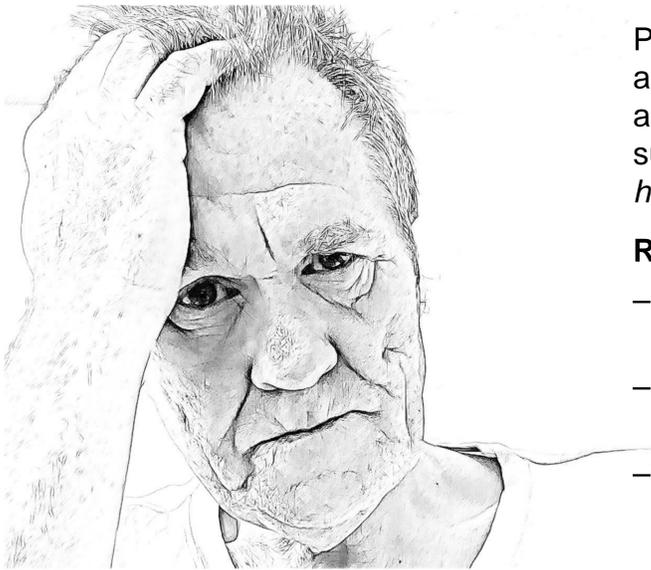


The mediating influence of anticipated self-stigmatization when help seeking on the relationship of depression and quality of life of untreated people

Freitag¹, S., Stolzenburg², S., Schmidt¹, S. & Schomerus², G.

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



Background

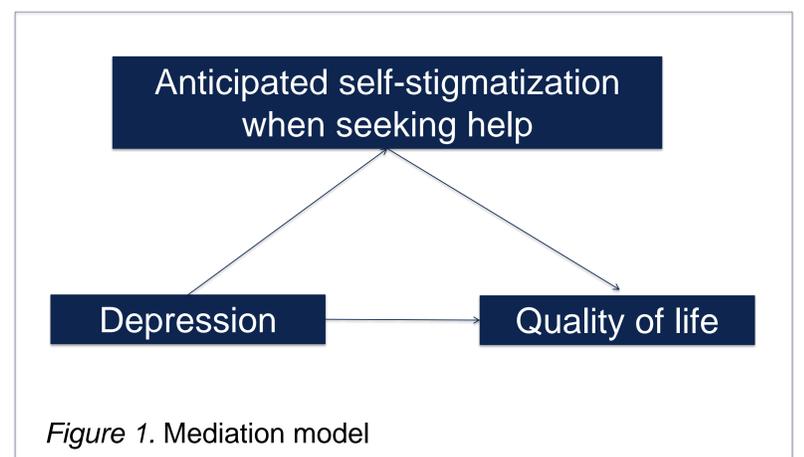
Presence of depressive symptoms is associated with decreased quality of life [1]. Seeking accurate treatment takes time; sometimes years before entering into therapies [2]. Stigma associated with seeking therapy can inhibit the use of psychological services and prolong suffering [3]. There is a lack 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.



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