S13　*Images and attitudes towards psychiatry and mental illness*
SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MENTAL ILLNESS AMONG
THE PUBLIC

M. C. Angermeyer. *Department of Psychiatry, University of Leipzig,
Johannisallee 20, Leipzig, Germany.*

Results of representative surveys conducted in Germany in the early
90s revealed marked discrepancies between the lay beliefs about
mental disorders and expert knowledge. The lay public attached
greatest importance to psychosocial stress for the aetiology of
schizophrenia and major depression. Less frequently, biological
factors have been endorsed as causes of these disorders. While
psychotherapy was generally held in high esteem,
psychopharmacotherapy was rejected by the vast majority of
respondents. The public's image of psychotherapy appeared largely
determined by popular views of psychoanalysis, whereas that of
psychotropic drugs was strongly influenced by the characteristics
associated with tranquillisers. Among the different psychotherapeutic
approaches, psychoanalysis was, except for group therapy in the
Eastern part of the country, the most preferred method. There are,
however, some indications of changes of the social representations of
mental disorders, due to the popularisation of new research findings
in the neurosciences and most recent developments in
psychopharmacotherapy.

S13　*Images and attitudes towards psychiatry and mental illness*
PREPARING SOCIETY TO REINTEGRATE THE MENTALLY
ILL: EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

J. Leff. *Section of Social Psychiatry, Institute of Psychiatry, De
Crespigny Park, London, United Kingdom.*

Discharging long-stay patients into the community is no guarantee that
they will become integrated socially. Barriers to integration include
negative images of the mentally ill in the media which have
intensified public fear of the mentally ill. Previous attempts to modify
public attitudes with large scale campaigns have had disappointing
results. Our objective was to evaluate an edational campaign about
mental illness focussed on the neighbours of a shelterd house. We
conducted a randomised controlled trial of an educational campaign.
A survey of public attitudes was conducted in two streets, each of
which contained a sheltered home for ex-long-stay patients. In the
experimental street an educational campaign was mounted, comprising
a public meeting, distribution of informational leaflets and a custom-
made video and social events in the home. The survey was repeated
in both streets after one year. In the experimental street there was a
significant decrease in neighbours' fear of the mentally ill and wish
to exclude them. More neighbours in the experimental street (28%)
than in the control street (8%) visited the patients and more
experimental patients (5/8) than control patients (0/6) reported contact
with neighbours. A campaign focussed on neighbours can increase
social integration of long-stay patients into the community.

S13　*Images and attitudes towards psychiatry and mental illness*
Population attitudes towards deviant behaviors in everyday life, proposed
interventions

E. Zbinden, W. Fischer, D Goerg, Prof. J Guimon

Recent studies show that confronted to psychiatric disorders defined according
to the DSM-IV categories (vignettes or brief description of pathological traits),
the general population hardly perceives differences and is rather unspecific in
the forms of treatment that should be undertaken.
In a survey done in Geneva in 1996 deviant situations which can appear in
everyday life (social withdrawal, agitation, strangeness, violence) were
described. People were asked to choose from a list of interventions the three
they considered as most appropriate. Their choices strongly varied according to
the situations. It appears that people would suggest in a great number of cases
to turn to psychiatrists, general practitioners or someone they trust.
The study of groups having chosen very contrasted interventions show that
their choices are related to more general dispositions and social representations
concerning etiological factors, attitudes towards the mentally ill and towards
medication. They are also embedded in different experiences and social
situations. These observations put into perspective the problem of information
on psychiatric disorders connected to different types of population

S13　*Images and attitudes towards psychiatry and mental illness*
GROUP THERAPY AND ATTITUDINAL CHANGES TO
MENTAL ILLNESS IN MEDICAL STUDENTS

L. Yllá Segura, A. González-Pinto Arrillaga. *Neurociencias.
Psiquiatría, Universidad del País Vasco, Sarriena, SIN, Lejona, Spain.*

In this article we present findings related to changes of attitude
towards mental illness of second year medical students after group
sessions. The students were assigned to two kinds of groups.
Experimental groups where dynamic sensitization techniques of group
psychotherapy were applied and theorethical formative groups where
psychiatric cases were discussed. The OMI-R adaptation of Cohen
and Struening's questionnaire OMI (Opinions towards mental illness)
has been used to measure such attitudes both before and after
participation in those groups. Authoritarian, one of the five
dimensions of the OMI-R test, was the dimension which was most
substantially altered, experiencing an overall increase.