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Reducing stigma towards mental illness by improving media portrayals in the context of crime

PhD Research Project

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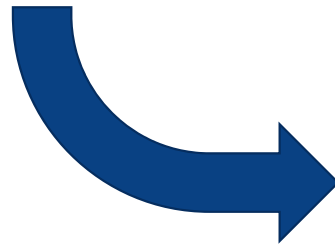
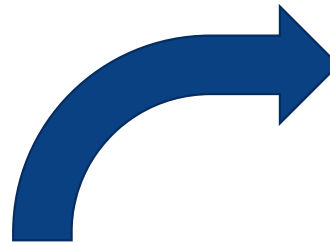


About me





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My Research Background

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Interventions to reduce stigma towards people with severe mental illness: Systematic review and meta-analysis

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ARTICLE INFO

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Discrimination
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Schizophrenia
Psychosis
Bipolar disorder

ABSTRACT

This review evaluates the evidence on what interventions are effective in reducing public stigma towards people with severe mental illness, defined as schizophrenia, psychosis or bipolar disorder. We included 62 randomised controlled trials of contact interventions, educational interventions, mixed contact and education, family psychoeducation programs, and hallucination simulations. Contact interventions led to small-to-medium reductions in stigmatising attitudes ($d = 0.39$, 95% CI: 0.22 to 0.55) and desire for social distance ($d = 0.59$, 95% CI: 0.24 to 0.80) post-intervention, but these were reduced after adjusting for publication bias ($d = 0.24$ and $d = 0.03$, 95% CI: -0.12 to 0.18). The combination of contact and education showed similar effects to that presented either intervention alone, and head-to-head comparisons did not show a clear advantage for either kind of intervention. Family psychoeducation programs showed reductions in stigma post-intervention ($d = 0.41$, 95% CI: 0.11 to 0.70). The effectiveness of hallucination simulations was mixed. In conclusion, contact interventions and educational interventions have small-to-medium immediate effects upon stigma. Further research is required to investigate how to sustain benefits in the longer-term, and to understand the active ingredients of interventions to maximise their effectiveness.





Outside of the PhD & research





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Improving news media portrayals of mental illness in the context of crime



Media portrayal of mental illness

THE  AGE

UPDATED NATIONAL VICTORIA EASTERN FREEWAY TRAGEDY

Horror smash truckie may have 'psychiatric condition', court told

April 27, 2020 – 11.04am



A truck driver allegedly involved in a horrific freeway crash which killed four police officers may have a "psychiatric condition" which has gone undiagnosed his whole life, a court has heard.

NEWS

Truck driver from Melbourne freeway crash 'deeply saddened' over deaths of four police officers

Posted Yesterday, updated Yesterday

The lawyer for the truck driver charged over the deaths of four police officers in a freeway crash in Melbourne last week says his client feels distressed and may have an undiagnosed psychiatric disorder.

Key points:

- Cranbourne man Mohinder Singh, 47, will appear in court again in October
- He was kept in hospital for several days, after suffering what police described as a "medical episode"
- He was charged early this morning after being released from hospital



Media portrayal of mental illness

The New York Times

After Florida Shooting, Trump Focuses on Mental Health Over Guns

THE AUSTRALIAN

FOR THE INFORMED AUSTRALIAN

NEWS OPINION BUSINESS REVIEW NATIONAL AFFAIRS SPORT LIFE TECH ARTS TRAVEL HIGH

HOME / NEWS / NATION



Judge questions aspects of schizophrenia diagnosis of accused Bourke Street killer

NEWS

EVIL ACT: Melbourne attacker had mental health, drug issues

MENU

The Canberra Times

NATIONAL ACT

Canberra woman 'floridly psychotic' when she killed her mother at Dunlop home

CBS NEWS

NEWS

SHOWS

VIDEO

CBSN

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CBS/AP | August 27, 2018, 6:10 PM

