CRITERIA FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTI-CYBERBULLYING PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED AT THE FAMILY AND SCHOOL LEVELS

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Abstract: *According to numerous studies, cyberbullying leads to significant mental health problems for both the instigators of bullying and their victims, and programs are being created around the world to prevent it. The scientific review analyzes russian and foreign literature sources in order to identify methodologically correct short-term and longitudinal programs for the prevention of cyberbullying among school-age children and adolescents. During the analysis, preference was given to research articles based on the principles of scientific evidence, using statistically reliable data, published in peer-reviewed journals, and literary reviews. The study did not include works that formally correspond to the topic, but devoted to preventive programs that exclude direct work with children, including those aimed at improving legislation, improving the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, prohibiting minors from using smartphones, introducing parental control systems, etc. Publications indexed in international scientific databases (Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed) and the Russian RSCI. The review summarizes the experience of developers and researchers of the effectiveness of programs aimed at reducing the frequency and level of adverse effects of cyber violence, and suggests effectiveness criteria to guide the selection of a preventive program.*

Keywords*: cyberbullying; children; teenagers; Internet; aggression; prevention*

КРИТЕРИИ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТИ ПРОГРАММ ПРОФИЛАКТИКИ КИБЕРБУЛЛИНГА, РЕАЛИЗУЕМЫХ НА СЕМЕЙНОМ И ШКОЛЬНОМ УРОВНЯХ

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Аннотация: *согласно многочисленным исследованиям, кибербуллинг приводит к значительным нарушениям психического здоровья как у инициаторов травли, так и у её жертв, в связи с чем во многих странах мира разрабатываются программы по его профилактике. В настоящем научном обзоре проанализированы российские и зарубежные литературные источники с целью выявления методологически обоснованных краткосрочных и лонгитюдных программ профилактики кибербуллинга среди детей и подростков школьного возраста. При анализе предпочтение отдавалось исследовательским статьям, основанным на принципах доказательной науки, использующим статистически достоверные данные, опубликованным в рецензируемых научных изданиях, а также обзорным публикациям. В исследование не включались работы, формально соответствующие тематике обзора, но посвящённые профилактическим программам, не предусматривающим непосредственной работы с детьми, в том числе направленным на совершенствование законодательства, повышение эффективности деятельности правоохранительных органов, ограничение использования смартфонов несовершеннолетними, внедрение систем родительского*

контроля и другие подобные меры. Были проанализированы публикации, индексируемые в международных научных базах данных Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, а также в Российской научной электронной библиотеке (РИНЦ). В обзоре обобщён опыт разработчиков и исследователей эффективности программ, направленных на снижение распространённости и выраженности негативных последствий кибернасилия, а также предложены критерии эффективности, которые могут служить ориентиром при выборе профилактической программы.

Ключевые слова: *кибербуллинг; дети; подростки; Интернет; агрессия; профилактика.*

