribution of *Psicothema* ($n = 6$, 9.84%), followed by the *Revista Electrónica Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado* [the Inter-University Electronic Journal of Teacher Education] ($n = 5$, 8.20%).

Data Collection

The type of sampling used in the process of selecting the participants was not directly reported in a number of studies; instead it was deduced from other information provided in the article. In 78.57% of the studies, convenience samples were used (although sometimes the randomization technique was used for the selection of centers or classrooms), whereas in the rest of the studies ($n = 12$, 21.43%) probability sampling was used.

The samples used were mainly recruited from schools ($n = 51$; 92.73%), although a smaller percentage were from social services ($n = 3$; 5.45%) and mental health centers ($n = 1$; 1.82%), or by performing a population-based survey by mail ($n = 1$; 1.82%). In one study it was not possible to establish the origin of the sample.

Regarding the geographical origin of the participants, only taking into account the Spanish samples, the number of studies that have been developed with data from each of the autonomous regions can be observed in Table 2, highlighting the contribution of Andalusia ($n = 15$; 33.33%) and Castile and Leon ($n = 8$; 78%). To these, we should add the article by Ramírez Fernández and Justicia Justicia (2006) which studies the population of Ceuta and which, due to the type of design used, includes data from each of the Spanish autonomous communities (Gutiérrez et al, 2008; del Barrio et al, 2003). In 11 studies (19.64%), it was not possible to determine the origin of the participants.

Participants

Excluding those participants from outside Spain, the sample size of the studies ranged from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 5,983. The mean number of participants per study was 992.74 ($SD = 1056.06$), with a median of 613.00 ($IQR = 999.75$), bearing in mind that it was not possible to extract the sample size on two occasions. In 35.19% of the studies, the sample size did not exceed 500 participants.

FIGURE 1
FLOW DIAGRAM OF THE SELECTION OF ARTICLES
PUBLISHED UP TO DECEMBER 2010

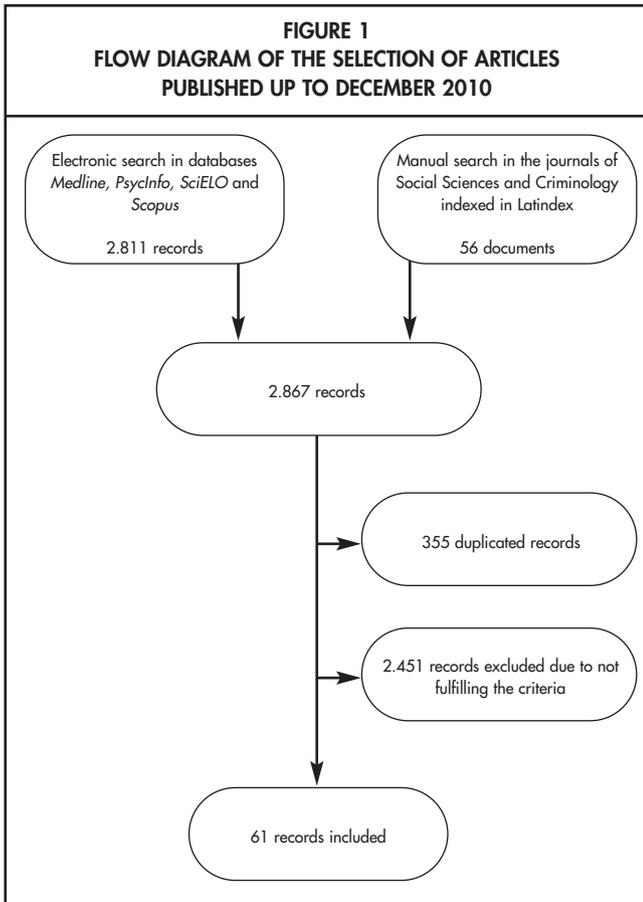


FIGURE 2
TIME EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ARTICLES

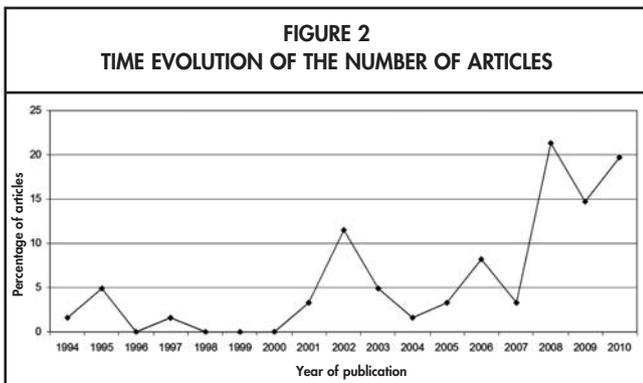


TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDIES INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW

