illness across several important life domains. Moreover, targeted anti-stigma interventions that improve attitudes of key groups, such as employers, peers at work, law enforcement officers and healthcare practitioners, could foster support for individuals with mental illness and make a significant impact on their quality of life. Improving public attitudes, therefore, can also create a virtuous cycle.

Ultimately, the most effective approaches require multilevel strategies incorporating persons with mental illness, the general public and key stakeholders. Extrapolating recommendations against public anti-stigma campaigns from studies only assessing associations between stigma and help-seeking at the individual level risks deterring investment from evidence-based approaches.


Authors’ reply: Not considering the broader context, Evans-Lacko and colleagues’ critique of our study mainly focuses on a part of a sentence (‘target these personal attitudes rather than broad public opinions’) in the conclusion of the abstract and understand this as a general recommendation for anti-stigma campaigns. In this generalisation, they lost sight of our paper’s explicit focus on the relationship between stigma and help-seeking, which was also stated in the full sentence: ‘Campaigns promoting help-seeking and fighting mental illness-related stigma should target . . .’. Unfortunately, when only browsing the abstract, the ‘and’ might indeed be misperceived as a two-fold recommendation, for campaigns promoting help-seeking on the one hand and anti-stigma campaigns on the other. We are sorry for that and have suggested that the BJPsych publish a correction for clarification that reads: ‘Campaigns promoting help-seeking by means of fighting mental illness-related stigma should target these personal attitudes rather than broad public opinions.’

Evans-Lacko and colleagues further argued that we overemphasised help-seeking as the key outcome. In light of the authors’ own reviews on this topic, this is a surprising statement. Just like our meta-analysis, these reviews start from the observation of the negative consequences of delays in help-seeking for mental illness and highlight the importance of better