

## **Functions of Non-Suicidal Self-Injury among Chinese Adolescents in Hong Kong**

### **ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The present study explored the functions of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. Four main functions were studied: removal of negative feelings/thoughts, generation of positive feelings/thoughts, derivation of social gains, and escape from unwanted social situations. **Method:** In total, 5422 high school students completed a self-report assessment battery that measured NSSI, impulsivity, distress tolerance, emotion reactivity, dissociative symptoms, negative emotions, disturbed interpersonal relationship, parental criticism, suicidal behaviors and demographics. **Result:** The prevalence of NSSI was 28.3% in this sample and self-injurers were more likely to be females. Carving was the most endorsed method, and there were gender differences in method used. Individuals who reported multiple self-cutting displayed the most disturbed psychosocial adjustment profile. Impulsivity was the most important risk factor for frequent NSSI. Differences in reported functions were found with respect to NSSI methods and genders. **Discussion:** Compared to teenagers in the West, Chinese adolescents reported similar endorsement rates on intrapersonal functions such as to stop bad feelings/thoughts or to feel more relaxed. Chinese adolescents, however, were more likely to report using NSSI to serve interpersonal functions such as to feel more a part of a group. This pattern of findings is discussed in terms of the Chinese collectivistic culture.