Talking about personal recovery in bipolar disorder: Text analysis of public peer online support forum posts

Who?
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Research question
What can online support forum posts reveal about the processes and experience of PR in BD in relation to the POETIC framework?

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose &amp; meaning</th>
<th>Meaning of mental illness experience Paid/voluntary work or formal education Quality of life</th>
<th>Meaningful life &amp; social roles Spirituality</th>
<th>Meaningful life &amp; social goals Rebuilding of life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism &amp; hope</td>
<td>Belief in possibility of recovery Positive thinking &amp; valuing success</td>
<td>Hope-inspiring relationships Having dreams and aspirations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Self-management &amp; personal responsibility Controversial role of medication</td>
<td>Control over life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensions</td>
<td>Balancing acceptance with ambitions Openness enables support, but also stigmatisation</td>
<td>Ambivalence around Psycho-mania</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Rebuilding positive sense of self Over-correcting stigma</td>
<td>Dimensions of identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Support from others Relationships</td>
<td>Peer support and support groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not POETIC</td>
<td>Other Symptoms</td>
<td>Genetics &amp; family history Diagnosis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency: 159 350 1000 1300 2000 4000 6500

How?

- Reddit user account identification via self-reported BD diagnosis statements
- Selected posts about PR in BD with an information retrieval approach

Data

Shared keywords:

- Tension: 375
- Bipolar: 83
- Hypomania: 42
- Mania: 53
- Recovery: 16
- Hope: 13
- Psychological: 11
- Nature: 11
- Premenstrual: 11
- Schizophrenia: 11
- Schizophrenic: 11
- Schizophrenics: 11

Ethical considerations

- Ethical approval by FHM Research Ethics Committee in May 2019
- Remove usernames, paraphrase quotes to protect users’ anonymity
- Feedback from people with lived experience throughout project

Analysis approach

Corpus framework analysis (CFA)

- Corpus linguistics + qualitative framework analysis

Summary

- Innovative text analysis approach to study PR in BD
- POETIC framework captures online experiences well, only 8% of instances coded as “Not POETIC”
- Different frequency/salience of online topics versus interviews/focus groups (see)
- Users discuss sensitive & contentious topics

Implications

- Research: POETIC framework validation
- Practice: more awareness of relevant PR issues in BD

Limitations

- PR terms list enabled but biased corpus construction
- Topic-like POETIC categories easier to capture with single terms than theme categories

References