

Youth violence declining in UK

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Physical violence among young people is on the decline overall in nearly thirty countries including the UK, according to a new international study involving researchers from the University of Hertfordshire.

Youth violence is a major concern in most countries with physical fighting being the most common sign of such violence. The study's findings show that investment in [violence prevention](#) programmes and other support networks do make a difference for the world's youth.

Professor Fiona Brooks, at the University of Hertfordshire's Centre for Research in Primary and Community Care, said: "Over the last decade in the UK, a wide range of programmes have been made available to [healthcare workers](#) and educators to reduce violence and associated triggers.

"These programmes have proven effective and have helped to lower the rates of violence in the UK. Such programmes include developing life skills in children and young people, working with young people who are potentially violent, as well as reducing the availability and misuse of alcohol."

In addition, many schools across England have signed up to the [UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award](#). This is a UK-wide initiative which helps schools to use the United Nations Convention on the [Rights of the Child](#) at the heart of a school's values. It teaches the rights and respects in all school relationships: not only those between teachers and their [pupils](#), but also between pupils. Evidence suggests that this

programme may reduce bullying and also help create a more supportive school culture which helps protect young people from developing a tendency towards violence.

Although violence among young people dropped in the UK and the majority of countries in the study, Ukraine, Latvia and Greece were the only countries that did not show a reduction in [youth violence](#) among young people. This could be a reflection of the instability and turmoil these countries have experienced in recent years.

A variety of factors predict the occurrence of violence among young people according to the study. These include:

- being born male
- living in low income countries
- living in more violent cultures with higher murder rates
- engaging in risk-taking behaviours including tobacco, marijuana and/or alcohol use
- victimisation by bullying.

The in-depth results from the study will influence decisions in directing resources to these adolescent groups which are at risk of using violence. Strategies include family-based training, minimising violence in public media, and school-based anti-violence programs and counselling.

More information:

www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2012-1614

Provided by University of Hertfordshire

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