Understandings of Men’s Depression in Published Research, News Media Portrayals, and Men’s Accounts of Their Experiences

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Abstract

Within the next two decades, depression is predicted to become the leading cause of disease burden in developed countries, and the second leading cause of disease burden globally. There is a relatively large body of research on women’s experiences of depression, but research on men’s depression, and their experiences with depression, has been fragmented. The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the understanding of depression in men through the triangulation of three diverse sources of data that deal with men’s experiences of depression. These data sources are: existing published research studies, media portrayals, and in-depth interviews with men.

Applying a systematic review methodology, the first study explores current knowledge about the factors associated with depressive symptoms in men. These factors include social and demographic factors, occupational factors, health behavioural factors, and psychological or cognitive factors. I discuss the relevance of these findings in relation to diathesis-stress models of depression, and to theories of pathoplasticity which describe an individual’s vulnerability to potential stressors.

In the second study, I extend the theory that ‘softer’ masculinities are becoming increasingly valued in modern society, through an investigation of how depressed men are positioned by particular discourses in news media articles. I explore news media portrayals of men’s communication about their depression in relation to theories of stigma and masculinity. The findings of this study highlight the role media can play in reproducing or challenging such stigma.

The third and final study addresses the limited research on men’s subjectivities of distress. I add to the body of knowledge about men’s discourses of depression by exploring how men draw on medical understandings of depression and how they talk about the broader social contexts of their experiences. The focus of this study is to explore the understandings of depression experienced by a group of Australian men
with high depressive symptoms. This study utilises a thematic analytic framework to provide an overview of men’s subjectivities of depression. The findings of this study provide more depth to knowledge of men’s understandings of depression.

This dissertation has several theoretical contributions and implications for clinical practice, public health services, and policy makers. The findings provide health practitioners and the public health sector with comprehensive knowledge about the relevant factors associated with men’s depression. This dissertation also presents an overview of factors discussed by a group of men with depression. This provides an understanding of how men make sense of their condition. The research findings highlight how discourses of men’s depression can work to dispel or reproduce stigma around men’s mental health concerns. These findings are particularly relevant to policy makers for their debate and development of the gender equality in mental health outcomes.
Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Brett Scholz

16 October 2014
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「裏に裏がある」といつも信じていて、裏を探しに論文を書きました。色々な人に裏を見せて頂きました。有難う

"Let me tell you all what it's like being male, middle-class, and white: it's a bitch"
- Ben Folds
Works Published During Research Candidature

Works Within This Thesis

**Scholz, B., Crabb, S., & Wittert, G.W.** (2014). “‘We’ve got to break down the shame’: Portrayals of men’s depression”, *Qualitative Health Research, 24*(12), 1648-1657.


Other Works


