

Abstract

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI), which is defined as deliberate and direct injuring of an individual's own body tissue without lethal intention, becomes one of the major public health concerns recent years (Nock, 2010). Research documented a strong relationship between history of child abuse and the development of NSSI. Recent studies have also shown the relationship between NSSI and sense of self-hatred. The present study examined the roles of child abuse and self-hatred schema in the presence of NSSI among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong. In this study, 3,136 adolescents (55% females) recruited from local secondary schools completed a series of self-report questionnaires assessing NSSI and a set of NSSI correlates. The first goal of this study was to examine the mediating role of self-hatred schema in the relation between child abuse and NSSI. Structural equation modeling results suggested that self-hatred schema and general emotional distress mediated the relation between child abuse and NSSI. The second goal of this study was to compare episodic and repetitive self-injurers on different psychological correlates of NSSI and parental mental health variables. Results revealed that self-punishment tendency, behavioural impulsivity, depressive and anxiety symptoms significantly distinguish between repetitive and episodic self-injurers. In addition, parents of repetitive self-injurers are more likely to show externalising and internalising problems but not other mental illness such as schizophrenia. Findings of the present study enhanced our understanding on the underlying mechanism of the relation between child abuse and NSSI and the differences between subgroups of self-injurers among community adolescents. Theoretical and clinical implications of these findings were discussed.