Is there violence in the neighbourhood?
Ask the children

Jinan Usta and Jo Ann M. Farver

Abstract

Background Community violence is a major public health concern. Much has been written about high intensity community violence such as wars or gang violence. However, chronic low intensity community violence is greatly overlooked. The objective of the following study is to assess how children living in neighbourhoods characterized by chronic low intensity violence perceive their environment.

Methods Children drew two pictures: one of their physical neighbourhoods and the other representing what goes on in the neighbourhoods. Each child also completed a neighbourhood safety survey.

Results The participants were four hundred and five children (213 girls; 192 boys) 8–12 years old (mean \(= 9.70\); SD \(= 1.26\)) who lived in Beirut. 75 drawings contained violent incidents (fist fights and heated verbal arguments were most commonly depicted). 168 children mentioned people fighting or quarrelling in the streets but elected not to draw them. Children reported feeling unsafe and dissatisfaction with the quality of their neighbourhoods.

Conclusion Children living in chronic low intensity community violence may feel unsafe and distrustful of their environment but may perceive violent events as regular normal occurrence. The risk of copying such behaviours and propagating violence is to be considered seriously.

Keywords: Lebanon, community violence, safety, children, drawings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine Lebanese children’s perceptions of their neighbourhoods. According to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model,1 neighbourhoods are part of a child’s micro-system. For very young children the micro-system is limited to the immediate family and as children mature, this system broadens to include schools, youth groups, and neighbourhood play areas. As such, neighbourhoods function as agents of socialization where children encounter contrasting role models for societal conventions, rules, and morality, notions of justice and fairness, and conflict resolution.2–4 The encounters children have with individuals in these widening networks, shape the assumptions they make about others, how they pattern their own behaviour, and whether they view their neighbourhood as a safe and friendly environment. Unfortunately, the high rates of neighbourhood violence in large US cities, and ethnic and political conflicts in cities of the Middle East, have led to the labelling of some neighbourhoods as ‘toxic environments’ and ‘inner-city war zones’.5,6

Prior research on neighbourhood effects has focused either on children’s exposure to an acute, one time violent or frightening event, such as the Los Angeles riots7 and sniper attacks in school yards,8 or on chronic neighbourhood violence where shootings, stabbings, gang activities, and being robbed re-occur, with unpredictable frequency.9 Few studies have examined children’s exposure to ‘low intensity’ chronic violence typical of settings like Beirut where the aftermath of prolonged wars have left people edgy and quick to resolve conflict with aggression. Accordingly, the current study was designed to examine Lebanese children’s perceptions of violence in their neighbourhoods and to investigate how their perceptions might be associated with their feelings of safety and trust.

The few existing studies on children’s perceptions of their neighbourhoods have been carried out in the US. For example, a survey of 2248 inner-city elementary school children,10 reported roughly 74 per cent of the children felt ‘unsafe’ in their neighbourhood, riding the school bus, and walking to school. Comparable findings from a study conducted in New Orleans inner-city housing projects also showed most children felt unsafe playing in their neighbourhoods or walking home from school.11

More recently, Farver et al.12 examined how children’s perceptions of neighbourhood violence and safety were related to their socio-emotional functioning, neighbourhood violent crime rates, and parents’ ratings of neighbourhood safety and violence. Two hundred and thirty three elementary school children from low and high violence communities in Los Angeles, drew pictures of their neighbourhoods, completed a neighbourhood safety survey, and rated their perceived self-competence and locus of control. Parents also rated the safety of their neighbourhoods and children’s prior exposure to violent events. The results showed that children who lived in high violence

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neighbourhoods felt unsafe playing outdoors, were more dis-
trustful of the police, had lower perceived self-competence, an
external locus of control, and their drawings had more violent
content, than did children who lived in low violence neighbour-
hoods. The findings suggested that exposure to neighbourhood
violence negatively affected children’s feelings of well-being,
sense of self, control over events in their lives, and opportunities
to play safely in their neighbourhoods.

