

# 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:
  - Positive and negative connotations
  - Attitudinal and evaluative meanings
  - Impact on public beliefs and stereotypes towards mental illness
  - This study: Corpus-assisted qualitative frame analysis (Touri & Koteyko, 2015; see also Atanasova, Koteyko, Brown & Crawford, 2017)



# Sampling of Data

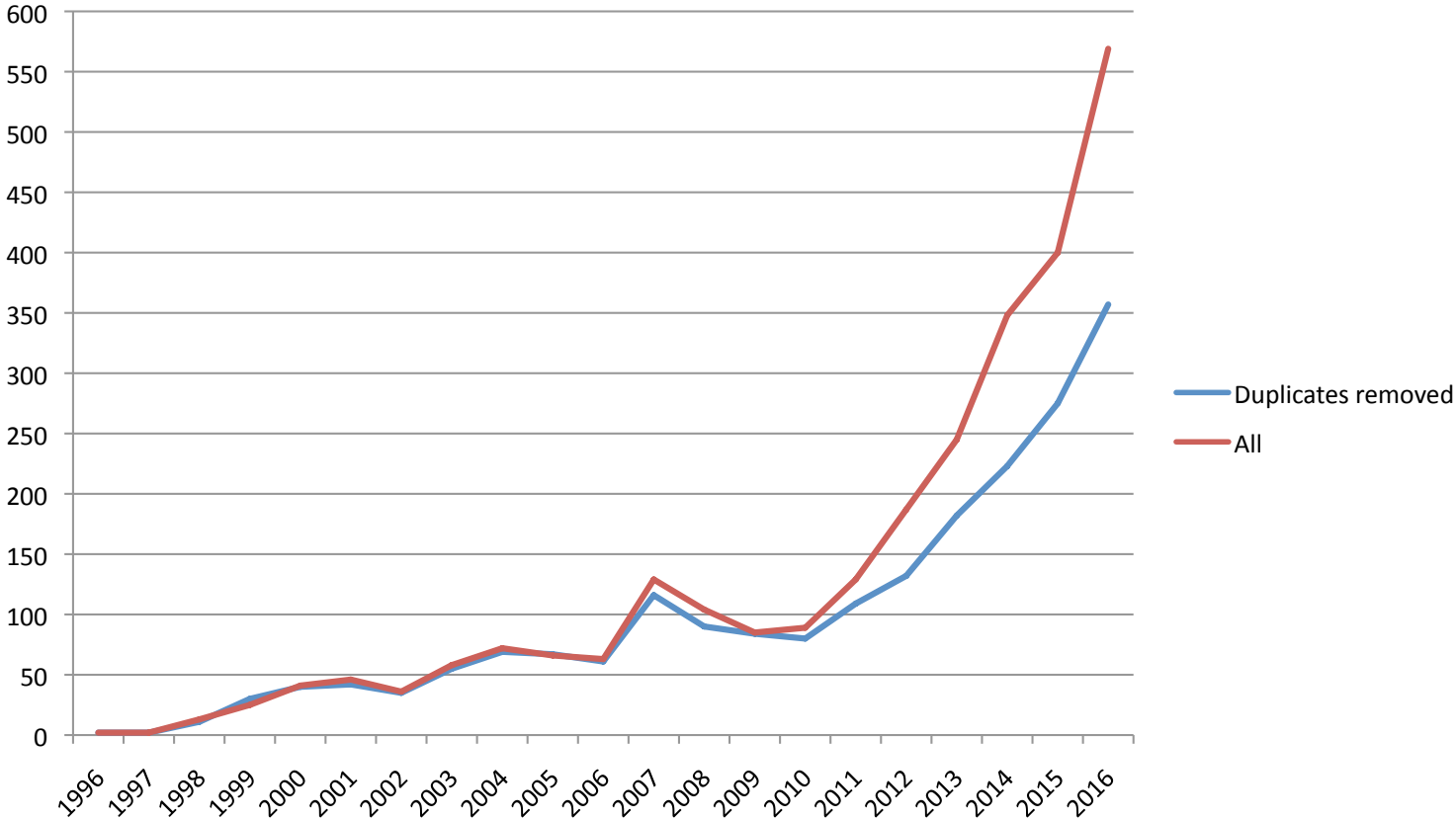
- UK broadsheet, tabloid and local newspapers (1996-2016)
- borderline personality disorder OR bpd OR emotionally unstable personality OR EUPD OR emotion regulation disorder OR emotional dysregulation disorder OR edd OR emotional instability disorder OR emotion impulse regulation disorder
- 2,709 articles 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



# 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.

# 'Treatment and Recovery' frame

## 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**