



## Background

Timmermanis and Wiener (2011) found that adolescents with ADHD are victimized by peers and participate in bullying others more often than adolescents without ADHD. Among adolescents with ADHD, victimization by peers was strongly associated with social factors including perceived social support and parent-rated peer relations problems. However, as this was the only study examining the association between ADHD and bullying in a solely adolescent sample, we do not have a solid understanding of bullying in this population.

## Research Objectives

- 1) Determine *WHAT* types of bullying adolescents with ADHD are involved in.
- 2) Determine *WHO* are the people they are bullying and being bullied by
- 3) Determine the reasons they provide for *WHY* that are involved in bullying.

## Method

### Sample

- Twenty-one adolescents had a previous diagnosis of ADHD (13 males; 8 females), and 17 (7 males; 10 females) did not have an ADHD diagnosis or significant symptomatology. Participants were between 13 and 18 years of age.
- All participants with ADHD received a diagnosis of ADHD based on DSM-IV criteria and this was verified using the *Conners' Rating Scale-3rd Edition*.

### Measures

The *Comprehensive Bullying Measure*, which was designed for this study, assessed self-reported victimization by peers and participation in bullying others. It was designed using items taken from previously validated questionnaires including the Safe Schools Questionnaire (Craig, 1998), California Bullying Victimization Scale (Felix et al., 2011), Pacific-Rim Bullying Measure (Taki et al., 2006) and Safe Schools Survey (Totten, Quigley & Morgan, 2004).

- **WHAT:** Various types of bullying were assessed including physical, verbal, relational, sexual, cyberbullying and destruction of property.
- **WHO:** Participants were asked to indicate the characteristics (e.g. age, relationship) of the individuals who they bully/are victimized by.
- **WHY:** Participants were also asked about their perception of the reasons they are victimized.

The *Conners' Rating Scale-Third Edition (Conners, 2008)* is a standardized questionnaire used to assess parents' perceptions of their adolescents' DSM-IV inattentive and hyperactive symptoms. Parents rated the adolescents on behaviours using a 4-point scale.

### Procedure

Data was collected as part of a larger program of research conducted by Dr. Judith Wiener at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Questionnaires were administered to adolescents in individual sessions with a graduate student.

# Who? What? Why? An Exploration of Bullying among Adolescents with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

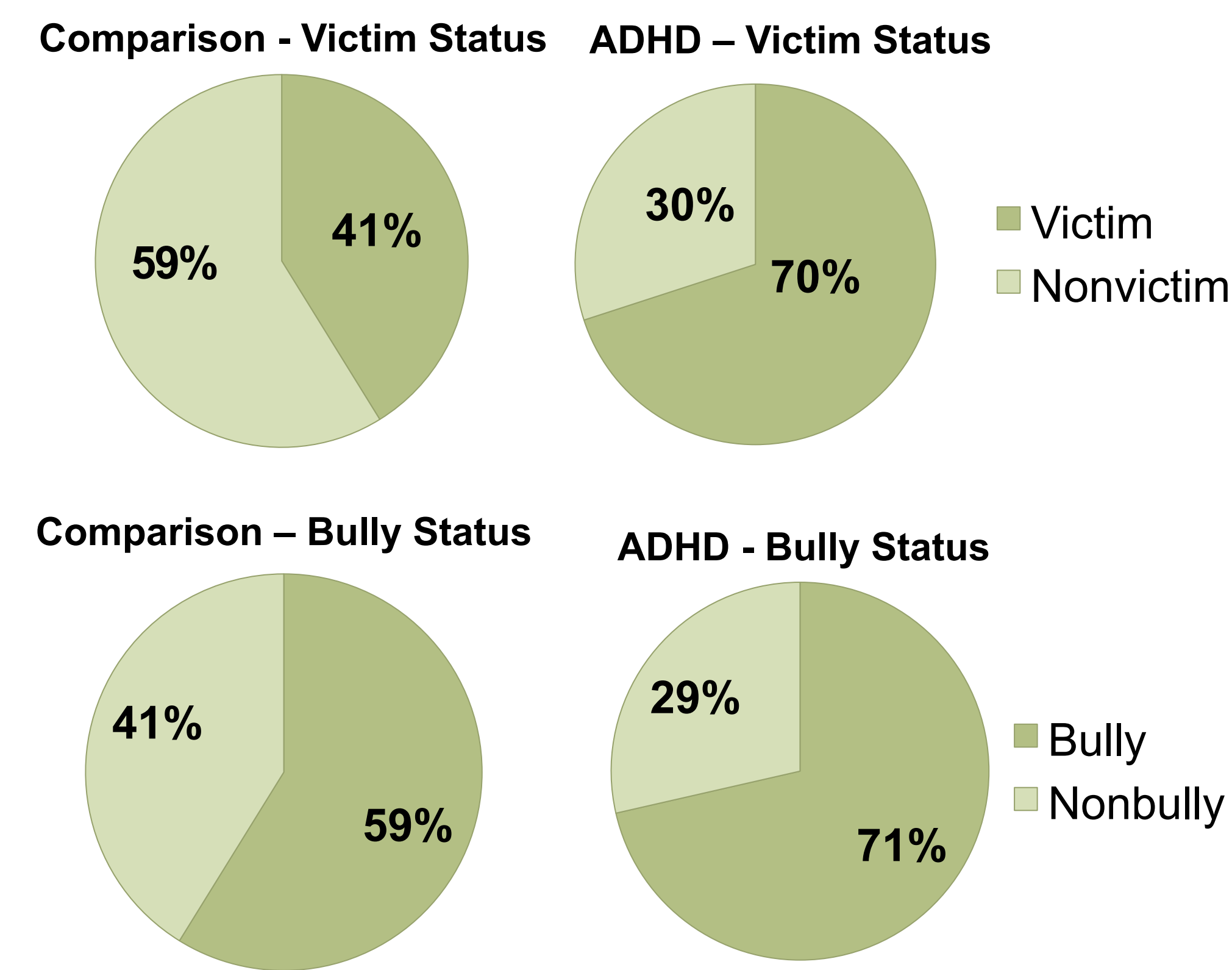
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## Results

