

# Disease disorder "nail biting" essay sample

[Psychology](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Nail biting is a common unwanted behavior which starts in late childhood and is considered as an obsessive compulsive disease/disorder. The majority of children is motivated to stop nail biting and have already tried to stop it, but is generally unsuccessful in doing so. In fact, it is a difficult behavior to change or treat. The objective of this study was to investigate the prevalence of co-morbid psychiatric disorders in a clinical sample of children with this habit who present at a child and adolescent mental health care outpatient clinic and the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in their parents (Ahmad, 2008).

Approximately 28% to 33% of children ages 7-10 are biting their nails, as well as the 44% of adolescents, 19% to 29% of young adults and 5% of older adults. It is more common in boys (Habit disorders: How to prevent and treat nail biting, 2006).

First of all, nail biting is related to genetics, as it tends to run in families and is learned behavior, which would also explain the familial link. If a small child sees her parents biting their nails in times of stress or inactivity, she might try it out and derive pleasure from the action, thus sparking a habit (Santillano, 2006). Additionally, nail biting is an Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder which is a psychiatric mental disorder characterized by obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors that significantly interfere with normal life.

Obsessions are unwanted, recurrent, and disturbing thoughts which the person cannot suppress and which can cause overwhelming anxiety.

Compulsions are repetitive, ritualized behaviors that the person feels driven

to perform to alleviate the anxiety of the obsessions. The obsessive and compulsive rituals can occupy many hours of each day (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), 2010). In most severe cases, nail biting is regarded as a conscious habit of self-inflicted harm, and some specific situations may lead to negative attitudes and exert an influence on the behavior of the subject during childhood, adolescence and first years of adulthood (Causes of Fingernail Biting, 2007).

In addition, nail biting can be a sign of mental or emotional disorder which is regarded as one of the stress relief habits. It is the habit of biting one's fingernails or toenails during periods of nervousness, stress, hunger, or boredom. The clinical name for nail biting is chronic onychophagia.

Obsessions, compulsion, and aggressiveness are the three top causes of this disorder. However, nail biters claim that they bite their nails as a way of relaxing in situations of anxiety, stress or distress. Any of these altered states can trigger off the unconscious nail biting habit. Also, nail biting is one of the nervous habits noticed in many people.

This habit starts in a person during childhood and in most of the cases it continues until adulthood. Once a person forms this habit, it is very difficult for him/her to get rid of it. Some children adopt this habit by imitation from their parents or friends at school (Causes of Fingernail Biting, 2007).

Recent studies made by Russian researchers have found that nail biting may be contributing to the loss of IQ due to lead poisoning. Regarding social effects the aesthetic aspect of the nail may affect employability, self-esteem, and interaction with other people. Especially, this is true among children who

are still mentally developing. Nail biters who also work with iron (plumbers, painters or printers) can also be affected by this poisoning (Nail biting, 2010).

Although nail biting is a common compulsive habit that does not cause serious health problems, it leads to negative effects. It can cause the fingertips to be red and sore and the cuticles to bleed and also increases the risk for infections around nail beds and in biter's mouth. Long-term nail-biting can also interfere with normal nail growth and cause deformed nails. Moreover, bitten fingertips can become very sensitive to pain; usually at the place the skin meets the edge of the nail.

Especially, nails, when taken care of improperly, are prone to various diseases. Hangnails are broken skin on the cuticle, (see appendix 1). When they are improperly removed, they are susceptible to microbial and viral infections producing whitlows. Saliva may then redden and infect the skin. Finally, it may also result in the transportation of bacteria that are buried under the surface of the nail, or pinworms from anus region to mouth. Nail biting is also related to dental problems, such as gingival injury (Nail Biting, 2010). Nail biting, which is a commonly seen in children and adolescents, is regarded as a harmful habit, and sort of stress relief technique that related to genetics.

#### Works Cited

Ahmad, Ghanizadeh. " Association of nail biting and psychiatric disorders in children and their parents in a psychiatrically referred sample of children 2008" 2 June. 2008 " Habit disorders: How to prevent and treat nail biting".

<https://assignbuster.com/diseasedisorder-nail-biting-essay-sample/>

17 May. 2006 Santillano, Vicki. " 2006 Fingernail Biting: Causes and Cures"

2006 " Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)" 2010

" Causes of Fingernail Biting" 2007

" Nail biting" 2010

#### ABSTRACT

In my home country, only kids have nail biting habit. However, it also happens to adult in U. S. A. Nail biting leads to many negative effects and that is so hard to get rid of it. After my teacher gave me an article that nail biting is a disease/disorder, I was so excited to look for more information about that habit.