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Destructive Conflict
and Bullying at Work

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Survey report: Destructive conflict and bullying at work

This report brings you the results of the first nation wide survey of workplace bullying to be undertaken across a number of occupations and industrial sectors in Britain. With this report it is possible to establish a comprehensive and reliable picture of the problem and its outcomes. For individuals as well as organisations these results should provide sufficient ammunition to put the issue firmly on the organisational agenda. Moreover, by studying these and other results previously available, organisations may be able to put in place mechanisms to prevent and reduce the prevalence of the problem.

Report overview:

- Background
- Survey participants and sample
- Prevalence of bullying
- The experience of bullying, targets and perpetrators
- Negative behaviours and bullying
- Coping with bullying
- Mediating factors – styles of management and stress
- Individual outcomes of bullying
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Background

Many studies, in Britain and abroad, have in recent years identified bullying at work to be an occupational problem of significant magnitude (Rayner, 1997; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). It is also suggested that large sums of money may be wasted due to destructive conflict and bullying at work. Increased sickness absenteeism may be one such cost factor, reduced productivity resulting from lower morale, and poor performance another. Recently we have also seen an increasing number of litigation cases where bullying has been identified as the main source of complaint.

In order to provide a reliable picture of the scale and severity of workplace bullying and its effects on individuals and organisations a research protocol was developed. At the suggestion of Diana Lamplugh of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, we took our research application to the British Occupational Health Research Foundation (BOHRF) which kindly agreed to fund the study.

In order to provide the researchers with useful advice throughout the study as well as aiding the process of gaining access to a large number of organisations, a study advisory board was established. Chairman of the advisory board was Lord Monkswell, sponsor of the ‘Dignity at Work Act’. In addition to representatives from the CBI and the TUC, the advisory board comprised individuals representing

leading private companies, and professional associations as well as voluntary organisations particularly concerned with the issue of workplace bullying, notably the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and the Andrea Adams Trust. (Appendix 1).

Survey participants and sample

In order to identify a broad and representative sample a considerable amount of effort was put into negotiating access to organisations and their members. Out of approximately 200 organisations 70 responded positively to our request. These organisations, whose participation has made this study possible, cover a wide range of occupations and industries spanning the public, the private as well as the voluntary sector. Taken together these organisations have more than one million employees.

A procedure for obtaining a representative and random sample, taking into account possible constraints of a practical nature, was developed by the researchers and applied by the participating organisations' personnel / human resources departments. In accordance with this procedure, 12,350 questionnaires were distributed to the selected individuals who were asked to fill in the questionnaire and return it directly by mail to the researchers. This procedure guaranteed full anonymity for the participants and confidential handling by the researchers. More than 5,300 questionnaires were returned giving a total response-rate of 43.40. When incomplete questionnaires and those reaching the researchers after the deadline were deducted from this number, 5,288 were retained for analysis.

Table 1: Survey sample

Area of work	Total sample	Returned quests-	Response rate %
NHS Trusts	1,069	535	50.5
Post/Tele.	1,000	273	27.3
Civil Serv.	250	141	56.4
Higher Edu.	1,072	487	45.4
Teaching	1,000	426	42.6
Local Authority	924	388	42.0
Manufact./Eng.	177	82	46.3
Manufact. IT	475	189	39.8
Brewery	160	68	42.5
Pharmaceutic	350	197	56.3
(Total manuf)	(1,162)	(536)	(46.1)
Hotels	493	163	32.7
Retailing	855	354	41.4
Banking	820	262	32.0
Voluntary Org	317	123	38.8
Dance	196	85	43.4
Police Service	1,000	483	48.3
Fire Service	1,167	520	44.6
Prison	1,000	471	47.1
SMS	25		
Total sample	12,350	5,288	42.8%

These figures conceal large variations across sub-samples (occupational groups/ industrial sectors).

The sample details presented below show that men were slightly over-represented. The age-distribution generally follows a normal distribution curve with the largest group of respondents belonging to the 35-44 age group. Less than 3% reported themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority. Most of the respondents held a full-time, permanent contract and over 60% had been in their present job for more than 4 years. Compared to industry in general, people in professional or managerial jobs appear to be over-represented.

Sample details

The respondents were asked to ‘tick the box that best describe yourself or your situation’.

