

Professionally vs. Self-Diagnosed: How Diagnostic Source Impacts Stigma of Adult ADHD



PRESENTER

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(they/them/theirs)

Background

- Negative views of ADHD are common, even among individuals who are diagnosed.
- Stigma creates barriers around help-seeking, self-advocacy, education, employment, and social relationships.
- It is important to identify factors that influence attitudes towards individuals with ADHD to help with this issue.
- Two known predictors of reduced stigma are: (1) knowing someone with ADHD and (2) having accurate information
- Another possible factor to consider may be whether someone is professionally or self-diagnosed with ADHD.
- The aim of this study is to examine whether attitudes towards individuals with ADHD differ based on reading a vignette with someone stating they were professionally diagnosed with ADHD versus someone reporting it is a self-diagnosis, while controlling for perceived knowledge, knowing someone with ADHD, and participant ADHD diagnosis.

Method

Participants

- 106 undergraduate Introduction to Psychology students.

Measures

- Adult ADHD Stigma Questionnaire
 - Subscales:
 1. Reliability and Social Functioning
 2. Malingering and Misuse of Medication
 3. Ability to Take Responsibility
 4. Norm-Violating and Externalizing Behavior
 5. Consequences of Diagnostic Disclosure
 6. Etiology
 - Higher scores mean greater levels of stigma
- Additional ADHD items
 - Perceived Knowledge (scale ranging from 1 (little to no knowledge) to 10 (high knowledge))
 - Knowing Someone with ADHD (yes/no)

Procedure

- Participants were randomly assigned to the professionally diagnosed or self-diagnosed condition.
- All participants then read a vignette about someone with ADHD, the only difference being the last sentence which disclosed source of diagnosis.
- All participants then responded to the Adult ADHD Stigma Questionnaire and the additional ADHD items.

Results

- One-way MANCOVA did not find significant differences between conditions on attitudes towards the individual in the vignette:
 - Wilks' Lambda = .92, $F(6, 71) = 1.02$, $p = .42$.

Discussion

- No significant effect of diagnostic source on stigma toward adults with ADHD.
- Limitation: ADHD stigma measure lacked validity.
- Future directions:
 - Explore stigma around self-diagnosis and social media's role in shaping attitudes.
 - Examine generational differences in attitudes towards self-diagnosis.

Even amid debates over self-diagnosis, participants showed no difference in stigma levels towards an adult who is self-diagnosed with ADHD versus one with a professional diagnosis.



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