

DISCRIMINATION & STIGMA IN EDUCATION



WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

Discrimination can be direct:
within EU law, direct discrimination occurs when one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation, based on a particular characteristic they hold.

It can also be indirect:
when an apparently neutral provision, criterion, or practice would put one person at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons.

Multiple discrimination:
is relevant in the area of employment (i.e. when a person is discriminated on multiple grounds).



CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUNG PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC AND LONG-TERM CONDITIONS

Young patients with chronic and long-term conditions can face obstacles within the educational system. The effect of chronic conditions is not only medical; it may also affect:

- Emotional & physical development
- Relationships with peers
- Anxiety & stress
- Cognitive impairment
- Fatigue
- Pain
- Restlessness



These problems are often overlooked by staff in educational institutions, from school to university. Patients may miss courses because of their disease, medical appointments, or treatment. When the illness is invisible or changing, patients may experience stigma and be accused of exploiting their conditions by their peers or even staff.

Patient organisations have highlighted that in some cases, the staff refuses to help: this can be the case for young patients with food allergies, or for young patients with diabetes that need help with insulin injections.



Due to treatment availability or costs in some countries, and lack of clear information about cross-border healthcare, some young patients may be prevented from benefiting from the EU exchange programme ERASMUS.



Young patients have highlighted that structural discrimination and stigma can affect their academic success, their professional orientation, their future ability to obtain a job, and their future income. To follow their curricula, patients need adaptations to their timetable and studies that are not always available. This encompasses adjusting exam conditions (e.g. access to the bathroom, food during an exam) and schedules. However, young patients can face rigid administrative rules and miscomprehension.

DISCRIMINATION & STIGMA IN EMPLOYMENT



1. INTERVIEW STAGE: DIFFICULTIES FINDING A JOB

“ If you reveal that you have had a mental health issue in the past you can lose out of the possibility to get the job. If you reveal it at the workplace it still all too often happens that you lose your job. Despite the fact that evidence shows that having a diverse workforce is of great benefit for a company! ”

Mental Health Europe

2. WORKING WITH A CHRONIC CONDITION AND DISCLOSING THE ILLNESS

Disclosing the illness is often sensitive for patients as there is a stigma attached to chronic conditions and lack of awareness of the ability of patients to continue to work safely.



In this regard, patient groups indicate a preference for disclosure to remain voluntary and non-compulsory due to the risk of discrimination and as part of patients' right to privacy.

MORE INFORMATION

This information has been summarised from EPF papers on non-discrimination (in education, employment and healthcare).

We invite you to consult our webpage on the topic (via the QR code below), where you can find the papers under 'Related information'. There you will find more information, examples, best practices and references.



Go to EPF webpage
on Non-Discrimination!

3. RETURN TO WORK

Good practices on return to work and integration of patients with chronic diseases within the workplace are available in a number of countries.

For example, the UK Health and Safety Executive published guides on how to facilitate return to work.

4. REMAINING IN WORK AND ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Patient organisations often note a correlation between patients' ability to remain at work and appropriate access to healthcare.



Early diagnosis is highlighted as crucial to ensure patients can remain at work longer.

Patient empowerment and **self-management** skills may be useful to patients learning to manage their conditions in the workplace.