1. Sex	
Male:	52.4%
Female:	47.6%
2. How old are you	
16 – 24	5.2%
25 – 34	24.1%
35 – 44	36.3%
45 – 54	26.4%
55 – 70	7.9%
3. Please state your ethnicity	
White:	97.1%
Afro-Caribbean	0.7%
Asian	1.1%
Chinese	0.2%
Other	0.8%
4. You are contracted to work	
Full-time	84.9%
Part-time	15.1%
5. Your contract is (Uniformed services excluded):	
Permanent	91.6%
Short-term	7.6%
Sub-contracted	0.8%
6. How would you describe your job? (Uniformed services excluded)	
Manual	13.8%
Clerical/admin	21.3%
Technical	7.2%
Professional/Managerial	47.5%
Other	10.0%
7. At which level in the organisation do you work?	
Worker (without supervisory responsibility)	41.0%
Foreman/woman or Supervisor	2.2%
Middle management	22.9%
Senior management	7.5%
Other	6.3%
8. How long have you been in your present job?	
Under 1 year	16.6%
1–3 years	22.4%
4–5 years	10.6%
More than 5 years	50.5%

Prevalence of workplace bullying

In order to establish the scale of bullying we provided the participants with a definition of workplace bullying often used in bullying studies (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996). This definition emphasises the negative, persistent and long-term nature of the experience of bullying.

“We define bullying as a situation where one or several individuals persistently over a period of time perceive themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one or several persons, in a situation where the target of bullying has difficulty in defending him or herself against these actions. We will not refer to a one-off incidents as bullying.”

To establish the scale and intensity of the bullying experience, the above definition was immediately followed by the following question:

“Using the above definition, please state whether you have been bullied at work over the last six months”.

A total of 553 people report that they had been bullied over the last six months. As far as the persistency of their experience is concerned, the respondents fell into the following categories:

No	Yes, very rarely	Yes, now & then	Yes, several times a month	Yes, several times a week	Yes, almost daily
89.4%	1.9%	6.2%	1.0%	0.8%	0.6%

From this we can conclude that **10.5%** or approximately **one in ten people** have been bullied in the last six months.

Table 2: Prevalence of bullying – per sector

Area of work	Bullied Now (10.5)	Bullied last 5 years (24.4)	Witnessed last 5 years (45.2)
NHS Trusts	10.5	24.9	46.2
Post/Tele-	15.8	27.1	47.6
Civil Service	9.9	25.5	46.1
Higher Education	7.2	21.1	41.9
Teaching	15.5	35.4	54.5
Local Authority	10.3	21.4	41.2
Manufact. - Engin.	9.8	22.2	51.2
Brewing industry	1.5	10.3	35.3
Manufacturing IT	4.2	22.2	44.4
Pharmaceutical ind.	2.5	17.8	28.4
Hotel industry	7.4	16.6	45.4
Retailing	6.8	17.5	33.1
Banking	11.5	24.0	38.5
Voluntary Orgs.	11.0	24.7	52.8
Dance	14.1	28.2	48.2
Police Service	12.0	29.0	45.1
Fire Service	8.8	19.8	42.5
Prison	15.9	31.6	62.0

The table above shows that bullying varies greatly between sectors and occupations with employees within the prison service, post and telecommunications, school-teaching and the dance profession being most at risk. The opposite appears to be true for the pharmaceutical industry and the IT industry. However, the samples for these groups were less representative and we, therefore, need to be careful and not read too much into these differences. The fact that both pharmaceutical and IT industries have a considerable number of people reporting themselves as having been bullied within the last 5 years suggests that these sectors are far from ‘bully-proof’.

Table 2 also seems to suggest that bullying is more prevalent in the public than in the private sector. Again we will argue that care needs to be demonstrated when the figures are interpreted. In a nutshell, the samples of the public sector were generally larger and more representative than those of the private sector.

How does this result compare with other studies?

Present study (all bullied)	UNISON (1997)	Norway Einarsen & Skogstad (1996)
10.5%	18.3%	8.6%

A direct comparison is difficult to make as the problem is often measured in

a different manner. Where results are comparable, (e.g. Einarsen and Skogstad's large scale study) the figures show that bullying is more prevalent in the UK than, say, Norway, though not to a dramatic extent.

The experience of bullying – targets and perpetrators

12% of women as opposed to 10% of men report themselves as being bullied. Only in a few industries can we say that women are over-represented among targets, notably in higher education, the fire service and the voluntary sector.

