

European Research Institute in Social Work (ERIS)

Research / dissertation project	
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Subject / title of the project <i>Stigmatisation as a problem of people with mental illnesses</i>	
Scientific importance <i>Objective is to examine the stigma experiences of people with diagnosis schizophrenia, to reveal the most often areas of stigma and discrimination experiences.</i> <i>The Aim of our study is: Determine whether and how people with schizophrenia perceive stigma and discrimination and to know how stigma affects their daily life.</i>	
Practical relevance <i>First step how to combat stigma, is identifying areas where stigma and discrimination are attended. Based on this knowledge it is possible to find appropriate ways and means of eliminating stigma.</i>	
Main thesis <i>People suffering from mental illness are confronted by fear and prejudice of other people, which is often based on wrong image of mental illness. Stigma makes the suffering much worse, it causes isolation and can be barrier against finding appropriate accommodation and job. It can even discourage people from searching for help because they are frightened to be labeled and it forces them to hide the symptoms of disease.</i>	
Research methodology <i>For our research aim we used qualitative research strategy, which is “particularly suited for exploring subjective views and perceptions and for understanding concrete everyday experiences of social phenomena such as stigma” (Schulz, Angermeyer, 2002, p.2) We selected semi-structured interview as a basic technique for collecting data. The research sample size was 15 participants with diagnosis schizophrenia in treatment at a psychiatric stationary. Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and analyzed by means of an inductive method, forming categories from the texts, as a basis for coding. Analysis aimed at establishing a typology of stigmatization experiences from the spoken words of the participants.</i>	
Key words <i>Stigma, Stereotypes, Predjudges, Diskrimination, Education, Labelling, Antiopressive approaches, Comprehensive Care, Social work, Schizophrenia, Qualitative research.</i>	
Most relevant literature	
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Key finding (if already existing)

We identified four dimensions of stigma experiences:

- 1) Interpersonal interactions – *Stigma and Discrimination in the context of social relationships*
- 2) Structural discrimination - *Stigma and Discrimination in the context of injustice in social structures, in political decisions, in legal regulations*
- 3) Access to social roles – *Stigma limiting access to important social roles*
- 4) Public image of schizophrenia – *stereotypes about schizophrenia in the public, negative attitudes towards people with schizophrenia*

These results mirror the findings of similar studies obtained in other cultural contexts, e. g. Poluchová and Heretik (2008), Schulz and Angermeyer (2002).