

Abstract

Childhood abuse has long been found to be related to non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). The current study aims to examine the possible mediating role of emotion dysregulation and habitual negative thinking between childhood abuse and NSSI. In addition, this study also explores the differential impacts of different types of childhood abuse on NSSI across genders. Participants ($N = 1060$) were recruited from two secondary schools in Hong Kong. They completed questionnaires measuring childhood abuse experiences, emotion dysregulation, habitual negative thinking and NSSI. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. Results supported a partial mediation model in which emotion dysregulation and habitual negative thinking mediated between childhood abuse and NSSI. The impact of physical abuse was found to be larger for males, while females were more affected by emotional abuse. Findings of the current study suggest that study of the relationship between childhood abuse and NSSI should take emotion dysregulation and habitual negative thinking into consideration. In addition, the differential effect of various types of abuse on NSSI in different genders highlights the importance of taking gender differences into consideration when studying NSSI.

Keywords: non-suicidal self-injury, emotion dysregulation, habitual negative thinking, childhood abuse, gender differences