Study	Type of sampling	Autonomous region or city where sample taken	Context of origin	Number of centers	Sample size	% males	Age range (in years or school grade)	Instruments	Categories	Co-occurring data	Time period
Almeida, Caurcel & Machado (2006)	probability ^a	Andalusia	school	14	842	51.01 ^b	11-16	Bull-S questionnaire	vict-peers; vict-indirect	no	current school year ^a
Anallitis et al. (2009)	probability	ns	general population	ns	869	51.40	8-18	Kidscreen-52 questionnaire	vict-peers		last week
Archer, Fernández-Fuentes & Thanzami (2010)	non-probability	Castile and Leon	school	5	601	41.77	15-19	Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory	vict-peers		last year
Aviles Martínez (2006)	non-probability	Castile and Leon; Basque Country	school	20	2181	51.40	10-18	CIMEI Questionnaire on Bullying and Peer Abuse	vict-peers; vict-indirect	no	last 3 months
Aviles Martínez (2009a)	non-probability	Castile and Leon; Basque Country	school	16	2169	51.70	10-20	CIMEI Questionnaire on Bullying and Peer Abuse	vict-peers		ns
Aviles Martínez (2009b)	non-probability	Castile and Leon; Galicia	school	8	730	50.42	1st ESO ^a	Questionnaire on	vict-electronic		last 2
Aviles-Martínez & Montjas-Casares (2005)	non-probability	Castile and Leon	school	5	496	57.11	12-16	CIMEI Questionnaire on Bullying and Peer Abuse	vict-peers; vict-indirect	no	during the term
Buelga, Cava & Musitu (2010)	probability	Valencia region	school	11	2101	52.26	11-17	Ad hoc scale based on the Scale of Victimization among Peers ² and the Willard classification	vict-electronic		last year
Cava, Buelga, Musitu & Murgui (2010)	non-probability ^a	Valencia region	school	4	554	46	12-16	Ad hoc questionnaire on victimization based on the Multidimensional Scale of Victimization ³ and the Questionnaire on Social Experiences ⁴	vict-peers		current school
Cerezo Ramírez (2001)	non-probability	Murcia	school	ns	315	ns	10-15	Bull Questionnaire	vict-peers		current school year ^a
Cerezo Ramírez (2002)	non-probability	ns	school	1	46	63.04	14-15	Bull-S Questionnaire	vict-peers		ns
Cerezo Ramírez (2008)	non-probability	ns	school	1	107	52.34	7-13	Bull-S Questionnaire	vict-peers		ns
Cerezo (2009)	non-probability ^a	ns	school	19	1392	52.30	6-18	Bull-S Questionnaire	vict-peers		current school year ^a
De la Torre, García, de la Villa Campiú & Casanova (2008)	non-probability	ns	school	4	345	45.50	14-18	3 items on the Questionnaire on Preconceptions of Intimidation and bullying amongst peers	vict-peers; vict-indirect	no	current school year
Del Barrio, Martín, Montero, Gutiérrez & Fernández (2003); Gutiérrez, Barrios, de Dios, Montero & del Barrio (2008)	probability	national study	school	300	3000	50	ESO	Ad hoc scale created	conventional crimes; vict-peers; vict-sexual;	Yes [only in Gutiérrez et al., 2008]	current school year ^a
Del Castillo Fernández & García Várela (2002)	non-probability ^a	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	Ns	vict-peers		ns

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDIES INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW (continued)

