

29<sup>th</sup> World Summit on

# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, MINDFULNESS AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

May 21-22, 2018 | New York, USA

## Evidence-based intervention for reducing reactive-proactive aggression in schoolchildren: Peer counseling and group cognitive behavioral therapy

Annis Lai-Chu Fung

City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Aggressive behavior in middle schools is prevalent and has been an alarming issue worldwide. Most programs designed to reduce aggressive behaviors among school children follow two routes: either by altering the aggressor's inaccurate evaluation of aggression (the social cognition route); or by influencing the aggressor's behavior by providing role models (the social learning routes). The current longitudinal-experimental study aims to investigate the effectiveness of two interventions to reduce aggressive behaviors in youth. The first program followed the social-cognitive route, which adopted a group-based cognitive behavioral therapy to reduce aggression. The second program was based on social learning theory and involved peer counseling. 186 students in Hong Kong, who aged 11-17 ( $M=13.0$ ,  $SD=1.22$ ), participated in this study. After random assignment, 101 students received peer counseling and 85 students received group cognitive behavioral therapy. The peer counseling condition consisted of peer mentoring offered by senior form students for six months, whereas the group cognitive behavioral therapy condition consisted of ten group sessions of 90 minutes each. Participants completed self-report questionnaires at baseline, immediately after, and 6 months after the intervention. Results from  $2 \times 3$  mixed MANOVA indicated that aggressive behaviors and psychopathic traits significantly changed over time. Proactive aggression, general psychopathy, impulsivity, and narcissism declined significantly from baseline to post-test and from baseline to six-month follow-up in the two conditions. Only the peer counseling condition showed significant decline in general and reactive aggression across the three time-points. The study encourages educators and helping professionals to adopt a groundbreaking perspective on differentiating and guiding aggressors in school context.

annis.fung@cityu.edu.hk