

CHILD ABUSE, IMPULSIVITY AND SELF-INJURY

Abstract

The present study investigated the roles of child maltreatment and behavioral impulsivity in the development of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. A total of 1,054 secondary school students participated in this study. Participants completed a package of self-report scales, including the Personal Report of Childhood Abuse (PRCA), the Behavioral Impulsivity Scale (BIS), the Inventory of Statements About Self-injury (ISAS), and scales that measure other psychological correlates of NSSI. Significant correlations were observed among different types of child abuse, behavioral impulsivity, and the presence of NSSI. Behavioral impulsivity served as a partial mediator between physical abuse and NSSI, and between emotional abuse and NSSI. Findings of this study suggest that adolescents with abuse history who also show higher impulsiveness are more prone to self-injury. Care and guidance can be provided to victims of abuse with the intention to reduce their impulsivity as it may predispose them to NSSI.

Keywords: non-suicidal self-injury, physical abuse, emotional abuse, behavioral impulsivity