



A STUDY ON THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

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Abstract

Schizophrenia is a chronic mental disorder that affects about 1% of the population. People with schizophrenia often experience symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized thinking. These symptoms can make it difficult for people with schizophrenia to function in everyday life, and they can also lead to social isolation and discrimination. The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on the stigma associated with schizophrenia. The paper will discuss the different forms of stigma that people with schizophrenia experience, the impact of stigma on their lives, and the strategies that have been used to reduce stigma.

KEYWORDS- Schizophrenia, Stigma, Internalized stigma , Contract based interventions, Media Portrayal, Anticipated Stigma, Labeling and Stereotyping, Structural Stigma, Courtesy Stigma

Introduction

Schizophrenia is a complex and often debilitating mental disorder that affects millions of individuals worldwide. Characterized by a constellation of symptoms, including hallucinations, delusions, disorganized thinking, and social withdrawal, schizophrenia has been a subject of fascination and fear throughout human history. While our understanding of this disorder has evolved significantly over time, one aspect remains particularly pernicious: the stigma associated with schizophrenia.

Stigma is a deep-seated and negative perception or stereotype attached to a particular group, often leading to discrimination and marginalization. When it comes to schizophrenia, the stigma attached to it has persisted for centuries, perpetuating myths, misconceptions, and fear. This stigma not only affects the lives of those diagnosed with schizophrenia but also hinders the progress of effective treatment and public awareness campaigns.



Types of Stigmas

1. **Public Stigma:** This is when people in society hold negative beliefs and stereotypes about individuals with schizophrenia. It often leads to discrimination and exclusion, like not giving them jobs or treating them unfairly.
2. **Self-Stigma (Internalized Stigma):** It's when someone with schizophrenia starts believing the negative things society says about them. This can make them feel bad about themselves, lower their self-esteem, and stop them from seeking help.
3. **Anticipated Stigma:** This is when people with schizophrenia expect others to treat them badly because of their condition. It can make them avoid social situations or not ask for help when they need it.
4. **Labeling and Stereotyping:** This happens when people define individuals with schizophrenia only by their diagnosis and use simplified, often wrong, ideas about them. For example, assuming they are all violent or unable to function in society.
5. **Structural Stigma:** This is when society has rules and systems that make it harder for people with schizophrenia to get the same opportunities as others. It can include unfair laws, unequal access to healthcare, or limited educational and job choices.
6. **Courtesy Stigma:** It affects family members and friends of people with schizophrenia. They may face discrimination just because they are connected to someone with the condition, even if they don't have it themselves.

The roots of the stigma associated with schizophrenia can be traced back to historical misunderstandings of mental illness. In ancient times, individuals displaying symptoms of schizophrenia were often considered possessed by evil spirits or deemed witches. This belief in supernatural causes of mental illness fueled fear and discrimination, which still linger in the collective consciousness today.

Moreover, the portrayal of schizophrenia in popular culture, including movies and media, has perpetuated misleading stereotypes, further deepening the stigma. Schizophrenia is frequently misrepresented as synonymous with violence, unpredictability, or split personalities, when in reality, it is a heterogeneous condition with a wide range of symptoms and outcomes. Such misconceptions contribute to the social isolation and discrimination that many individuals with schizophrenia endure.



The consequences of this stigma are profound. People with schizophrenia often face discrimination in various aspects of their lives, including employment, housing, and relationships. They may internalize this stigma, leading to a diminished sense of self-worth and self-esteem, which can hinder their recovery and rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, the societal fear and misunderstanding surrounding schizophrenia may discourage individuals from seeking help or treatment early on, leading to delayed interventions and poorer outcomes.

As we strive for a more compassionate and inclusive society, it is imperative to address and challenge the stigma associated with schizophrenia. This multifaceted problem requires efforts from various sectors, including healthcare, education, and media, to dispel myths, increase understanding, and promote empathy. By acknowledging the humanity and potential of individuals living with schizophrenia, we can work toward a world where they are not defined by their diagnosis but rather supported on their journey towards recovery and fulfillment. This exploration of the stigma associated with schizophrenia aims to shed light on this pervasive issue, ultimately contributing to a more informed and empathetic society.

