

Stigma as a Predictor of Parental Willingness to Seek Mental Health Services for Their Children in Rural America

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Background

- Stigma: labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001)
- Stigma exists in some capacity towards mental illness (Hinshaw, 2005)
- This stigma is a barrier to mental health services for some people (Boydell et al., 2006; Gulliver, Griffiths, & Christensen, 2010)

Rural Stigma

- Rural communities have more mental illness stigma than their urban counterparts (Hammer et al., 2013; Stewart et al., 2015)
- Rural value system
- Lack of anonymity
- Other barriers to services: Lack of access, awareness of services, and financial difficulties

Rural Parental Stigma

- Parents of children with mental health disorders often feel as if though they are not good parents (Eaton, Ohan, Stritzke, & Corrigan, 2016)
- 2015 study on low-income, urban, African-Americans found self-stigma as a predictor of help seeking (Dempster, Davis, Jones, Keating, & Wildman, 2015)



Rural Parental Stigma

- First study focusing on parental stigma of seeking mental health services for their children in rural America done in 2015 (Polaha & Williams, 2015)
 - Low perception of public stigma (inconsistent with previous research)
 - Negative correlation between stigma and willingness to seek help for children

Methods

- Amazon Mechanical Turk

Answer a survey about food and calorie consumption.

Requester: Shawn Hsu

HIT Expiration Date: Nov 20, 2017 (6 days 11 hours)

Reward: \$0.10

Time Allotted: 60 minutes

- Parents' Perceived Stigma of Service Seeking (PPSSS) (Williams, & Polaha, 2014)
- Safeguards
- 2-tailed t-test
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PPSSS

- If I were to take my child to a mental health professional for them to receive services...
- Self-stigma: "It would make me feel strange," "It would make me feel embarrassed," "It would make me feel like a bad parent"
- Public stigma: "Some people might say bad things behind my back," "Some people would treat me with less respect," "Some people would avoid me"

Demographics

- n= 81
- Gender: 50/50
- 72% White
- Age
 - 21-29: 31 participants
 - 30-39: 36 participants
- Relationship status
 - Married: 55 participants
- Education
 - Less than high school degree: 2 participants
 - High school degree or equivalent: 8 participants

