Introduction

- Stigma towards individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia continues despite increasing public knowledge about the disorder.¹
- Questionnaires are used almost exclusively to assess stigma despite self-report biases affecting their validity.²

Hypotheses: We hypothesized that FTV biases would be greater in conditions thought to evoke stigma and found partial support for this.

Methods

Design: Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions that involved talking to a confederate.

Measures: We assessed participants’ stigma towards schizophrenia with both implicit and explicit measures.

Participants were students recruited from Queen’s University undergraduate psychology subject pool (N = 41, 34 women, 7 men, age: M±SD = 18.85±1 years).

Results

Implicit Measures (FTV Biases)
- No main effect of either Label or Symptom
- Significant interaction. F(1, 36) = 5.81, p = .021, η² partial = .14 (see Figure 2)

Explicit Measures (CAMI Scores)
- No main effect of either Label or Symptom
- Significant interaction. F(1, 36) = 4.45, p = .042, η² partial = .11 (see Figure 3)

Discussion

- We hypothesized that FTV biases would be greater in conditions thought to evoke stigma and found partial support for this.
- Our findings partially support our hypotheses, as we found that participants’ FTV biases were greater after conversing with a peer who displayed symptoms.
- People rated their own conversation ability better when they thought that they were conversing with someone with schizophrenia.
- Participants in the schizophrenia label/symptoms present group were more likely to believe that people with schizophrenia should face social restrictions.

Conclusions

- Diagnostic labels and observed symptoms affect how threatened people feel when they interact with individuals with schizophrenia.
- Implicit and explicit measures of stigma can differ significantly.
- Therefore, it is essential to include implicit measures of stigma in order to control for potential response bias (i.e., people are hesitant to admit stigmatized beliefs about others).

References


Contact: adam.heenan@queensu.ca