Gunman in Jacksonville shooting had history of mental illness, records show

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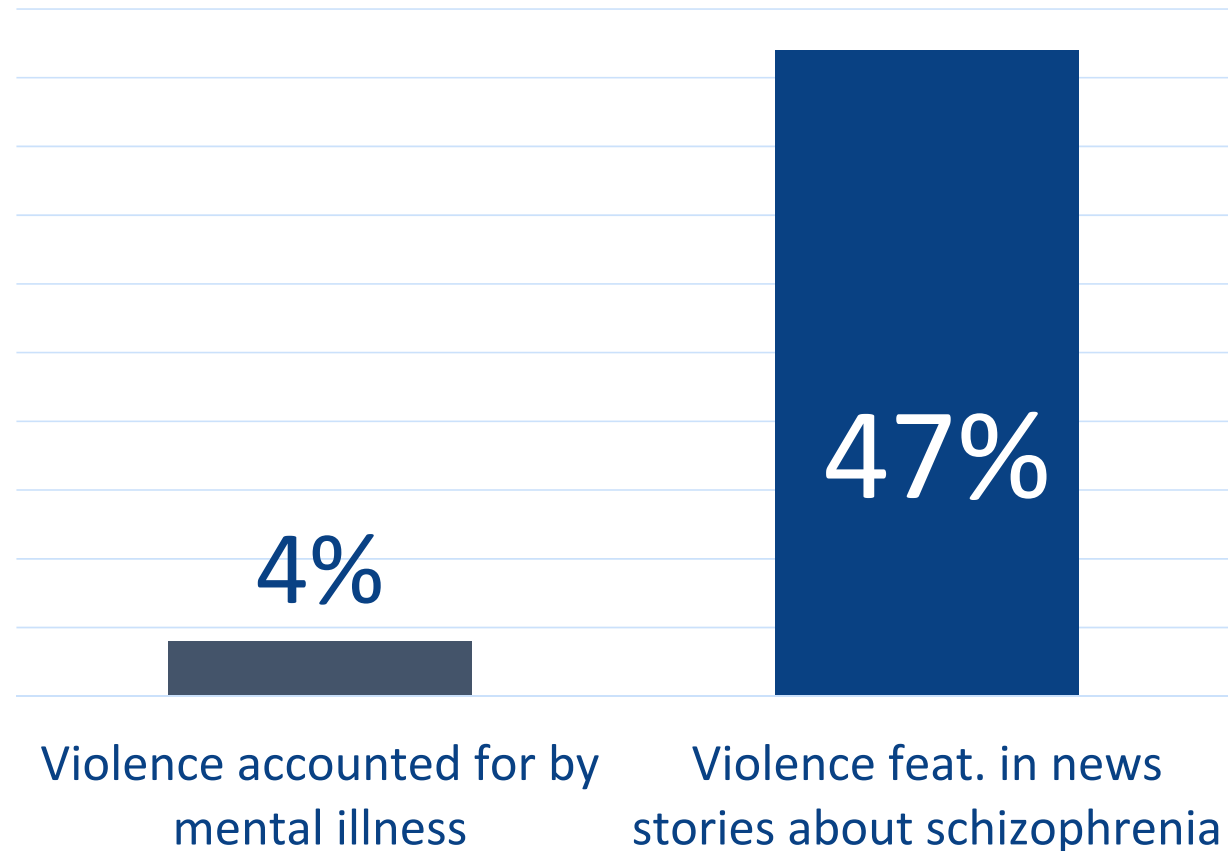
Vic mental health crisis means more murder



Why is media reporting important?

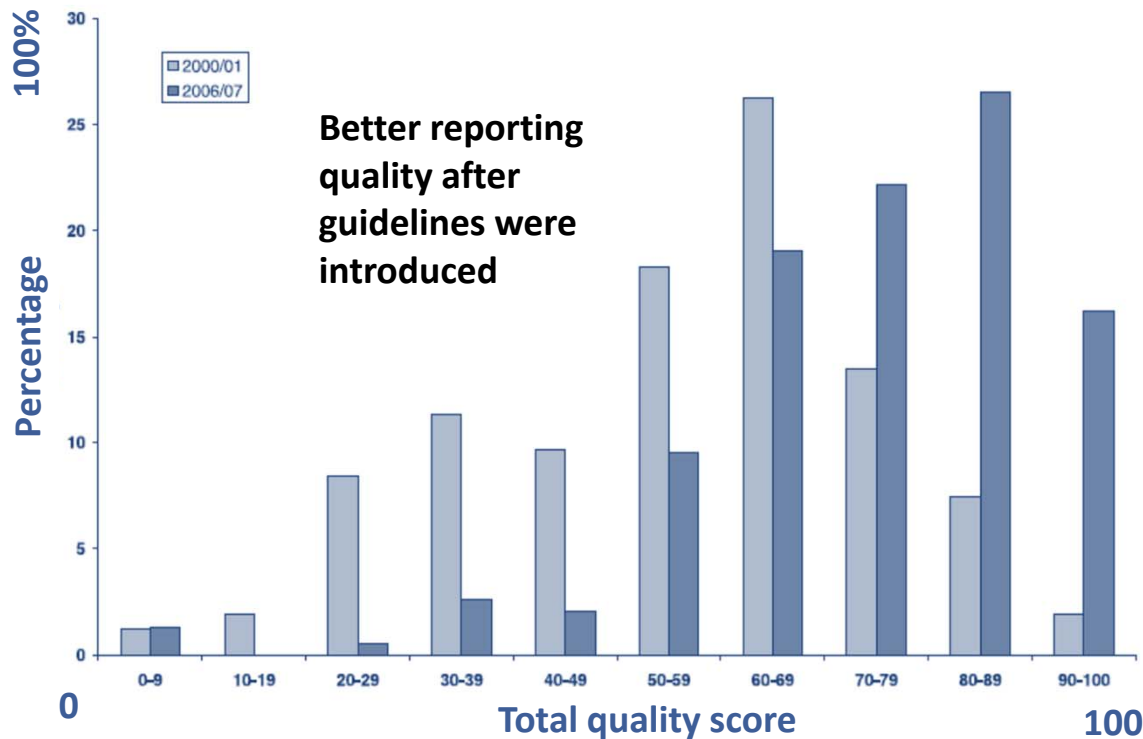
Media is a **key source** of information about mental illness.

