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### **Opinion of Dutch citizens about mental health policies**

An illustration of an added theme in the Nationwide opinion survey of Addiction Treatment Services  
(abstract Udo Nabit)

At the top of the economic crisis, the Dutch government proposed major cuts in the Dutch Mental Health Care System. The treatment of people with a mental health problem was no longer fully reimbursed, resulting in substantial financial contributions from patients up to several hundreds of euros. Mental health professionals reacted heavily and stated that this is a form of discrimination of a most vulnerable group, since full subsidy of treatment for somatic disorders were out of the question.

In order to investigate the opinion of the general public on this issue, we added some questions to the nationwide opinion research of Dutch citizens (Abstract Udo Nabit: *Trends in opinions of Dutch Citizens about Addiction Treatment Services*) about this proposed policy.

We formulated two statements and a vignette about 'Robert' (who had either schizophrenia, a depression, an alcohol- or drugs addiction). Results showed that the majority of the Dutch citizens agreed with the statement that considering reimbursement of costs, there shouldn't be a distinction between treatments for mental and physical ailments. However, on the second statement, it turned out that citizens do make a distinction between the different mental health ailments. On the question '*Do you think Robert should pay for his own treatment?*' 20% of the respondents agreed when it concerned Robert with schizophrenia, and 45% agreed when it concerned Robert with an alcohol addiction.

Stigmatisation of people with an addiction is a long standing and major problem. It leads to reduced self-confidence and embarrassment, but also to social exclusion and discrimination (Livingston & Boyd, 2010). On top of that stigmatisation contributes to an increasing treatment gap.