### 1) WHAT types of bullying

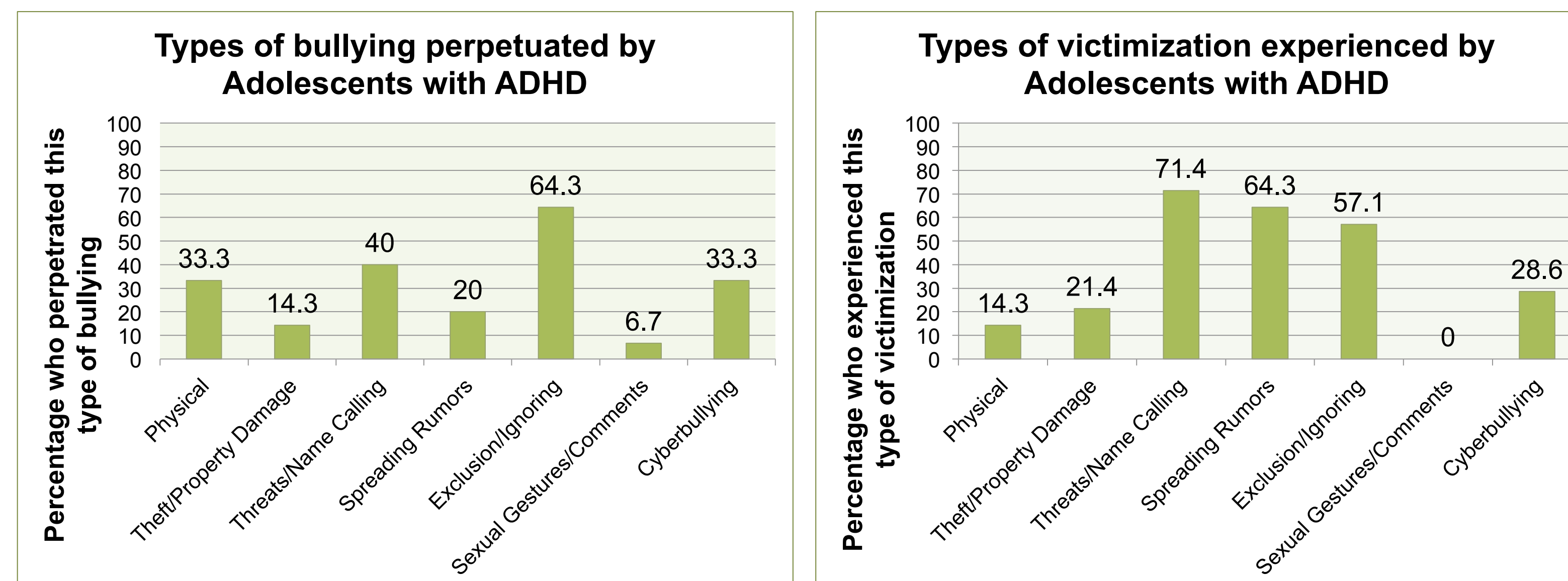
Adolescents were categorized as “victims” or “nonvictims” and “bullies” or “nonbullies” based on whether had experienced any victimization by peers or participated in any bullying of others (irrespective of frequency).



