

## Abstract

The stigma of mental illness affects psychiatry as a medical profession and psychiatrists. The present study aimed to compare the extent and correlation patterns of perceived stigma in psychiatrists and general practitioners. An international multicenter survey was conducted in psychiatrists and general practitioners from twelve countries. Responses were received from  $N = 1,893$  psychiatrists and  $N = 1,238$  general practitioners. Aspects of stigma assessed in the questionnaire included perceived stigma, self-stigma (stereotype agreement), attitudes toward the other profession, and experiences of discrimination. Psychiatrists reported significantly higher perceived stigma and discrimination experiences than general practitioners. Separate multiple regression analyses showed different predictor patterns of perceived stigma in the two groups. Hence, in the psychiatrists group, perceived stigma correlated best with discrimination experiences and self-stigma, while in the general practitioners group it correlated best with self-stigma. About 17 % of the psychiatrists perceive stigma as a serious problem, with a higher rate in younger respondents. Against this background, psychiatry as a medical profession should set a high priority on improving the training of young graduates. Despite the number of existing antistigma interventions targeting mental health professionals and medical students, further measures to improve the image of psychiatry and psychiatrists are warranted, in particular improving the training of young graduates with respect to raising awareness of own stigmatizing attitudes and to develop a better profession-related self-assertiveness.