

Developmental Trajectories of Nonsuicidal Self-injury among Chinese Adolescents:
A 2-year Longitudinal Study

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Nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) is a common and perplexing behavior among adolescents. The question why adolescents engage in this self-destructive behavior is a hotly-studied topic, yet conclusive answers to this question have not been reached. To address this question, this dissertation proposed an integrative model of the development of NSSI. In this model, three types of risk factors: predisposing factors, specific vulnerability factors and maintaining factors for NSSI were examined. In Part 1 of this dissertation, a 3-wave longitudinal design was used to test this model. To understand adolescents' experience of NSSI in more details, Part 2 of this dissertation reported findings from structured interviews conducted with selected repetitive self-injurers.

In Part 1 of this dissertation, 3,600 adolescents (56.6% females) completed self-report questionnaires assessing NSSI and a comprehensive set of NSSI correlates for three waves over one and a half years. Results showed that NSSI mostly served the emotion regulation function. Emotion over-reactivity, unstable sense of self and relationship problems predisposed adolescents to adopt NSSI as an emotion regulation strategy. Behavioral impulsivity, self-criticism and peer influence served as specific vulnerability factors for NSSI. Unwanted emotions/thoughts and behavioral impulsivity also contributed to the maintenance of

NSSI.

In Part 2 of this dissertation, 42 repetitive self-injurers completed individual structured interviews assessing their lived experience of NSSI. Participants again rated emotion regulation to be their primary reason for engaging in NSSI. Negative affects often occurred before and during NSSI, while positive and self-conscious negative affects often followed after NSSI. Negative affects significantly decreased after NSSI, suggesting that NSSI successfully accomplished the emotion regulation function. After NSSI, adolescent self-injurers tended to turn to their friends for help.

Findings of this dissertation enhanced our understanding of the development of NSSI among community adolescents. Conceptual and clinical implications of these findings were discussed.

中國青少年非自殺性自傷行為的發展軌跡：一個 2 年的追蹤研究

摘 要

非自殺性自傷行為（以下簡稱自傷行為）在青少年中是一種常見的但卻令研究者和心理治療師感到困惑的行為。青少年為何會自傷是研究的熱點，但研究者們對該問題仍然沒有獲得確實性的結論。為回答這一問題，本論文提出了一個關於自傷行為發展的整合性模型，其中包括自傷行為的三類風險因子：易感因子，特別誘發因子和保持因子。本研究的第一部分通過一個 3 期的追蹤研究來測試該模型。為了更詳細的瞭解青少年的自傷行為，本論文還進行了第二部分的訪談研究。

在本研究的第一部分中，3,600 名青少年（56.6% 為女性）完成了關於自傷行為和其他與自傷相關因素的自我報告問卷，問卷分三次進行，每次間隔半年。結果表明自傷行為主要用於情緒調節。情緒反應性，不穩定的自我感和人際關係是自傷作為情緒調節工具的易感因素。行為衝動性，自我批評和同伴影響會特別誘發青少年的自傷行為。另外，負面情緒/想法和行為衝動性令青少年持續自傷。

在本研究的第二部分中，42 名有反復性自傷行為的青少年參與了結構性訪談。參加者同樣將情緒調節作為自傷的最主要原因。負面情緒通常出現在自傷前和自傷過程中，正面情緒和自我覺知的負面情緒通常出現在自傷後。自傷後負面情緒顯著下降表明自傷成功完成了情緒調節作用。自傷後，青少年傾向於尋求朋友的幫助。

這些發現有助我們增強對青少年自傷行為發展的理解，也對診斷和治療自傷行為提供了重要的啟示。