Severe mental illness is **most commonly** portrayed in the context of violence and crime.





What can we do about it?



We know **media guidelines work**

- E.g.: Mindframe guidelines & suicide reporting

There is **limited guidance available** on responsible reporting of severe mental illness and crime

Source: Pirkis et al. (2009). Changes in media reporting of suicide in Australia between 2000/01 and 2006/07. *Crisis*, 30(1), 25-33, Figure 1, Page 30.



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Media guideline development process



Guideline development

Aim: To develop guidelines to extend media guidance to responsible and fair reporting of mental illness in the context of crime and violence

Participants (N = 62)

Key stakeholder groups formed the expert panel:

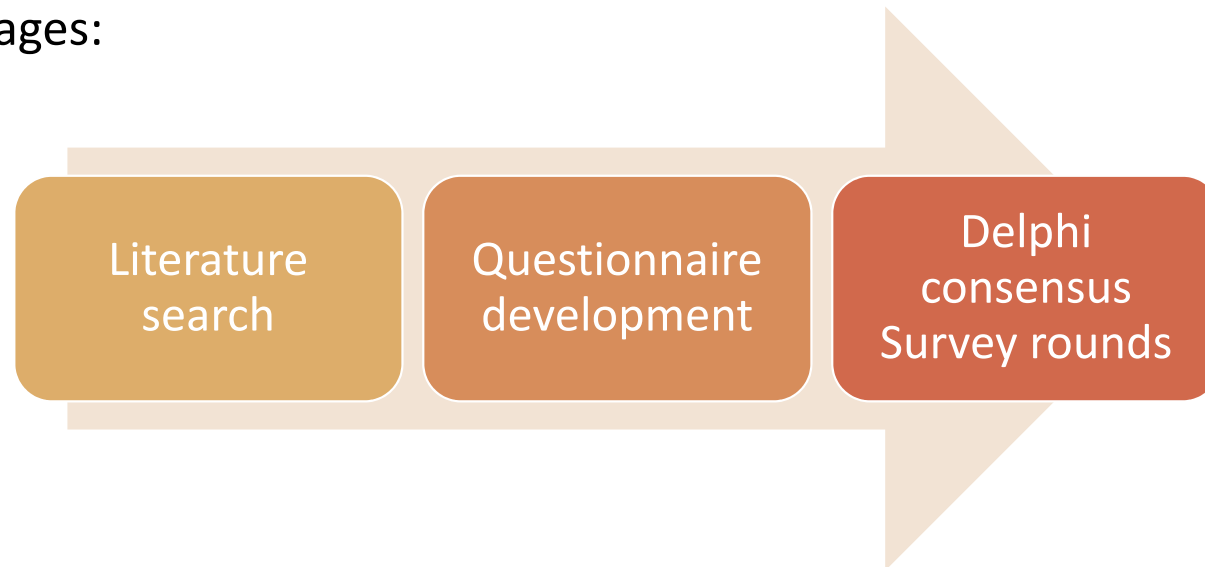
- Consumer advocates (n = 18)
- Mental health professionals (n = 21)
- Media professionals (n = 23)





The Delphi Method

- Uses expert consensus to determine ‘best practice’
- Range of experts from a variety of relevant backgrounds
- Conducted in 3 stages:

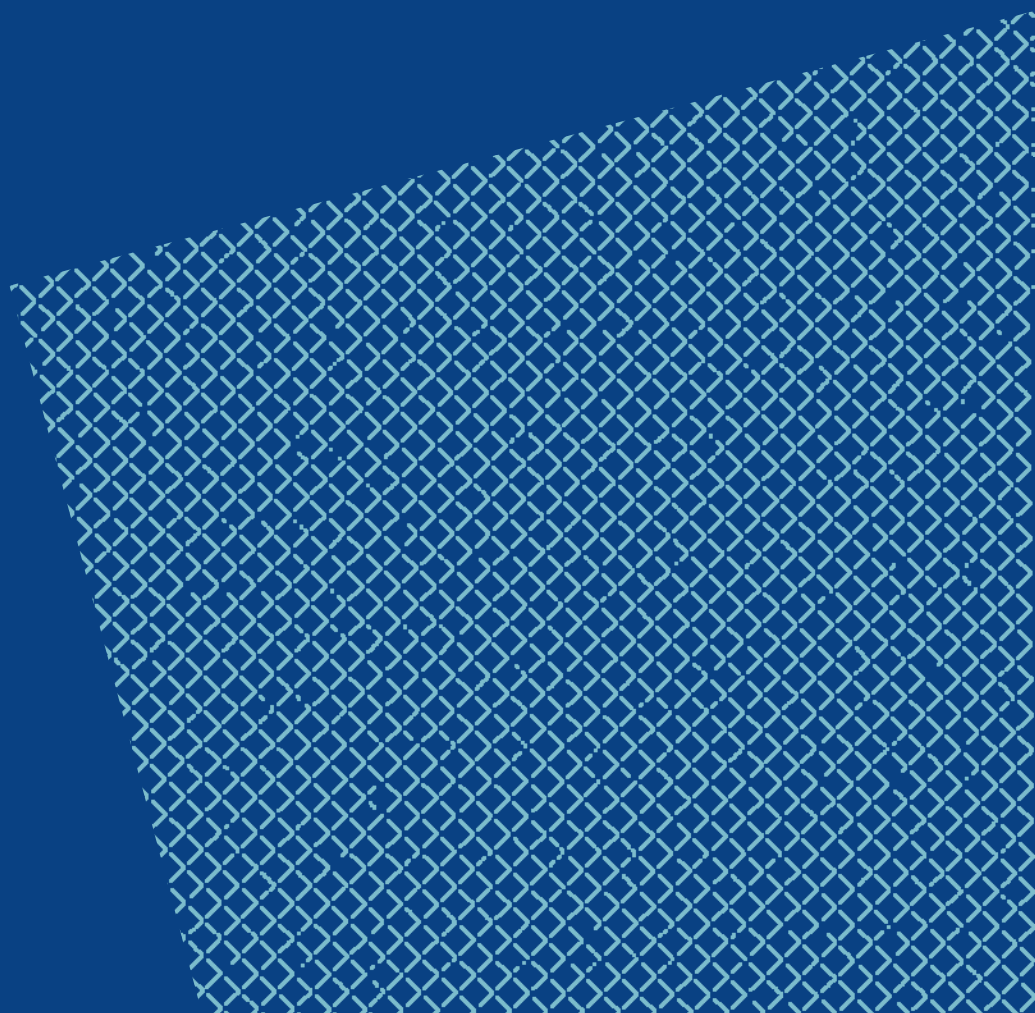


- Endorsed items formed the best-practice guidelines



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The Guidelines





Guidelines on media reporting of severe mental illness in the context of violence and crime

From 111 statements, 77 were endorsed under the following 10 topics:





Guidelines summary part 1



Be informed

About mental illness and violence

Consider
impact



On the public and people with mental illness



Report
accurately

About the role of mental illness in the event

Provide
context



Explain all relevant factors that contribute to violent behaviour



Explain legal
terms

Including consequences of 'not guilty by mental impairment' verdicts



Guidelines summary part 2



Use appropriate language

That is person-first and not sensationalist

Provide help-seeking info



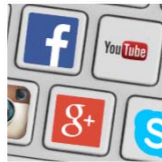
Help-lines and links to further information about mental illness and crime



Consider images & video

Choose carefully, avoid sensationalist images

Social media



Monitor comments, report unsafe content



Seek training & advice

Mindframe, mentors, trained colleagues



Next steps: Implementation & Evaluation

- Media training based on guidelines
- Pilot trial with RMIT Journalism students
- Aiming to extend evaluation in Post Doctoral research
- Collaboration with Mindframe Australian National Media Initiative





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Thank you

Questions?

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