

Cross Section of perceived stigma and attitudes toward OCD genomics in Latin American individuals with OCD.

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Background

- Individuals who suffer from mental illnesses are **susceptible to stigma** in various forms, such as discrimination and prejudice.
- Incorporating **genomic analysis** into clinical settings poses unique challenges, such as concerns regarding privacy and stigmatization.
- Concerns that genetic explanations for psychiatric disorders might **heighten stigmatization** of those affected by exacerbating preexisting notions of inferiority and defectiveness must also be considered.

Methods

- **Participants:** $N = 157$ adult participants ($M_{age} = 31.94$, $SD = 11.33$) with clinically significant OCD or OCD-like symptoms and Latin American ancestry.
- **Measures:** *Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale, 2nd Edition* (Y-BOCS-II), *Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues* (ELSI), and *Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System-Stigma* (PROMIS Stigma).
- **Analyses:**
 1. Series of correlation analyses to assess linear associations between responses to ELSI items, Y-BOCS-II symptom severity scores, and PROMIS Stigma scores.
 2. Two-step regressions (2) to assess the extent to which specific ELSI items predict PROMIS Stigma while controlling for Y-BOCS-II symptom severity scores.



Perceived level of stigma about mental illness in one's own country predicts self-reported OCD stigma, even when accounting for OCD symptom severity.



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Results

- Significant correlations were observed between current Y-BOCS-II total scores ($M = 22.18$, $SD = 8.86$) and PROMIS Stigma raw scores ($M = 15.65$, $SD = 6.98$) ($r = .420$, $p < .01$), as well as PROMIS Stigma raw scores and ELSI item 8 responses ($r = -.355$, $p < .01$) such that greater perceived stigma about mental illness in one's own country is associated with greater self-reported OCD stigma.
- Perceived stigma about mental illness in one's own country was a significant predictor of self-reported OCD stigma above and beyond current Y-BOCS-II total scores ($\beta = -2.48$, $p < .001$).
- Self-reported attitudes toward OCD genomics were a significant predictor of PROMIS Stigma above and beyond Y-BOCS-II scores ($\beta = 2.04$, $p = .012$) such that those who presumed a genetic component to the development of OCD also reported increased OCD stigma, even after accounting for OCD symptom severity.

ELSI Items used for Regression Analyses	
Item 8	"Overall, in your opinion, what is the level of stigma about mental illness in your country?"
Item 10	"How much do you think a person's genes contribute to their risk of developing OCD?"

Discussion

- This study provides initial evidence highlighting the importance of addressing one's environment and cultural norms in therapeutic intervention, specifically in individuals of Latin American ancestry.
- General perceptions toward mental health in one's country should be addressed in therapeutic interventions that aim to reduce OCD stigma.
- Outside of OCD symptom severity, clinicians may also consider targeting one's attitude toward their genetics in an effort to reduce stigma surrounding OCD.

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