

Influence of Lifestyle Modification Factors on Young Adults Exhibiting Non-Suicidal Self-Injurious and Suicidal Ideation

Kiran Kharka¹, Vallari Kukreti², Madhulata Nayal³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, S.S.J. Campus, Almora, Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, S.D.M. Govt. P.G. College, Doiwala, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

³Professor, S.S.J. University, Almora, Campus Almora, Uttarakhand.

Abstract

Having healthy routines and positive behaviors is essential. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is challenging without a routine and healthy habits. The purpose of the present exploratory study was to examine the underlying lifestyle modification factors in young adults exhibiting non-suicidal self-injurious behavior and suicidal ideation, and to compare lifestyle modification factors in young adults exhibiting non-suicidal self-injurious behavior and suicidal ideation with respect to their gender. 200 college-going young adults (100 males and 100 females) from a government college in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, between the ages of 18 and 29 were randomly selected and interviewed. 39 college-going young adults were identified for further research out of 200 participants. Whereas 17 individuals (12 males and 5 females) indicated suicidal ideation, and 22 participants (13 males and 9 females) reported NSSI behavior. The results of this study indicate that factors related to lifestyle modification have an impact on suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-injurious (NSSI) behaviors. Significant gender differences were observed as well in these factors. Future research should use more sophisticated statistical methods and a larger sample size.

Keywords: Non-suicidal self-injury, Suicidal ideation, Lifestyle modification factors, young adults.

1. Introduction

Having healthy routines and positive behaviors is essential. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is challenging without a routine and healthy habits. However, not every habit is beneficial to health or adaptability. Maladaptive behaviors can make it challenging to perform everyday tasks, adversely influence psychological health, and negatively impact overall well-being and quality of life. Lifestyle habits, including physical activity, sleep patterns, eating habits, and unhealthy behaviors such as tobacco, alcohol, or drug use, excessive Internet and mobile device usage, and gambling, have been recognized as possible contributing factors in NSSI adolescents (Goni-Sarries et al., 2026) [1]. In NSSI, the individual has, on 5 or more days, engaged in intentional self-inflicted damage to the surface of his or her body of a sort likely to induce bleeding, bruising, or pain (e.g., cutting, burning, stabbing, hitting, excessive rubbing), with the expectation that the injury will lead to only minor or moderate physical harm (i.e., there is no suicidal intent) (APA 2013) [2]. Unhealthy habits, including inadequate physical activity, poor sleep quality, excessive daytime sleepiness, and prolonged screen time, may serve as predictors or risk factors for non-

suicidal self-injury (NSSI) among adolescents (Goni-Sarries et al., 2026) [1]. Although NSSI and suicidal thoughts and acts have distinct motivations, they have certain comparable risk factors, such as a history of trauma, abuse, or chronic stress, high emotional perception and sensitivity, and few effective mechanisms for dealing with emotional stress, feelings of isolation (This may be true even for those who appear to possess many friends or connections), history of alcohol or substance abuse, presence of depression or anxiety, feeling of worthlessness (Whitlock et al., 2015) [3].

The majority of studies on suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) have focused on adolescents. On the other hand. Insufficient studies have been undertaken with young adults, particularly in India, and no comparable research was found in Uttarakhand. Therefore, by filling this significant research gap, the current study adds to the body of knowledge and offers a new perspective on these problems in this age range.

The purpose of this study was:

- To examine the lifestyle modification factors in young adults exhibiting suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-injurious behavior.
- To compare lifestyle modification factors in young adults exhibiting suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-injurious behavior, with respect to their gender.

2. Materials and Methods

In this exploratory study, 200 college-going young adults (100 males and 100 females) from a government college in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, between the ages of 18 and 29 were randomly selected and interviewed. The students were pursuing their studies in courses leading to bachelor's, master's, B.Ed., and PhD degrees. 161 were excluded from the sample because they did not report non-suicidal self-injurious behavior and suicidal ideation, and 39 college-going young adults were identified for further research out of 200 participants. Whereas 17 individuals (12 males and 5 females) indicated suicidal ideation, and 22 participants (13 males and 9 females) reported NSSI behavior.

The Personal Data Schedule and Beck Depression Inventory-2 (BDI-2) were initially given out for the study purpose. Out of 200 individuals, 39 were selected for further assessment based on their suicidal thoughts and non-suicidal self-injurious (NSSI) behavior. Subsequently, a structured interview was conducted with these 39 participants to assess their lifestyle modification factors.

