

MEDICAL ACADEMICS ATTITUDE TOWARDS PSYCHIATRISTS

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Introduction: Previous studies have shown that not only mental health patients but also mental health professionals are stigmatized. Thus stigma toward psychiatry and psychiatrists may be implicated in the diminishing recruitment rates within the discipline of psychiatry.

Objectives: To measure the level of stigmatization towards psychiatry and psychiatrists among medical academics.

Methods: We randomly selected 90 medical academics (other than psychiatrists), by consulting the list of all the employees of this institution. We employed the "Perceptions of Psychiatry survey" developed by the World Psychiatric Association which contains 37 items that refer to psychiatry as a discipline, psychiatrists, and psychiatric patients.

Results: More than 50% of the respondents had at least one item coded as a negative attitude towards psychiatry. The most frequent negative attitudes were:

- i) psychiatry is not a scientific discipline,
- ii) psychiatrists are not paying attention to physiology and they can help patients only in a small degree,
- iii) psychiatry has a low prestige among medical students.

Furthermore, few medical academic (other than psychiatrists) would encourage students to choose psychiatry as a career path.

Conclusions: The level of stigmatization toward psychiatry and psychiatrists could be considered high. This study could contribute to the delineation of future interventions aimed to reduce stigma.