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THE ROLE OF STIGMA RESISTANCE IN PERSONS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA AND SCHIZOAFFECTIVE DISORDER

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Introduction: The stigma of schizophrenia is well established as a complicating feature of psychiatric treatment. The fight against stigma and discrimination may benefit from individuals' capacity to counteract stigma (=stigma resistance). In our recently published study [i] stigma resistance emerged as a separate construct. The very nature of stigma resistance, however, is still not fully revealed.

Aims: The aim of our study is to shed more light on stigma resistance and gain a better insight in its genesis and impact.

Methods: Qualitative interviews are carried out with patients with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder following a semi-structured guideline. Transcripts of recorded interviews are coded and analysed thematically using a modified grounded theory approach. Interviews are continued until theoretical saturation is achieved.

Results: Preliminary results relating to the genesis of stigma resistance, its contribution to auto-protection and the concepts of life of a patient, as well as their influence on recovery will be presented.

Conclusion: Finding out more about determinants and consequences of stigma resistance could be a crucial step in improving the effectiveness of interventions targeting stigma and social exclusion.

[i] Sibitz I, Unger A, Woppmann A, Zidek T, Amering M. Stigma resistance in patients with schizophrenia. *Schizophr Bull.* 2009 Jun 1. [Epub ahead of print]