Study	Type of sampling	Autonomous region or city where sample taken	Context of origin	Number of centers	Sample size	% males	Age range (in years or school grade)	Instruments	Categories	Co-occurring data	Time period
Eslea et al. (2004)	non-probability ^a	ns	school	ns	859	54.90	EP and ESO	Olweus Bullying Questionnaire	vict-peers		10-12 last weeks
Estévez López, Martínez Ferrer & Musitu Ochoa (2006)	non-probability ^a	Valencia region	school	4	965	ns	11-16	Violence Scale ^b	vict-peers		Last school year
Estévez, Murgui & Musitu (2008); Estévez, Murgui & Musitu (2009)	non-probability ^a	Valencia region	school	7	1319	47	11-16	Peer Victimization Scale	vict-peers		ns
Estévez, Villardón, Calvete, Padilla & Orue (2010)	non-probability ^a	Basque Country	school	10	1431	48.44	12-17	Questionnaire on cyberbullying; Questionnaire on cyberbullying -victimization [ad hoc]	vict-electronic		lifetime
Fernández-Fuentes & Fuentes (2010)	non-probability	Castile and Leon	school	5	567	41.62	15-19	14 items of the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory	vict-peers		last year
Gallardo Cruz & Jiménez Hernández (1997)	non-probability ^a	ns	social services and school	ns	122	ns	9-14	Personal interview vict-indirect	vict-carers;	no	lifetime ^a
Garaigordobil & Oñederra; (2008)	probability	Basque Country	school	169	5983	52.7 (5 th - 6 th EP); 50.2 (ESO)	10-16	School Violence Questionnaire; Peer maltreatment in Compulsory Secondary Education; My Life at School	conventional;crimes; vict-peers;	si	current school year ^a
Garaigordobil & Oñederra (2009)									vict-sexual; vict-indirect		
García Contente, Pérez Jiménez & Nebot Adell (2010)	probability	Catalonia	School	66	2727	50.53	2nd ESO to 2nd Bachillerato/ CFGM	FRESC Survey (Risk Factors in Schools of Barcelona) with items adapted from Health Behaviour in School aged Children and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey	vict-peers		last year
García Orza (1995)	non-probability	Andalusia	school	1	64	57.81	11-1	Ad hoc questionnaire based on Questionnaire on Interpersonal Violence and Intimidation Attitudes ^b	vict-peers		ns
González Méndez & Santana Hernández (2001)	probability	Canary Islands	school	26	1146	36.60	16-18	Ad hoc scale and a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale	vict-indirect		lifetime ^a
Hava García (1995a); Hava García (1995b)	probability	Andalusia	school	6	532	51.50	13-20	Ad hoc questionnaire	conventional vict-carers; vict-peers; vict-sexual	no	lifetime
Hernández de Frutos, Sarabia Heydrich & Casares García (2002)	probability	Navarre	school	18	603	51.91	12-17	Questionnaire based on Olweus model	vict-indirect		current school year

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDIES INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW (continued)

Study	Type of sampling	Autonomous region or city where sample taken	Context of origin	Number of centers	Sample size	% males	Age range (in years or school grade)	Instruments	Categories	Co-occurring data	Time period
Jiménez García, Menéndez Álvarez-Dardet & Hidalgo García (2008)	non-probability ^a	Andalusia	school	30	623	50.20	11-17	Inventory of events ⁷	stressful life events	vict-sexual	last 5 years
Lila, Herrero & Gracia (2008)	probability	Valencia region	school	39	1908	50.52	13-18	Ns	conventional crimes; vict-carers; vict-peers	yes	last year ^a
Marín Antón, Carbonero Marín, Rojo Fructuoso, Cubero & Blanco (2002)	non-probability ^a	Castile and Leon	school	ns	196	ns	EP	Ad hoc questionnaire	vict-peers	no	ns
Martínez-Arias & Delgado (2006)	non-probability ^a	Madrid	school	2	745	51.60	12-18	Questionnaire for the Evaluation of School Violence ⁸	conventional crimes; vict-peers; vict-sexual	no	last 3 months
Manugón de Minguelanz, Caño Sánchez & Facas Gil (2002)	non-probability	Castile and Leon	school	1	ns	ns	ESO	Ad hoc Questionnaire on Social Climate	vict-peers	no	ns
Méndez & Cerezo (2010)	non-probability ^a	Murcia	school	ns	886	47.7	11-18	Bull-S Questionnaire	vict-peers	no	current school year ^a
Menesini <i>et al.</i> (2003)	non-probability	Andalusia	school	ns	296	ns	4th EP and 2nd ESO	Version of the Participant Roles Questionnaire ; plus 4 items of victimization	vict-peers; vict-indirect	no	current school year ^a
Monks , Ortega-Ruiz Rodríguez-Hidalgo (2008)	non-probability ^a	ns	school	3	298	50.84	11-16	Ns	vict-peers	no	lifetime ^a
Monks , Ortega-Ruiz Torrado Val (2002), Ortega & Monks (2005)	non-probability ^a	Andalusia	school	1	92	53.26	4-6	Ns	vict-peers; vict-indirect	no	current school year
Muñoz-Rivas, Grama, O'Leary & González (2007)	non-probability ^a	Madrid	school	20	2416	41.4	16-20	Modified Conflict Tactics Scale (MCTS)	vict-peers	no	during the relationship with current partner
Olaya, Ezpeleta, de la Osa, Granero & Doménech (2010)	non-probability	Catalonia	mental health centers	ns	520	54.3	8-17	2 items on the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale; 1 item on Risk Factors Schedule	vict-indirect	no	lifetime
Oliva, Jiménez, Parra & Sánchez-Queija (2008)	probability ^a	Andalusia	school	10 ^b	101	37.62	15-18	Ad hoc questionnaire	vict-sexual	no	last 3 years
Olivan (2002)	non-probability	Aragon	social services	1	100	60	11-17	ns	vict-carers; vict-sexual	no	lifetime ^a
Orte Socías (2003)	non-probability ^a	Balearics	school	ns	3033	59.67	9-17	Ad hoc questionnaire	vict-peers	no	current school year
Ortega Ruiz (1994)	non-probability	Andalusia	school	3	575	54.00	14-16	Translation of the questionnaire by Olweus	vict-peers	no	current school year
Ortega, Elpe & Calmaestra (2009)	non-probability	Andalusia	school	10	830	49.90	12-18	Questionnaire of Cyber-bullying	vict-electronic	no	last 2 months

