



ESPS PEER REVIEW REPORT

Name of journal: World Journal of Psychiatry

ESPS manuscript NO: 13334

Title: Associative stigma in family members of psychotic patients in Flanders: an exploratory study

Reviewer code: 00723721

Science editor: Xue-Mei Gong

Date sent for review: 2014-08-18 15:25

Date reviewed: 2014-10-31 22:05

Table with 4 columns: CLASSIFICATION, LANGUAGE EVALUATION, RECOMMENDATION, CONCLUSION. It lists various grades (A-E) and corresponding actions like 'Accept', 'High priority for publication', 'Rejection', 'Minor revision', and 'Major revision'.

COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

This paper examines an important topic, i.e. the associative stigma and possible associated factors (predictors) in Belgium. The importance of another study on this topic is justified by the cultural differences and their influence on the associated stigma. I find the study to be valuable, well designed and well written. I have only a number of minor remarks that should be revised by the authors, which I list below: - Typos: there are several double spaces between words, brackets right beside the words (without any space) and full points in superscript. They should be corrected. - Introduction: There seems to be a contradiction between two sentences: '...whereas there is doubt if the diagnosis of the patient is of any significance' [20, 24] and 'Hence, the abovementioned findings strongly indicate a stigmatizing effect of the diagnosis of a psychotic disease on family members of the patient'. - Assessment of stigma: The sentence 'Only one positive answer on the stigma questionnaire was considered to represent a form of perceived stigma' might induce some misunderstanding, as it could suggest 'only' as 'only if'. To avoid this I would suggest another expression, such as 'The presence of just one positive answer [...] was enough to considerate...' - There seems to be a contradiction in the following sentences: 'The sum total of all scores from the stigma chapter (Likert-scale from 0 to 3) determined the total stigma, with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 42' and that of the Results: 'The average total level of subjective stigmatization experienced by the family members was 6.0 (± SD 5.6), with scores ranging from 0 to 30.', and finally,



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there is another one in the discussion (...compared to a possible maximum score of 42, this score did not seem very pronounced). - Results. Level of associated stigma. Sentence 'More than 1 in 5 (21.3%) experienced guilt more or less frequent, while shame was less pronounced'. Since authors are talking about prevalence and not levels or degrees, adjectives like 'pronounced' should be avoided. I suggest 'less frequent' instead. Sentence '20% is concerned about how...'. To keep consistency with the rest of the expressions, it should be expressed in past mode. - Results. Predictive factors. Sentence 'The predictive capacity of hallucinations ( $\beta=.204$ ,  $t=1.827$ ,  $p=.072$ ) and the attribution of psychotic illness to inheritability ( $\beta=.190$ ,  $t=1.716$ ,  $p=.090$ ) reached significance'. The authors have not displayed previously what was considered as statistically significant and tendency towards statistical significance. They should do so. And regarding this sentence, having as a reference the usual levels, these findings correspond with a tendency towards statistical significance ( $p .05 - 0.1$ ). - Discussion: Sentence 'There was also a disequilibrium between man and female patients...'. I am not an English-native speaker, but I guess that disequilibrium must be uncountable, and therefore the 'a' should be eliminated. - Limitations: Since the authors are displaying also the strengths, I suggest changing the title of the section to Limitations and Strengths. - In this section it is displayed that 'The current study's strengths are the large study cohort, and the finding that associative stigma in relatives of psychotic patients in Flanders is prominent and even more severe compared to previous international research'. From a conceptual point of view, a finding cannot be considered as strength. Descriptions of strengths should be restricted to those of methodological nature. - Conclusion: Sentence 'In conclusion, the current study clearly demonstrates the presence of substantial feelings of associative stigma'. I think that the authors can claim that the prevalence of associative stigma was high, but not the level. Therefore, I would avoid the adjective 'substantial', and would refer clearly to the prevalence instead.



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## ESPS PEER REVIEW REPORT

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CLASSIFICATION	LANGUAGE EVALUATION	RECOMMENDATION	CONCLUSION
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority publishing	Google Search:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accept
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Minor language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Existing	<input type="checkbox"/> High priority for publication
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: A great deal of language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> No records	<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Rejected	BPG Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor revision
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Poor		<input type="checkbox"/> Existing	<input type="checkbox"/> Major revision
		<input type="checkbox"/> No records	

### COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

- an important research with significant findings - no ethical problems - study design rational and reliable - discussion well-organized



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## ESPS PEER REVIEW REPORT

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CLASSIFICATION	LANGUAGE EVALUATION	RECOMMENDATION	CONCLUSION
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade A: Priority publishing	Google Search:	<input type="checkbox"/> Accept
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade B: Minor language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Existing	<input type="checkbox"/> High priority for publication
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade C: A great deal of language polishing	<input type="checkbox"/> No records	<input type="checkbox"/> Rejection
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade D: Rejected	BPG Search:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor revision
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade E: Poor		<input type="checkbox"/> Existing	<input type="checkbox"/> Major revision
		<input type="checkbox"/> No records	

### COMMENTS TO AUTHORS

Catthoor et al.: Associative stigmmain family members of psychotic patients in Flanders: an exploratory study This is manuscript describes a questionnaire survey that assessed presence and severity of associative stigma in family members of psychotic patients. The prevalence of associative stigma in the studied sample was as high as 86%. Disruptive behavior by the patient towards in-housing family members was the most accurate predictor of higher associative stigma. It is a well designed and correctly conducted survey. The topic is important and the results are interesting. Limitations are accurately listed. The repetition of them is not necessary, can be omitted. Majority of the comments are also repetitions.