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## THE IMPACT OF DAY CLINIC TREATMENT ON INTERNALIZED STIGMA

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**Background:** The stigma of mental illness is a complicating feature of psychiatric treatment, especially in schizophrenia. A detrimental consequence is internalized stigma-the inner subjective experience of stigma resulting from applying negative stereotypes and stigmatizing attitudes to oneself. The empowerment and recovery oriented program of the day clinic might contribute to a reduction in internalized stigma. Until now the influence of day clinic treatment on internalized stigma has not been studied.

**Methods:** Data from two groups of patients had been collected at baseline and after five weeks. The experimental group attended the day clinic treatment (TKL-group,20 patients), the control group waited for the day clinic treatment (KO-group,20 patients). At both times the Internalized Stigma Of Mental Illness scale, the CES-Depression Scale, the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire capturing the subjective quality of life and the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale were applied. Furthermore, sociodemographic and clinical data were collected.

**Results:** Changes during the five weeks within the TKL-group showed a significant reduction of internalized stigma and psychopathology and a significant improvement in quality of life. Within the KO-group it was only a significant reduction of depression. Significant differences between the two groups concerned changes in the quality of life and psychopathology with a clear advantage for the TKL-group. However, with regard to changes in internalized stigma, no significant differences between the TKL- and the KO-group could be observed.

**Conclusions:** Exploring a sample size of two groups each of 110 patients appears to be a feasible and valuable research plan with regard to internalized stigma.