OILA VA MAKTAB DARAJASIDA AMALGA OSHIRILADIGAN KIBERBULLINGGA QARSHI DASTURLAR SAMARADORLIGI MEZONLARI

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Annotatsiya: *Ko'plab tadqiqotlarga ko'ra, kiberbulling bulling tashabbuskorlari hamda ularning qurbonlarida jiddiy ruhiy salomatlik muammolarini keltirib chiqaradi, shu sababli butun dunyoda uning oldini olish bo'yicha dasturlar ishlab chiqilmoqda. Ushbu ilmiy sharhda maktab yoshidagi bolalar va o'smirlar orasida kiberbullingning oldini olish bo'yicha metodik jihatdan to'g'ri tuzilgan qisqa muddatli va longitudinal dasturlarni aniqlash maqsadida rus va xorijiy adabiyot manbalari tahlil qilindi. Tahlil davomida ilmiy dalil prinsiplariga asoslangan, statistik jihatdan ishonchli ma'lumotlardan foydalangan holda taqrizlanadigan jurnallarda chop etilgan tadqiqot maqolalari va adabiyot sharhlariga ustunlik berildi. Mavzuga shakliy jihatdan mos keladigan, biroq bolalar bilan bevosita ishlashni istisno qiluvchi profilaktik dasturlarga bag'ishlangan ishlar tadqiqotga kiritilmadi — bularga qonunchilikni takomillashtirishga, huquqni muhofaza qilish organlari faoliyatining samaradorligini oshirishga, voyaga yetmaganlarga smartfondan foydalanishni taqiqlashga, ota-ona nazorati tizimlarini joriy etishga va shu kabilarga qaratilgan dasturlar kiradi. Xalqaro ilmiy ma'lumotlar bazalarida (Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed) hamda Rossiya RSCI da indekslangan nashrlar ko'rib chiqildi. Sharhda kiberzo'ravonlikning noxush ta'sirlari chastotasi va darajasini kamaytirishga qaratilgan dasturlarni ishlab chiquvchilarning hamda ularning samaradorligini o'rganuvchi tadqiqotchilarning tajribasi umumlashtirilgan; profilaktik dasturni tanlashda yo'l-yo'riq beradigan samaradorlik mezonlari taklif etilgan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *kiberbulling; bolalar; o'smirlar; Internet; agressiya; profilaktika.*

Introduction:

Cyberbullying (digital violence, cyberbullying, online violence, online harassment) arose simultaneously with the spread of the Internet among mass users focused on using the network for personal (usually unrelated to work, scientific research, or the search for serious information) purposes. It quickly spread among adult netizens and among children and adolescents [1, 2]. The maximum rates of cyber violence were observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, when millions of people around the world found themselves in quarantine, and work and study were carried out remotely [3]. Monitoring of large groups of children and adolescents before the COVID-19 pandemic, during the pandemic during the quarantine period and during the period of less strict restrictions, as well as after the end of the pandemic, when all restrictions were

lifted, led to the conclusion that the more children and adolescents spent time online, the higher the probability that they will be subjected to cyber-violence. The revealed pattern was nonlinear, and the increase in cases of cyber violence occurred in an exponential progression [4]. Extremely high rates of online violence are observed in many countries around the world. In a study of the frequency of cyberbullying in Europe, it was reported that 8.7% of children in Belgium, 6.9% in Bulgaria, 18.9% in the Czech Republic (an increase of 9.2% over the past 8 years), 13.1% in Denmark, 12.0% in Finland (an increase of 6.7% over the last 5 years), 2.9% in Italy 5.7% in Germany, 31.5% in Poland (an increase of 24% over the last 8 years), 12.0% in Spain (an increase of 7.0% over the last 5 years), 12.2% in the UK were subjected to systematic cyberbullying [5, 6]. The prevalence of cyberbullying among young people is so high that up to 35% of young people admit that they have been subjected to cyberbullying, and 20% admit that they have bullied others [7, 8]. Numerous studies lead, alas, to very disappointing conclusions: from 2000 to the 2020s, bullying on the Internet became commonplace. The opinion has spread, supported by numerous studies, that cyberbullying leads to significant mental health problems for both the instigators of bullying and their victims. Basically, cyberbullying has become associated with anxiety, depression, non-suicidal self-harm, and suicide [9, 10]. As a result, the issue of the need for its prevention has become acute. Initially, the prevailing assumption was that "bullying and cyberbullying are a consequence of the general unfavorable climate" in this school. Therefore, most preventive measures aimed at working with a wide audience were implemented on a school scale [11, 12, 13]. However, the results of school prevention programs have been very mixed: in particular, in Spain and Finland, where almost all schools are covered by prevention programs, there has been a significant increase in the frequency of cyberbullying (see above). Therefore, the traditional opinion about the greatest effectiveness of preventive programs implemented in the educational environment began to be questioned [14, 15].

