

World Congress on

Eating Disorders, Nutrition & Mental Health

September 12-13, 2016 Philadelphia, USA

Innovation and technology: The role of social media in the prevention and education of anorexia nervosa

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Innovation and technology have resulted in social change that has greatly impacted mental health. While adverse outcomes are numerous, we aim to use innovation and technology to promote wellness. One area of this focus in higher education has been the use of media such as film, coupled with social media such as Twitter® and Periscope®. Movies have long been utilized to highlight varied areas in the field of psychiatry including the role of the psychiatrist, issues in medical ethics and the stigma toward people with mental illness. Furthermore, courses designed to teach psychopathology to trainees have traditionally used examples from art and literature to emphasize major teaching points. At Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, psychopathology such as the Eating & Feeding Disorders is taught to trainees through film. This is achieved by selected works serving a metaphorical or symbolic role in the etiology, clinical presentation, course and prognosis of the mental illnesses highlighted in our course syllabus. While REDRUM has been extremely well-received at Rutgers and nationally, course directors have recently begun streaming the didactic live over Periscope®. The goal of our new project is to provide education and primary prevention strategies to all individuals irrespective of their medical background. Didactic: How Carrie is referenced in teaching the Eating & Feeding Disorders: The Eating Disorders are characterized by a disturbance in perception of body image resulting in severe disruption in eating behavior. The Eating Disorder section of the DSM-5 includes the diagnosis of anorexia nervosa. While depicted as obese in the novel, Carrie is underweight in Brian De Palma's film adaptation. It is therefore the horror film that should be referenced by course directors when discussing Carrie as a case study of anorexia nervosa. Anorexia nervosa is conceptualized in psychodynamic terms as a reaction to the demand that adolescents behave more independently and increase their sexual functioning. Carrie replaces preoccupations about eating for these other age-specific pursuits. While there is no overt evidence of an eating disorder in the movie, Carrie's body is perceived as though it is possessed by introject of an intrusive, domineering and unempathic mother. Starvation serves as an unconscious means of starving and destroying the internal object. Mrs. White forbids Carrie from going to the prom one stormy night over dinner. Two important aspects of the conversation included Carrie not eating any of her dinner and her use of telekinesis as the argument with her mother escalates resulting in Mrs. White that Carrie is possessed by Satan. In the movie's penultimate scene, Carrie kills her mother in the kitchen by impaling her with knives, symbolic of Carrie's preoccupation with food.

Biography

Anthony Tobia is trained in dual Residency in Internal Medicine and Psychiatry at West Virginia University. He currently holds titles of Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Clinical Associate Professor of Internal Medicine at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. He serves as the Director of Medical Student Education and Associate Program Director of Residency Training and is certified by the Board of Psychosomatic Medicine. He is the Director of the Division of Psychosomatic Medicine at Rutgers-RWJMS. His academic interests include various innovative teaching approaches including six that are registered in the Office of Patents and Licensing at Rutgers.

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