Introduction: Stigma can be defined as ‘the co-occurrence of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination in a situation where power is exercised’ and during the last years the interest in the stigma of mental illness has increased considerably. In fact, evidence exists about the stigmatization of patients with mental illness and stigmatization of psychiatry and psychiatrists. Sometimes not only the general population stigmatise and discriminate mental illness but also the non-psychiatric healthcare professionals.

Objectives and Methods: Review of the literature using medline database to research some topics: (1) Stigma of mental health (patients, psychiatry and psychiatrists), (2) Stigmatization by non-psychiatrists healthcare professionals, (3) Repercussions in physical health of the patients, and (4) How to combat this stigma in general hospital.

Results: Many articles address the stigma of mental illness but most of them report the perspectives of patients, patient’s family and describes the discrimination behavior by general population. There are few studies that discuss this problematic in health professionals but enough to conclude that stigma of mental illness has been identified as a significant barrier to help-seeking and care. In recent decades it has become widely acknowledged that there are physical health disparities between patients with and without mental illness. For this situation contributes; poorer access to physical healthcare, diagnostic overshadowing and the notion that health professionals are not immune to the effects of stigma attached to mental illness, despite formal education in psychiatry. Although "often unintentional" such discrimination remains a major barrier to quality care, treatment and recovery.

Discussion and Conclusions: Stigma is a cruel reality in mental health care and this can negatively impact on physical health outcomes. As professionals, we must always be aware of how our own attitudes may affect our ability to provide appropriate, individualised care. Stigma reduction in healthcare students and professionals needs to be sustained over time if it is to result in positive changes for people living with mental illness. To achieve this, it is necessary education, inclusion of contact with people with mental illness and burnout reduction.

Supplementary material: Complete presentation available at http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org

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