Materials and methods:

The purpose of the scientific review is to search for methodologically correct short–term and longitudinal cyber violence prevention programs among school-age children and adolescents that have proven their effectiveness. The selection of works for the preparation of the review was carried out in several stages. At the first stage, thematic publications were searched for keywords in international scientific databases (Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed) and the Russian RSCI; the found works were thoroughly checked regarding their content, and those that did not correspond to the research topic were excluded. Works that formally correspond to the topic of the review were also excluded, but devoted to preventive programs that exclude direct work with children, aimed at improving legislation, improving the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, prohibiting minors from using smartphones, introducing parental control systems, etc. At the second stage, publications for which full-text free access was open were selected from the selected works.; Among them, priority was given to research articles based on the principles of scientific evidence, using statistically reliable data, published in peer-reviewed journals, and literary reviews. At the third stage, the selected sources were used to prepare this scientific review.

Results:

Cyberbullying among young people is just one of the forms of violent acts, which is usually combined with real violence carried out offline. As a rule, participants in cyberbullying and participants in bullying in real life are the same people, both aggressors and victims [16, 17]. Just like in real life, in addition to the aggressor and the victim, outside observers participate in cyber violence. Some of them remain neutral, while others join in mocking the victim. Unlike in real life, there are usually no sympathizers of the victim on the Internet [18, 19]. Just like real violence, cyberbullying is associated with numerous negative consequences for mental health, and not only for victims [20, 21, 22]. Due to the

facts of cyber violence causing real harm, in many countries, liability for cyberbullying has been legally introduced, which is often considered a more serious act than similar actions outside the network [23, 24]. Cyberbullying is also being prevented in almost all countries, on the one hand as a crime, on the other hand as a negative social phenomenon that occurs mainly among young people. In one of the recent studies conducted by specialists of the Federal State Budgetary Institution «V. Serbsky National Medical Research Centre for Psychiatry and Narcology» of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation [25], the preventive programs implemented within the walls of the school were considered in detail. In this paper, we will focus more on family prevention in the information field and comprehensive prevention models.

Prevention of cyberbullying within the family and school

Numerous programs implemented at the family and school levels are, in essence, work with adolescents carried out within the framework of open psychotherapy groups. Some programs focus on reducing the rates of mutual aggression between group members by developing emotional intimacy, unity, and increasing the level of empathy [26] (for example, the PREDEMA program implemented in Spain). Group classes last about six months, and if necessary, they can be resumed at any time. Effectiveness control is carried out both by recording the dynamics of violence cases and by evaluating the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in a group using a battery of psychological tests. Short programs aimed at forming productive interpersonal interaction strategies (for example, the Italian RPC, "Relazioni per crescere" - "Relationships for growth") often rely on psychotherapeutic techniques that teach coping behavior (coping with stress, aggression, anxiety) [27]. A similar program is being implemented within the framework of the Spanish TEI project ("Tutoría Entre Iguales" - "Guardianship among equals") [28]. It is based on the formation of coping behavior skills among students, teachers and parents, with subsequent transfer of them to each other (internal mentoring as an alternative to the work of a professional psychotherapist). A study conducted after six months of the program's operation showed a significant decrease in the number of conflicts, including fights, ridicule and mutual bullying on the Internet. The famous KiVa program, implemented in many European countries, but especially in Finland, is aimed at creating an intolerant attitude towards violence on the part of neutral observers. For a long time, it was considered almost the "gold standard" of anti-bullying practices [29, 30], but in recent years there have been significant doubts about its effectiveness. Studies have shown that KiVa remains highly effective in preventing traditional bullying, but it probably has little effect on the prevalence of cyberbullying [31]. Similar results were obtained during the implementation of programs aimed at creating a "positive school environment" in the United States and Great Britain. Training in emotional interaction, coping, and acceptance skills dramatically reduced the number of actual bullying in the schools included in the program, but had almost no effect on cyberbullying rates. This was probably due to the fact that the "rules of the game" in real life and on the Internet, including in social networks, are fundamentally different [32, 33]. The Spanish Asegrate program stands out among the programs developed for families and schools. It is aimed at teachers and trains them to work with the families of students. In fact, the key element of the program is a workbook for the child's parents, which contains a set of exercises developed within the framework of the behavioral therapy model [34]. It should be noted that recently there have been more and more attempts at indirect interaction between specialists (psychotherapists, psychologists) and children: it is carried out through parents, teachers, volunteers, etc. This approach is explained by the need to "expand the scope of the program" or the supposed effectiveness of "peer interaction", "mentoring", "transfer of personal experience". On the other hand, it is obvious that parents and teachers do not have special knowledge, as a rule, they may feel insecure in their unusual role, or, on the contrary, act the way they are used to, without

