



Effective Health Care

Provider Stigmatization, Discrimination, and Prejudice Towards Patients with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- *Provider Stigmatization, Discrimination, and Prejudice Towards Persons with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)* is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.

Topic Description

Nominator(s): *Health care professional association*

Nomination Summary: The nominator is concerned that health care professionals are discriminating against persons with SMI, leading to inappropriate diagnoses and improper care. While no explicit definition was provided in the nomination, we interpreted SMI as encompassing a broad range of conditions, including severe psychiatric disorders (e.g., schizophrenia), cognitive disorders (e.g., Alzheimer's disease), and developmental disorders (e.g., autism). As an example, the nominator asserted that medical students are less likely to apply appropriate examination and diagnostic skills with physically or intellectually disabled individuals, and appear frightened of and less attentive to persons with SMI when they present with clinical symptoms unrelated to their SMI. The nominator suggests that interventions to reduce stigmatization of mental illness among health care professionals could greatly enhance the care of those with SMI and reduce morbidity and mortality.

Population(s): Individuals with SMI

Intervention(s): Strategies to reduce provider stigmatization, discrimination, and prejudice towards patients with SMI (e.g., education initiatives, social inclusion initiatives)

Comparator(s): Current practices

Outcome(s): Improved quality of care for individuals with SMI.

Key Questions from Nominator: *What is the effectiveness of different clinician directed strategies for reducing stigma, prejudice, and discrimination in the care of individuals with serious mental illness?*

Considerations

- The topic meets EHC Program appropriateness and some importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.) .
- A search of the available literature identified a limited number of studies comparing the effectiveness of strategies to reduce stigma, discrimination, and prejudice toward individuals with SMI by health care professionals.
- Most of the research on proposed interventions for health care personnel is focused on educational initiatives or normalizing interventions for medical students. Normalizing interventions refer to programs that allow for increased contact between future health care professionals and individuals with SMI. Our literature search did not reveal any other types of interventions.
- Given the limited volume of published studies a systematic review is not feasible and no further activity will be undertaken on this topic.