

A Comparison of Attitudes toward Life and Death, Experiential Avoidance, and Sense of Control among Self-Mutilative Adolescents with and without Borderline Personality Traits

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Purpose: This study examines the relative risks of self-injurious behaviors among adolescents with borderline personality traits (BPT). It also identifies the characteristics of self-mutilative adolescents with BPT and identifies correlations with various psychological factors. **Methods:** According to the Chinese Personality Disorders Inventory – BPD criteria, a total of 2,067 students (556 males, 1511 females, with mean age 16.5) in an institute of technology from southern Taiwan were divided into 4 groups: with or without BPT traits and self-injurious behaviors. Twenty-five participants in each group were randomly sampled for further investigation. **Results:** Of the 2,015 valid participants, 7% fulfilled the criteria of BPT. For the entire sample, the prevalence rate of self-injurious behavior was 9.7%. The self-injurious rate of adolescents with BPT was much higher than those without BPT (odds ratio = 22). Compared to other groups, self-mutilative adolescents with BPT were significantly inclined to adopt multiple self-mutilation methods, and were also significantly frequent users of some particular self-mutilation methods. According to trend analyses, significant linear trends were found in the psychological factors related to experiential avoidance, attitudes toward life and death, and sense of control for groups of self-mutilative adolescents with BPT, self-mutilative adolescents without BPT, and the non self-mutilative non BPT group. **Conclusions:** The high risk self-mutilative behaviors among those with BPT are worthy of notice. Self-mutilative adolescents with BPT indicated the highest tendency of experiential avoidance, negative sense of control, negative attitudes toward life and death, and the highest repulsion by life. They showed the least positive sense of control, as well. Moreover, they were more vulnerable to negative consequences or were maladapted. Lastly, implications of the results and future research possibilities are discussed.

Key words: borderline personality traits, self-mutilative adolescents, attitudes toward life and death, experiential avoidance, sense of control

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