



Original research

Madness in the movies: An evaluation of the use of cinema to explore mental health issues in nurse education



Edward McCann*, Sylvia Huntley-Moore

School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin, 24 D'Olier Street, Dublin 2, Ireland

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 September 2015

Received in revised form

10 May 2016

Accepted 30 September 2016

Keywords:

Mental health

Cinema

Film

Nursing education

Nursing practice

ABSTRACT

The research literature on the use of cinema in nurse education is relatively small. This study evaluates student nurses' learning experiences of a new undergraduate elective module called Madness in the Movies. Ethical approval was granted to conduct the study. Data were collected through an online survey and a social media discussion forum. The anonymous online survey responses were collated via *Survey Monkey*. Content analysis was conducted on the data from the *Facebook* discussion threads to understand, interpret and conceptualise the meanings from the data. All study participants agreed that their understanding of mental health issues was enriched, their attitudes and beliefs enhanced and their confidence to talk about mental health concerns increased significantly. This module provides a fruitful approach to encourage critical reflection on mental health issues in a safe environment that closely mirrors authentic practice experiences. The module facilitates the development of students' knowledge, values and attitudes in relation to person-centred mental healthcare.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Popular cinema can greatly influence societal beliefs about mental illness, diagnosis, mental health practices and practitioner attributes (Darbyshire and Baker, 2012; Wedding and Niemiec, 2003). Furthermore, cinematic portrayals of mental illness can have a significant impact upon public perceptions of and reactions to people who experience mental health issues particularly around stigma, marginalisation and discrimination (Chouinard, 2009). Although some representations are negative, some commentators argue that many film images of mental distress, though challenging, can be positive and empathetic (Harper, 2008; Kelly, 2006). However, the depiction of available treatments and the role of mental health practitioners are generally negatively portrayed (Bhagar, 2005; Byrne, 2009).

The use of popular cinema in health professional education is becoming more evident in the literature and is part of a trend to introduce the humanities subjects into the science-based curriculum (Datta, 2009; DiBartolo and Seldomridge, 2009; Kalra, 2013;

Kerby et al., 2008; McKie, 2012; Oh et al., 2012). Health educators have explored the use of popular films for teaching medical students in general (Darbyshire and Baker, 2011; Wilson et al., 2014) and trainee psychiatrists specifically (Gramaglia et al., 2013; Kalra, 2011). However, this approach is less prevalent in nursing and midwifery education and training, although it has been recognised that film can have a significant impact upon student learning (Diaz-Membrives et al., 2016; Fieschi et al., 2015; Kalra, 2013; Zauderer and Ganzer, 2011), particularly on the capacity to reflect and thus to construct meaning and understanding (Biggs and Tang, 2011; Parker and Falk, 2004; Taylor, 2000). Cinema, as a powerful medium, has the capacity to invoke strong emotions and feelings and may influence the viewer's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and ultimately their behaviours (Byrne, 2009). In terms of mental health issues specifically, several studies have investigated creative ways of tackling stigma and innovative ways of addressing government concerns about societies' negative responses towards people who experience mental health problems (Dale et al., 2014; Harper, 2008). Some studies have looked at film depictions of treatments such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and its perceived use as an instrument of social control (McDonald and Walter, 2009; Sharma and Malik, 2013). One study, that examined film representations of mental health nursing, found that practitioners were still being negatively portrayed, and seen purely as custodians in an 'aberrant,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: mccanned@tcd.ie (E. McCann), shuntley@tcd.ie (S. Huntley-Moore).

secret and dangerous world' (De Carlo, 2007). However, there are relatively few studies that focus specifically on mental health issues and the portrayal of 'madness' in cinema in relation to nurses and nursing practices (Anderson, 2003; Hyde and Fife, 2005; Kerber et al., 2004; Masters, 2005).

