Self-Injury: Treatment, Assessment, Recovery

**Acronym**

STAR

**Keywords**

Nonsuicidal Self-Injury (NSSI), Longitudinal, Neurobiology, Online Therapy, Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA), E-Learning/Blended Learning

**Project Management**

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Cooperation Partners

- University Hospital Heidelberg
- Central Institute of Mental Health in Mannheim
- University of Koblenz-Landau
- Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

Project Term

11/2017-10/2021

Link Project Website

www.star-projekt.de

Background & Aim of the Project

Nonsuicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) is defined as repetitive, voluntary destruction of one's own body tissue that is not socially accepted. NSSI is reported at least once by about 35% of German adolescents and young adults. NSSI often occurs in combination with various psychiatric disorders. However, it has not yet been clarified why NSSI spontaneously remits in many patients after some time but remains in others for many years. Very little research exists on how adolescents can be supported in quitting NSSI.

The project aims to identify possible psychological and neurobiological mechanisms that could contribute to stop NSSI (e.g. psychological diagnostics, ecological momentary assessment (EMA), functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), genotyping, online therapy). By analyzing the factors contributing to stopping NSSV, future intervention and prevention offers can be specifically planned and implemented in order to improve psychosocial care in this area.
Description of the Project

Adolescents and young adults aged 14 to 21 years will be able to participate in the project. A total of 2,000 participants are to be recruited and followed up over a period of 18 months using online questionnaires. Of these participants, 700 will be randomly assigned to participate in either online psychoeducation (n=350) or online therapy (n=350). Another 300 participants will be asked to participate in psychological interviews, neurobiological examinations (fMRI, genotyping, cortisol) and EMA at local clinical centers. As a control group for this group of 300 people suffering from NSSI, 150 healthy subjects will also participate in the onsite examinations.

In an additional subproject, medical specialists (n=500) will be surveyed online regarding their knowledge of the current Association of the Scientific Medical Societies in Germany (AWMF) guidelines on NSSI. In a further step, e-learning and blended learning training courses on the subject will be designed and evaluated.

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