

Ethical aspects of mental health and stigma

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”The double perspective”

Eskimo/Indian



Can you perceive both the Eskimo and the Indian?

WPA Madrid declaration on ethics of the profession

- ”As practitioners of medicine, psychiatrists must be aware of the ethical implications of being a physician, and of the specific ethical demands of the specialty of psychiatry. As members of society, psychiatrists must advocate for fair and equal treatment of the mentally ill, for social justice and equity”
-BUT IT IS DIFFICULT

What principles are guiding the doctor?

Principles of biomedicine: The four-principles approach

- To do good
 - Not to harm
 - Preserve autonomy of patients
 - Fair and just distribution
- Beauchamps and Childress, 1984

Ethical positions

- Deontological – Kant – laws of universalities - *duty*
- Utilitarianistic : cost – benefit , to gain the most for the largest number at the lowest cost- *utility and prioritising*
- Virtues: trust in the individuals ability to make sound *judgements*
- Discourse - Habermas: truth through thre open and valuefree dialogue – a process which never stops
- Caritas – care for the other

Mental health and ethical aspects

- WHO definition of health from 1948: A state of total wellbeing – physical, mental and social
- Comment: Ideal – based on the belief of making a better world after the atrocities of 2 WW. An impossible demand. The fate of the human existence not included – can lead to social and psychological exclusion, .
- **For the individual** important to work with resilience, hope and recovery perspective. How to get the most out of life circumstances . Psychological growth.
- **For society.** A demand to focus on health and not only illness. Prevention plays a major role – focusing – today on regaining working ability

From mental problems to mental illness

- Difficult distinction
- How many are there?
- Is stress a normal condition or a disease- og can it develop into a disease? – a depression
- Doctors task is to restore health, advocacy for patients – but both towards the individual patient and on a societal level.

Stigmatisation:

Two brief examples – it is everywhere!

1. Dinner party conversation: Male – early 60ies – pronounced by a friend to be a hypoconder. Everyone was laughing
2. ” We finally got him” (comment by staffmember on a beltfixation of a young man in a psychiatric ward)

Stigma, prejudice, discrimination – concept and definitions

- Stigma means label (greek), Often used to mark somebody socially unacceptable from others - socially created - comes from
- Prejudice and Ignorance - leads to
- Discrimination -social exclusion and
- Selfstigmatisation

Knowledge on stigma from

- Surveys _ questionnaires and semistructured interviews of
 - Patients and carers
 - Health and mental health professionals
 - The public
- Analysis of
 - Media
 - Movies
 - Human rights issues

Key results

- Patients experiencing stigma at work, in health sector, with friends
- The public perceptions of
 - Dangerousness leading to fear
 - Unpredictability
 - Uncertainty
 - compassion
- Health professionals - worst

Where does stigma take place

- In the individual – selfstigmatisation
- In the families
- Health staff
- Mental health staff
- At work

Types of stigma

- Structural stigmatisation
 - Human rights issues and laws
 - Ressource allocation for research and - treatment
- (Mental) health professionals through
 - Attitudes of pessimism, lack of involvement
- Media
 - Psychiatry: "bad patients"
 - Somatic: "bad treatment"

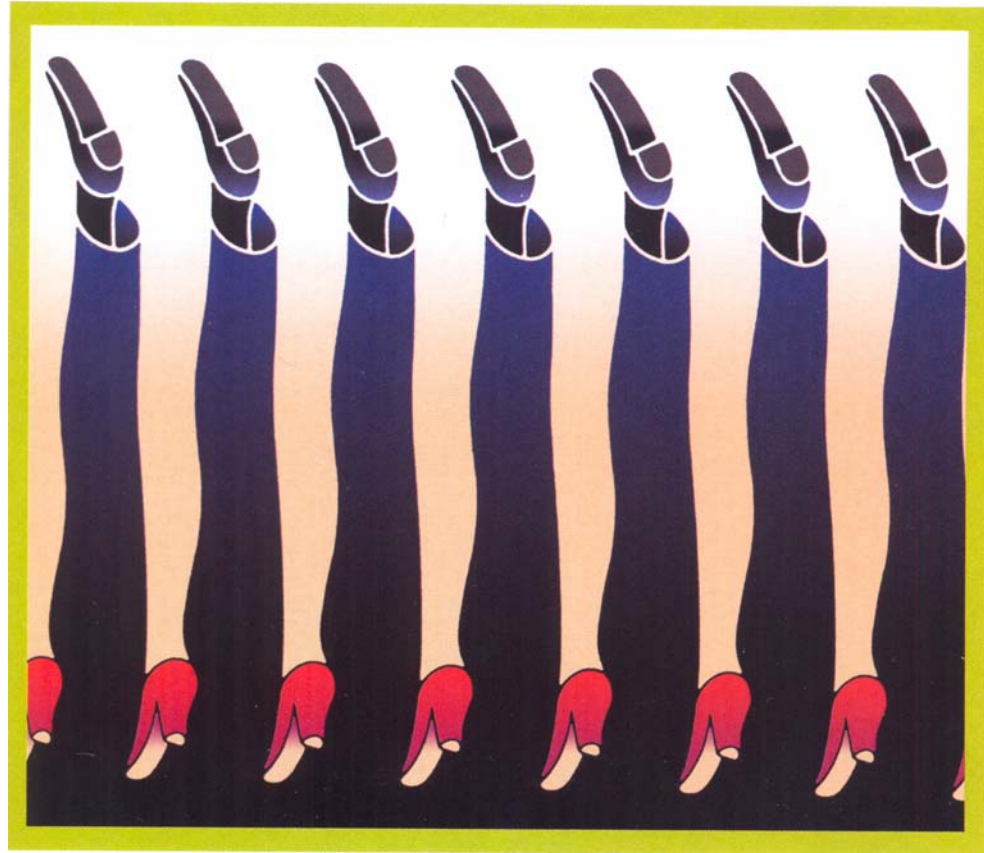
Ethical aspects of stigma

- Stigma itself is a huge ethical problem in psychiatry
- It is being targeted in many places around the world: WPA, WHO, EU, and now several governments:..
- How: A long proces: Awareness coupled with hard core economic arguments – labourforce more and more troubled by mental problems, disorders.
- Involving the knowledge but also basic values, attitudes and beliefs of individuals

Are there adverse effects of antistigma campaigns?

- Should always be questioned
- Sustainability – follow up being an issue- of will governments do what it takes
- Is it the right target?
- Can it harm? Risk of antistigma campaigns can enhance stigma
- Risk of moralisation – PC ness
- Ethical positions: Discourse - Habermas: truth through dialogue – a process which never stops

Legs of Two Different Genders



Can you find both male and female legs?