

Exploration of the Phenomena of Resisting Urges to Self-harm in Adolescence

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Abstract

The paper deals with the topic of self-harm in adolescence with a focus on the phenomenon of resisting the urge to physical self-harming behaviour. In the study, data obtained within the project solved on a representative sample of Slovak adolescents are handled, in the current study the following aspects were observed in self-harming adolescents younger (12-15 years; n = 498) and older (16-18 years; n = 387) groups: the age of the first self-harm, the time since the last self-harm, the time that usually elapses from the urge to the self-harm itself, and the reasoning if resistance occurs (ie. the time interval between the above). The aim is to clarify the process between the urge for self-harm and self-harm itself based on the time data and qualitative data and its comparison between age cohorts. The questionnaire with open questions was used for data collection. Data were processed by frequency and thematic analysis (of over 200 statements). The results show several patterns of reasoning the postponing self-harm, the most common of which are deliberation, waiting for the fitting opportunity, rational rejection, and rejection respecting the loved ones. The time between urge and self-harm is most often within 1 hour or more than 24 hours. The results are beneficial for revealing resistance as a process of finding or using urge management resources as strategies useful in preventing self-harm or recurrence.

Keywords: Deliberation; Postponing; Rejection; Resistance; Urge.