Exposure to violence at a young age has adverse effects on
children’s development. Young children are particularly
vulnerable to violent events because they cannot protect them-
selves from the potentially damaging effects. Moreover, children
who are struggling with developmentally appropriate concerns
about safety, competence, and bodily integrity, may be especially
stressed when witnessing relatives or friends being hurt in street
fights and other highly aggressive incidents.

Research has shown that children have different responses
to exposure to unpredictable and uncontrollable stressful
events. Some children become more aggressive and hyperactive
than usual, while others develop feelings of incompetence,
helplessness and low self esteem. Many children manifest
symptoms associated with posttraumatic stress disorder, such
as diminished ability to concentrate at school, sleep distur-
bances, flashbacks, disordered attachment relations to significant
others, sudden startling and hyper vigilance, and a nihilistic fatal-
istic orientation to the future leading to increased risk taking
behaviours. Such effects often last long after the precipitating
event.

Typically, clinical reports have been concerned with children’s
symptoms following an acute and isolated traumatic event. Isolated events are thought to have less serious effects on chil-
dren because they are short in duration, after which things can
‘return to normal.’ However, children’s reactions may be more
adverse when the violent incidents are intense and recurring, as is characteristic of chronic neighbourhood violence. Children
who are exposed to violence on a daily basis do not have time to
recover from the event. The adult who they may turn to for
stability, control or protection, may be a wounded victim, an
out of control combatant, or too depressed or overwhelmed
to form a secure attachment with the child. Children who experience constant unpredictable traumatic events, and the
violation of their immediate environments, generally manifest
anxiety accompanied by vulnerability. Children’s capacity to
trust themselves as well as others, and to enjoy their lives are
obvious consequences of these experiences.

The Beirut setting
Between 1975 and 1991, several brutal wars devastated Lebanon
and shattered the country’s political, social and economic
systems. Research focusing on the impact of war on the mental
health of the Lebanese population during these years revealed
variable degrees of psychological distress and unusual behav-
ior, including anxiety and depression, nervousness and
reduced social networks, and chronic PTSD. People also
complained of being quick to anger, argumentative, and having
difficulty in relating to others.

Although the periodic and unpredictable outbursts of street
combat, air raids and shelling were over in 1991, the Lebanese
population’s sense of security and stability remained threatened
by the continuing unstable political situation in the Middle
East. In addition, war survivors had to struggle for their daily
living, a hardship compounded by a rapidly deteriorating
national economy and the disruption of public and community
services. In general, and over time, the inhabitants of Beirut
have become progressively, more stressed, nervous, edgy, and
easily irritated. A low level of violence has prevailed in the
streets and is manifested in frequent eruptions of verbal argu-
ments that often escalate to physical fights and the occasional
use of sticks, knives, or guns. Commonly, these fights are
quickly disrupted by bystanders who separate the fighters, thus
these confrontations rarely result in major casualties or deaths
or interrupt the activities of the street. Hence, they involve ‘low
intensity’ violence when compared to the preceding wars or to
community violence characteristic of North American cities.

What is missing from current research on the effects of
neighbourhood violence in settings like Beirut, is a considera-
tion of children’s perceptions of neighbourhood violence, and
how their perceptions may serve as a risk factor in negatively
affecting their socio-emotional status. In the current study we
conceptualized the neighbourhood context as a risk factor—that
is, children living in Beirut were expected to be aware of the
aggressive behavior (i.e. verbal conflicts and physical fights)
occurring in their neighbourhoods. Second, we hypothesized
that children’s feelings of safety and trust would be reflected in
their drawings. That is, children who had violent content in
their drawings were expected to report feeling unsafe walking
or playing in their neighbourhoods and to be distrustful of
authority figures. Third, we predicted that there would be gender
differences in the drawings. Based on gender differences in the
research literature on children’s aggressive and social behav-
ior, and the mixed findings on gender differences in response
to violence, we expected that boys’ drawings would have
more violent content and fewer positive elements (i.e. flowers,
sunshine, smiling adults, and children at play) than would girls’
drawings.

