

PW01-209 - IMPLICIT SELF-STIGMA IN PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

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Objectives: People with mental illness often internalise negative stereotypes, resulting in self-stigma and low self-esteem ('People with mental illness are bad and therefore I am bad, too'; Corrigan and Watson 2002, Rüsçh et al 2006). Despite strong evidence for self-stigma's negative impact as assessed by self-report measures, it is unclear whether self-stigma operates in an automatic, implicit manner, potentially outside conscious awareness and control.

Methods: We therefore assessed (i) negative implicit attitudes toward mental illness and (ii) low implicit self-esteem, using two Brief Implicit Association Tests (Sriram and Greenwald 2009) in 85 people with mental illness. Implicit self-stigma was operationalised as the product of both implicit measures. Explicit self-stigma and quality of life were assessed by self-report.

Results: Greater implicit and explicit self-stigma independently predicted lower quality of life after controlling for depressive symptoms, diagnosis, and demographic variables.

Conclusions: Implicit self-stigma is a measurable construct and is associated with negative outcomes. Attempts to reduce self-stigma (Knight et al 2006) should address implicit-automatic processes.

References:

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