



Stigma is a hugely negative influence and countering it is vital in tackling viral hepatitis.

Negative impacts of stigma include:

Reduced dignity and self-esteem



Anxiety and depression



Effects on access to employment and housing



Damaged social relationships



Lack of engagement with treatment and support services



People less likely to come forward for testing



Lack of influence on how services are designed and delivered



Abuse of human rights



The end result of this is often social isolation and further negative effects on mental health.



Stigma can often be internalized ('self-stigma'), causing people to be ashamed and worried about their condition.

Patient groups help to defeat stigma

They achieve this by:

Providing group members with accurate, evidence-based information and knowledge



Countering myth and prejudice



Being a reliable source of accurate and credible information



Providing the media with real stories that people can relate to



Making people with viral hepatitis a more visible presence in the community



Stigma is a common experience for people with viral hepatitis



It is always negative



It can be effectively countered with credible information and knowledge



Countering stigma is hugely beneficial both to people with viral hepatitis and to society



People who don't experience stigma are more likely to be in contact with testing and treatment