Methods
Participants
The participants were 405 children (213 girls; 192 boys) 8–12-
year-old (mean = 9.70; SD = 1.26) who were recruited from
schools in the city of Beirut. Using a list provided by the Ministry
of Education, 243 public and private schools, estimated to have
at least 25 students between 8 and 12 years of age, were selected.
Because most students who are enrolled in Beirut’s public
schools are of low socioeconomic status (SES), and students
enrolled in private schools are of middle to high SES, only public schools with a private school in their vicinity were included to ensure an adequate representation of socioeconomic status. Eight public schools and 18 of their neighbouring private schools were chosen to obtain a sample of at least two thirds of Beirut, not including suburbs. After obtaining consent from the Ministry of Education, the study’s objectives and protocol were explained to the individual school directors for their approval. Two public schools did not participate because the data collection coincided with the final year exams and one school was relocated so the corresponding private schools were also dropped. Two private schools refused to cooperate. The final sample included 14 schools: five public and nine private schools (total enrolment 425 students). All parents were sent a consent form and a demographic questionnaire regarding the age of the child, place of residence, and socioeconomic status. A total of 405 children returned the consent and demographic forms. One hundred and forty three (35 per cent) children were from low SES families, 148 (36 per cent) were from mid-low, 87 (21.5 per cent) were from mid-high and 27 (6.7 per cent) were from high SES families.

Measures and procedures
The data were collected in May and June, 1997 during class hours at a time previously agreed upon with the school director so as not to disrupt the daily academic activities, e.g. during art class or recreation time.

Neighbourhood drawings
Using the ‘Draw Your Neighbourhood Procedure’ developed by Lewis and her colleagues, children were given two sheets of paper and a pencil, and asked to draw two pictures. First, they were told: ‘Draw a picture of your neighbourhood.’ When they were finished, they were told: ‘Draw a picture of what goes on in your neighbourhood.’ After the children completed their drawings they were taken individually to another room where they were asked to describe their drawings (i.e. to name the objects in their pictures and describe any action or activity depicted), their responses were recorded on a separate sheet of paper. To avoid biasing children’s descriptions, research assistants interacted with the children in a friendly, but concise manner.

Perceptions of neighbourhood safety
After discussing their drawings with the research assistant, children individually completed the Arabic version of the Children’s Survey on Safety and Trust. This survey is illustrated in an age-appropriate format. In the first part, children were asked to indicate on a 4-point scale how much trust they have for teachers, police officers, doctors/nurses, and religious figures in the community using pictures of thermometers containing four levels of ‘liquid’ (1 = no trust at all; 4 = a lot of trust). Next, children rated how safe they feel at home, in school, playing in the neighbourhood, and walking home from school on a 4-point scale using pictures of thermometers (1 = not safe at all; 4 = very safe). When children reported feeling little or not safe they were asked why and their answers were recorded. During the duration of the encounter with the children, attention was made to avoid mentioning the word violence or other related terms.

Coding of the drawings
The drawings were coded using the Child and Violence Neighbourhood Coding Scheme by the same person who did the debriefing. Violent incidents were defined as ‘an any act or behaviour that causes damage or injury, or human figures engaged in verbal threats or activity labelled as fighting, hitting, someone starting a fire, or robbery’. Other violent acts such as shooting, hitting, shouting, fighting that were reported in the debriefing session but were not depicted in the drawings, were coded as a separate variable.

Reliability
The data were collected by a team of research assistants. Two assistants were trained by the first author to administer the drawing procedure and measures. Three additional research assistants, who were blind to the study’s objectives, children’s age, gender, SES, etc., were trained by the first author to code the drawings. Sixteen randomly chosen pictures (eight from each set of drawings) were used in the training. To establish reliability, six additional drawings from the two sets were randomly selected, and coded independently by the first author and the assistants. Cohen’s kappas calculated for intercoder reliability for violence, physical characteristics, general impression, hope and other elements, ranged from 0.84 to 0.94 (median = 0.90). Similar reliability checks were performed midway, and at the end of the coding using drawings from the sample. Cohen’s kappas ranged from 0.75 to 0.89. All disagreements were resolved by discussion between the first author and the assistants.
Results

Analysis of the drawings

Most of the drawings contained high-rise apartment buildings where many children typically resided. There were open shops and markets depicting much buying and selling of goods, people walking in the streets or gathered around a TV set, cars rolling, children playing soccer, and flags hanging from balconies. These elements reflected the daily life of Beirut at the time of the data collection and which coincided with the international world cup soccer games.