1.1. Module description

The Madness in the Movies module is an elective module spanning 6 weeks for students in second year of a four-year multidisciplinary Bachelor of Science Honours Nursing Degree Programme (See Appendix 1). The module is open to all nursing students regardless of discipline. The overall aim of the module is to introduce students to the portrayal of mental illness in popular cinema and to encourage them to develop a critical approach to reading film. The films used in this module were chosen to address particular mental health topics (Table 1). The choice of films was guided by the knowledge and experience of the lecturers in terms of mental health practice, education and their deep appreciation of film.

Having viewed each film in class, students were instructed to log onto a private Facebook page created specifically for the discussions. The lecturers would generally start the discussions by posing questions related to aspects of mental health and encouraged students to reflect upon the potential influences and impact on their own practice. For example:

1. Film as a medium can really challenge us and get us to think about mental illness and how it is portrayed. Discuss.
2. How accurate is the stereotype of psychiatric systems and treatments portrayed in the film? Is this still prevalent today? What has changed in terms of policy and developments in practice?
3. What particular aspects were raised in relation to mental health and emotional well-being? How are the issues you have identified e.g. physical abuse, drug and alcohol use, depression, grief, etc. addressed currently in mental health practice?
4. Having viewed the film, what characteristics did you enjoy? Consider the characters, the content and the cinematic techniques used that made the film appealing to you?

Two guides to narrative film analysis were adapted by the lecturers and disseminated to students to help them in formulating and expressing their views and ideas. The first paper (Dwankowski et al., 2014) addressed film contents such as genre, setting, plot and structure, imagery and film facts. It also included cinematic effects such as soundtrack, lighting, editing and use of camera. The second paper (Jacobs, 2013) encouraged students to explore deeper meaning including implicit (how the characters grow), explicit (the moral of the story) and symptomatic (sociological) content. Different approaches to interpretation are discussed such as contextualist, psychological, feminist, Marxist or culturalist viewpoints.

2. Methods

2.1. Aim and objectives

The aim of the study was to evaluate the students' learning experience and specifically to determine the extent to which students had achieved the module learning outcomes.

The study objectives were to:

1. Explore students' understanding of the depiction of mental health issues in popular cinema;
2. Establish the extent to which students had used a range of tools to critique and analyse portrayal of mental illness in film;
3. Determine the extent to which students had compared and contrasted the portrayal of mental illness in film with current trends and approaches to mental health;
4. Identify the extent to which students related the analysis of mental health in film to their own personal development and professional practice.

This paper will report primarily on the findings related to study objectives 1, 3 and 4.

2.2. Design and data collection

The study used an exploratory mixed methods design utilising qualitative and quantitative approaches (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2007). An end of module anonymous survey consisting of a 15-item questionnaire was developed specifically for the project and used to gather data on the module organisation, delivery and assessment. A further 2 questions elicited students' perceptions of their own personal and professional development as a result of engaging with the module. The questionnaire used a combination of Likert Scale and short answer responses. The questionnaire was examined for content validity by a group of colleagues from the authors' department with extensive experience in educational research who found the questions to be comprehensive and appropriate to the concept being measured (Rebar et al., 2011). The questionnaire was also examined for face validity by a group of students not registered for the Module who judged the questions easy to understand and to complete (Rebar et al., 2011).

Data were also collected from the Facebook group discussion threads. Signed consent was sought through an identified gatekeeper and the discussions were anonymised through the removal of any individual identifiers and substituted with codes.

2.3. Participant profiles

A total of twenty-two students enrolled on the module. Fifteen students responded to the online survey and sixteen students agreed to the use of their Facebook discussions in the study. The details of the study participants and their related nursing disciplines are presented in Table 2.

Table 1
Films used and the topics addressed.

Film	Topics
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)	Institutions, systems and treatments
Monster's Ball (2001)	Depression and anxiety
An Angel at my Table (1990)	Schizophrenia
Human Traffic (2000)	Drug and alcohol use
Transamerica (2005)	Sexuality and gender issues
As Good as it Gets (1997)	Obsessive compulsive disorder

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4940449>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4940449>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)