

Abstract

Objective: Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) among adolescents has become one of the leading public health concerns and attracted increased research attention in recent years. The phenomenology of NSSI and the underlying mechanism, however, are still unclear. The present study examined the prevalence and psychological correlates of NSSI among Chinese community adolescents in Hong Kong. **Method:** Participants, 4,782 Chinese adolescents (68.5% girls, aged between 11 and 19 years), were tested twice in two consecutive years. Participants completed measures assessing NSSI, mood lability, depression, impulsivity, self-identity disturbances, interpersonal disturbances and dissociative symptoms in class. **Results:** Findings revealed that 15.0% of participants have engaged in NSSI within the past two years. Among different NSSI behaviors, cutting, biting and self-hitting were the most prevalent and burning was the least. Gender differences on specific NSSI methods were also observed. Among all psychological correlates, behavioral impulsivity was the most important predictors for NSSI. Among the three types of impulsive behaviors, substance use captured the largest amount of unique variance in NSSI and it was also the most powerful predictor of future NSSI. Path analysis revealed that NSSI was most likely triggered in the context of unstable relationship, and behavioral impulsivity exerted a significant moderating effect on the development of NSSI. **Discussion:** Implications for classification issues of NSSI in DSM system and treatment strategies were discussed.