Neural Basis of Social Cognition in Chronic-Victims of Bullying

Published: 13-05-2020
Last updated: 10-04-2024

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Ethical review	Approved WMO
Status	Pending
Health condition type	Other condition
Study type	Observational non invasive

Summary

ID

NL-OMON49139

Source
ToetsingOnline

Brief title
Social Cognitions and Attention for Victims (SCARS)

Condition

- Other condition

Synonym
n/a

Health condition

geen aandoening

Research involving
Human

Sponsors and support

Primary sponsor: Universiteit Leiden
Source(s) of monetary or material Support: NWA Startimpuls

Intervention

Keyword: Bullying, Chronic victim, Neuroscience, Social cognition

Outcome measures

Primary outcome

Differences in brainstructure and -functioning related to social cognitive processes.

MRI scans:

-Structural MRI to acquire information on the attributes of gray and white matter (volume, density, and cortical thickness).

-Functional MRI to acquire information on task-related brain activity during social-cognitive processes.

Tasks and questionnaires:

-The participants will fill in questionnaires about rejection sensitivity, social anticipation, intent attribution, bullying and victimisation, mindset, mental health and perspective taking.

-The participants will perform tasks about attention, emotion recognition and behavior towards others.

-Parents of participants will, if they are willing, fill in questionnaires

about the well-being of their child, the social skills of their child and

emotion regulation of their child.

Secondary outcome

See above.

Study description

Background summary

Victims of bullying have been found to have higher levels of mental health problems (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010; Moore et al., 2017). On average, bullying interventions are effective in decreasing the amount of bullying and victimization in schools, particularly in elementary schools (Gaffney, Ttofi, & Farrington, 2018). Although interventions are effective in decreasing victimization, some victims (± 4%) remain victimized (Kaufman, Kretschmer, Huitsing, & Veenstra, 2018). These chronic victims in intervention schools experience more mental health symptoms (e.g., depressive and social anxiety symptoms) compared to chronic victims in control schools (Garandeau, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2018; Kaufman et al., 2018). In other words, victims are generally worse off, but victims who remain victimized in schools with anti-bullying interventions are even worse off (which is now called the healthy context paradox). Therefore, it is crucial to understand chronic victimization processes better, to be able to improve interventions. School-wide intervention programs typically address group-processes, but focus less on the social cognitions of individuals, whereas victims have been found to have a more negative social-cognitive style (Crawford & Manassis, 2011; Fox & Boulton, 2005; Kellij, Lodder, van den Bedem, Güro*lu, & Veenstra, n.d.). However, the neural processes underlying social cognition in chronic victims remains unclear. The aim of this project is thus to examine the behavioral responses in social-cognitive tasks and the associated neural processes in chronic victims of bullying. Generated knowledge of this project may help to improve interventions by finding new angles to tackle victimization of bullying and to increase resilience in chronic victims against developing internalizing problems over time.

Study objective

The overall aim of the project is to better understand processes of chronic victimization through neurobiology and behavior. To this end, the first and main goal is to investigate the underlying neurobiology of chronic victimization in late childhood, including whether chronic victimization is

associated with neural sensitivity to social experiences. The second goal is to examine behavioral social-cognitive patterns in chronic victims and to examine to what extent chronic victims differ from previous and non-victims.

Study design

This is a cross-sectional study that combines neural responses with behavioral assessments. Participants will perform computerized tasks related to social cognition, and neural activity will be measured using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). We will use structural MRI to measure underlying anatomical processes. Additionally, a battery of tasks will be administered outside of the scanner to assess social and cognitive functioning. Also the parents will be asked to fill in some questionnaires. All of these are non-invasive measures.

Study burden and risks

No known risks are associated with the participation in the proposed measurements. MRI scanning is a non-invasive technique without catheterizations or introduction of exogenous traces. Many children and adults have undergone MRI studies without any apparent harmful consequences, as long as the absolute contra-indications are adhered. Absolute contra-indications include the presence of intra-cranial or intraocular metal or a pacemaker. A relative contra-indication is claustrophobia. Some people experience claustrophobia while inside the scanner, if this happens during the study it will be terminated immediately at the subject*s request. Although the participants do not receive direct benefits from participation, there are greater benefits for society from the knowledge that could be gained from the proposed research. This knowledge is needed to better understand chronic victimization and be able to improve anti-bullying interventions to better aid chronic victims.

Contacts

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Trial sites

Listed location countries

Netherlands

Eligibility criteria

Age
Adolescents (12-15 years)
Adolescents (16-17 years)
Children (2-11 years)

Inclusion criteria

Fluent Dutch speaker
9 to 12 years of age
Attending a school implementing the anti-bullying intervention KiVa
Attending 6th, 7th or 8th grade of a Dutch Elementary school
Have a chronic/previous/no peer victimization history

Exclusion criteria

Having a history of neurological disease or current use of psychotropic medications
Having a contraindication for MRI (such as metal implants, heart arrhythmia, claustrophobia).
Having an IQ lower than 70

Study design

Design

Study type: Observational non invasive
Masking: Open (masking not used)

Control:	Uncontrolled
Primary purpose:	Other

Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status:	Pending
Start date (anticipated):	01-02-2020
Enrollment:	105
Type:	Anticipated

Ethics review

Approved WMO

Date:	13-05-2020
Application type:	First submission
Review commission:	METC Leiden-Den Haag-Delft (Leiden) metc-ldd@lumc.nl

Approved WMO

Date:	22-10-2020
Application type:	Amendment
Review commission:	METC Leiden-Den Haag-Delft (Leiden) metc-ldd@lumc.nl

Study registrations

Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL71576.058.19