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Experts Present Strategies to Address Adolescent Violence and Bullying

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During a web-based CME conference on July 13th, two of the nation's leading experts on adolescent violence and bullying examined the prevalence of adolescent violence - including bullying - in the United States, identifying risk and resiliency factors for violence, as well as common characteristics shared by victims and aggressors, and offered effective prevention strategies health professionals can use to combat the problem. The conference was co-sponsored by the American College of Preventive Medicine and Medscape/WebMD. A free archive of the session is now available online at <http://www.medscape.com/viewprogram/5652>. To view an archive of the web-based conference visit the url, register and log-in as a free Medscape user. You will be able to see and hear the program online. There is no cost to view the program or to obtain CME credit. In his opening remarks as moderator of the session, Dr. George Lundberg, Editor-in-Chief of Medscape General Medicine, said, "Despite a growing understanding of the psychological and physiological effects of violence and the need for preventive measures, the Office of the Surgeon General reports that rates of violent activity have not decreased since the mid 1990s." He continued, "Many schools still lack effective violence prevention and treatment programs; however, there are methods that health professionals can use to both identify and prevent youth violence." Dr. Howard Spivak, discussing whether violent tendencies are a product of nature or nurture, stated that, "the fact that the rates [of adolescent violence] are relatively low in the rest of the world as compared to this country gives the positive message that this is, in fact, preventable and that this phenomenon in the United States reflects either something we are doing that is promoting violence or violent behavior, or something we're not doing." Dr. Susan Limber, Associate Director of Clemson University's Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life and one of the nation's foremost bullying experts, stressed that health care professionals should be "vigilant" when evaluating their patients, looking for possible signs of bullying victimization and routinely asking about peer relations. The conference provided critical information for practicing physicians, public health officials, and other front-line health providers who provide primary care to adolescents, as well as to those who are concerned with the health and social implications of adolescent violence and bullying.