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDIES INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW (continued)

Study	Type of sampling	Autonomous region or city where sample taken	Context of origin	Number of centers	Sample size	% males	Age range (in years or school grade)	Instruments	Categories	Co-occurring data	Time period
Ortega, Elípe, Mora-Merchán & Calmaestra, Vega (2009)	non-probability ^a	Andalusia	school	7	1671	51.3	12-17	DAPHNE Questionnaire	vict-peers; vict-electronic	yes	last 2 months
Ortega & Mora-Merchán (2008)	non-probability ^a	Andalusia	school	4	707	58.00 ^b	5th Primary to 3rd ESO	CIMEI Questionnaire on bullying and peer abuse	vict-peers		current school year ^c
Ortega, Ortega-Rivera & Sanchez (2008)	non-probability ^a	Andalusia	school	3	420	43.3	1.4-20	Modified version of AAUW Sexual Harassment Survey	vict-sexual		ns
Ortega, Sánchez, Ortega-Rivera, Nocentini & Menesini (2010)	non-probability	Andalusia	school	ns	170	0	1.6-18	AAUW Sexual Harassment Survey	vict-sexual		last 2 months
Pérez Fuentes & Gázquez Linares (2010)	non-probability ^a	Andalusia	school	ns	1214	43.70	12-16	Questionnaire on Predictive Factors of School Violence Among School Children ^d	vict-peers		ns
Postigo Zegarra, González Barran, Mateu Marqués, Ferrero Berlanga & Martorell Pallás (2009) ^e	non-probability ^a	ns	school	ns	641	48.99	12-16	Bull-S Questionnaire	vict-peers		current school year
Ramírez Fernández & Justicia Justicia (2006)	non-probability	Ceuta	school	2	587	54.20	8-15	Modified version of Questionnaire on bullying among school children by Olweus	vict-peers		during the term
Sánchez Burón & Fernández Martín (2007)	non-probability ^a	Madrid	school	59	2283	48.3	5th EP to 2nd Bachillerato	Ad hoc scale created	common crimes; vict-peers; vict-sexual	no	lifetime ^f
Sánchez Jiménez, Ortega Rivera, Ortega Ruiz & Viejo Almazan (2008)	non-probability ^a	Andalusia	school	3	446	47.50	1.4-20	Ad hoc questionnaire based on Conflict Tactics Scale and Relational Aggression Scale	vict-peers		lifetime
Sánchez Lacasa & Cerezo Ramirez (2010)	non-probability	Murcia	school	3	426	48.59	9-12	Questionnaire Bull-S	vict-peers		current school year ^g
Vellman, Templeton, Reuber, Klein & Moesgen (2008)	non-probability	ns	social services	ns	6	35.6 ^h	12-18 ^h	Children of Alcoholics Screening Test; The Conflict Tactics Scales	vict-carers; vict-indirect	no	last year and lifetime
Vitias & González (2010)	probability	Catalonia	school	5	352	49.70	12-17	Ad hoc questionnaire	vict-electronic		current school year