As with sex, age seems to be of little importance with regard to prevalence of bullying. However, younger employees and those in the middle-age band are slightly more at risk than older employees.

16-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-70 years	All
14.0%	10.5%	13.0%	12.0%	8.8%	10.5%

Organisational level of targets

Workers (no Supervisory Responsibility)	Foreman/ Woman	Middle Management	Senior Management	Other
10%	9%	11%	9%	11%

The fact that bullying appears to be equally likely to affect a manager as to a worker comes as a surprise to the researchers. However, with growing pressures applied to all levels of the organisation, combined with greater accountability and responsibility given to middle line-management, stress and frustration may increasingly be taken out on subordinates. A managerial training deficit in some organisations may also account for some of the explanation.

Table 3: Organisational level of target – per sector

Area of work	Workers	Foreman/ woman	Middle manager	Senior manager	Other
NHS Trusts	9.4	10.9	14.7	7.4	9.8
Post/Telecomm.	19.5	8.3	0.0	0.0	8.7
Civil Service	12.9	0.0	7.8	9.2	15.8
Higher Edu.	4.8	13.3	8.7	7.7	5.9
Teachin	13.5	18.1	12.2	16.6	22.6
Local Authority	8.9	8.9	14.3	11.2	12.5
Total Manufact.	4.8	4.3	3.8	5.6	1.6
Hotel industry	9.4	2.8	11.7	0.0	15.4
Retailing	5.6	4.0	8.7	7.7	13.2
Banking	9.8	10.0	14.3	10.5	10.6
Voluntary Orgs.	10.3	7.1	17.3	0.0	11.8
Dance	18.5	33.3	17.6	0.0	10.3
Police Service*	12.2	10.6	19.5	0.0	N/A
Fire Service**	10.2	9.3	5.3	5.6	16.7
Prison Service	14.8	19.4	15.5	18.5	0.0

* Constable/Sergeant/Inspector/Chief Inspector

** Employee without managerial responsibility (fire-fighter, fire-control operator, clerical, admin)/Junior management (leading fire-fighter, sub-officer, leading fire-control operator & equivalent administrative staff)/Middle management/Senior management/Other.

Organisational level of perpetrators

Managers	Colleagues	Subordinate(s)	Client(s)
75%	37%	7%	8%

Table 4 : Organisation level of perpetrators - per sector

Area of work	Supervisor/ Manager	Colleague	Subordinate	Client, student etc
NHS Trusts	64.3	53.6	7.1	10.7
Post/Tele-communic.	79.1	37.2	2.3	2.3
Civil Service	71.4	35.7	7.1	0.0
Higher Education	62.9	51.4	11.4	2.9
Teaching	86.4	21.2	3.0	18.2
Local Authority	67.5	35.0	5.0	10.0
Total Manufact.	81.8	18.2	0.0	0.0
Hotel industry	58.3	41.7	0.0	16.7
Retailing	70.8	33.3	4.2	20.8
Banking	80.0	36.7	13.3	6.7
Voluntary Orgs.	69.2	38.5	23.1	15.4
Dance	75.0	33.3	8.3	0.0
Police Service	81.0	34.5	3.4	1.7
Fire Service	76.1	30.4	15.2	2.2
Prison Service	74.7	42.7	6.7	8.0

In line with previous UK studies of workplace bullying, the above figures suggest that bullying is predominantly linked to managerial behaviour. The onus can, therefore, be seen to be on management with respect to starting to deal with the problem.

A substantial number of respondents identify a colleague as the perpetrator. From previous studies of the problem we know that it is very difficult to remain neutral in cases of bullying. It is, therefore, possible that colleagues, who fear becoming targeted themselves, may decide not to get involved and may be seen as taking the side of the bully in the eyes of the target. For the same reason some individuals may play an active part in the bullying. However, it is beyond doubt that in some incidents people resort to bullying behaviour or behaviour which may be construed as bullying against a co-worker. Whatever the rationale behind such behaviour, unions and staff associations need to adopt a clear position against such behaviour. Not surprisingly clients are identified as an important perpetrator group in some sectors.

