# Analysis of Factors Influencing the Rate of Non-suicidal Self-injury among Adolescents

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***Abstract:*** Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is a growing concern among adolescents and adults, with a rate of 27% among junior and senior high school students. NSSI refers to self-injury that is not intended to cause death, but rather is a way for individuals to cope with emotional pain or distress. This research found that several factors contribute to NSSI among adolescents and adults, including family, social, school, and personal issues. To address this issue, several solutions can be implemented. Firstly, parents must be more attentive to their teenagers, providing support and creating a safe environment where they can talk about their emotions. Secondly, schools should reduce pressure on students and educate them on NSSI. This will help students understand the serious consequences of self-injury and how to seek help if needed. Lastly, society as a whole should improve its understanding of NSSI and create a supportive environment that encourages seeking help for emotional distress. In conclusion, NSSI is a serious issue that requires attention and action from parents, teachers, and society. By understanding the factors that contribute to self-injury and implementing solutions, people can work together to prevent and alleviate this behavior among adolescents.

***Keywords:*** NSSI, adolescents, influencing factors

## 1. Introduction

In the consulting rooms of Peking University's Sixth Hospital, many teenagers are teetering on the brink of suicide. In the absence of a clear intention to commit suicide, repeated intentional injury to their own body behavior, called non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) behavior, is referred to as self-injury behavior [1]. Self-injury is common among adolescents and reaches its peak in adolescence. The incidence rate of NSSI among Chinese junior and senior high school students is 27%, gradually decreasing after adulthood [2]. Self-injury has been a concern in the West for over a century. As early as 1880, NSSI has noted abroad in clinical samples of borderline personality disorder (BPD), but at that time it was not distinguished as a separate category from other behavioral problems of mental disorders [3]. During the study, scholars used their own definitions to describe the behavior. Until now, there were at least 33 relevant terms [4]. There are many ways of self-injury, including cutting, cautery, head-banging, pinching or scratching, swallowing dangerous objects, and poking the body with sharp objects. Although the purpose of self-injury is not to end life, frequent and extreme self-injury can lead to physical disability and even death, which greatly increases the risk of suicide. People need to fully understand it, pay enough attention to it, face it correctly and avoid tragedy. This article will present a definition of self-injurious behavior, analyze the main causes of its effects, and

offer possible recommendations. It is hoped that it will contribute to a proper understanding of the behaviour and inhibit the occurrence of the phenomenon.

## 2. Influencing Factors

The incidence of non-suicidal self-injury in adolescents is higher than in other age groups. Psychologists believe that not all self-injury-related behaviors are motivated by self-destruction; they can also be motivated by self-exploration. Ericson, a famous American developmental psychologist, believes that people's life development will go through eight stages: oral stage, anal stage, genital stage, latent stage, adolescence, youth, adulthood and old age [5]. At each stage, one goes through an important turning point, called a crisis. People need to solve their identity crisis during adolescence (12-18 years old). If teenagers can gradually form their outlook on life and values, establish career ideals and understand themselves at this stage, they will solve the crisis smoothly and realize identity synthesis; otherwise, there will be confusion about identity, and it will be difficult to make firm life choices. Ericson named the extreme identity chaos as identity-diffusion, in which the individual with identity loss is in a state of disintegration, feels extremely empty, and can hardly experience happiness [5].

The combined effects of biological and environmental factors mainly cause the high Incidence of NSSI among adolescents. Environmental susceptibility mainly refers to the disapproved environment, such as the family, school, peers, and Internet, where the adolescent lives. For example, if a child cries after being bullied at school, a parent might say, "You're overreacting; it's not a big deal; just focus on school." Such feedback from parents will make them sink into self-denial and gradually fail to accurately express their emotions, prompting them to constantly strengthen and upgrade their emotional expression and finally gain their parent's attention in extreme ways. A disapproved environment can also include oversimplifying solutions to problems and goals without understanding adolescents' difficulties. For example, when a teenager is upset about a bad test, a teacher might say, "Just study more next time, and you'll do fine." Parents will say, "Watch fewer mobile phones, and grades will come up." Such simplistic guidance does not teach adolescents to tolerate pain, solve life's problems, and effectively regulate goals and behaviors. When children with high emotional sensitivity live in an unrecognized environment, they will develop emotional dissonance, and after emotional dissonance, they will suffer from environmental disapproval, which will aggravate emotional dissonance. Such interaction eventually leads to widespread and lasting emotional disorders, leading to the occurrence of NSSI. Next, the article will analyse the four sources of influence from family, society, school and individual.

