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Exploring the relationship between public stigma and help-seeking intention for emotional problem in the general population

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Background: People with psychiatric symptoms are often reluctant to seek treatment because of the public stigma toward psychiatric disorders.

Purpose: To examine the relationship between public stigma and help-seeking intention for health problem in the general population.

Method: This study was designed as cross-sectional study. Participants were 373 adults aged 20 years and above from general population. The survey included demographic data, Perceived Psychiatric Stigma Scale (PPSS), Internalized Stigma of Mental Illness Scale (ISMIS), Chinese Health Questionnaire (CHQ), and help-seeking intention. We changed the questionnaire content from internalized stigma to public stigma for patients with psychiatric disease. The SPSS 18.0 with t-test was employed to analyze the association between public stigma and help-seeking intention.

Results: This study adopted 12 items of CHQ, including somatic symptom, anxiety and depressive symptom. Results showed that no significant associations were found between perceived public stigma and help-seeking intention for somatic symptom and sleep problem. Respondents with higher levels of anticipated marital preclusion of PPSS showed fewer tendencies to call help from psychiatric professionals while facing emotional problems. No matter, in each dimension or total score, the higher scores of ISMIS revealed the less tendencies to seek help from psychiatric professionals while facing emotional problems.

Conclusion & Implication: This study showed that public stigma influences the behavior of people in seeking treatment for health problems. The results of this study can be used as a reference to decrease public stigma and public's understanding of psychiatric disorders through media for government's policy.

Biography

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