

## STIGMATIZATION OF PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS BY MEDICAL STUDENTS

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**Introduction:** Mental illness in the general population are significantly represented, even so psychiatric patients are currently highly stigmatized in the Czech Republic. The main aspect leading to the stigmatization seems to be a lack of information and misinterpretation of psychiatric disorders caused by media.

**Aims:** Our pilot study aims to monitor attitudes of general medicine students toward mentally ill patients. We were interested in students' personal experiences with psychiatric disorder, including friends and family and also personal experience derived from movies, literature and documents.

**Methods:** We contacted students of General Medicine, Palacky University in Olomouc. They filled out the questionnaire with questions designed to describe the characteristics of psychiatric patients and psychiatrists.

**Results:** The survey indicates that stigmatizing attitudes are less frequent among the students with personal experience with mental illness. Decrease of stigmatization was also found in students which attended the subject connected with psychiatry and also in students interested in career as a psychiatrist.

**Conclusions:** Personal experience with psychiatric patients, and formal or informal education is associated with lower levels of stigmatization. The key to the de-stigmatization seems to be in the psychoeducation and training.