Elements of the drawings

The two drawings ‘draw your neighbourhood’ (Drawing 1) and ‘what goes on in your neighbourhood’ (Drawing 2) were analysed for the number of violent incidents, neighbourhood physical characteristics, symbols of hope, other elements and overall general impression (Table 1).

Results of analysis of variance tests showed there were no significant social class or age differences in the content of either drawings. However, t-tests showed that there were significant differences for gender, specifically in the second drawing (Table 2). Girls’ drawings included more positive elements, such as stars, sun, flowers, trees or children playing than did boys’ drawings. Most frequently (63 per cent), the children drew themselves in their pictures as figures looking down from their apartment buildings onto the streets rather than as participants in the activities below.

Violent content

Violent incidents were present in 10 of Drawing 1 and in 75 of Drawing 2. The total number of violent events in the second drawing was 111. Six of these drawings contained Israeli helicopters or war planes dropping bombs. These drawings were excluded from the analysis because they did not represent the community violence. Five violent incidents included the use of knives or guns, whereas the other violent events involved verbal arguments (69), fist fights (22), or beating with a stick (9) (Fig. 1). All incidents that included a weapon were drawn by boys and involved men as victims and aggressors. In the other drawings that contained violence, it was difficult to differentiate the victim from the aggressor. Males were involved in 43 per cent of the cases, with women representing 14 per cent. The gender was undeterminable in the rest. None of the drawings showed dead bodies but two contained wounded victims. Bystanders were portrayed as proceeding uninterrupted with their regular activities (Figs 2–4). Only one boy drew himself at the top of the building looking down at a man firing a gun and the boy was screaming ‘stop’ (Fig. 5). In response to the question: ‘What

Table 1 Comparison of the two drawings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Drawing 1</th>
<th>Drawing 2</th>
<th>t- tes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of</td>
<td>4.46 (1.16)</td>
<td>2.86 (3.32)</td>
<td>9.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical elements (SD)</td>
<td>5.55 (2.21)</td>
<td>1.86 (1.68)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of</td>
<td>1.63 (0.92)</td>
<td>2.95 (3.1)</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hope elements (SD)</td>
<td>2.89 (0.51)</td>
<td>4.085 (2.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other elements (SD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General impression (SD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of drawings with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violent events</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Gender differences in the second drawing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of elements (5 or more)</td>
<td>68 (35.9)</td>
<td>108 (50.7)</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hope elements (3 or more)</td>
<td>48 (25)</td>
<td>78 (36.6)</td>
<td>0.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impression</td>
<td>26 (13.5)</td>
<td>52 (24.4)</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 Children playing while their parents are sitting at the table watching them and chatting. In the middle, the two men are fighting.

Figure 2 Children playing, a man selling fruits, the girl jumping the rope has a bump over the head. She was accidentally hit because there were people fighting. The two women are cursing each other.
IS THERE VIOLENCE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?

168 children interestingly talked with the research assistant about fighting, hitting or beating going on in the streets. But in many cases, these violent acts were not actually depicted in their drawings. When children were asked why they did not draw the violent incidents they were describing to the assistant in their pictures, their answers included ‘I don’t know how’, ‘I forgot to’, and ‘I didn’t want to make my drawing ugly’ or ‘the drawing is nicer without violence’. One girl scratched out her drawing after completing it, because she found what typically takes place in her neighbourhood to be too ugly (Fig. 6).

Feelings of safety
When asked to rate their feelings about safety, 40 children (9.9 per cent) reported feeling not at all or a little safe at home, 45 (11.1) felt a little safe at school, 117 (32.6 per cent) a little safe playing and 148 (39.8 per cent) a little safe walking in their neighbourhood. The low level of safety was more prevalent among boys than among girls. In addition, children who reported feeling unsafe while playing or walking in their neighbourhood were from higher socioeconomic status, whereas more children of lower socioeconomic status reported feeling unsafe at home or at school (Table 3). When asked why they felt unsafe, children expressed their worries about being caught in a violent incident or having an encounter with a bad guy while playing (n = 49) or while walking (n = 39). Children were also concerned about being the victim of a motor vehicle accident while playing (n = 53) or walking in their neighbourhoods (n = 105). Forty-six children reported that they were not allowed to walk or play in the neighbourhood unattended by an adult.