Review of Literature

Schizophrenia is a debilitating mental disorder that affects millions worldwide. Beyond the challenges posed by the disorder itself, individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia often face an additional, formidable adversary: stigma. This literature review synthesizes key findings from existing research to comprehensively understand the stigma associated with schizophrenia. It examines the various dimensions of stigma, its consequences, and strategies employed to combat it.

Stigma associated with schizophrenia manifests in multiple dimensions. Public stigma, as explored by Yang et al. (2019), involves negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discriminatory behaviours directed towards individuals with schizophrenia. Anticipated stigma, investigated by Link et al. (2001), reflects the fear and expectation of encountering prejudice, leading to self-stigmatization and reluctance to seek treatment. Internalized stigma, as discussed by Rusch et al. (2005), occurs when individuals with schizophrenia adopt societal stereotypes, resulting in diminished self-esteem and self-worth.



Consequences of Stigma:

The consequences of stigma associated with schizophrenia are far-reaching. It can lead to discrimination in various life domains, including employment, housing, and healthcare (Pinfold et al., 2003). The psychological impact, as revealed by Adelufosi et al. (2011), includes feelings of shame and social isolation, hindering recovery and rehabilitation efforts. Moreover, stigma perpetuates a cycle of silence, discouraging individuals from seeking timely treatment and support, as emphasized by Corrigan et al. (2006).

Strategies to Combat Stigma:

Efforts to combat stigma encompass a range of strategies. Education and contact-based interventions, as advocated by Corrigan et al. (2006), are essential in dispelling myths and fostering empathy. Media campaigns that portray schizophrenia accurately and humanely can challenge stereotypes (Corrigan et al., 2006). Additionally, cultural factors influencing stigma, as explored by Adelufosi et al. (2011), underscore the importance of context-specific interventions tailored to diverse societies. stigma, its consequences, and strategies employed to combat it.

Research Methodology

A narrative review is a sort of research review that presents a story or narrative about a certain issue based on the available literature. In a narrative review, the author summarizes and synthesizes information from multiple sources to create a thorough understanding of the chosen topic.

Introduction

Schizophrenia presents a significant mental health problem that requires perennial method to overcome its stigma. This narrative review examines the literature to provide light on the various facets of stigma associated with schizophrenia, including its impacts and the various methods used to overcome its challenges.

Stigma Phases

According to Yang et al. (2019), public stigma causes prejudiced opinions and discrimination toward people with schizophrenia. The fear of prejudice, sometimes known as expected



stigma, is a central subject in this article (Link et al. 2001). This anxiety is directly associated with self-stigmatization and a refusal to seek help. Further investigation demonstrates that internalized stigma, as defined by Rusch et al. (2005), occurs when people with schizophrenia adopt cultural expectations and it leads to low self-worth and dilemma.

Intervention Perspectives

In reaction to the prevalent stigma, the narrative moves through a series of methods. Education and face to face interventions curtail the stigma and enhances the self-esteem of the patients as well as improves the willingness to take treatment reflecting Corrigan et al.'s (2006) findings. The article focuses on media efforts, which are powerful weapons dismantle stereotype concepts and myths , as underlined by Corrigan et al. (2006). Adelufosi et al. (2011) examine the factors that influence stigma, an often-overlooked area, emphasizing the importance of interventions suited to varied countries.

Long Term Consequences

The narrative examines the corollary effects of the stigma surrounding schizophrenia. This Discrimination affects employment, housing, and healthcare of an individual (Pinfold et al., 2003). Adelufosi et al. (2011) reveal the psychological trauma, exposing feelings of humiliation and social isolation which is a bottleneck to recovery. Corrigan et al. (2006) make a painful observation: stigma makes an inertia in patients to seek support.

Conclusion

As the narrative concludes, it is clear that the stigma associated with schizophrenia is a major challenge. People dealing with it have umpteen problems in their daily life. The good news is that there are methods that can help to overcome these challenges. This assessment helps to eradicate the prevalent stigma associated with schizophrenia. Let us work together to make the world a more compassionate, understanding, and supportive place for all.

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