

P-618 - THE PLACE OF SUBJECTIVITY IN PSYCHIATRIC RESEARCH: ADDRESSING STIGMA

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Introduction: Qualitative methodology as a tool to understand the subjective meaning of individual's experience, is becoming more popular in health sciences' research. Understanding Stigma, which represents a major source of disability of people with mental illness, is a challenge that conventional research methods can not properly address.

Objective and aims: To explore major features of qualitative methods and their relationship with quantitative research, and to point out how Stigma about mental illness can benefit from this epistemology and methodology.

Methods: Review of relevant literature.

Results: Qualitative research seeks to know "what, how and why?" instead of "how much and what frequency?". The researcher tries to shorten the distance to what's being researched, through close participation and interpretation of the study participants' experiences, considering its subjectivity and multiplicity. This accounts for a solid internal validity, but does not allow for external validity, replication and generalization, which is the goal of post positivism paradigm through quantitative methods.

Because of its considerable strength in disclosing cultural issues, values, judgments, behaviors and social contexts, the use of qualitative methods on Stigma experience has allowed a better understanding of its meaning.

Conclusions: There is now widespread evidence and acceptance that addressing subjective experience is of great importance in substantial mental health research. Despite fundamental differences from quantitative methods, qualitative methodology has gained considerable relevance, and became an essential tool to better address challenges in mental health, taking a bio-psycho-social model into account, such as in Stigma experience.