There was a marginally significant trend for adolescents with ADHD to be categorized as victims more often than adolescents without ADHD,  $X^2(1, N=37)=3.11, p=.07$ .

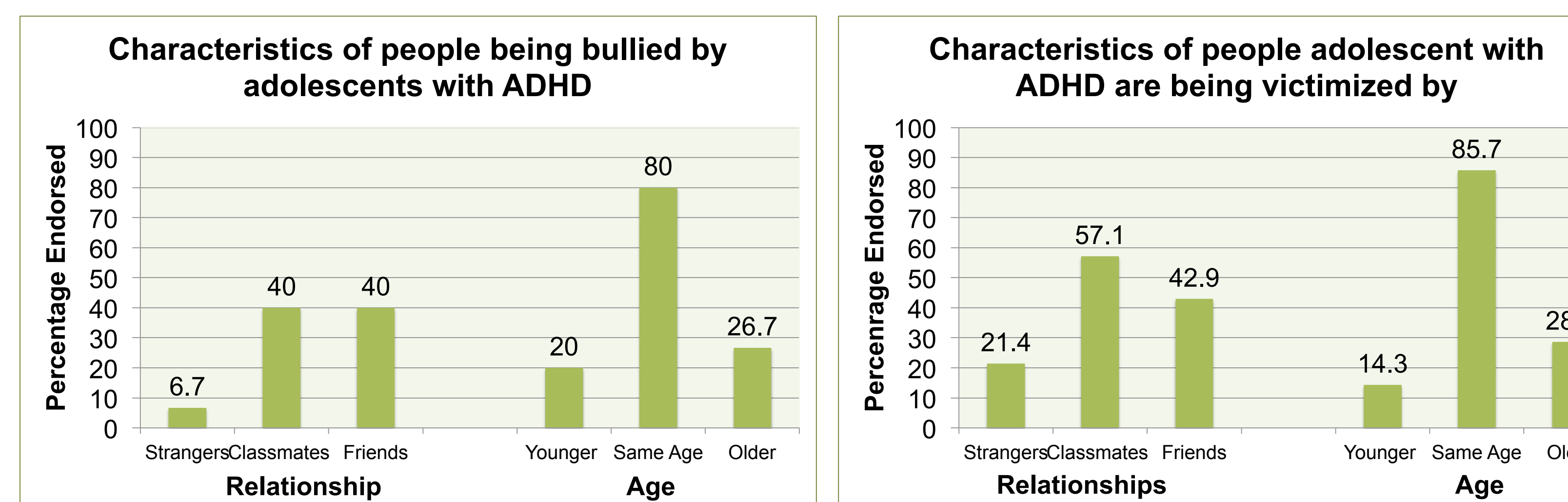
There was no significant difference between adolescents with and without ADHD in terms of categorization as bullies.

The following graphs depict the types of bullying that adolescents with ADHD perpetrated (left) and experienced (right).



