# STIGMATIZATION OF THE MENTALLY ILL
# AS A MEDICAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEM OF UKRAINE

**Tetiana Chorna[1]**
**Iryna Khliestova[2]**

Today's life problems that cause psychological stress and mental disorders in people of all ages, namely political and financial instability, the war in eastern Ukraine, the pandemic (coronavirus infection COVID-19), and much more are the result of increasing the number of mentally ill.

Therefore, such a phenomenon as stigmatization begins to be used in modern society and devalues the human personality, resulting in a negative perception of the mentally ill [2, p. 309].

The term «stigmatization» has been existing since ancient times, has Greek origins, and is translating as a mark or label (stigmatization, stigma). A more specific scientific understanding of the term in scientific sources is interpreted as «hanging a label» on someone to clamp down on any negative human quality. Significant scientific interest in the problem of stigmatization as a concept of the theory of social reaction was acquired in the 1960s and was theoretically studying until the 1990s of the twentieth century. The term «stigmatization» has been interpreting by many domestic and foreign scholars as «mental illness», «sign of illness», and «branding».

The problem of stigmatization of society was first studying by E. Goffman in 1963. Scientists have identified three types of stigmas, namely:
– congenital stigma;
– stigma due to illness;
– stigma of belonging to a minority [4].

Prominent scientist H. Becker in his works, interprets this term as a «normative model» [3], H. Leymann understands this concept as a «socio-psychological model» [6], and H. Tellenbach as a «dramatization of evil» [8]. Problems of stigmatization are more common in patients with mental illness, such as individual character deficiencies, which are perceiving as «weakness of will», disability – «physical injuries», AIDS patients.

However, the stigma of today depends on the level of integration, solidarity, and humanity of the state society. In the countries of the European Union and the North Atlantic, in particular in Canada, Germany, the USA,

---

[1] National Pirogov Memorial Medical University, Ukraine
[2] National Pirogov Memorial Medical University, Ukraine

New Zealand, patients with mental disorders find support not only from government agencies but also from NGOs, trade unions [9].

A major medical and social problem of modern society is the phenomenon of stigmatization among student youth, especially students studying in medical institutions of higher education in Ukraine and young psychiatrists. According to the results of an anonymous survey of respondents who are applicants for higher medical education at Vinnytsia National Medical University named after Mykola Pirogov (4-6 course) and psychiatrists who work in psychiatric institutions and have less than five years of experience, it has been finding that 87.4% of students and 67.9% of young psychiatrists believe the mentally ill are a great threat to society and should be treated harshly by medical staff.

In 2008, a poll was conducted in many regions of Ukraine among the adult population with the help of Socis-Gallup on attitudes towards the mentally ill. It has been finding that 45% of respondents believed that these patients need the most favorable treatment, but 43% insisted that such patients pose a threat to society [1; 5, p. 364].

Thus, patients are forcing to be treated in institutions with strict isolation in the so-called «closed centers of total control», even though they are not considered criminals. Unsatisfactory sanitary and hygienic conditions in psychiatric health care facilities, which have been building over 70 years (in some cases over a century) and require major reconstruction, increase the signs of stigma and contribute to the complete disintegration of the individual, the formation of dysfunctional conditions and further exacerbation of mental illness.

Studies by British researchers V. Pinfold and N. Toulmin suggest that during the treatment of patients, doctors themselves cause their stigmatization, thus setting an example to follow and causing stigmatization of family members of these patients. Therefore, abroad, the National Institute of Mental Health is constantly conducting research, analysis, surveys, training among schoolchildren, students, police, and other professionals to eliminate the phenomenon of stigma in society [7, p. 341; 9, p. 243].

Isolation from society and compulsory treatment of the mentally ill in health care facilities affect the psychosomatic, moral aspects and encourage additional stress and disability, which has an even more negative impact on the patient's health. Mentally ill people feel lonely, lose their sense of self-worth, feelings of hopelessness appear due to constant manifestations of discrimination: humiliation, restriction of rights, insults from health workers. Therefore, the social isolation of the mentally ill is the chief cause and consequence of the exacerbation of mental disorders.