This study employed the following types of tools:

- **Personal Data Schedule:** The researcher created this Personal Data Schedule. This questionnaire includes questions on the youth's personal lives, such as name, mother's and father's names, age, height and weight, address, etc.
- **Structured Interview (Lifestyle Modification Factors):** The researcher has constructed a structured interview. The questions in this questionnaire are centered on the everyday routines of young adults, such as sleeping habits, breakfast, junk and restaurant food consumption, internet and mobile content usage, drug and alcohol use, NSSI behavior, etc.
- **Beck Depression Inventory-2 (BDI-2):** The Beck Depression Inventory-second edition (Beck et al., 1996) [4] is a self-report instrument for measuring the severity of depression in adults and adolescents aged 13 years and older. In BDI-2, 21 depressive symptoms and attitudes are listed, namely 1) Mood, 2) Pessimism, 3) Sense of failure, 4) Self-dissatisfaction, 5) Guilt, 6) Punishment, 7) Self-dislike, 8) Self-accusations, 9) Suicidal ideas, 10) Crying, 11) Irritability, 12) Social withdrawal, 13) Indecisiveness, 14) Body image change, 15) Work Difficulty, 16) Insomnia, 17) Fatigability, 18) Loss

of appetite, 19) Weight loss, 20) Somatic preoccupation & 21) Loss of libido. Scoring of this scale is 0-13 for minimal depression, 14-19 for mild depression, 20-28 for moderate depression, and 29-63 for severe depression. The reliability of the tool is .74 and the construct validity of the tool is 0.93.

3. Results

Two groups are created from the sample; Table 1 contains details about each group.

Table 1: Details of the Sample

S. No.	Name Of Group	Male	Female	Sample Size
1.	NSSI	13	9	22
2.	Suicidal ideation	12	5	17
Total		25	14	39

Table 1 indicates that males demonstrated higher levels of suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-injurious behavior relative to females.

Table 2: Details of Internet Usage in Hours

Group	Gender	Normal (0-3 hours)	Moderate (3-5 hours)	High (6 and above hours)	Total
NSSI	Male	4	5	4	13
	Female	7	1	1	9
Suicidal Ideation	Male	4	3	5	12
	Female	4	1	-	5
Total		19	10	10	39

Table 2 shows the frequency of internet usage of males and females in both groups. In both groups, the proportion of participants with normal internet use (0-3 hrs.) was the highest (19/39), whereas the proportions with moderate (3-5 hrs.) and high (6+ hrs.) internet use were equal (10/39 each). Our results revealed that more males with Suicidal ideation indulge in high usage of the internet.

Table 3: Details of Sleeping Patterns in Hours

Group	Gender	Less sleep (Less than 6 hours)	Normal Sleep (6-8 hours)	Excessive sleep (more than hours)	Total
NSSI	Male	4	8	1	13
	Female	1	4	4	9
Suicidal Ideation	Male	2	10	-	12
	Female	-	3	2	5
Total		7	25	7	39

Table 3 indicates the sleeping hours of the participants. In both groups, most individuals maintained regular/normal sleeping hours (25/39), while the proportions of those with insufficient and excessive sleeping hours were identical (7/39 each). In the NSSI group, shorter sleep duration was more prevalent among males (4/13), whereas excessive sleep duration was more common among females (4/9). A similar pattern was also observed in the suicidal ideation group (males with insufficient sleep, 2/12, and females with excessive sleep, 2/5).

Table 4: Details of Junk Food and Restaurant Food Consumption Per Month

Group	Gender	Less Consumption (0-2 times)	Normal Consumption (3-5 times)	Excessive Consumption (6 and above)	Total
NSSI	Male	1	10	2	13
	Female	3	6	-	9
Suicidal Ideation	Male	5	6	1	12
	Female	3	2	-	5
Total		12	24	3	39

Table 4 illustrates the monthly frequency of Junk food and Restaurant food consumption by both groups. The findings show that most individuals (24/39) in both groups fell into the category of normal (3-5 times per month) Junk and Restaurant food intake. Only 3 out of 39 individuals belonged to the group with excessive Junk and Restaurant food consumption (6 or more times per month). In contrast, almost half (12/39) were classified under the low-consumption category, as those in the normal category. These findings suggest that males consume Junk food and restaurant food more often than females.

Table 5: Details of Regularity in Breakfast and Food Consumption

Group	Gender	Regular Breakfast		Total	Regular Food		Total
		Yes	No		Yes	No	
NSSI	Male	9	4	13	9	4	13
	Female	5	4	9	6	3	9
Suicidal Ideation	Male	7	5	12	4	8	12
	Female	3	2	5	5	-	5
Total		24	15	39	24	15	39

Table 5 presents data on breakfast and food consumption regularity. The findings show that a higher proportion of individuals (24/39) in both groups had regular breakfast and food intake than those who had irregular breakfast and food consumption (15/39). Furthermore, the results indicate that males experiencing suicidal thoughts are more inclined to have irregular food consumption.

Table 6: Details of Alcohol/Drug and Substance Abuse, and Exercise

Group	Gender	Alcohol/Drug		Total	Exercise		Total
		Yes	No		Yes	No	
NSSI	Male	8	5	13	6	7	13
	Female	1	8	9	1	8	9
Suicidal Ideation	Male	6	6	12	8	4	12
	Female	1	4	5	2	3	5
Total		16	23	39	17	22	39

Table 6 presents alcohol, drug, and substance abuse, exercise, and body satisfaction for each group. Findings reveal that of the 39 participants, 16 reported alcohol/drug consumption, whereas 23 individuals were not consuming alcohol/drugs. Compared to females, males demonstrated a higher prevalence of alcohol, drug, and substance abuse tendencies.