Feelings of trust
Children were asked to rate their trust in authority figures in their community. One hundred and eight (26.7 per cent) reported a total lack or little trust in the police, 119 (29.4 per cent) said they...
Disturbing religious figures, 56 (14.4 per cent) distrusted the doctor and 49 (12.1 per cent) distrusted their teachers. Children's lack of trust in the police was significantly higher in the low socioeconomic group (49, 34 per cent, \( p = 0.007 \)). Similarly, religious men and the police were the figures children felt least happy or neutral about (251 and 288, respectively, versus 303 for the doctor and 339 for the teacher). Although the police were people to whom most children would ask for help when lost (n = 285), another unspecified adult was the person they would more likely seek help from if something bad happened to them (n = 232 other person versus n = 189 for the police).

### Discussion

This may be the first study to examine the relation between chronic, low intensity neighbourhood violence and children's interactions with their environment. Most prior research has focused on the impact of chronic neighbourhood violence on the children's socio-emotional functioning; giving the impression that low intensity neighbourhood violence is relatively harmless. Perhaps low intensity chronic violence has not attracted much research attention because adults are more affected by wars or urban gang violence. Chronic, low intensity violence may barely be perceived and may not present a challenge to the coping mechanisms of the adult. Moreover, adults may think that children do not notice or remember these incidents and are presumed to be unaffected. However, based on the results of the current study, this assumption is not correct. Clearly, relatively non-threatening or non-traumatic events as perceived by an adult are not equally insignificant to a child.

To a great extent, it is true that adults shape the way children react to traumatic event. Family paradigms or the core assumptions, beliefs, or convictions that families hold about the nature of their environment may affect how they react to the violence in their neighbourhood.\(^3\) Parents' perceptions of danger in their environment may determine or influence how children form their own conceptions of safety and danger. Several studies have shown that parents who were traumatized and were in a confused state about an incident they had experienced, often made the event more frightening for their children.\(^{30,40-42}\) Similarly, Garmezy\(^43\) recognized that sensitive parenting and community support systems, such as teachers or neighbours, as well as the child's individual characteristics, are factors that mediate children's exposure to frightening events. However, if parents are not aware of their children's perceptions they cannot do anything to attenuate the distress associated with their experiences. Thus, many children may be at heightened risk for developing maladaptive coping styles to deal with their experiences.\(^{44,45}\) For example, research has shown that there are discrepancies between parent's and children's views of their neighbourhoods. Brim et al.\(^1\) pointed out that American children were more critical of their neighbourhoods than were their parents. While, roughly 60 per cent of the parents rated their neighbourhoods as 'very good' or 'excellent places to raise children', less than a third of the children described their neighbourhoods as 'very good places to grow up'. Hence, the importance of interviewing the child.

Studies using a child-focused approach are nevertheless difficult to conduct. Commonly, children who have witnessed violence in their homes or neighbourhoods are too frightened to discuss it coherently. Therefore, researchers and clinicians may use projective measures such as, fantasy play,\(^25\) story narratives,\(^7\) drawings,\(^46,47\) and sometimes a combination of all three,\(^48\) to examine distress among children who may not respond to direct questioning, or may have difficulty in articulating their thoughts and feelings. Drawings have been used in conjunction with interviews to evaluate children's exposure to civil war,\(^5,49,50\) school yard violence,\(^8\) child abuse cases,\(^47,51,52\) and community violence exposure.\(^25,38\) In the current study we used drawings to provide the children with a means to organize, make sense of, and talk about their experiences, as well as to better understand children's perceptions of their neighbourhood.