To solve the medical and social problem of stigmatization of mentally ill people in society and in the psychiatric hospital and to prevent stigmatization of mentally ill patients in the future practice of psychiatrists, the following measures will be appropriate, borrowed in European countries, namely: introduction of a model of environmental psychiatry in Ukraine mentally ill to independent and filled life in society; improving the material and technical base of psychiatric health care institutions by creating the best conditions for the organization of treatment and protection; use of modern standards in the treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention of mental illness; integration of medical, psychological, and social programs to improve the adaptation of patients with mental disorders; systematic educational training, lectures, conferences on psychological and psychiatric topics with elements of medical ethics, morality, and deontology; strengthening the professional requirements for medical staff working with the mentally ill and applying it to those who implement stigmatizing, antisocial behavior, conducting psycho-informational work for family members of the mentally ill, which should be aiming at forming an adequate understanding of diagnosis, treatment and ways to create conditions for favorable environmental rehabilitation. All of the above measures should be a guide for future psychiatrists who choose to specialize in psychiatry and for psychologists and the like.

## References:

1. Kostiuchenko S., Lubianytska I., Piievska Yu. (2009) Stavlennia do psykhichno khvorykh v ukrainskomu suspilstviza danymy opytuvannia hromadskoi dumky [Attitudes towardsthe mentally ill in Ukrainian society according to a public opinionpoll]. *Novosti medyciny i farmacii «Psihiatriya»,* no. 303. Available at: http://www.mif-ua.com/archive/article/10997

2. Chorna V.V., Makhnyuk V.M., Khliestova S.S., Khliestova I.V. (2020) Pytannia styhmatyzatsii psykhichno khvorykh z boku studentiv medykiv ta medychnoho personalu psykhiatrychnykh zakladiv ta zakhody z yii minimizatsii [Issues of stigmatization of the mentally ill by medical students and medical staff of psychiatric institutions and measures to minimize it.]. *Bulletin of Vinnytsia National Medical University*, no. 24(2), pp. 309–315. DOI: https://doi.org/10.31393/reports-vnmedical-2020-24(2)-19

3. Becker H. (1963) The Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of Deviance. New York: The Free Press. Available at: https://monoskop.org/File:Becker_Howard_Outsiders_Studies_In_The_Sociogy_Of_Deviance_1963.pdf

4. Gofman, E. (1969) The Insanity of Place. *Psychiatry*, no. 32(4), pp. 357–388. Available at: https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1970-16738-001

5. Khliestova S.S., Chorna V.V. (2020) The bullying phenomenon among students as medical and psychologicalproblems. Riga: Izdevnieciba «Baltija Publishing», pp. 353–371. https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-588-36-5/20

6. Leymann, H. (1996) The Content and Development of Mobbingat Work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, no. 5(2), pp. 165–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/13594329608414853

7. Pinfold, V., Huxley, P., Thornicroft, G., Farmer, P., Toulmin, H., & Graham, T. (2003) Reducing psychiatric stigma anddiscrimination – evaluating an educational intervention with thepolice force in England. Soc. Psychiatry Psychiatr. Epidemiol., 38(6), 337–344. doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-003-0641-4

8. Tellenbach, H. (1986) Melancholia. Problem geschichteEndogenitat, Typologie, Pathogenese. Klinic. (Vierte, etwieterte Auflage). Berlin: Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg. ISBN 978-3-642-96194-6

9. Vila-Badia, R., Martnez-Zambrano, F., Arenas, O., Casas-Anguera, E., Villellas, R., Ramon Martin, J., ... & Ochoa, S.(2016) Effectiveness of an intervention for reducing socialstigma towards mental illness in adolescents. World J. Psychiatry, 6(2), 239–247. doi: https://doi.org/10.5498/wjp.v6.i2.239