Table 6 indicates that the majority of participants across both groups did not engage in exercise. Out of 39 participants, 17 reported exercising, while 22 reported not exercising. Results also show that males with suicidal ideation are more inclined to regular exercise in comparison to NSSI males and females with suicidal ideation and NSSI.

4. Discussion

According to the present study, males are more likely than females to engage in non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) behaviors and experience suicidal ideation. Contrary to this study, Zhang et al., (2026) [5] reported that compared to male adolescents, female adolescents had a considerably higher likelihood of engaging in NSSI. The contradictory findings may be attributed to cultural differences. Additionally, the discrepancy may also be because the present study included young adults rather than adolescents.

Analysis of all tables and findings of this study reveals that lifestyle-modifying variables, habits, and routines shape individuals' attitudes towards themselves and their behavior. Kim et al., (2023) [6] stated that Internet addiction is a risk factor for suicidal thoughts and non-suicidal self-injury in adolescents. Our study reveals that males were more indulgent in internet usage. A supportive study by Yang et al., (2020) [7] discovered gender differences in using the internet for various purposes. Compared to females, males often spend more time utilizing gaming and knowledge-sharing software.

Liang et al., (2025) [8] reported that increased risk of NSSI was associated with shorter self-reported sleep duration and extended objectively determined sleep delay. In our study, the majority of participants' sleep durations fell within the normal range. However, the findings also showed that although some female participants reported sleeping considerably more hours than the normal range, some male participants reported sleeping significantly fewer hours than the normal range.

According to the current study's findings, those who report having suicidal thoughts and engaging in non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) practices typically engage in less physical activity. In addition, the results of our research show that males use drugs and alcohol more often than females. Goni-Sarries et al., (2026) [1] indicated that regular smoking, alcohol use, early cannabis use, and poor physical exercise were associated with a statistically significantly increased risk of NSSI. No significant association was found between NSSI and substance use, when considered in broad terms, or with experimenting with smoking. Prabhu (2010) [9] reported that women stated that they drank alcohol more for stress relief and tension reduction than for pleasure.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that factors related to lifestyle modification have an impact on suicidal ideation and non-suicidal self-injurious (NSSI) behaviors. Significant gender differences were also observed in these factors. The current study is constrained by the small sample size. Moreover, no statistical methods were used to analyze the data. To provide more solid and trustworthy results, future research should use more sophisticated statistical methods and a larger sample size.

6. Reference

1. Goni-Sarries, A., Gutierrez-Valencia, M., Morata-Sampaio, L., Saiz-Fernandez, L. C., Leache-Alegria, L., & Sanchez-Villegas, A. (2026). Lifestyle habits, problem behaviors and non-suicidal self-injury in adolescents: a systematic review with meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Adolescent Research Review*, 11(1), 95-110.

2. American Psychiatric Association (2013). Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.). United States of America: American Psychiatric Association Press, pp. 803.
3. Whitlock, J. A. N. I. S., Minton, R. A. C. H. E. L., Babington, P., & Ernhout, C. A. R. R. I. E. (2015). The relationship between non-suicidal self-injury and suicide. *Ithaca, NY: The Information Brief Series, Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery Cornell University, 201.*
4. Beck, A.T., Steer, R.A. & Brown, G. K. (1996). BDI-II manual-2nd ed. USA: Person Group (Psychocorp), 1-11.
5. Zhang, Y., Qian, W., Ma, Z., Xu, J., Zhu, Y., Ouyang, F., ... & Xu, L. (2026). The non-suicidal self-injury behaviour and its influencing factors in adolescents. *BMC pediatrics.*
6. Kim, H., Jhon, M., Kim, J. W., Kang, H. J., Ryu, S., Kim, S. Y., ... & Lee, J. Y. (2023). Suicide and non-suicidal self-injury from internet addiction among Korean adolescents. *Journal of the Korean Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 34(3), 152.*
7. Yang, X., Xin, M., Liu, K., & Böke, B. N. (2020). The impact of internet use frequency on non-suicidal self-injurious behavior and suicidal ideation among Chinese adolescents: an empirical study based on gender perspective. *BMC Public Health, 20(1), 1727.*
8. Liang, J., Liu, Y., Zhang, T., Jia, F., & Hou, C. (2025). Sleep characteristics and non-suicidal self-injury: unveiling the association in depressed adolescents. *BMC psychiatry, 25(1), 1027.*
9. Prabhu, S., Dulmus, PhD, C. N., & Ratheeshkumar, K. S. (2010). Prevalence, nature, context, and impact of alcohol use in India: recommendations for practice and research.