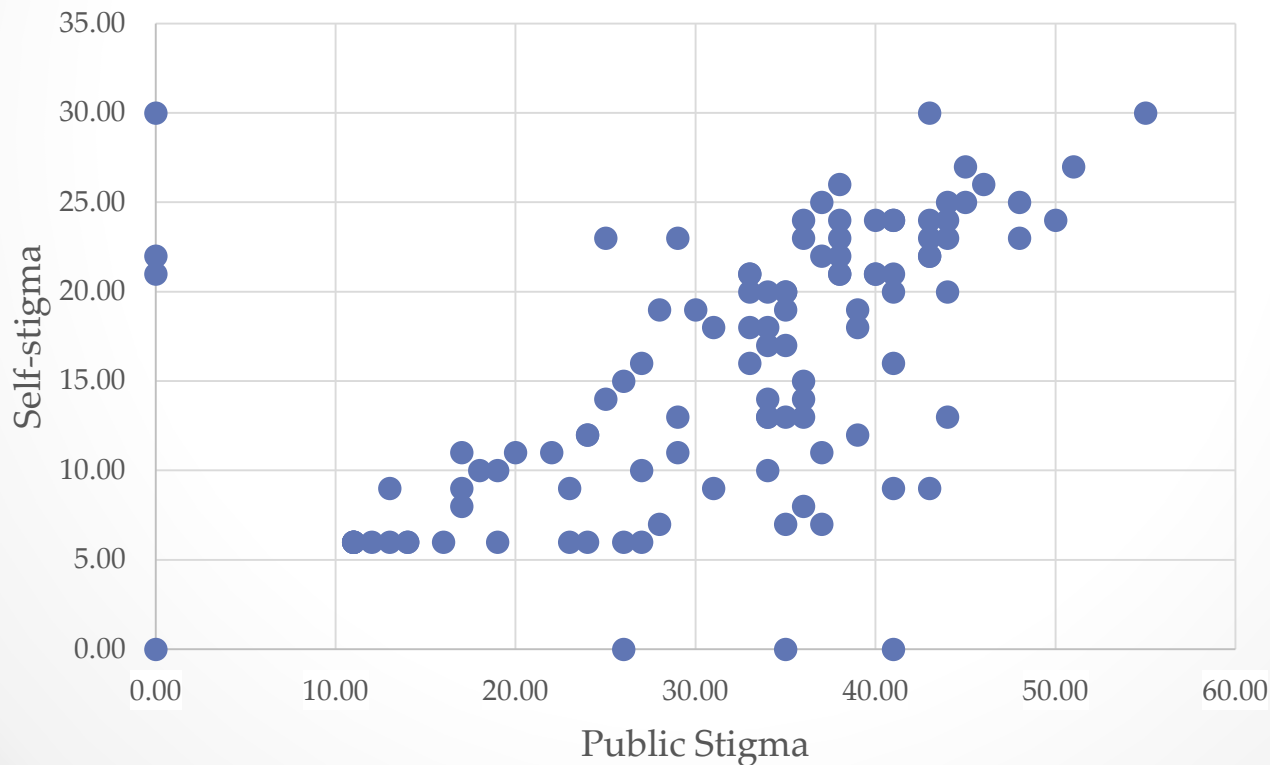
Results

- Cronbach's alpha showed high consistency for self and public stigma (.95 and .94 respectively)
- Average self-stigma score: 15.1 (Possible 6-30)
- Average public stigma score: 31.3 (Possible 11-55)
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Results

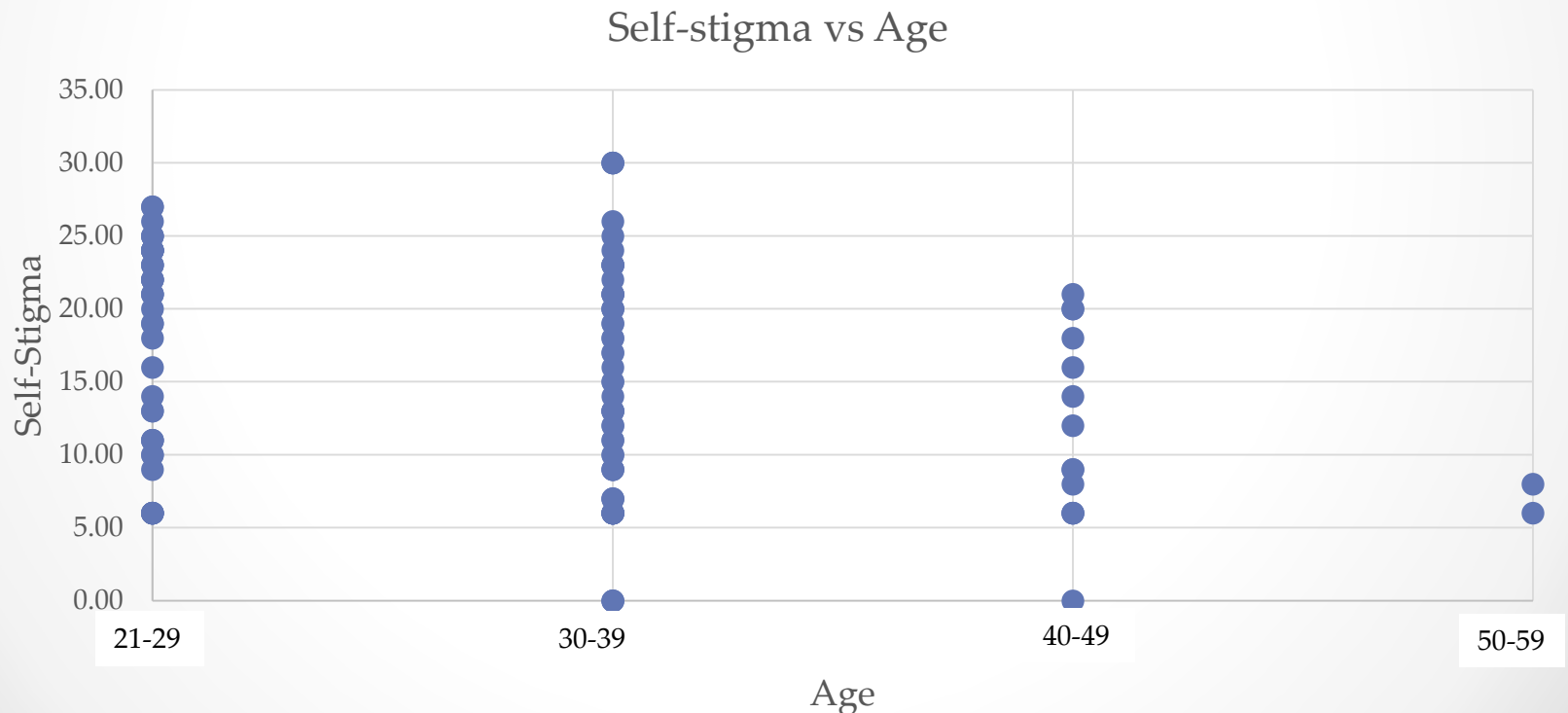
- Significant positive correlation between self and public stigma ($p=.000$, $r= .784$)

