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Youth violence subject of study; PREVENTION

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Growing youth violence will be the focus of a five-year, \$2-million study to find ways to prevent and reduce the problem, with the University of Western Ontario in a lead role.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, a federal agency, will provide funding for the project.

"(Youth violence) seems to be a more widespread problem these days," said Peter Jaffe, an expert in domestic violence who teaches in the education faculty at UWO and will play a key role in the study as co-investigator.

"In the old days, you'd see a fight and think about calling police," Jaffe said.

"Today, young people see a fight and they're more inclined to record it on their cellphone and post it on the Internet. Violence is more and more being seen as entertainment."

The national study takes in a cross-section of experts, including educators and mental health workers, including several with ties to UWO.

Youth violence is a growing concern of police and educators. Violence, especially use of knives and guns and gang-like attacks, has grown in many cities, including London.

Last week, two teens, a 15-year-old boy and 14-year-old girl, were charged after a 17-year-old student was stabbed at Banting secondary school.

And there have been several instances of gangs of youths attacking other youths, even adults and, often, strangers.

Three weeks ago, an estimated 200 young people, mostly students at Saunders secondary, gathered for a fight between a few youths just off school property. When police arrived, they faced heckles and obscenities. A few people threw bottles and lighters.

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