## 2.1. Family Factors

In now society, the family's ecosystem will significantly influence a teenager such as thoughts and behaviors. A nice family ecosystem can make a teenager live in a happy environment; they will have positive emotions and an optimistic attitude. On the other hand, a bad family ecosystem will lead to the teenager's character defects and even more seriously, may lead to mental illness. However, not all teenagers can, fortunately, be born into a nice family without any pressure or anxiety. Many teenagers who face pressure and anxiety will have an incline toward self-injury. Family factors are most valued among the many factors that can lead to students' non-suicidal self-injury. According to research that aims to understand the current situation of non-suicidal self-injury behavior among primary and middle school students and explores the family environment's influence on non-suicidal self-injury behavior of primary and secondary school students [6]. 6 252 primary and secondary school students from 4 schools were selected by cluster sampling method. The intentional NSSI scale and Chinese Family Assessment instrument were used to conduct the questionnaire survey. The

family environment factors of NSSI behavior of primary and secondary school students were analyzed by two-classification logistic regression. The study finally found that the detection rate of non-suicidal self-injury behavior was 30.74%. In primary and middle school students, family communication, family conflict, and parental control were risk factors for non-suicidal self-injury behavior [6]. If students' inner thoughts are deeply considered, they may lack love and security in their hearts, which leads them to think that no one loves them in the family, and they will commit non-suicidal self-injury behaviors. In fact, such behavior will not immediately threaten the life of the person concerned, but for the students, it is a way to ask their parents for help, and they hope to take care of their families in such an extreme way.

## 2.2. Social Factors

Now technology is more and more developed, and social platforms will present all kinds of things. Yet these platforms can also unwittingly cause stress, anxiety, and depression. Social media is a collection of highlights from everyone's life, such as a new phone, bag, or post. There is nothing wrong with these behaviors. The problem is that people is always used to compared with others' highlight, thus producing a psychological gap. In addition, in life, money is used to measure the value of things, and in social media, likes, comments, and retweets become the currency of value. For example, when teenagers post a post on moment, if others don't give those teenagers a "like" or give the negative comments, they will feel anxious and even delete the moment, just like taking down an unpopular product. People unknowingly treat themselves as commodities, allowing others to measure their worth. Internet language can also do great harm to teenagers' psychological growth. Malicious attacks, insults, or privacy disclosure from others will also pressure us. Sometimes individuals just express different opinions from the public, but they have to suffer terrible Internet violence. The following above can all be the reason that students will have the reaction of non-suicidal self-injury. A landmark ruling found that social media companies contributed to the death of Ian Russell's daughter, Molly, who died by suicide in November 2017 while suffering from depression and being "negatively affected by online content." The coroner ruled that social media had sent her posts romanticizing self-harm behavior, which should not have been provided to a 14-year-old. This is the first time a post-mortem investigation has linked a child's death to social media. The ruling has called on social media companies to make changes to ensure online safety for children and teenagers [7].

## 2.3. School Factors

Teenagers spend more time at school than at home, and inappropriate behavior at school can cause great physical and mental damage to students, so the school environment and who is involved are also important. Many of the people teenagers face at school are their classmates and teachers, but in a way the influence of teachers at school is the same as that of parents at home. Therefore, teachers' words and deeds will have a great impact on students' mental states and self-cognition. There are mainly two kinds; The first point is not an objective evaluation. As the absolute authority of students, teachers have the right to control what they say and do. Therefore, when the teacher evaluates a student, the student very easy to internalizes the teacher's evaluation of himself, even though the student is still rebellious on the surface; for example: "Some teachers like to scold students stupid, stupid ", which to a certain extent affects the students' self-cognition, although inferiority will not have a big impact in the short term, but may imperceptibly affect the future psychological development of students. The second is indiscriminate scolding. Appropriate and objective criticism and scolding are two kinds of concepts, scolding is more like the teacher to vent their emotions, rather than for the students, for the thing itself in feedback, in this case, will lead to students in extreme anxiety, they will worry about the teacher, classmates and anyone else evaluation of their own,

because only good evaluation can avoid this situation, namely make only once, it is possible to let the student in long-term anxiety, panic state of mind.