Note, ns = Not specified; EP = Primary Education; ESO = Obligatory Secondary Education; CFGM = Intermediate Educational Diploma; vict-carers = Victimization by carers; vict-peers = Victimization by peers; vict-sexual = sexual victimization; vict-indirect = indirect victimization or witness to victimization; vict-electronic = electronic victimization

^aDeduced by the authors from the information given in the study

^bInformation is given on the total sample (e.g. includes subjects from other countries), but not for the subsample that is the object of this study

^cQuestionnaire on Cyberbullying - Cuestionario de Cyberbullying

^dScale of Victimization among Peers - Escala de Victimization entre Iguales

^eMultidimensional Scale of Victimization - Escala Multidimensional de Victimization

^fQuestionnaire of Social Experiences - Cuestionario de Experiencias Sociales

^gViolence Scale - Escala de Violencia

^hQuestionnaire on Interpersonal Violence and Intimidation Attitudes - Cuestionario sobre Actitudes Inimicadoras y Violencia Interpersonal

ⁱInventary of Events - Inventario de Acontecimientos

^jQuestionnaire for the Evaluation of School Violence - Cuestionario de Evaluación de la Violencia en la Escuela

^kQuestionnaire on Predictive Factors of School Violence Among School Children - Cuestionario de Factores Predictores de la Violencia School para Escolares



Males and females participated in virtually all of the studies and, generally, the percentage was similar. As shown in Table 1, there is one exception, the article by Ortega et al. (Ortega, Sánchez, Ortega-Rivera, Nocentini & Menesini, 2010) which focused exclusively on victimization in girls between 16 and 18 years of age. Not counting this study, the percentage of male participants ranged between 36.60 and 60.00%. In seven studies (12.50%), the percentage of boys and girls was not specified and could not be estimated from the data provided.

In most of the studies ($n = 36$; 64.29%), the sample consisted only of children and adolescents, whereas in the other studies ($n = 20$, 35.71%) young adults were also included. Children under 12 years of age were included in 26 studies (47.27%), and 4 years was the lowest age studied. Overall, the mean age of the sample was, mostly, around age 14. Specifically, this result was the case in 12 (21.43%) of the studies included. Note that in 20 cases (35.71%) the mean age of the sample was not specified and could not be estimated using the data provided in the article.

Victimization: categories, instruments and time period

This section considers various aspects of the assessment of victimization in the 56 selected papers.

Victimization categories

Victimization by peers was the most analyzed category; specifically 73.21% of the papers reviewed deal with this subject. Next there was exposure to violence or indirect victimization with 23.21%, and sexual victimization with 17.86%. Electronic victimization made up 10.71% of the studies, at the same level as the experience of conventional crimes (10.71%). Finally, the least studied category was victimization by caregivers, which reached 8.93%.

In addition, it has been taken into account whether the papers are focused on a single category of victimization or if they present information on experiences of different types. Regarding this aspect, the majority of studies (71.43%) focus on one category, 17.86% contemplate two, and 5.36% of studies provide information on three and four categories, respectively. Note that, of all of the studies reviewed, only 7.14% provide data on the co-occurrence or accumulation of victimization situations, or poly-victimization.

Assessment Instruments

The instruments most frequently used were the Bull-S questionnaire (Cerezo, 2000) (13.72%) and the Questionnaire on Bullying and Peer Abuse (CIMEI) (Avilés, 1999) (5.88%) in its different versions, both referring to bullying in school. The adaptation, modification or partial use of the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996) also stood out (7.84% of papers) regarding bullying in school and the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) (7.84%) to assess partner violence and exposure to violence between parents. Also, 19.61% of the

studies used an *ad hoc* questionnaire or instrument for the assessment of victimization, one that was not based on previous instruments, or at least it was not indicated in the article.

Time period

In 17 studies the time period chosen to assess the victimization was not explicit (36.96%), but could be inferred from other information provided. It is observed that most of the studies (73.91%) refer to time periods of one year or less, while 23.91% include time periods of over a year or referring to the whole lifetime. One study provides information on both the previous year and the lifetime of the participant.

