

Self Cutting in Adolescence: Psychosocial Predictors

V. Leite¹, J. Ferreira¹, L. Veiga¹

¹Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Hospital Pediátrico Carmona da Mota, Coimbra, Portugal

Introduction

Provided with his biological and psychological circumstances, the adolescent frames within a context of interactions, life experiences and disruptive situations. The plethora of changes taking place at this period of transition sets the stage for a wield between physical and psychological growth potential and the process of illness.

Successful management of circumstances versus lacking of coping strategies will determine, respectively, favorable or unfavorable prognostic implications for development outcomes. It depends on the youths' individual traits, but also on the resources provided by his social context.

Objectives

The authors seek to identify the main psychosocial factors associated with self-cutting in the youth, aiming for an expedient identification and prompt intervention.

Methods

The authors used a sample of 50 adolescents gathered from a larger ongoing study. They were referred to the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Department between January and June of 2014, identified with self-cutting history.

The authors resorted to the International Classification of Diseases (10th edition), specifically to its psychosocial axis (V). Each case was searched for the risk factors contemplated in this axis.

Results

Even though being preliminary, results allow identification of some psychosocial patterns suggestive of increased risk for self-cutting. They highlight the importance of timely identification and prompt intervention.

Conclusions

Adolescent's individual characteristics (biology, temperament, resilience) interact with environmental circumstances. Different developmental outcomes are determined, some of which unpredictable. However, self injurious behaviors, such as self-cutting seem to associate with specific psychosocial patterns. A proper assessment of the psychosocial contexts may allow identification and timely intervention.