Stigma is a common experience of patients with chronic pain

What is stigma?
Stigma is negative beliefs and attitudes about others based on defining characteristics (e.g., health conditions)

People with chronic pain also experience stigma if they have:
- Membership to groups, such as women, children, racial/ethnic minoritized groups.
- Other stigmatized conditions, such as depression, anxiety, substance use disorder.

Perpetrators of stigma are:
- General public
- Healthcare professionals
- Friends, family, colleagues, and peers
- Popular culture
- People living with pain*

*Some people self-stigmatize and believe what others say

What stigmas do people living with chronic pain face?
- Pain is disbelieved or devalued
- They are blamed for their pain or labeled as drug-seeking
- They question the legitimacy of their pain (self-stigma*)

What are the effects of pain stigma?
- Observers are less inclined to help people
- Dissuades people from accessing healthcare
- Decreased quality of life

How can stigma be addressed?
- Recognizing stigmatizing behaviors and language
- Provider education on biological, psychological, and social aspects of pain

Learn more about pain stigma:

References:
- Goldberg (2017), *BMJ*
- De Rudder & Craig (2016), *PAIN*
- Wakefield et al. (2018), *PAIN Reports*