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STIGMA PERCEPTION AND DEPRESSION AMONG PATIENTS SUFFERING FROM CHRONIC SOMATOFORM DISORDERS

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Introduction: Several studies indicate a significant longitudinal comorbidity of depression and chronic pain. Also, perceived stigma is a barrier to recovery. This study wanted to evaluate the correlations.

Objectives: To investigate to what degree chronic pain patients suffer from depression and stigma fears 132 (66% females) consecutive in- and out-patients with somatoform pain disorders who presented at the Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (MUV) were investigated using the Stigma Questionnaire by Link and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI).

Aims: The aim of this study was to survey the attitudes of 132 patients with the diagnosis somatoform pain disorder, toward mental illness stigma and the influence of depressive symptoms.

Methods: The BDI was employed for measuring of the severity of depression and the modified 12-item version of Links Stigma Questionnaire to evaluate stigma perception.

Results: Three third of the patients expect discrimination because of their psychiatric diagnosis and two third of the chronic pain patients also showed depressive symptoms. The overall results show a significant correlation between stigma perception and depressive symptoms.

Conclusion: Fear of stigma increases with depressive symptoms and both are a risk for treatment delay. Goal of future research should be the question how to reduce depression and fear of stigma in order to help them enter psychiatric treatment early and gain self-confidence and mental health back again.