

### Abstract

**Introduction.** Self-stigma is important for the recovery of people with schizophrenia, and occurs when a person internalises negative evaluations from the public and incorporates them into his/her own personal values. Affected individuals can suffer from low self-esteem, low self-efficacy or other adverse consequences, such as poor treatment compliance. This study examined the self-stigma of Chinese patients with schizophrenia who were enrolled in a district-based recovery programme, and its associated factors.

**Method.** This was a cross-sectional study conducted in an outpatient clinic. Patients who were recruited into the recovery programme from July 2013 to October 2013 with a diagnosis of schizophrenia were invited to participate. Information regarding socio-demographic and clinical characteristics was obtained. The participants rated their self-stigma level using the Self-Stigma Scale – Short Form. Compliance of medication was assessed.

**Result.** 209 participants were recruited. The median score of Self-Stigma Scale was 2.57 (IQR: 0.56). Five factors were associated with a higher level of self-stigma, including more severe negative symptoms, having a better insight into the social consequences of mental disorder, a previous suicide attempt, a higher body mass index and a lifetime length of psychiatric admissions of less than 12 months. Level of self-stigma was not found to be related to medication compliance in current study.

**Conclusion.** Five factors were associated with a higher level of self-stigma. Medication compliance was not found to be related to level of self-stigma. The current study provides further information on the understanding of self-stigma in Chinese patients with schizophrenia. Further prospective studies on self-stigma could be conducted, such as using a longitudinal design or recruiting patients with schizophrenia that are not joining recovery programme.

*Keywords:* Self-stigma, Schizophrenia, Recovery-based programme