DISCUSSION

As can be seen in this work, and from the results obtained, the literature on the extent of child and adolescent victimization in our country obtained from the children themselves is abundant, especially in the last few years and in the geographical context of Andalusia, but it does have a number of limitations that cannot be ignored and must be corrected to further advance the research in this field and increase the knowledge we have on this issue as requested from international organizations (Krug et al., 2002).

The studies included in this review have been carried out by many national authors who, in general, are not exclusively related to this area of work, with one-off or occasional contributions reaching 59.6%. This lack of specialization can be seen in the journals that published these works in which, although there is a certain preference for *Psicothema*, followed by the *Revista Electrónica Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, the absence of specialist journals of reference that cover a notable amount of articles on victimization in childhood and adolescence is noteworthy, a fact that almost certainly influences the dispersion of the definitions, methods and results obtained.

From the review, we can observe the existence of a general trend in national researchers to focus on one single form of

TABLE 2
STUDIES PUBLISHED IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS FOR EACH AUTONOMOUS REGION

Autonomous region	Frequency	Percentage
Andalusia	15	33.33
Castile and Leon	8	17.78
Community of Valencia	5	11.11
Basque Country	4	8.89
Catalonia	3	6.67
Madrid	3	6.67
Murcia	3	6.67
Aragon	1	2.22
Balearics	1	2.22
Galicia	1	2.22
Canary Islands	1	2.22
Navarre	1	2.22



victimization, especially on school bullying, with 7 of 10 studies analyzing this type. The fact that only 7% of the reviewed studies provide data on the accumulation of various forms of victimization means that a limited view is offered of the reality of victimization in childhood, underestimating the potential associated psychopathological effects, since other forms of victimization that the child may be suffering, in addition to the one being assessed are not taken into account (Finkelhor et al., 2007). It is necessary to carry out studies on the different forms of victimization other than that committed by peers, including the types where the perpetrators are often unknown (such as conventional crimes), adults in the child's environment (such as victimization by caregivers or sexual victimization) or even siblings, both in children and adolescents. In this sense, the fear of reporting can partly explain this limitation, as studies that include forms of victimization other than school bullying may describe situations that are offenses under our law, with the inevitable ethical and legal implications that this may have for the researcher.

Secondly, the lack of standardized assessment instruments with robust psychometric properties prevents a comprehensive investigation of child victimization. In 20% of the studies reviewed, researchers created their own ad hoc instruments, adapting them to the objectives of their study in terms of how they intend to assess victimization, without considering the validity of the data obtained or the difficulty that this method causes for national and international comparisons of the results obtained (Hamby & Finkelhor, 2000).

Additionally, regarding a limitation that can be applied to other contexts in social sciences, most of the studies on child and adolescent victimization have been published in journals with little international projection, with some exceptions, a fact that prevents the research carried out in Spain from being known by the global scientific community. The studies need to be presented in international scientific forums and to be enriched by expert reviews from other cultures and countries, a consequence that, unfortunately, is only achieved through publication in international journals.

At the methodological level, the lack of information regarding the time period in which the victimization was assessed, the type of sample used and the use of convenience samples are added limitations. As positive indicators, the inclusion of boys and girls in a similar percentage, data collection from children under the age of 12 in about half of the studies or the use of a significant sample size, over 500 subjects, in more than half of the studies, illustrate the interest that has been raised in Spain on the study of victimization in childhood and also the effort that has been devoted to the analysis of this type of experience.

As proposals arising from the study conducted, it is worth noting the need to come to an agreement regarding the criteria used in the definition of the multiple forms of child victimization, since the inclusion of concepts and behaviors that are different in each of the studies hinders the understanding between

researchers and the subsequent comparison between studies. Also, the use of standardized and comprehensive instruments is a must in this area. While there are not many published instruments that enable us to carry out an overall assessment of child victimization and that are appropriate to the children's age and ability to comprehend, the recent Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire stands out (JVQ; Finkelhor et al., 2005), which is starting to be applied in our country. In the same vein, it would be of interest to create a guide for conducting epidemiological studies that would facilitate the establishment of a set of criteria to follow when a researcher wishes to carry out one of these studies, just as there are, for example, guidelines for the publication of systematic reviews (see Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009).

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