

**Family Communication Patterns, Alexithymia, and Functions of Non-suicidal Self-injury  
among a Clinical Sample of Young Female Adults**

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**Abstract**

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) refers to the conscious or intentional attempt to harm oneself without the aim of suicide (Klonsky, 2011). This study aims to identify family communication patterns and alexithymia as the correlates and predictors of two functions of NSSI (interpersonal & intrapersonal) among a sample of 82 ( $M_{age} = 21.76$ ;  $SD = 2.34$ ) young adult females with mental health disorders and a history of NSSI. This study used a correlational research design, and through a purposive sampling strategy, the data were collected from a government hospital in Lahore. The study used the Revised Family Communication Patterns Scale (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002), Toronto Alexithymia Scale (Bagby et al., 2009), and Inventory of Statements about Self-Injury (Klonsky & Glenn, 2009). The findings revealed a strong positive and significant relationship of conformity orientation (a subscale of family communication patterns), difficulty in identifying feelings, and difficulty in describing feelings (two facets of alexithymia) with intrapersonal function of NSSI. The intrapersonal function of NSSI was also significantly and positively predicted by difficulties in describing feelings of Alexithymia. The findings of the study contribute to the indigenous literature and help mental health professionals design interventions in treating NSSI targeting emotional regulation and parent-child communication.

**Keywords:** alexithymia, conformity orientation, family communication patterns, NSSI, intrapersonal function