taking into account the recommendations received from specialists. In our opinion, the distancing of specialists inevitably leads to a decrease in the success of preventive programs. Also, programs implemented through everyday educational methods, including involving children in creativity and art classes, cannot be considered successful. As a rule, such programs attract mostly well-off and successful children who have not previously participated in bullying of peers and teachers, and problem children avoid participating in them [35]. At the same time, ordinary informational lectures conducted by police officers and doctors turn out to be very effective due to the acquisition of knowledge about cyberbullying by children, which allows them to build their relationships more competently on the Internet and avoid risky situations provoking cyberbullying [36, 37]. An example of such a program that informs children attending senior kindergarten and junior high school about the threats of violence, including sexual and physical violence, as well as cyber violence, is the Florida Foundation for Child Safety in Schools curriculum, implemented in 8 countries [38].

Cyber violence prevention programs aimed at families

In many countries, government agencies are actively promoting cybersecurity. Such educational programs often focus on parents of at–risk adolescents, who are trained to provide necessary support to children who have been subjected to cyber violence. They also explain to parents the need to refrain from illegal actions themselves if their children have been offended at school or on the Internet [39]. Among the preventive measures, there were programs based on the principle of role-playing games, the participants of which reproduced situations involving media characters, practicing behavioral strategies aimed at reducing aggression and achieving reconciliation [40]. Long-term programs were significantly more effective than short-term interventions, despite the fact that the latter had a large coverage of participants. The participation of parents and children in violence prevention programs conducted in the form of "emotional literacy" trainings (emotional self-regulation skills, emotional self-identification abilities, and training in "healthy response" to feelings) also led to a decrease in violence among adolescents. The decrease in the number of quarrels among adolescents was especially significant [41]. Most likely, this result was partly due to a decrease in tension in families. Similar programs aimed exclusively at children have produced statistically unrepresentative results [42]. The multi-level program "The Tabby" (Threat Assessment of Bullying Behavior among Young People), implemented in Italy, is a system that integrates teacher training, work with parents and whole families, intra-school and extracurricular activities with students. The program is based on training in avoiding risky behavior and illegal actions. Among the teenagers participating in the program, the rates of participation in cyber violence and in real violence, both as aggressors and as victims, significantly decreased, with the exception of girls who exhibit victim behavior [43]. The comprehensive program of assistance to teachers, adolescents and their families "Prev@cib", based on the principles of clarification, training and psychotherapeutic support, created in Spain, showed good results, but the positive effect of its application lasted only a few months, and then was leveled [44].

Cyber violence prevention programs implemented through digital technologies

Official government structures and public organizations in many countries actively promote cyber violence prevention programs based on the use of network filters that automatically exclude user contact with potentially unsafe online content and potentially dangerous interlocutors. However, studies show the low effectiveness of these programs [45, 46]. Prevention programs based on traditional principles of psychotherapy, but implemented in a remote format, for example, in the form of open groups working on social networks and on messenger platforms, are potentially promising in terms of achieving a large reach of the adolescent audience. The Austral-

