

Mental Health and the role of media

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ABSTRACT:

KEYWORDS:

INTRODUCTION

Its been months since the death of Sushant Singh Rajput and people have started talking about “suicide”, “mental illness” frequently. Since then the media’s “role” and its depiction of mental illness are what started to question. The discourse on mental health started after his death and news reporters, actors and almost everyone started spilling “do’s and don’ts” of mental illness. People started sharing their opinion on how he did not look depressed. And this is where we all fail as a society in terms of understanding mental health.

The use of media nowadays is well known. People are using various forms of media to be in touch with people and to know national and international events as well. In the last few decades, an ample amount of research has done to understand how mass media influences our belief systems (Wimmer, 1991). The studies have shown that in today’s society, media holds a strong power to influence people,

regarding mental illness, emphasizing the fact that mental health is a spectrum and mental illness have wide range of conditions, symptoms are important to discuss and express on available platforms. SO media holds a big responsibility of not only giving information to people but sensitizing them correctly on topics like mental health.

CONCLUSION

Media plays a significant role in shaping people's beliefs as well as their attitudes. The negative portrayal of mental illness through media enforces negative attitudes and false beliefs about mental illness as well as a person with mental illness. This gets serious when media forgets their role of sensitizing people and gets carried away with the sensationalism. Media has capability to change people's perception of mental illness, it has potential to break the chains of the stigma of mental illness. First sensitization of reporters about mental health should be done. Attempts should be made to convey the right information about mental health and efforts should be made to create a safe space for everyone to talk about mental health. Now its responsibility of media to show stories of recovery, stories of hope, and pass on the mic to people with mental illness.

DECLARATIONS

The author declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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