

Abstract

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) was frequently found to be associated with emotion dysregulation among adolescents. This study aims to explore the reciprocal relationship between NSSI and emotion dysregulation in 3335 Chinese adolescents over one-year time. Participants completed self-report measures assessing NSSI, emotion dysregulation, anger rumination and thought control. Results suggested that relationship between NSSI and emotion dysregulation is a dynamic one in which emotion dysregulation leads to the use of NSSI but then becomes exacerbated by it over time. The growth trajectory of NSSI, apart from its state, was also examined using latent growth curve modelling (LGM). Interestingly, the growth of NSSI cannot be predicted by initial frequency of NSSI, but by the baseline of emotion dysregulation. Emotion dysregulation mediated a serial effect of cognitive vulnerability, including anger rumination and thought control, and eventually on the growth of NSSI. Findings of this study provide evidence for a vicious cycle of NSSI and emotion dysregulation. Results imply that it might be beneficial for treatment programs to target emotion regulation as a central process variable in treating NSSI.

Keywords: Emotion Dysregulation; Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI); Reciprocal relationship, Rumination, Thought Control