Numbers and sex of perpetrator

Table 5: Number & sex of perpetrator

Men bullied by other men exclusively	61%	Women bullied by other women exclusively	36%
Men bullied by women exclusively	9%	Women bullied by men exclusively	28.50%
Men bullied by men and women	25%	Women bullied by men and women	32.5%

Much of these differences may be explained with reference to characteristics of labour markets where men and women still tend to work together predominantly with other individuals of their own gender. As most perpetrators are to be found within managerial ranks and most managers are still male, these differences do not come as a surprise.

How many were bullied - ‘singled out’ or bullied in group

From previous UK studies of workplace bullying we know that not all those who report themselves as having being bullied have been singled out for mistreatment. Here is what we found:

Table 6: Bullying experience

How many were bullied?	Present study	UNISON (1998)
Only you	31.2%	11.2
You and several other work- colleagues	54.9%	
Everyone in your work group	14.8%	31.2

These figures suggest that a smaller group than has been previously identified (e.g. UNISON, 1997) report themselves as having been bullied together with their entire workgroup. It may be argued that, where everyone seemingly is being exposed to bullying, we may be talking about a repressive work-regime operating more on a collective as opposed to an individual level.

The table below shows a considerable variation across sectors.

Table 7: Singled out or bullied in a group - per sector

Area of work	Only you	You plus colleague/s	Everyone in group
NHS Trusts	28.6	55.4	16.0
Post/Tele-corn.	23.3	67.4	9.3
Civil Service	28.6	50.0	21.4
Higher Education	31.4	60.0	13.6
Teachi	25.8	60.6	13.6
Local Authority	35.0	42.5	22.5
Total Manufact.	22.7	59.1	18.2
Hotel industry	41.7	50.0	8.3
Retailing	50.0	41.7	8.3
Banki	26.7	60.0	13.3
Voluntary s.	30.8	53.8	15.4
Dance	25.0	50.0	25.0
Police Service	41.4	43.1	15.5
Fire Service	41.3	45.7	13.0
Prison Service	23.0	58.1	18.9

Bullying – a prolonged experience

A defining feature of workplace bullying is the duration of the experience which is seen as playing an essential part in the damage bullying seems to inflict on the target

Table 8 : The duration of the bullying experience (n=549)

When did the bullying start?	All bullied	Men	Women
Within the last 6 months	16.8	14.4	19.1
Between 6 & 12 months ago	16.4	13.7	19.1
Between 1 and 2 years ago	27.5	28.9	26.3
More than 2 years ago	39.3	43.0	35.6

From this we can conclude that bullying is a drawn out affair which for two out of three (66.8%) targets of bullying goes on for more than a year, and for approximately 40% for more than two years.

Respondents' experience of negative behaviour

Prior to exploring perceptions of whether they had been bullied or not, we presented the participants with a list of 29 negative behaviours which have frequently been identified with bullying. Comparing the experience of those currently bullied with the rest of the sample the following behaviours were encountered on a regular basis (monthly, weekly or daily).

Table 9: Top negative acts

Negative Behaviours – regular exposure	% Currently Bullied	% Not Currently Bullied
Having your opinions and views ignored	53.6	9.9
Someone withholding information which affects your performance	49.9	17.2
Being exposed to an unmanageable workload	45.9	18.4
Being given tasks with unreasonable or impossible targets or deadlines	38.4	14.4
Being ordered to do work below competence	36.4	11.8
Being ignored or facing hostility when you approach	34.9	2.4
Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with our work	33.8	3.2
Being ignored or facing hostility when you approach	32.6	3.4
Excessive monitoring of your work	31.5	7.0
Spreading gossip	31.1	4.6
Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person (i.e. habits and background), your attitudes or our private life	30.6	4.3
Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks	29.2	7.3

For the total sample, behaviours related to what we may refer to as ‘personal derogation’, were those found to be most closely connected with bullying. Examples of such behaviours are: ‘Attempts to find fault with your work’, ‘Being humiliated and ridiculed in connection with work’ and ‘spreading of gossip and rumours about you’.

What do targets do when faced with bullying?

Whilst 34.4% of targets reported that they ‘confronted the bully’, 12,5% responded that they ‘did nothing’. The action most commonly reported by targets of bullying was ‘discussing the problem with work colleagues’, followed by ‘discussing the problem with friends and family’. Some of the results are shown in table 10. From these figures it appears to be obvious that for many individuals neither personnel nor the union or staff association seem to be viable options when one is faced with bullying. Comparing the responses from all those reporting themselves as having been bullied with those currently bullied (last six months) shows that, in general, the currently bullied group appears to be the more active in seeking support. These findings may suggest that the climate is changing with regard to organisational responsiveness to the problem. However, it is also possible that those bullied at present have a stronger

need to portray themselves as pro-active with regard to their own behaviour in order to bolster their self-esteem.

