

MEETING ABSTRACT

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Stigma by health and mental health professionals in comorbid states

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People with mental disorders are facing the double pressure of undertreatment both for their mental and physical diseases. The dimensions and burden of these problems associated with the high rates of medical comorbidity, disability, and mortality among people with mental disorders have been revealed in many recent reviews. This issue constitutes a major public health/mental health challenge and has serious consequences, including the stigma by health professionals. Efforts tackling the stigmatization attached to mental disorders have a history of almost couple decades. On the contrary, the stigma on the management of the somatic illnesses of patients with mental disorders is an issue that has only recently raised concern. Health/Mental health professionals can simultaneously be stigmatizers, stigma recipients and agents of de-stigmatization. The stigmatizing practices and approaches of the physicians, psychiatrists and the mental health workers on somatic illnesses and somatic treatments of patients with mental disorders is a serious aspect of the problem, and can be conceptualized as a reconstructed specific form of general stigma. The stigma by the health and mental health professionals especially on the treatment of medical comorbidities of people with mental disorders is the focus of this presentation. Hence, current researches on the relations of stigma and mental health professionals, general medical professionals, medical education, the care givers, and the cultural dimensions are reviewed. The conclusions warn us on reviewing the undergraduate and graduate training programmes in the context of current stigma theories and emphasize the need to

improve our means of reducing the stigma among the mental health workers and the physicians.

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