

Young women's fights start on social media and move to reality

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Young women who've engaged in physical fighting with other young women, particularly if they have uploaded the fight to social media, are sought by a PhD researcher for a study on the rising rates of violence by young women.

Ashleigh Larkin, from QUT's School of Justice, said the internet had many sites dedicated to showing fights between [young women](#) that had been uploaded by either the audience or the victor.

"I'm interested in hearing from young women aged 14 or over to investigate female violence - what it is they do, how it starts and the role that [social media](#) plays in it," Ms Larkin said.

"So far, my research has found that these fights often stem from an argument on Facebook or other social media site and then they name a time and a place to meet to have a fight to sort it out.

"The fight is often a full-on punch up, and the last person standing is the winner.

"It's a problem-solving mechanism. Participants do it to boast they've won or they've been in a fight and people come to watch and film it on smartphones then upload online."

Ms Larkin said participants received kudos from the thousands of people who watch the videos and comment on different aspects of the fight.

"I think young women have always had physical fights but now they can get a global audience," she said.

"My study is trying to figure out what they do and why they do it so we can better respond as we don't really want anyone to be involved in violence or use it to solve disagreements.

"Some people explain it as young women trying to be equal to young men or trying to be masculine.

"But I think it is just another element to solving peer group conflict. It's also a status thing: they are saying 'I can win and no one will fight me anymore'."

Ms Larkin said young women's violence hadn't been much researched because most violent crime is committed by men and young women's fighting was not deemed serious enough to warrant consideration.

"Another reason is that [physical violence](#) is deemed a masculine activity and thus isn't compatible with social conceptions of femininity.

"However, the increase in the number of videos and social media sites carrying these fights and the huge number of views and 'likes' means this phenomenon is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

"The question is: why are young women choosing to engage and display [violence](#) in this way?"

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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