

# Mental, physical toll of bullying persists for decades

By Linda Poon, NPR

What doesn't kill us only makes us stronger, right? Well, not when it comes to bullying.

Some may still consider bullying a harmless part of growing up, but mounting evidence suggests that the adverse effects of being bullied aren't something kids can just shake off. The psychological and physical tolls, like anxiety and depression, can follow a person into early adulthood.

In fact, the damage doesn't stop there, a British study published this week in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* suggests. It actually lasts well into the adults' 40s and 50s.

"Midlife ... is an important stage in life because that sets in place the process of aging," says Louise Arseneault, a developmental psychologist at King's College London and the study's senior author. "At age 50, if you have physical [and] mental health problems, it could be downhill from here."

And health isn't the only thing to worry about. Chronic bullying's effect on a person's socioeconomic status, social life and even cognitive function can persist decades later, too, Arseneault's research suggests.

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