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# Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in Relation to Self-Harming Behavior During Adolescence

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## ABSTRACT

Self-injurious behavior has demonstrated an increasing trend among adolescents and young adults over the last decades. Its high prevalence in both clinical and non-clinical populations poses a serious threat to the physical and mental health of adolescents. To understand the causes and mechanisms underlying this undesirable phenomenon, as well as to develop more effective treatment and intervention strategies, it is essential to obtain relevant data from multiple domains, including information on the overall mental health of self-injuring adolescents. The aim of this study is to examine the extent to which depressive and anxiety symptoms are associated with self-injurious behavior and to assess the predictive value of these symptoms in relation to self-injury. The research was conducted on a sample of 203 adolescents aged 15 to 19 years ( $M = 16.62$  years), with a female representation of 58.6%. The presence of depressive and anxiety symptoms, assessed using the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21), was found to be statistically significantly correlated ( $p < 0.001$ ) with the occurrence of self-injurious behavior, as measured by a modified Self-Harm Inventory (SHI). Linear regression analysis indicated that both depressive symptoms (DS) and anxiety symptoms (AS) significantly predicted the occurrence of self-injurious behavior ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $R^2_{DS} = 0.495$ ;  $R^2_{AS} = 0.466$ ). These findings suggest that depressive and anxiety symptoms play a crucial role in the development and manifestation of self-injurious behavior among adolescents. This has significant implications, particularly for the prevention of self-injury onset and progression. Given these results, further research into additional comorbidities commonly associated with self-injurious behavior in this population is highly recommended.

**Keywords:** self-harm; depressive symptoms; anxiety symptoms; comorbidity; adolescence

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