

Stigma in Employment Toward Persons with Mental Illness in Japan

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In Japan, there is a recognized need for further research into stigma in the workplace toward persons with mental illness. Toward that end, I will discuss here two studies that we have conducted with the aim of (I) elucidating the stigma experienced in the workplace by persons with mental illness, and (II) elucidating employers' attitudes toward persons with mental illness.

With respect to (I), the presence of stigma in the workplace and self-stigma was demonstrated [1,2]. In addition, we found that more than 50% of persons with mental illness did not disclose their illness when they were hired or while working, citing anxiety over rejection, dismissal, and treatment as the reasons for non-disclosure [3,4]. Among the demands asked of employers were education, measures against stigma, improved treatment, consideration of illness, and opportunities to work. It is therefore thought that persons with mental illness will become more likely to disclose their illness and find it easier to work through raising awareness and increasing understanding of persons with mental illness in the workplace.

With respect to (II), the study was conducted with reference solely to schizophrenia. Among the findings, one in four employers showed an adamant refusal to employ individuals with schizophrenia. In addition, employers with a high level of stigma toward persons with mental illness responded that "there is no possibility of employing persons with schizophrenia" ($p < 0.05$).

These results indicate that a future goal should be to develop concrete measures for combating stigma by targeting both persons with mental illness and employers.

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