### 2) WHO are adolescents with ADHD bullying or being bullied by

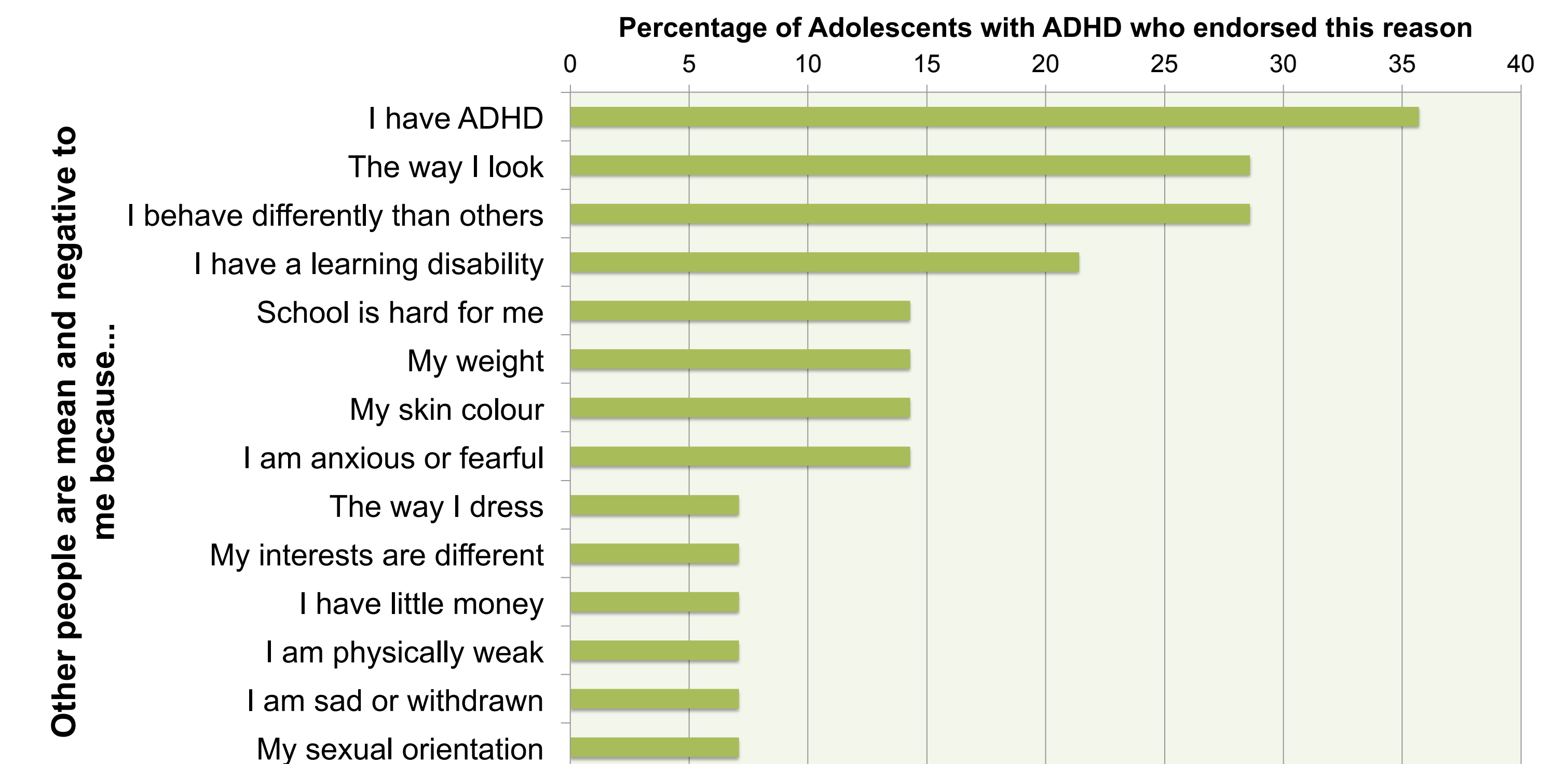
Adolescents with ADHD were asked about the characteristics of the people they they bullied (left) or were victimized by (right).



## Results continued

### 3) Reasons WHY bullied

Adolescents with ADHD were asked why they were thought people “were mean and negative to them”. The following are the most frequently endorsed responses:



## Discussion

- While not statistically significant, trends indicate that adolescents with ADHD experience more victimization and bully others more than adolescents without ADHD.
- The most common type of bullying perpetrated by adolescents with ADHD was relational (e.g., exclusion, ignoring). This was followed by physical, verbal and cyber bullying.
- The most common types of bullying experienced by adolescents with ADHD were verbal (e.g., threats, name calling) and relational (e.g., spreading rumors, exclusion, ignoring).
- Among adolescents with ADHD, a majority of the bullying took place between peers (e.g., classmates and friends) of the same age.
- When adolescents with ADHD were asked why they thought people “were mean and negative to them”, the most commons reasons endorsed were having ADHD, appearance, behaving differently and having a Learning Disability.
- The present study provides preliminary information about the bullying experiences of adolescents with ADHD. Future research should examine protective and risk factors among adolescents with ADHD to inform social interventions for this population.

## References

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