At present, the tendency of depression and anxiety in middle and high school students is on the rise, which is a risk that many schools have begun to face, such as suicide, self-injury and other behaviors, although the school is tired of psychological teachers, but still lack of training and practical experience will also lead to improper handling or not timely produce other related problems. In addition, many teenagers began to self-harm or even commit suicide due to school bullying. For example, the New York Post reports on the tragic suicide of Adriana, a 14-year-old New Jersey girl who was bullied at school. Despite repeated complaints from Adriana's father, the school did nothing to stop the bullying. The incident made it all the more painful when Adriana's assailants posted videos mocking and threatening her on various social media platforms. Adriana's suicide drew attention to the problem of bullying in schools, with her father taking personal action to demand accountability from schools and draw attention to the issue. This incident highlights the need for effective measures to protect the safety and rights of students in schools [8]. Only a change in the attitude of school teachers and the importance attached to bullying in schools can change this.

## 2.4. Individual Factors

The individual influencing factors of non-suicidal NSSI are closely related to gender and self-emotion management ability. Many foreign studies have shown that: the number of self-injuries in females is 1.5-3 times higher than that of males. However, some studies have found no significant difference between men and women in self-injury behavior [9,10]. As the existing research conclusions are generally based on clinical samples, there are few studies on the systematic study of NSSI in male samples. So, the researchers still have to be very cautious about interpreting these results. Other studies have tested the hypothesis that intentional self-injury in adolescents is positively associated with low self-image and have examined the association between substance abuse (drugs, tobacco, alcohol) and intentional self-injury. One hundred thirteen high school students, mainly aged 16 to 18, answered 16-item versions of the intentional self-injury checklist, 36-item structural analyses of social behavior, and individual questions about drug, tobacco, and alcohol use. Results showed a positive correlation between intentional self-injury and low self-image and a positive correlation between intentional self-injury and smoking and alcohol consumption. These results imply that low self-image and high substance use may be markers that identify adolescents at risk of self-injury [11].

## 3.    Suggestions

## 3.1.  Promote Effective Family Communication

To create a positive and supportive environment for their children, parents need to be attentive and proactive in various areas. For instance, paying attention to changes in their children's emotions is crucial, as mood swings and negative emotions are common in young people. In this context, parents should not only be willing to listen and empathize but also create a safe space where their children can express their feelings freely.

Another key aspect is fostering a harmonious family atmosphere, which can have a positive impact on children's emotional development. Parents can achieve this by modeling positive behaviors and values, promoting mutual respect and understanding, and guiding their children to learn tolerance and empathy towards others. This can help children learn positive emotional coping strategies and avoid negative or harmful behaviors such as self-injury.

Additionally, parents need to be aware of their children's companions, particularly during adolescence when peer influence is often strong. Keeping a check on their children's friends, making contact with them, and understanding their dynamics can help parents recognize potential emotional

problems and address them before they escalate. Moreover, parents should be vigilant about their children's peers' self-injurious behavior, as it can be contagious and lead to dangerous outcomes.

In recent years, the incidence of non-suicidal self-injury caused by emotional crisis events has been on the rise, and it is more common in teenagers. The age of the first self-injury is concentrated between 12-14 years old, and there is not only one way of self-injury. Some people regard teenagers who self-injure as "problem teenagers", which is secondary damage to their mental health. It is hoped that people from all walks of life should attach great importance to teenagers with self-injures and help them escort their healthy growth.

## 3.2. Social Improvement

For the government and schools, the real implementation of quality-oriented education can provide teenagers with more possibilities for self-exploration. Through quality education, teenagers may realize that "I like art better than math." In addition, schools can teach students through meditation, talk, and other ways to vent emotions, effective emotional management, and interpersonal communication courses so that students learn the correct way of interpersonal communication. After the occurrence of NSSI, timely and effective intervention measures must be taken. No matter whether parents, teachers, or friends, it is not difficult to help teenagers seek professional treatment once they are found to have serious NSSI. From the perspective of identity exploration, NSSI shows teenagers' strong desire for self-exploration.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, studies and investigations have confirmed the high incidence of NSSI and the various factors that contribute to this behavior. Through practical cases and in-depth research on family, school, society, and self, this study has identified the immense pressure faced by teenagers and their lack of understanding and support from parents and teachers. Furthermore, the influence of social media and online celebrities also contributes to this behavior. To address this issue, this research proposes effective communication with parents, improving the level of school teachers and strengthening the ability to resist pressure. It is hoped that this article raises awareness about non-suicidal self-injury and provides insights into why it occurs and how it can be mitigated. By improving social care and awareness, people can better support teenagers and prevent the occurrence of NSSI. However, this paper provides a review of relevant studies and case summaries based mainly on the literature, and more relevant empirical experiments for specific scopes could be studied more often in the future.

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