

The Relationship Between Stigma Surrounding Mental Health Disorders and Motivation for Treatment

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Introduction

- Stigma, the negative social attitude towards an attribute of an individual, may contribute to treatment avoidance among people experiencing mental health (MH) problems.¹
- Stigma towards MH treatment has a negative impact on students' willingness to see MH professionals.²

Aims

- The first aim is to examine the impact internalized stigma has on motivation for treatment among individuals with histories of MH disorders.
- The second aim is to assess the relationship internalized stigma (self-stigmatization) has with social support and treatment motivation.

Method

Sample

- Surveys collected from 61 individuals affiliated with TCU students.

Measures

- Self-Stigmatization:** Day's Mental Illness Stigma Scale
- Treatment Motivation:** TCU Treatment Motivation Scale
- Social Support:** Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

Analysis

- Descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-tests were used to examine the effect of receiving a formal diagnosis on treatment motivation. Correlations assessed the relationship between self-stigmatization, social support, and treatment motivation.

Demographics	Total (n)	Percent (%)
(N = 61)		
Sex		
Female	45	73.8
Male	16	26.2
Hispanic		
No	52	88.1
Yes	5	8.5
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1.7
Asian	3	5.1
Black	3	5.1
White	47	79.7
More than one race	2	3.4
Other or unknown	1	1.7

Results

Treatment Readiness:

- Participants with a self-reported formal diagnosis ($M = 2.96, SD = 0.15$) are more ready for treatment than participants without a formal diagnosis ($M = 2.46, SD = 0.84$), $t(30) = 2.51, p = .018$.

Pressures for Treatment:

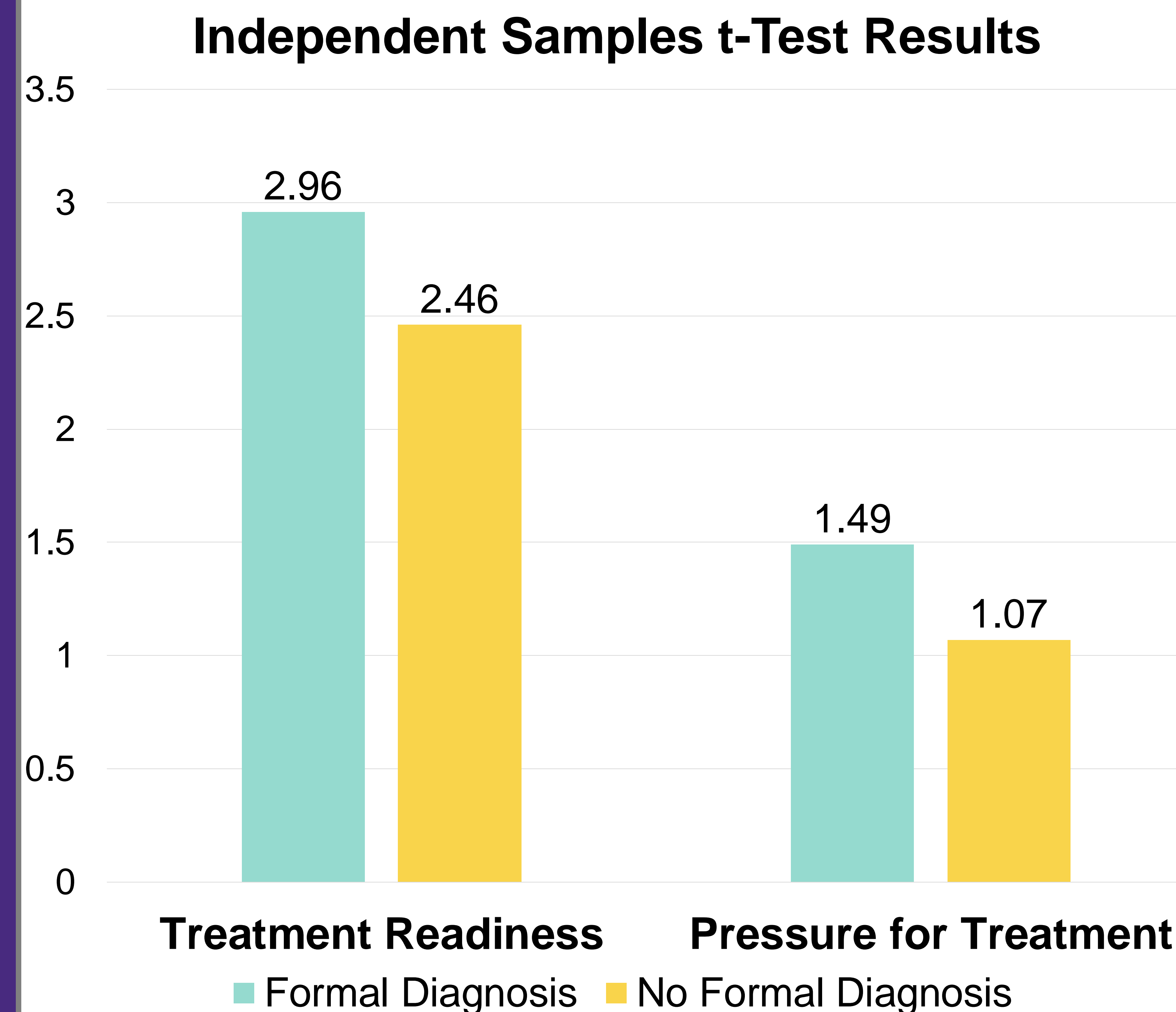
- Participants with a self-reported formal diagnosis ($M = 1.49, SD = 0.67$) feel more pressure for treatment than participants without a formal diagnosis ($M = 1.07, SD = 0.16$), $t(30) = 2.29, p = .029$.

Self-Stigmatization & Family Support, Problem Recognition, & Pressure for Treatment

- Self-stigmatization and family support were negatively correlated, $r = -0.35, p = .044$.
- Self-stigmatization is positively correlated with problem recognition, $r = 0.44, p = .013$.
- Self-stigmatization is positively correlated with pressure for treatment, $r = .38, p = .032$.

Support from Friends and Treatment Needs

- Recognition of specific treatment needs is positively correlated with social support from friends, $r = 0.48, p = .007$.



Correlations with Self-Stigmatization

Variable	Self-Stigmatization
1. Family Support	-0.35*
2. Problem Recognition	0.44*
3. Pressure for Treatment	0.38*

Note. *Correlation is significant at $p < .05$.

Discussion

Treatment

- Participants with a self-reported diagnosed MH disorder (34.7%) showed higher treatment readiness than those without a diagnosed MH disorder.
- Treatment needs were positively related to social support from friends.
- Those with a diagnosed MH disorder felt more pressure for treatment than those without a diagnosed MH disorder.

Internalized Stigma

- Internalized stigma was related to less familial support.
- Problem recognition and stigma were positively correlated, as were stigma and pressure for treatment.

Limitations:

- Generalization of findings is limited.

Future Directions:

- Examine possibilities for addressing stigma during treatment initiation process.
- Further explore the relationships between stigma and MH, and stigma and substance use.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2023). APA Dictionary of Psychology. *American Psychological Association*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/stigma>
- Komiya, N., Good, G. E., & Sherrod, N. B. (2000). Emotional openness as a predictor of college students' attitudes toward seeking psychological help. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 47*(1), 138–143. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.47.1.138>