Framing of Borderline Personality Disorder in the UK Press

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Overview of Current Studies

• Presentations of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) in the UK press
  – Corpus-assisted qualitative frame analysis
Presentations of BPD

• Corpus-assisted discourse analysis to explore how Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is presented in UK newspaper articles

• Focus on stigma and prejudice against individuals affected by BPD
Borderline Personality Disorder

- Most common diagnosed personality disorder
- Estimated prevalence 0.7%-2% in the general population
- Women 0.6% twice as often diagnosed compared to men (0.3%) (NHS, 2011 factsheet) and overrepresented in the forensic population with 20%
- Most misunderstood, misdiagnosed and stigmatised of all personality disorders
Borderline Personality Disorder

DSM 5 “BPD” and ICD-10 “Emotional Unstable Personality Disorder”

• Broadly define marked behaviour tendencies indicating emotional instability, disturbed patterns of thinking or perception, impulsive behaviour and intense but unstable interpersonal relationships.
Corpus Linguistics

- “Corpus” comes from the Latin word “body” – plural “corpora”
- A corpus is a collection of texts
  - Not random
  - Purposeful
  - Sampled to be representative of subject investigated
  - Machine-readable for computer analysis
  - Spoken or written data
Corpus Linguistics

• Quick computerised processing of data
• Uses reliable statistics
• Counts lexical items
• Identifies quantitatively typical and atypical semantic patterns (coarse grain analysis)
• Provides an objective and balanced picture
• Provides contextual qualitative examples (fine-grain analysis)
Corpus Linguistics

• Quantitative and qualitative analysis of semantic patterns identifies:
  o Positive and negative connotations
  o Attitudinal and evaluative meanings
  o Impact on public beliefs and stereotypes towards mental illness
  o This study: Corpus-assisted qualitative frame analysis (Touri & Koteiko, 2015; see also Atanasova, Koteiko, Brown & Crawford, 2017)
Sampling of Data

• UK broadsheet, tabloid and local newspapers (1996-2016)
• borderline personality disorder OR bpd OR emotionally unstable personality OR EUPD OR emotion regulation disorder OR emotional dysregulation disorder OR edd OR emotional instability disorder OR emotion impulse regulation disorder
• 2,709 articles with total count of 1,916,325 words
Sampling of Data

- Duplicates were maintained!
- Linguistic research tends to remove duplicates with aim to focus on unique linguistic expressions
- Psychological perspective with a focus on:
  - Mere-exposure effect
  - Illusionary truth effect
- Focus on unique editorial decision to maintain (rather than change/correct) stigmatising linguistic expressions
Chronological Development

Articles Published between 1996-2016

Duplicates removed
All
Frame Analysis

Frames influence human consciousness by selecting certain aspects of information of a perceived reality and making them more salient “in such a way as to promote a particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52).
Identified Frames

- ‘Legal’ frame
- ‘Mental Health Services’ frame
- ‘Trauma and Abuse’ frame
- ‘Family’ frame
- ‘Stigma’ frame
- ‘Mental health literacy’ frame
- ‘Suicide and self-harm’ frame
- ‘Recovery’ frame
- ‘Bad and vulnerable women’ frame
‘Legal’ frame

Presentation of individuals as vulnerable, violent, dangerous, callous, sadistic and abusive

– In other words, his symptoms - his addictions, his selfishness, his dysfunctional personal relationships, his sadism - suggest that he suffered from a recognisable condition, borderline personality disorder

Long-term concerns of mental health problems

– Under cross-examination by Paul Greaney QC, defending Rebecca Dormer, he agreed that there had been concerns in their family "for a number of years about Becky's mental health.”

BPD for defence of diminished responsibility/capacity

– Robert Forrest, defending Young, said the teenager is very immature' and had been diagnosed with an emotionally unstable personality disorder.
‘Legal’ frame

BPD not a ‘real’ mental health disorder

− "But this is not serious enough to be a disorder," prosecution consultant forensic psychiatrist Dr John Sandford told Exeter Crown Court.

Prison or psychological treatment

− Reid will undergo mental health treatment for the next two years and must also complete 50 days of a rehabilitation activity requirement as instructed by the probation service.

− Rather than being sent to a psychiatric hospital, Petra was remanded in custody at New Hall Prison, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.
‘Mental Health Services’ frame

Hard to access
  – MP Ben Bradshaw has raised his concerns about the two-year wait for treatment for some mental health sufferers in Parliament after the Echo highlighted the issue

Little help and failing patients
  – Her mother, Karen, accused the National Health Service during the trial of "completely failing" her daughter by not providing proper care.

Promise of service and treatment improvements
  – "These schemes include the further development of the low secure unit within Cefn Coed Hospital, together with the development of a borderline personality disorder service."
‘Mental Health Services’ frame

Responsible for patients’ suicide and self-harm

— The 20-year-old died eight days after being found hanging in a bedroom of the East Willows ward in Cherry Knowle Hospital in Ryhope last August.