Table 10 : Coping strategies

If you have been bullied, what did you do?	All bullied last 5 years	Currently bullied
1. Confronted the bully	34.4	40.9
2. Went to the union/staff association	16.7	24.4
3. Went to personnel	11.1	12.7
4. Discussed it with colleagues	47.3	63.3
5. Went to occupational health	2.6	4.0
6. Went to the welfare department	2.9	4.2
7. Saw my doctor (GP)	10.3	15.6
8. Discussed it with friends/family	38.0	51.5
9. Made use of the organisation's grievance procedure	8.1	9.2
10. Did nothing	12.5	14.6

Bullying and styles of management

All respondents were asked to rate their manager or supervisor on a number of characteristics identified with different management styles. These characteristics were typical examples of behaviours identified with the following styles of management or styles of leadership: Autocratic, divisive, laissez-faire and non-contingent punishment (all negative styles). Noncontingent punishment refers to a punitive management style where the punishment seem to be unrelated or not contingent upon the behaviour of the subordinate. The positive styles measured were participative leadership, integrity of manager and individualised consideration. The last of these refers to the extent the manager look after the needs of the individual.

We divided the sample into four groups: 'currently bullied', 'previously bullied', 'witnessed bullying only' and 'neither bullied nor witnessed bullying'. Overall we found that the experience of bullying was associated with higher scores on the items associated with 'negative' management styles, and lower scores on the 'positive management styles'. For the 'neither bullied nor witnessed bullying' group the result was exactly the opposite, with relatively high scores on the behaviour identified with positive management styles and low scores on the styles considered to be negative. The two groups 'previously bullied' and 'witnessed bullying' reported a very similar experience, with all scores at a level between the two other groups, though more similar to the non-bullied than the 'currently bullied' group. A graphic illustration of this relationship is given in appendix 2. The near identical graphs of the two middle groups is illustrated by the fact that only three lines graphs are clearly visible, with the two middle lines largely overlapping.

Bullying is associated with a negative work environment

Independently of posing questions about the experience of bullying, we asked respondents a number of questions with regard to their work-environment using questions from a standardised stress-questionnaire, the Pressure Management Indicator (PMI). Bullying was found to be associated with a negative work-climate, high workload and unsatisfactory relationships at work. When the sample was divided into four groups following the same procedure as for management styles, it was found that those who are ‘currently bullied’ reported the least satisfactory work-environment, followed by ‘previously bullied’, ‘witnesses’ and ‘neither witnessed nor being bullied’. In the tables below we are comparing these scores with normative scores for the general population as generated from previous studies using the same instrument. All scores refer to mean values. We have also included the response to a number of questions about possible recent organisational events.

Table 11: Sources of pressures in your job (mean scores)

Item	Currently bullied	Previously Bullied	Witness Bullying	Neither W nor B	Norm	P
Workload	23.17	21.36	19.94	17.95	17.54	< 0.001
Organisational climate	17.95	15.93	15.27	13.64	13.24	< 0.001
Relationship	35.47	29.15	27.36	24.70	25.78	< 0.001

In the next table we have combined the data for the three groups which consists of the responses of those who are currently not bullied. Dividing the currently bullied group (n=553) into two groups: **occasionally bullied** (rarely, ‘now and then’ and monthly) and **regularly bullied** (weekly or daily) produced the following results:

Table 12: Sources of pressures in your job (mean scores)

Item	Occasionally bullied	Regularly bullied	Not currently bullied	Norm	P
Workload	23.14	23.42	19.06	17.54	< 0.001
Organisational climate	17.83	18.80	14.45	13.24	< 0.001
Relationship	35.21	37.16	26.17	25.78	< 0.001

Comparing the two groups of currently bullied individuals, we found that in all cases those regularly bullied were identified with higher scores or more negative outcomes. However, only in the case of ‘relationship’ at work was the difference between the scores of the two groups statistically different. For both bullied groups we can see that the scores are way above the norms of for the general population.