ian IRCB (Increasing resilience to cyberbullying) program, based on the classic triad of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DPT), implemented on the Internet and distributed through a referral link system, has attracted a lot of attention. However, despite numerous positive reviews from researchers, no convincing evidence of its effectiveness has been obtained [47, 48]. Online cybersecurity programs aimed at preventing a wide range of risks that exist on the Internet and are relevant to teenagers, for example, Spanish Safety.net (not to be confused with Google's service of the same name, which tests the security of mobile phone applications), they work on a different principle: they consist of several information blocks containing various materials (texts, photos, audio- and video files) linked by links that allow you to navigate from page to page not in strict sequence, but spontaneously, depending on the current interest in the topic. Thus, by "traveling" through the link system, a teenager receives information on financial literacy on the web, prevention of cyber violence, coping with his emotions, and learns the addresses and phone numbers of organizations to which he can turn for help [49]. The program Safety.net It proved to be a highly effective prevention tool. Among the teenagers randomly selected from among the participants, the level of violence and cyberbullying turned out to be significantly lower than in the control group. A similar program implemented on the social network Instagram (the network has been banned in the Russian Federation since 2022) has not shown such high efficiency [50]. The Cooperative Cybereduca 2.0 program (Spain), implemented in the form of a video game in combination with weekly safety lessons conducted at school during the school year, showed good results [51]. The experience of sending SMS messages of a supportive nature to teenagers who have been victims of violence discharged from the hospital has also received a lot of positive feedback, both from the victims of violence themselves and from people from their immediate environment [52].

Cyber violence prevention programs implemented through alternative technologies

The Canadian Ministry of Health has published recommendations on daily routines for children and adolescents, known as the «Canadian 24-h movement guidelines for Children and Youth». The idea of the principles is simple: a child is prescribed daily physical activity of at least 60 minutes, observing the duration of a night's sleep from 9 to 11 hours for adolescents under 13 years of age and at least 8-10 hours for adolescents under 17 years of age inclusive. It is forbidden to exceed the daily limit of screen time (TV, computer, gadgets), set at 2 o'clock. Thus, the "guidelines" are purely hygienic requirements that do not include any psychological technologies, including those aimed at preventing cyberbullying, but their observance proved to be extremely effective: the chances of becoming an aggressor or victim of bullying at school and on the Internet, or the object of sexual harassment online, among children who followed the principles, sharply decreased [53].

Conclusions:

Since the consequences of cyberbullying on mental health are assessed as more severe than the consequences of violence experienced in real life [54, 55], cyberbullying has quite naturally become the target of numerous prevention programs, which, in turn, have shown varying degrees of effectiveness. Summarizing the experience of developers and researchers of the effectiveness of programs aimed at reducing the frequency and level of adverse effects of cyber violence, several important conclusions can be drawn that determine the requirements for creating an effective prevention program. First, the prevention program should be implemented in a comprehensive manner, covering various areas of adolescent life: (1) daily routine, including sleep and wakefulness, metered intellectual and physical activity, restrictions related to time spent at screens; (2) the program should in-

volve both adolescents themselves and adults from their families. The transfer of information within the adolescent environment, carried out by volunteers from among peers, is a very promising area (parents, teachers); (3) The program should be aimed at preventing not only exclusively cyber violence, but also the entire set of risks associated with the Internet; (4) The program should include various forms of interaction with adolescents, both traditional pedagogical (lectures, seminars, trainings, psychoeducation events) and psychotherapeutic (group and individual psychotherapy within the framework of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DPT)), and interactive interactions, implemented, among other things, in the form of network projects. It is recommended to create special prevention programs for children and adolescents who develop mental disorders, in particular, those at risk for self-harm and suicidal behavior [56]. Secondly, the prevention program should be implemented in a long-term, systematic manner, covering as wide groups of adolescents and adults as possible, and many specialists should participate in its implementation (it is hopeless if the program is implemented by one specially trained teacher at a school, this is the task of the entire team) of various fields, including internists and psychiatrists, psychotherapists, psychologists and educators, representatives of the police and the media. Probably the most promising projects are those implemented on a large scale (district, city, country). Thirdly, the program should undergo regular performance evaluation, while having a well-developed feedback system, and, if necessary, be modified in a timely manner, adapt to the conditions of objective reality and the cyber environment, responding to economic, political, and cultural changes in society. The development of such programs undoubtedly requires large resources, but the costs are likely to pay off due to a significant reduction in cybersecurity-related suicides and mental disorders [57].

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