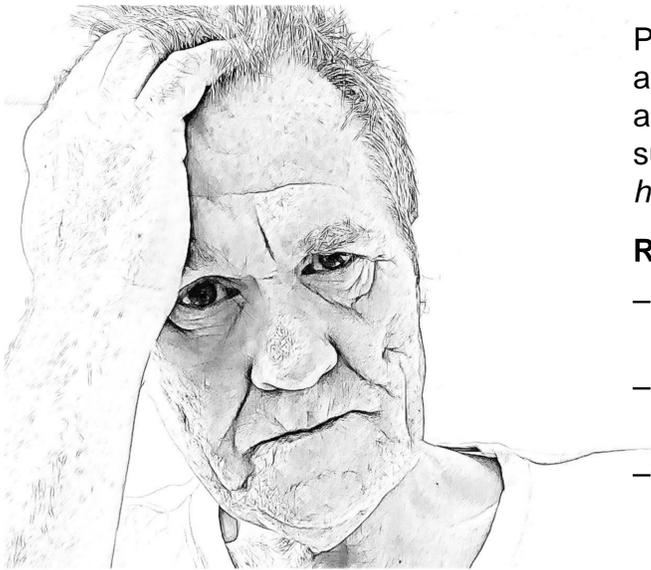


# The mediating influence of anticipated self-stigmatization when help seeking on the relationship of depression and quality of life of untreated people

Freitag<sup>1</sup>, S., Stolzenburg<sup>2</sup>, S., Schmidt<sup>1</sup>, S. & Schomerus<sup>2</sup>, G.

<sup>1</sup> Department Health & Prevention, University Greifswald, Germany; <sup>2</sup> Department Psychiatrie & Psychotherapie, University Medicine Greifswald, Germany  
Contact: simone.freitag@uni-greifswald.de



## Background

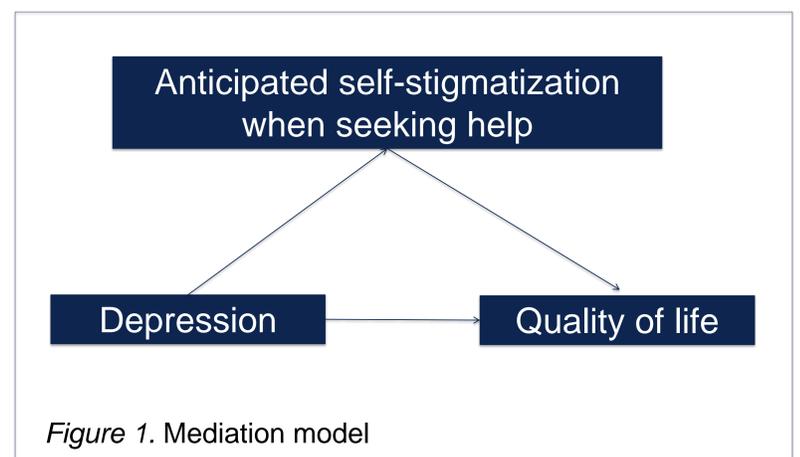
Presence of depressive symptoms is associated with decreased quality of life [1]. Seeking accurate treatment takes time; sometimes years before entering into therapies [2]. Stigma associated with seeking therapy can inhibit the use of psychological services and prolong suffering [3]. There is a lack of research on the *anticipated self-stigmatization when seeking help* and *quality of life* in people with untreated depressive syndrome.

### Research aims

- Examine the associations between depression, quality of life and anticipated self-stigma when seeking help.
- Examine quality of life & anticipated self-stigma when seeking help in people with untreated depressive syndrome.
- Does anticipated self-stigmatization to seek help mediate the association of depressive symptoms on quality of life?

## Method

- Cross-sectional, community based study in Northern Germany
- N=229 people were interviewed; age  $M(SD) = 49.6 (16.4)$  yrs (18-80 yrs)
  - N=199 people had a psychiatric-relevant diagnosis; N=178 with affective diagnosis (ICD-10)
- Measurements:
  - Subjective Quality of life (QoL; Eurohis-8, [4]) -  $M(SD) = 24.3 (5.0)$ ;  $\alpha = .73$
  - Depression (PHQ-9, [5]) -  $M(SD) = 12.8 (4.7)$ ;  $\alpha = .78$
  - Anticipated self-stigmatization (SSOSH, [6]) -  $M(SD) = 22.6 (7.2)$ ;  $\alpha = .84$
  - Psychiatric Interview (MINI)
- Statistical analyses: correlation, regression analysis (controlled for age/gender)



## Results

### Associations

- People with an affective diagnosis (ICD-10; N=178)
- Depressive symptoms & subjective QoL highly negatively associated ( $r = -.646, p < .001$ )
  - QoL slightly negatively associated with anticipated self-stigmatization ( $r = -.012, p = .095, n.s.$ )
  - Depression & anticipated self-stigmatization positively associated ( $r = -.109, p = .129, n.s.$ )
  - Significant negative associations for age
    - & depressive symptoms ( $r = -.155, p < .05$ )
    - & anticipated self-stigma when seeking help ( $r = -.205, p < .01$ )
  - Gender: no associations

### Mediator-analysis

- Total sample:
  - Depression predicts QoL, SSOSH not associated with depression/QoL -> no mediation of SSOSH
- Gender effect:
  - Women: tendency of SSOSH to be significant predictor for QoL ( $p = .073$ )
  - Men: tendency for partial mediation of anticipated self-stigma ( $p = .064$ )
- Age:
  - Younger (<49 yrs): tendency for SSOSH to be significant predictor for QoL ( $p = .069$ )

➤ **Neither mediator nor moderator effect found for anticipated self-stigmatization when seeking on QoL in people with untreated depressive syndrome**

## Discussion

People with untreated depressive symptoms experience low levels of QoL. No mediation effect of anticipated self-stigma when seeking help on quality of life was found. In tendency self-stigmatization when seeking help predicts QoL in younger individuals and females. Self-stigmatization when seeking help does not effect QoL directly.

➤ Investigation of other variables (e.g. help seeking behavior) and interaction effects is needed.



## References

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