

Young people think friends are more at risk of cyberbullying

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Credit: Petr Kratochvil/public domain

Young people are aware of the risks of cyberbullying but perceive others as being more at risk than themselves. Young women are more vulnerable to this perception than young men.

This is the finding of a study by Dr Lucy Betts and Sondos Metwally from Nottingham Trent University (NTU) that will be presented as part

of the poster presentation session at the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference next week (Thursday 7 May 2015) hosted in Liverpool.

A survey, designed to measure how vulnerable [young people](#) felt to [cyberbullying](#) and how vulnerable they felt compared to other people, was completed by 109 sixth form students (63 females and 46 males aged between 16 and 18 years old).

Analysis showed that sixth form students rated themselves as being at a lower risk of cyberbullying than other groups (friends, students your age, younger students, and strangers). Among these other groups, younger students were identified as those at most risk of becoming a victim of cyberbullying. Girls also had a higher perception of the risks of experiencing cyberbullying than boys.

Dr Betts said: "Our findings suggest that whilst young people are aware of the [potential risks](#) associated with cyberbullying they believe that they are less likely to experience cyberbullying than their peers. This unrealistic perception of invulnerability appears to lead many to think it is something that happens to other people.

"However, given the reported high prevalence rates of cyberbullying in some studies (ranging from 7 - 70 per cent) it may be necessary to implement more measures so that whilst continuing to raise young people's awareness of the risks we also ensure they fully understand that this could actually happen to them."

Provided by British Psychological Society

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