

## **Abstract**

### **The impact of media stigmatization on patients' perceptions of their Mental illness: A Qualitative Study**

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Mass media is an influential tool for shaping the opinion of the public. Sometimes all we know about a group of people comes from portrays in the media. The media often pictures mental illness in a negative way, often leading the service user to experience stigma. Dehumanization, cultural dispossessing, alienation, injustice and denial are likely to increase when inaccurate portrays of mental illness are supported in the media. This qualitative study delves into the experience of six individuals diagnosed with mental illness and their lived experience of stigma in relation to portrays in the media. The results indicated that mass media generally reinforce the myths that mentally ill are dangerous and violent often resulting in avoidance and exclusion. Therefore, a strategic action for change is needed. Positive use of media in terms of prevention and awareness, were also identified.