

## SUNY Downstate SPH Student Spotlight

*What brought you to the field of Public Health and prompted you to pursue a DrPH degree?*

While doing my undergraduate degree at SUNY Stony Brook I took a class in Women's Studies, where I learned about the sexual violence that women face on a daily basis. The class had a strong impact on me because I have many friends who have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. I became passionate about improving the health of women, which led me to pursue a major in Women's Studies with a focus on Gender, Sexuality, and Public Health. I supplemented that with an additional major in Health Sciences, concentrating in Public Health and Community Health Education. I went on to pursue an MPH in Global Health Practice from the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. There I conducted research and directed my studies on women's sexual and reproductive health abroad. I conducted my field work in Udaipur, India where I worked with an NGO evaluating a post-natal care intervention and the use of Depo-Provera injectable contraceptive.

I decided to come to SUNY Downstate to pursue a DrPH degree in order to develop the skills I will need to advance the sexual and reproductive health of women in New York City and around the world. Specifically, I chose the DrPH because it focuses on the application of research. Working intimately with faculty on their research, as well as performing my own, will give me the opportunity for applied learning and experience in the field.

*What made you choose SUNY Downstate?*

I chose SUNY Downstate for a few reasons: reputation, location, and affordability. SUNY Downstate is a renowned medical institution and learning center, and its reputation precedes itself. The exceptional work of the faculty and staff of the SPH translate this reputation for excellence. After speaking with the faculty in the Department of Community Health Sciences it was very evident that the faculty's passion for their student's success and areas of research fueled the excellence of the school. In my time in the DrPH program I have come to see that this passion leads the faculty to work intimately with and truly mentor the students and help them advance their careers and education. SUNY Downstate also has a prime location in central Brooklyn. It is very accessible for all areas of New York City, and gave me the opportunity to pursue a higher degree while remaining close to home and my family. Similarly, despite its excellent reputation and prime location Downstate remains affordable and will leave me in the strongest possible financial position upon graduation.

*What would you say to a student considering the program?*

I would tell someone who is considering the program to be passionate about hands-on application of public health principles. That means having a genuine commitment

to helping a community, and it means being willing to challenge yourself in your coursework and research.

## Cyber-Bullying: Bullying in the New Age

Abstract # 263723  
 Simran Dhaliwal Emaus, MPH, CPH, JoAnn DiLernia, MPH, CPH,  
 Erin Stirling, BPharm, MPH, CPH, & Jaime Corvill, PhD, MSPH, CPH

### Background

With the increase in technology and telecommunication, cyber-bullying is steadily on the rise (Macdonald & Roberts, 2010). Cyber-bullying is consistently defined as bullying that does not occur in person but through digital or remote media and can therefore "occur" more secretly, spread more rapidly and pervasively more easily than in-person forms of bullying (Shaw & Limber, 2010; Stoeberl & Smith, 2008). This ability to exist indefinitely in one form or another, on the Internet and social networking sites creates an ideal environment for cyber-bullying to impact a person's daily life and well-being. However, while the media has increased attention on cyber-bullying and its consequences, limited scientific research regarding cyber-bullying currently exists.

### Purpose & Methods

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to explore past and present bullying experienced by individuals in a university environment. This presentation focuses on, specifically, the result of cyber-bullying and its growing concern for students.

**Methods:**

- \*An anonymous, online survey was emailed to students, staff, and faculty of the health schools at a large public university.
- \*Randomized surveys were sourced to create the 52-question Multi-level School Bullying Assessment Survey (MLS-BAS).
- \*All survey data was recorded anonymously in an online format using SurveyMonkey®.
- \*Descriptive and analytical statistics were calculated using SAS® software.
- \*Free-type responses were examined using a grounded theory approach.

### Findings

\*1773 students, faculty, or staff from schools of Medicine, Nursing, Physiotherapy, and Public Health received the recruitment email.

- **N = 236** (263 total responses; 27 removed due to missing data).
- Significantly more students reported being cyber-bullied at the current institution than faculty or staff (Figure 1).
- Students also experienced significantly more cyber-bullying at college in general than at high school or elementary/middle school (Figure 2).
- "Social networking sites" were the most common mode of cyber-bullying during college; however cyber-bullying via email showed an increasing trend. Findings were supported by qualitative data (see quotes). Bullying over the phone decreased dramatically as students progressed from high school to college (Figure 3).
- Most qualitative responses addressed the difference in technology use among older and younger participants.
- Despite multiple online programs and degrees, those who identified themselves as online students and supplied free response answers stated that they have never experienced bullying in their classes.
- Participants described being cautious of their activity on social networking sites as a way to protect themselves from cyber-bullying.

### Discussion

Although all categories had access to the Internet at the current institution, students reported significantly more cyber-bullying than faculty and staff do not use cyber technology. Additionally, the difference in cyber-bullying between students and younger adults is not surprising. Cyber-bullying was reported more frequently than previous studies. Male students reported approximately 21.9% of cyber-bullying, however, reported modes of cyber-bullying demonstrated in Figure 2 demonstrates the prevalence of cyber technology. Study participants, which may be a limitation of the study. The qualitative responses indicated a lack of awareness of a problem. The lack of awareness may have led to restrained online behavior.

**Limitations:**

- Due to the nature of the survey, responses from taking the survey were not representative of the total university population.
- The wide age range of participants was controlled by focusing on students.

**Recommendations:**

- Cyber-bullying is occurring and needs to be addressed. It is recommended that future campaigns need to focus on awareness and prevention.

#### Figure 1. Proportion of respondents who experienced cyber-bullying while at the current institution.

#### Figure 2. Proportion of students who were bullied via electronic or digital media, by level of schooling.

#### Figure 3. Trends in the mode of cyber-bullying in the survey call.

#### Table 1. Sample Demographics from the Multi-Level School Bullying Assessment Survey (MLS-BAS)

	EMS	Students	Faculty	Staff
<b>N</b>	236 (100%)	158 (67%)	64 (27%)	14 (6%)
<b>Gender Identity</b>				
Female	177 (75%)	86 (54%)	39 (61%)	12 (86%)
Male	44 (19%)	25 (16%)	18 (28%)	2 (14%)
Other	15 (6%)	47 (30%)	7 (11%)	0 (0%)
<b>Race</b>				
White	152 (64%)	89 (56%)	42 (66%)	10 (71%)
Hispanic	18 (8%)	11 (7%)	7 (11%)	2 (14%)
Asian	20 (9%)	13 (8%)	5 (8%)	1 (7%)
Black	13 (6%)	10 (6%)	4 (6%)	1 (7%)
Other	33 (14%)	45 (28%)	15 (23%)	10 (71%)
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	142 (60%)	84 (53%)	41 (64%)	10 (71%)
25-34	10 (4%)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
35-44	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
45-54	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
55-64	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
65+	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

#### Sample Qualitative Responses

*"Please note that at my age, there was no 'cyber' anything when I was growing up!"*

*"As an adult I am extremely cautious of friends on networking sites, as they are people you want to be, but I don't get all my privacy settings..."*

**Contact Information:**  
 Simran Dhaliwal Emaus, MPH, CPH, simrande@gmail.com  
 JoAnn DiLernia, MPH, CPH, joann@msd.com  
 Erin Stirling, BPharm, MPH, CPH, erinstirling@gmail.com  
 Jaime Corvill, PhD, MSPH, CPH, corvill1@msd.com