Bullying and change

We asked people whether any on the following events had taken place in their organisation within the last 6 months and had this response:

Table 13: Bullying and organisational events (mean scores)

Item	Currently bullied	Previously Bullied	Witness bullying	Neither W nor B	P
Major organisational change	0.51	0.48	0.48	0.40	< 0.001
Redundancies	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.16	NS
Budget cuts	0.54	0.47	0.49	0.40	< 0.001
Major technological change	0.26	0.22	0.22	0.20	< 0.001
Major internal restructuring	0.50	0.47	0.45	0.38	< 0.001
Change of management	0.53	0.47	0.45	0.38	< 0.001

With the exception of ‘redundancies’, we found a statistically significant relationship between exposure to bullying and various events frequently linked with organisational change. The association between bullying and organisational events appears to be strongest for ‘change of management’. This confirms previous findings (e.g. UNISON, 1997) which suggest that bullying often coincides with change of management. In the case of ‘major organisational change’, ‘budget cuts’ and ‘major internal restructuring’ the scores for the ‘witness’ group also happen to be statistically significantly different from those who have neither witnessed nor experienced bullying. 15

This should suggest that the association between bullying and organisational change cannot simply be explained with reference to dissatisfaction and the present state of mind of those currently bullied.

Outcomes of bullying

When we discuss potential outcomes of bullying, it is necessary to be aware of the difficulty in establishing the relationship between cause and effect in what we refer to as cross-sectional studies. The best we can do is to pinpoint eventual strength of association between factors or variables we are investigating.

Below we show results which emerged when we did a similar analysis of the data as we did in the case of management style and work environment variables, namely dividing the total sample into the four groups: ‘currently bullied’, ‘previously bullied’, ‘witnessed bullying’ and ‘neither bullied not witnessed bullying’.

To measure mental and physical health we used two heavily validated instruments frequently used in studies in the UK, the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and

the Occupational Stress Indicator (OSI). From the results it appears that bullying may have a significant effect on both mental and physical health. Compared with the norms for the general population we find very much higher levels of mental and physical ill health for the currently bullied group than for any other groups. As far as mental health is concerned the average value is well above a threshold level, which suggests that the individual may be in need of screening for potential psychiatric consultation. We would like to stress that what when we use the term mental ill health, we refer to ill health among the normal population at large and not what may be referred to as pathological mental disturbance.

Table 14: Bullying and health (mean scores)

Item	Currently bullied	Previously Bullied	Witness Bullying	Neither W nor B	Norm	P
Mental health – GHQ score	5.61	3.73	2.80	2.23	*	< 0.001
Physical health – OSI score	43.67	38.55	33.98	31.74	30.64	< 0.001

* For the GHQ a score of 4 or above is considered above the level which may imply a need for screening for psychiatric treatment. The figures above suggest that this may be the case for a very high percentage of those who are currently bullied. However, it is not only the currently bullied group who appear to be affected. The previously bullied group also report high levels of physical as well mental ill health. Moreover, the effects seem, to some extent, to extend beyond those directly targeted to include also witnesses of bullying.

Dividing the currently bullied group (n=553) into two groups: occasionally bullied (rarely, ‘now and then’ and monthly) and regularly bullied (weekly or daily) produced the following results:

Table 15: Bullying and health outcomes (bullied group)

Item	Not currently bullied	Occ. Bullied	Regularly bullied	Norm	P
Mental health – GHQ score	2.62	5.45	6.68	*	< 0.001
Physical health – OSI score	33.46	43.26	46.34	30.64	< 0.001

From these figures we may conclude that being regularly exposed to bullying appears to have more health implications than occasional exposure.

Recommendations

- **Establish a culture free of bullying**

Bullying can only thrive when it is condoned, directly or indirectly by management. The fact that most bullies are found within managerial ranks further suggests that in order to develop a work-environment free of bullying, management must critically examine their own practices which may contribute directly and indirectly to bullying. To support a culture shift, it may be necessary to undertake training in general managerial skills, stress management and emotional control and awareness.

- **Introduce effective, safe and fair policies on bullying.**

No organisation is immune from bullying though the scale and intensity of the problem vary greatly between organisations. This suggests that all organisations should have in place policies and procedures which can deal with problems when they occur, and which may act as a deterrent to bullying in the first place. Any anti-bullying policy should provide targets of bullying with a 'safe' reporting procedure, protecting them from possible retribution, whilst at the same time ensuring a fair hearing of the case. Severe or repeated breach of policy should be met with sanctions. However, in order to ensure their effectiveness, a monitoring system needs to be put in place.

