Enhancing assessment and challenging stigma – what you mustn’t miss

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Overview

What is testimonial injustice
Credibility and perceived credibility
Clinical assessment, objectivity and objectification
What is hermeneutical injustice
Patient safety issues
Enhancing clinical practice and adult protection
Poll

How well do you understand these concepts?
How important are they for health care practice?

• Malignant alienation
• Diagnostic overshadowing
• Vexatious exclusion
A person is wronged as a ‘knower’ due to negative stereotyping about an aspect of their identity, leading to a deflated perception of credibility.

Fricker, 2007; Sullivan 2019
## Perceived Credibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>% Trustworthy (1-2)</th>
<th>% Untrustworthy (4-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Police</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary men/women</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television news readers</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Servants</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy/Priests</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Leaders</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians generally</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government ministers</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising executives</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 19,387 online adults aged 16-74 across 23 countries

Skinner 2019
Objectivity, Agency and Objectification
Hermeneutical Injustice

A significant area of unjust social experience for a marginalised group is obscured from collective understanding, because the discourse and language to make sense of it does not exist.

Fricker, 2007; Sullivan 2019
“…a progressive deterioration in their relationship with others, including loss of sympathy and support from members of staff, who tended to construe these patients' behaviour as provocative, unreasonable, or overdependent. In some instances an element of deliberately assumed disability was invoked. Such alienation between patient and others appeared to have been malignant in that it gained momentum and was associated with a fatal outcome.”

Morgan & Priest, 1991; Watts & Morgan, 1994
Malignant Alienation

Aggregate Example

Young woman with anxiety spectrum disorder (OCD/PTSD/GAD)
Past or current experience of victimisation or abuse
Limited response to first-line treatments
Limited availability of specialist treatments
Repeated, visible distress / help-seeking / self-harm
Framed as manipulative, attention-seeking, inevitable death by misadventure
Escalating distress met by “behaviour modification” approach of withholding service engagement
The wrongful attribution of a person’s reported clinical symptoms to an existing diagnosis - usually physical symptoms misattributed to a mental illness

“...no matter how you, you know, well you are, no matter how much, how good you seem and how well spoken you are and all those sorts of things, you just get treated like a complete nut case.”

Thornicroft et al. 2007; Happel et al. 2016
Diagnostic Overshadowing Case Example

Man crawls out of hospital
4 months ago | 0:56

Johnson 2021
Wilful neglect in the form of refusal to treat, leading to suffering or harm, motivated by a desire to punish or re-exert power as a reprisal for perceived loss of power, for example previously upheld complaints

“…raising concerns through multiple regulators, for them all to be told that everything is in order and that I wasn’t being denied treatment, made me doubt reality itself. I have obsessions around accuracy and truthfulness, and I ended up terrified that I might be killing people by giving the wrong information. For a long time I thought I was losing my mind.”

Thomson, McAllister, Gask & Veale, In preparation
Vexatious Exclusion

Case Example

Palombini 2021; Thomson 2020; Thomson et al., In preparation
Overcoming Epistemic Injustice in Practice

Curiosity and Narrative

Phenomenology and Empathy

Participation and Inclusion

Lending of Credibility and Authority
Narrative-based history taking

Who is this person?

What is life like beyond illness, disability & health care?

Hamkins 2014
Creation in one's own mind of another's experiences
Test by questioning, describing and reconstructing
Iterative rephrasing and discussion
Emphasis on accurate understanding of subjective experience

Oyebode 2018
Participation and Inclusion

**Inclusion in care**
- Inviting to MDT meetings
- Co-producing care plans
- Copying correspondence
- Open communication
- Sharing information about diagnosis and treatments

**Participation in service planning**
- Co-production
- Service user engagement

**Knowledge co-creation**
- Research together
- Present together
- Publish together

NICE 2011; Newman 2015; Thimm 2020
Lending of Credibility and Authority

Support and Advocacy

Bystander interventions

Maintaining standards

Raising and addressing concerns

Barber 2019; Sherman 2019


Hamkins S. The art of narrative psychiatry. Oxford University Press; 2014


