Background:
Experts indicate that despite the demand there was no increase in referrals to Moscow psychiatric services in 2020. Among contributing factors are image/public perception of psychiatry and psychiatric diseases that are heavily influenced by social media.

Methods:
More than 700 thousand social media messages of Muscovites matching relevant keywords (January-August, 2020) were downloaded using specialized software. Alongside with quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis was performed on a random subsample of 401 messages and respective images.

Results:
Our analysis allowed combining messages into 6 groups and the biggest one was “Frivolous attitude to psychiatry”. In these messages, psychiatric terms are mainly used as means of stigmatization, to insult the opponent, even in cases when person is “guilty” of liking the “wrong” ideology, politicians or fashion. This heavily stigmatizes seeking help in official psychiatric facilities. People discuss numerous psychiatric diagnoses but at the same time they do not distinguish between types of psychiatric services (even in- and outpatient facilities). In the overall majority of messages people rely not on their personal experience, but on their thoughts based on e.g. stigmatizing pieces of art. This often leads to highly incompetent statements. COVID-19 references were very few in the subsample (<4%) but it should be highlighted that sometimes information gaps are filled with esoteric and conspiracy theories which do not promote seeking help in official psychiatric facilities either.

Conclusions:
Analysis showed high level of stigmatization of the service in social media, which can distract people from seeking help when needed. It can be recommended to create appropriate social media monitoring system to find main topics for informational interventions and monitor the effectiveness of such interventions.

Key messages:
- Psychiatry and psychic illness are highly stigmatized in social media.
- Social media monitoring can help in destigmatization of psychiatric care.