- **Confront and challenge abusive and bullying management styles.**

Bullying is often associated with an autocratic, insensitive and even abusive management style. The time has come to challenge seriously 'confrontational' or 'macho' management styles, so often preached by management and business schools embracing an aggressive US style of management. Not only are such styles morally reprehensible, according to the findings of the present study they are also linked to negative organisational outcomes. Instead organisations should embrace cooperative styles of management based on personal and professional qualities such as integrity and consideration for the needs of the individual and the group.

- **Reduce bullying by reducing stress-levels**

Bullying is associated with a negative work-climate, high workload and unsatisfactory relationships. This suggest that organisations may be able to go some way towards resolving or at least minimising the problem of bullying by reducing and controlling stress at work. (It follows that any risk assessment strategy focusing on psychosocial work-hazards should include bullying and victimisation).

- **Situation – not person: Controlling the controllable**

Bullying is a complex issue which needs to be treated with care. Whilst the personalities of offender and target often play a role in cases of bullying, we

consider approaches which focus on the pathology of offender (or target), e.g. by means of screening, to be at best unhelpful. Instead, organisations should focus on those issues or antecedents of bullying which are under their own control and where intervention can be achieved.

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Appendix 1

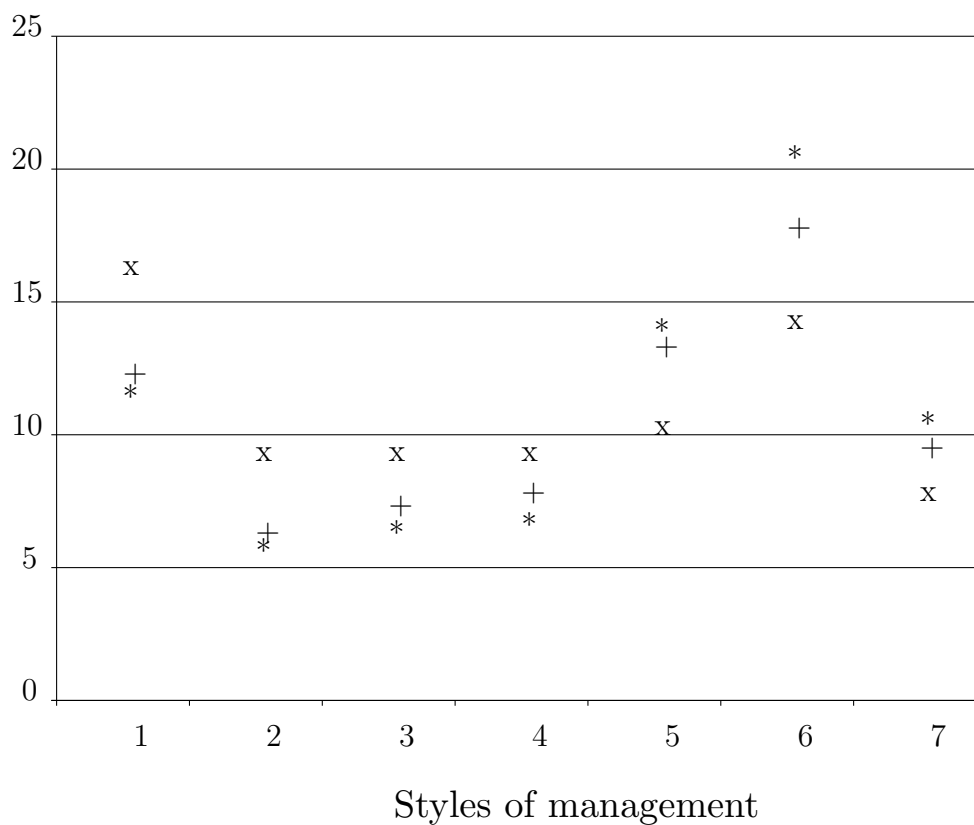
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Appendix 2

Bullying and styles of management

Mean values



- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 autocratic | |
| 2 n-c. punishment | |
| 3 divisive | |
| 4 laissez-faire | |
| 5 integrity | |
| 6 indiv. consideration | |
| 7 participative | |
| | Bullied Now x |
| | Bullied 5 yrs + |
| | Witnessed + |
| | Not B or W * |