

THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF COVERAGE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN PRINTED MEDIA IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Introduction: The term media on a whole pertain to the main method of mass communication. The main aim of the media is communication, with the objective educating and informing the audience. It is unknown how accurately media reports the topics related to the mental health issues.

Aims and Objectives: This study was conducted to explore the extent and nature of coverage of mental health issues in printed media.

Materials and Methods: By purposive sampling technique, 853 printed media from which a sample of 751 articles were drawn, i.e. n = 751 (n1 for newspapers, n1 = 740 and n2 for magazines, n2 = 11). With the help of search terms which consisted of 32 journals and diagnostic terms covering the full range of mental disorders.

Results: 190 (25.3%) articles on mental health issues appeared in the city / region section. 200 (26.6%) articles in newspapers did not mention the author. The most common theme of the articles in newspapers was suicide, followed by substance abuse. The neutral description was used in all articles.

Conclusion: Majority of the articles appeared in city / region section with neutral / nature.

Keywords: Magazines, mass media, mental health issues, newspaper, print media.

Introduction:

The term media on a whole pertains to the main method of mass communication, that is mainly can be in the form of internet, television, radio, newspaper, magazines, newsletters and various other forms of print. The main aim of the media is communication, with the objective of educating, informing, and entertaining the audience. It is a reflection of the society and consequently affects the behaviour, attitude and perception of the audience. Media and mental illness interact with each other in various ways. Media may act as the

primary source of information about mental illness and may shape the perceptions and attitudes about mental illness. It acts as a means of reducing inaccurate perceptions. It can also act as a risk factor for certain forms of mental illnesses. Films can be used as a means of understanding psychiatric disorder and the treatment methods that are available.¹

Media scope can negatively affect open states of mind towards individuals with emotional or mental wellness issues. The idea of such media scope, and how far it changes after some time, may in this way

impact the effect of a simultaneous program against shame and segregation, e.g. that propelled in 2009 by Time to Change.^{2,3} Newspapers are one of the initial communication tools of the society.

One of the point of the battle was to teach print media staff about speaking to individuals with psychological sickness all the more emphatically, and this appears to have had some effect.⁴ Of most noteworthy worry to mental health experts is that numerous delineations pass on the impression of a solid relationship between mental illness and savagery.⁵⁻⁷ Until today, there are various methodological confinements in this area of work. Initially there are issues with the representativeness of the subjects obtained.⁸⁻¹¹ Second, numerous subjects were aggregated retrospectively.^{5,6,11} Third, things were chosen from formerly existing database, which implied that the creators were not able to work with their on particular meaning of mental issue or to assess how vital dysfunctional behaviour was to the occasions revealed.^{5,6} Furthermore, forth, none of the examples can claim to be a forthcoming national example.

Aims and Objectives:

This study was conducted to explore the extent and nature of coverage of mental health issues in printed media.

Materials and Methods:

A quantitative research approach with an exploratory research design was adapted to explore the extent and nature of coverage of mental health issues in printed media.

By purposive sampling technique, 853 printed media from which a sample of 751 articles were drawn, i.e. n = 751 (n1 for newspapers, n1 = 740 and n2 for magazines, n2 = 11). With the help of search terms which consisted of 32 journals and diagnostic terms covering the full range of mental disorders.

Results:

190 (25.3%) articles on mental health issues appeared in the city / region section. 200 (26.6%) articles in newspapers did not mention the author. The most common theme of the

articles in newspapers was suicide, followed by substance abuse. The neutral description was used in all articles.

Most of the articles in the study belong to Hindustan Times, followed by The Tribune. Minimum articles identified during the study period belonged to The Hindu. The entertainment section of the newspapers reported the second highest number of articles on mental health issues, followed by on the front page. The sports section had the lowest number of articles on mental health issues.

Discussion:

The study findings are supported by study conducted by Kranke et al (2010) in which articles were more frequently identified in the broad sheet (59.4%) than in the tabloid newspapers (40.6%). Only 6% of articles were featured on front page, of which a significantly greater number were from the tabloid newspaper.¹²

The results are supported by studies by Morse F (2013) and Stuber J (2015) to describe the association between psychiatric disorders and aggression in the printed media shows that the proportion of articles depicting psychiatric disorders together with either self or other directed aggressive behaviour were 31.2%.^{13,14}

Conclusion:

The following conclusions were drawn from this study.

The study reveals that the majority of articles appeared in the city / region section. The present study shows that most of the articles pertaining to mental health issues are of neutral language / nature not stigmatizing any group of people. The opinion of mental health professional was short in less than a third of cases and was associated with a more positive language / nature used overall.

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