Irresponsible discharge of patients

— Paige Bell, 20, had been discharged from the psychiatric hospital just hours after she was dramatically pulled to safety by a policewoman from the wrong side of the railings of Wearmouth Bridge on August 6.
‘Trauma and Abuse’ frame

Childhood experiences of parental death or abuse

– This was amplified when her father Tom died of cancer when she was 18.

– "She had a serious psychiatric condition directly as a result of child sex abuse at age eight.

– "I'd had a really difficult childhood and turned to drink, drugs and self-harming.

Abuse by mental health practitioner or social worker

– A psychiatric nurse from Huddersfield has denied fondling a woman patient in her hospital room and asking to have sex with her after her discharge home.
‘Family’ frame

Bereaved family

– After her death, her mother and father, Anthony Kearney - who are separated - described her as "the most beautiful, intelligent and bright young girl with her whole life ahead of her”.

– Her mother, Eleri Linden, said after the verdict: "Losing Ceri has left a hole in our lives which can never be filled and a pain in our hearts which will never heal.

– Older brother Ketan, 38, broke down in tears as he paid tribute to his father and described the impact his death had had on their mother Mradula, 56.

– Casey's father, Anthony, said: "We think the jury has come to the correct decision in convicting Bonser with the murder of Casey."
‘Stigma’ frame

Public perception about BPD and mental illness

– If more of us talk publicly about our experiences of psychosis, we might _shift public perception_ enough to create a stronger social support system.

Stigma towards professionals with mental illness

– As a service-user researcher, there's no hiding your mental-health history and that means, says Mayes, that some staff may _still react to you only as a person with a mental illness_ when you want to be seen as a fellow professional.

Helping others

– He has now _made a film to encourage others to talk about mental health and seek help._

– Teenagers who battled _mental_ illness among _top charity fundraisers_ on Justgiving website.
‘Mental Health Literacy’ frame

Educating the public
– Given the incidence of mental illness in society, it would be highly surprising if we did not meet it every day, but how many people recognise someone with a mental illness?

Specifics about BPD
– She was suffering from emotionally unstable personality disorder, a psychiatric condition that can cause sufferers to act impulsively, have angry or violent outbursts and self-harm.
– She was suffering from a behavioural disorder due to the misuse of alcohol and was diagnosed with a borderline personality disorder.

Suicide information
– A person may be more likely to be suicidal if they have a mental health condition, such as depression; eating disorder anorexia nervosa; bipolar disorder; anxiety disorder; schizophrenia and borderline personality disorder.
‘Suicide and Self-Harm’ frame

Insight perspective
– She had talked to her 12-year-old son about hanging herself three days before her death, the inquest heard.

Mental health services
– AN ARSONIST who endangered neighbours by torching his Edenbridge home in a failed suicide bid had been repeatedly let down by mental health services, a court has been told.
– That the treatment of bereaved relatives by the authorities is dismissive at best, and that the number of teenage "self-harmers" being sent to prison where they are more likely to injure or kill themselves instead of receiving proper psychiatric care is growing.

Drug abuse
– After their 12-year relationship came to an end, her life descended further into alcohol abuse, drug addiction and mental illness.
Community services
– She has used the community provision to treat her depression and borderline personality disorder for the past 17 years.

New treatment approaches
– A NEW treatment for suicidal people with borderline personality disorder is being tested in a top psychiatric hospital.

Writing and arts
– On her blog she explains: 'As I progressed through my recovery from Borderline Personality Disorder, I'd like to think that my blog now also provides people with hope, and determination.
– A Leyland woman who suffers from borderline personality disorder is finding ways to cope with her anxiety through her 3D artwork.

Successful recovery
– "The fact that I have a mental illness makes it more important that I work," says Alex Whitelaw, who now works at BHS in Walsall.
‘Bad and Vulnerable Women’ frame

– Why is this diagnosis given to so many women - it's mostly women - who are labelled as BPD because they self-mutilate?
– A woman who attacked two strangers with a knife had killed her mother six years before, the Old Bailey heard.
– Spears was sharing her son's hospital room and prosecutors believe the mother administered sodium through the boy's stomach tube.
– A man accused of raping a 'vulnerable' woman in his car has insisted it was her that initiated the sexual encounter that led to him being tried for rape.
– But the jury at her trial in 2001 decided that Andrews beat him with a cricket bat and then stabbed him after he tried to end their relationship.
– She had become pregnant again when she was 18, but an on-off relationship with the father ended shortly before their daughter's first birthday.
– A sexual relationship between Mr Broadbent and "patient A", a 30-year-old woman, started after she told him she had developed feelings for him in an email.
Future

• Diachronic analysis on how presentations of BPD have changed over time
• Analysis of complex mental illness in the UK press
Thank you