Objective: Adolescence is a developmental phase associated with significant somatic and psychosocial changes. So far, there are few studies on developmental aspects of life satisfaction. This cross-sectional study examines the effects of age and gender on adolescent's life satisfaction. METHODS: 1,274 German adolescents (aged 11-16 years) participated in a school-based survey study. They completed the adolescent version of the Questions on Life Satisfaction (FLZ(M) - Fragen zur Lebenszufriedenheit), a multidimensional instrument measuring the subjective importance and satisfaction with eight domains of general and eight domains of health-related life satisfaction. Effects of gender and age were analyzed using ANOVAs. RESULTS: Girls reported significantly lower general (F = 5.0; p = .025) and health-related life satisfaction (F = 25.3; p < .001) compared to boys. In both genders and across nearly all life domains, there was a significant decrease in general (F = 14.8; p < .001) and health-related life satisfaction (F = 8.0; p < .001) between 11 and 16 years. Satisfaction with friends remained on a high level, whereas satisfaction with family relations decreased. Only satisfaction with partnership/sexuality increased slightly, however, this effect cannot compensate the general loss of satisfaction. CONCLUSIONS: Decreasing life satisfaction has to be considered as a developmental phenomenon. Associations with the increasing prevalence of depression.
and suicidal ideation during adolescence are discussed. Life satisfaction should be considered a relevant aspect of adolescent's well-being and functioning.