

## NURSING STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH ANOREXIA NERVOSA

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### Abstract

Anorexia nervosa is a complex psychiatric disorder characterized by a restriction of food and energy intake, and drastic weight loss. Persons with psychiatric disorders are more often victims of stigma than persons suffering from organic diseases, and stigmatization has also been registered among healthcare workers. This paper aims to ascertain whether people with anorexia nervosa are stigmatized among nursing students at University North.

The research was conducted by using a structured questioner in which the Social Distance Scale was used, and it contained additional demographic questions and questions about the stigma. The questioner was distributed to the students in the Google Docs form. 154 students participated in the research, 58% of which do not work in their field, while 42% work as nurses.

The analysis of the results showed that students working in healthcare show a statistically significant higher level of social distance towards people with anorexia nervosa than students who are not working in healthcare. Also, the analysis of the results showed that nursing students do not stigmatize persons with anorexia nervosa in formal relationships, however, stigmatization is visible in informal relationships.

The stigmatization of persons with anorexia nervosa from nursing students can affect their later approach to patients, the course the treatment, and the outcome of the treatment, and it can also represent a considerable obstacle in achieving recovery and improving the life quality of patients. Additional theoretical and practical contents have to be included into the education of nursing students to completely eliminate the stigmatization of patients.

**Key words:** Anorexia nervosa, Nursing students, Attitudes, Stigmatization.