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Mental Health Stigma and Self-Diagnosis in College Students

There is very minimal research on both college students' views of mental illnesses and the prevalence of self-diagnosing. In this study, we are aiming to explore stigmatizing attitudes regarding mental illnesses and the utilization of psychiatric services. We are interested in conducting this research to better understand how college students are impacted by mental illness as well as the stigma attached to diagnoses and psychiatric services. Previous research suggests that there is a rising prevalence of mental health issues among college students. With this population being at such great risk it is important to better understand these issues that are largely impacting the future leaders and members of society. The present study was conducted on SurveyMonkey distributed by SONA Systems as well as web links presented on flyers and social media. Participants were asked to respond to surveys that covered the stigma of mental illnesses and if it is internalized by the individual identifying with them, as well as attitudes about seeking professional help. We hypothesized that results will reveal: a significant/nonsignificant correlation between internalization of self-stigma, openness to seeking professional services, and type of diagnosis of mental illness. Future implications of our research include implementing additional services and outreach to college students who self-identify with a mental illness or are impacted by the internalization of stigma. Limitations of this study include only recruiting participants who describe themselves as having a mental illness, the tendency to answer dishonestly, and the overall lack of psychoeducation among college students.