Self-stigma vs Public Stigma



Results

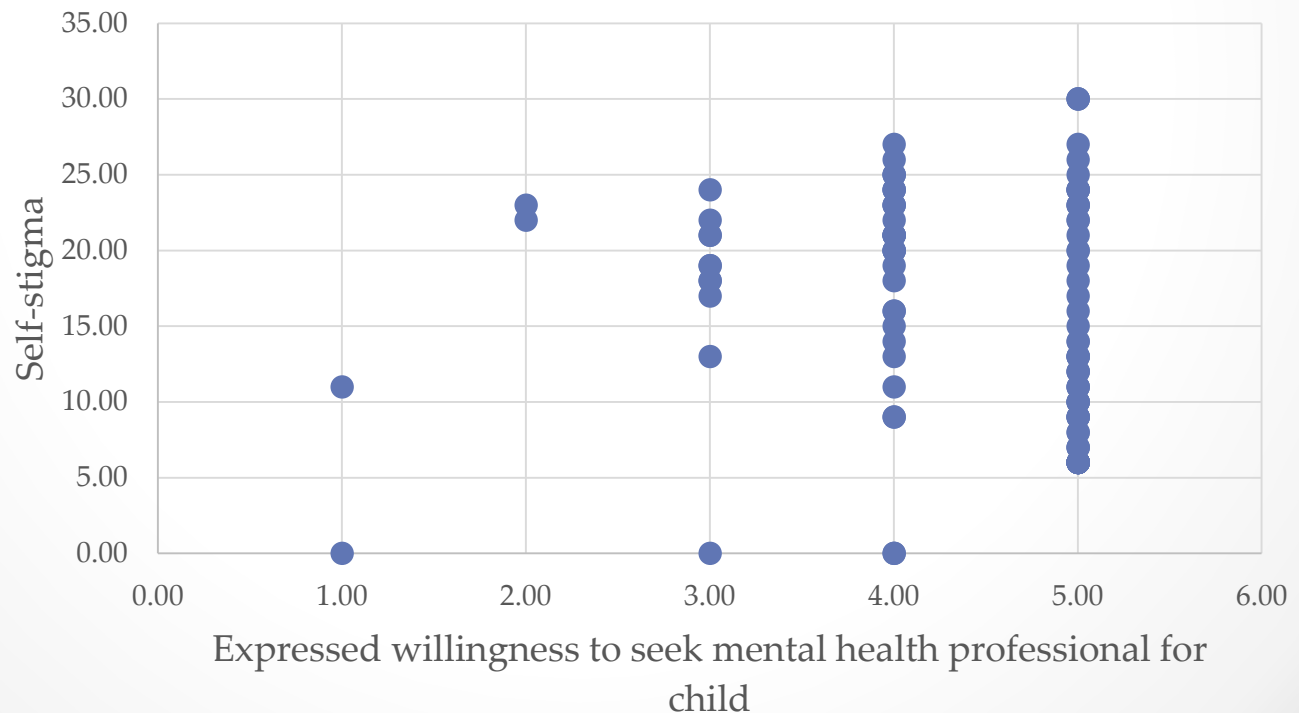
- Significant negative correlation between self-stigma and age ($p=.013$, $r=-.281$)



Results

- Significant negative correlation between self-stigma and expressed willingness to seek help from a mental health professional for children ($p=.042$, $r=-.231$)

Self-stigma vs Expressed Willingness to Seek Mental Health Services for Child



Discussion

- Supports findings of:
 - Dempster, Davis, Jones, Keating, & Wildman, 2015
 - Polaha & Williams, 2015
- Public vs Self
- Limitations
- Future?
 - Cause and effect
 - Intervention