The drawings revealed that children are aware of the heated arguments and the physical fights that occur in their neighbourhoods as part of their daily life experiences; people continuing with their transactions or proceeding to where they were heading seemingly unaffected by the violent event. Adult indifference to the events depicted in the pictures could be partly explained by the fact that most of adults today are survivors of the Lebanese wars and atrocities and many may trivialize those incidents. Indeed, Lewis and Osofsky\(^38\) has shown that among children who are exposed to chronic violence, many become uncaring, emotionally numb, and desensitized as a way of coping with their experiences. This may explain the lack of affect in most of the children's drawings. One could reasonably ask: are the children copying the indifference they perceive in the adults around them? Two children expressed their refusal clearly (Fig. 4). While the other children (41.48 per cent) explicitly stated they omitted those incidents from their drawings and expressed their dislike for what goes on in their neighbourhoods and their wish for a more beautiful world (not merely a more beautiful drawing) lacking in violence. This is similar to Bryant’s\(^3\) (1978), study which reported that children most frequently mentioned that what made their neighbourhoods
Research on children’s exposure to community children’s has shown that their perceptions are associated with difficulties in their socio-emotional functioning. Moreover, similar to findings from the family violence literature, frequent angry interactions between adults negatively impact children’s overall psychological well being and children report feeling scared and mad following verbal arguments between adults. However, many of these studies were carried out with family members which involved marital disputes, family discord or video-taped arguments and not with real life fights that are occurring almost daily in the streets of Beirut among individuals who the child often knows.

A significant percentage of the children in the current study felt unsafe and distrustful of individuals in their neighbourhood. More boys than girls reported feeling unsafe. This gender difference can be explained partly on the basis of socio-cultural norms where men are expected to defend women in dangerous times, which may cause girls to feel more protected while placing an extra burden on boys. Moreover, as boys tend to report more aggressive responses in verbal arguments, it is possible that the male children become caught in fights while walking or playing in the street, thus increasing their concern with safety.

There was an interesting relationship between the children’s social class backgrounds and their feelings of safety. While children of higher socioeconomic status reported feeling less safe in their neighbourhood, more children of low socioeconomic status reported feeling unsafe at home and at school, this raises a concern about the occurrence of school violence and domestic violence. It seems that the presence of violence in children’s immediate proximity may decrease their ability to observe violent events occurring in their neighbourhood.

With regard to the findings for children’s ratings of trust and feelings towards certain community authority figures, most were least happy with the police whose job it is to protect them. The majority of the children mentioned that a police officer would be the first person they would ask for directions when lost, but when something bad happened they would first call another adult for help. This reflects the situation in Lebanon where people are used to resolving their conflicts at the interpersonal level and they infrequently resort to authorities. Another group of children was not allowed to be outside unattended in their neighbourhood. This reflects parents’ fears about their neighbourhoods and while they are seeking to keep their children safe, they may be unintentionally jeopardizing their children’s opportunities for social interaction and the development of trusting relationships.

Our research lacks an in depth evaluation of the psychosocial and emotional development of the participating children. Our aim was to show that these repeated low intensity violent events are perceived by children and that they are affected by them. A transactional model as proposed by and Fiese and Sameroff, Bronfenbrenner or others, would provide the means to examine how children’s perceptions, interpretations, and responses to the events taking place in their neighbourhoods shapes not only their individual experiences, but how these factors contribute over time, to the ‘psychological climate of their community’, and define the expected characteristics of the neighbourhood environment. When we were explaining the objectives of the study, some teachers reported that children’s play behaviour had become increasingly more aggressive and involved much fighting. Although, children may re-enact their experiences in play with their peers for some time following a stressful event, we cannot attribute their aggressiveness solely to copying adults or to feeling unsafe living in their neighbourhoods. In order to determine whether children’s behaviours were reactions to particular perceptions, a full range of the stressors involved, as well as children’s pre-stressor functioning would need to be examined. A sizable percentage of children reported feeling unsafe at home and at school, two factors that may affect significantly their perception of the world around them.

In conclusion, our study reveals that regardless of its intensity, children perceive violence and they are affected by it. Children see adults in their community resolving their conflicts by fighting. Some expressed their dislike, but others perceived the events as normal behaviours in every day life. It is important to raise the awareness of the public towards their unhealthy violent behaviours in order to prevent the young generations from copying them and propagating an increasingly violent society.

Acknowledgements

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