The Function of NSSI: Differences by ADHD Symptom Endorsement

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Among those who engage in NSSI, individuals with high ADHD symptomatology do so for affect regulation and self-punishment.

The Function of NSSI: Differences by ADHD Symptom Endorsement
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INTRODUCTION
- Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) appears as a condition for further study in the DSM-5.
- NSSI is the act of deliberately self-inflicting harm to the surface of one’s skin without the intent of dying.
- Relief from negative emotions and escape from interpersonal problems serve as two common functions of NSSI.
- A risk factor for NSSI is impulsivity, which is a core feature of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); this suggests a potential link between the two.
- The current exploratory study focused on the function of NSSI in college students with and without elevated ADHD symptoms.

METHOD
- College students with a history of NSSI (N = 42)
- Barkley Adult ADHD Rating Scale (BAARS) to determine ADHD symptoms
- Inventory of Statements About Self-Injury (ISAS)
- In-person, self-report survey format
- Participants were divided into 2 groups:
  ○ Elevated ADHD symptom (4+ symptoms on the BAARS)
  ○ Non-ADHD (3 or fewer symptoms on BAARS)

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for engaging in NSSI</th>
<th>“Elevated ADHD Symptom” group</th>
<th>“Non-ADHD” group</th>
<th>Effect size (η²p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affect Regulation</td>
<td>4.05 (1.79)*</td>
<td>2.45 (2.28)*</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Boundaries</td>
<td>.60 (.99)</td>
<td>.55 (1.14)</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-punishment</td>
<td>3.35 (2.08)*</td>
<td>1.95 (2.21)*</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-care</td>
<td>.55 (.83)</td>
<td>.38 (.67)</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling generation</td>
<td>2.15 (2.06)</td>
<td>1.41 (1.94)</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-suicide</td>
<td>1.75 (2.29)*</td>
<td>.55 (1.53)*</td>
<td>.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation seeking</td>
<td>.45 (.89)</td>
<td>.18 (.39)</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer bonding</td>
<td>.15 (.37)</td>
<td>.05 (.21)</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal influence</td>
<td>1.25 (1.52)*</td>
<td>.41 (1.01)*</td>
<td>.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toughness</td>
<td>1.05 (.99)*</td>
<td>.45 (.91)*</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marking distress</td>
<td>1.90 (1.77)</td>
<td>1.05 (1.59)</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>.40 (1.23)</td>
<td>.14 (1.47)</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.55 (.94)*</td>
<td>.05 (.21)*</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

DISCUSSION
- As seen above, participants with elevated ADHD symptoms in the current study reported higher rates of engaging in NSSI for affect regulation, self-punishment, interpersonal influence, and autonomy.
- These preliminary results from our sample (N = 42) suggest that reported function of NSSI may be based on ADHD symptomatology

REFERENCES: