

Bibliotherapy: Awareness and Use Among Medical Library Workers in Ogbomoso

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Abstract

The concept of bibliotherapy draws upon various academic fields, such as medicine, literary criticism, librarianship, and psychology, to promote the use of reading as a therapeutic tool. This study aimed to explore the extent to which medical library workers are aware of and utilize bibliotherapy. Using a descriptive survey design, the study employed Slovin's formula and simple random sampling to select 24 respondents from a population of 45 medical library workers. The findings revealed that the medical library workers had a good understanding of bibliotherapy. Therefore, it is recommended that they should be equipped with the necessary skills to provide bibliotherapy services, and given the opportunity to practice it.

Keywords: Bibliotherapy; Depression; Books; Medical Library; Library Staff.

1. Introduction

A medical library is a repository of medical-related books, periodicals, and various information materials. It houses printed materials, audio and visual recordings, maps, photographs, computer software, online databases, and other forms of media. Libraries, regardless of their type, are established worldwide to provide information resources that cater to the needs of their target users (Adebayo, 2018). It is the responsibility of librarians and library professionals to define their roles in reconstructing a fractured society (Arulanantham & Navaneethakrishnan, 2013). Libraries and reading rooms, with their vast array of knowledge and information, can also become essential service points for therapy to those affected, using bibliotherapy techniques, which utilize library materials as clinical tools for mental health. Therefore, medical library workers must be adequately equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to apply bibliotherapy methods effectively. There are many definitions of bibliotherapy, and we will briefly explore some of them. Essentially, bibliotherapy refers to the use of books as a form of therapy to address personal difficulties. Specifically, bibliotherapy involves reading books or e-books that are applicable to a particular challenging life circumstance in order to resolve problems.

Bibliotherapy is a word that originates from two Greek words, "biblio," meaning book, and "therapy," meaning healing. The term "bibliotherapy" was first introduced by Samuel McChord Crothers, a Unitarian minister and essayist, in 1916. At that time, it referred to the use of literature in the treatment of people with mental illnesses. The first formal definition of bibliotherapy appeared in the 11th edition of Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary in 1941. Webster's Third New International Dictionary provided another definition in 1961, which was later adopted by the American Library Association (ALA) in 2012. This definition states that bibliotherapy is the use of specific reading materials as therapeutic tools in medicine and psychiatry, guiding individuals towards solutions to their personal problems through directed reading.

A form of bibliotherapy involves the utilization of a variety of materials such as written texts, online articles, and audio-visual resources to aid in the treatment process. In clinical settings, this can include videos, recordings, films, and computer programs.

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The potential of bibliotherapy as a treatment option for teaching hospital patients, particularly medical students, has prompted a study to evaluate the level of awareness and application of this concept among medical information providers in three institutions: Lautech Teaching Hospital Library, Bowen Teaching Hospital, and Lautech College of Health Sciences Medical Library in Ogbomoso, Oyo state, Nigeria.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the awareness and use of bibliotherapy among medical library workers in Ogbomoso. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- a. Ascertain the level of awareness of Bibliotherapy among medical library staff in Ogbomoso;
- b. Examines the bibliotherapy services provided by medical libraries in Ogbomoso;
- c. Accesses the usage of bibliotherapy for depression management hospital among patients;
- d. Ascertain the frequency of use of library information resources for bibliotherapy services for mental depression management; and
- e. Examine the challenges being faced by medical library staff towards using bibliotherapy services for managing deviant behaviours in patients.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Bibliotherapy

According to Reitz (2011), bibliotherapy is a planned reading program that uses books selected on the basis of content to facilitate the recovery of patients suffering from mental illness or emotional disturbance. Lucas and Soares (2013) defined bibliotherapy as a tool to promote psychological well-being in individuals, by encouraging effective social behavior, clarifying values, and instilling cultural identity and ethnic pride. Bibliotherapy can benefit both individuals and groups, as group settings provide opportunities for feedback, interpretation, modeling, and improving communication.

Akinola (2014) identified several benefits of bibliotherapy, including improving reading comprehension, enhancing self-esteem, addressing behaviour problems for students with learning difficulties, matching specific books with individual students and their unique problems. Furthermore, it allows emotionally disturbed students and adolescents to identify similarities between their personal problems, and it assists school counsellors, teachers, and information professionals in addressing social problems affecting their students. Finally, bibliotherapy can serve as a corrective measure for the general well-being of individuals experiencing emotional and behavioural disorders. Given the growing significance of bibliotherapy, it is essential for every school counsellor, teacher, and information professional in Nigeria to be familiar with this therapeutic technique and the role it plays in human development.

2.2. Factors, Influencing Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy is influenced by various factors including the relationships formed between the patient and therapist, the patient's responses and reactions, and the feedback provided to the physician for interpretation, evaluation, and follow-up. Merriam-Webster's School Dictionary, New edition (2020) offers a broader definition of bibliotherapy, recognizing two levels: the first involves reading as a tool in medicine and psychiatry, while the second involves non-medical aspects such as reading guidance provided by librarians, teachers, counsellors, social workers, correctional institution officials, or other qualified individuals, aimed at helping others resolve their personal problems through reading. Despite the numerous benefits of bibliotherapy, there is still much debate surrounding its effectiveness in treating depression.

Depression is a mental health condition characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and disinterest in activities that one usually enjoys. It can have negative effects on an individual's thoughts, behavior, emotions, and overall well-being. According to the American Psychological Association (2013), depression can also cause physical symptoms and cognitive changes that can significantly impair a person's ability to function. Depression is a major public health concern as it can lead to decreased productivity in work or studies, psychomotor changes, loss of motivation, and apathy (Nagaraja et al., 2015). Bibliotherapy, through steady reading of books, has been identified as a potential intervention to help alleviate the symptoms of depression and other mental health conditions.

Books possess the ability to transport individuals from their present moment and surroundings to an entirely different time and place. When one feels alone, a book can be a reliable companion, and the main character's journey can provide solace for someone who has lost all hope. This highlights the significant impact reading can have on mental health, considering its multiple functions such as improving knowledge and contributing to mental development. Bibliotherapy, which is the practice of healing mental health through reading, involves the use of non-fictional self-help books and other literary works such as poetry or films to treat emotional and behavioral disorders (McCulliss, 2012).

The use of reading as a method for healing individuals who were receiving treatment at health institutions in the USA has been recognized as an effective therapeutic technique (Gildea & Levin, 2013). This method has been referred to as reading therapy, library therapy, literature therapy, among others, but the term bibliotherapy is now commonly used. Bibliotherapy is often integrated into cognitive behavioural therapy and is considered a therapeutic method (McCulliss, 2012). Through creative bibliotherapy, individuals analyze their own feelings, thoughts, and behaviours within the context of a character's experiences in a book, poem, or film. This helps them confront and solve their mental problems (Glavin & Montgomery, 2017).

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

A research design serves as a method for gathering data in a research project. It is a systematic and logical approach that involves planning for data collection, measurement, and analysis. In this particular study, a survey research design was employed, as stated by Abdulsalam (2016). This descriptive survey study aimed to investigate the level of awareness and utilization of bibliotherapy among medical information providers.

3.2. Population of the Study

Population refers to the theoretical concept of a vast collection of numerous instances, from which a researcher selects a sample and infers the outcomes to the entire group. It represents the complete set of individuals that the researcher intends to investigate and gain knowledge about. In view of this, the population of this study include information professionals in Lautech Teaching Hospital Library, Bowen Teaching Hospital, and Lautech College of Health Sciences Medical Library, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study involved 24 participants, consisting of 7 staff members from Lautech Teaching Hospital Library, 7 from Bowen University Teaching Hospital Library, and 10 from Lautech College of Medical Sciences. All staff members of the targeted medical institutions were included in the study due to the limited number of respondents. The participants comprised both professional and para-professional workers, and data was collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sampling and sample size are critical aspects of quantitative research as they are necessary to make statistically sound generalizations from the study results to the broader population. To ensure that the results are representative, it is crucial to use an appropriate sampling method and sample size, allowing for the identification of associations or differences within the study results. For this study, Slovin's formula was utilized to determine the necessary sample size for the population. The simple random sampling technique was employed for this study to give all respondents across the three selected teaching hospitals in ogbomoso an equal chance of being selected for the study. By using this method, the study aimed to ensure that the sample is truly representative of the population.

3.4. Instruments for Data Collection

The questionnaire administered to the participants consisted of two sections. The first section aimed to gather sociodemographic information about the study population, while the second section focused on the level of awareness and usage of bibliotherapy, bibliotherapy services provided by the library, the usage of bibliotherapy for depression management, frequency of usage of library information resources to solve mental depression, and challenges faced by medical library staff in using bibliotherapy services to manage deviant behaviours in patients.

3.5. Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to the accuracy and significance of conclusions based on research findings. It indicates the degree to which the outcomes of data analysis genuinely represent the phenomenon being investigated. To ensure content and face validity of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by three experts in Library and Information Science. Their suggestions, corrections, observations, and recommendations were incorporated before the questionnaire was administered.

3.6. Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection took place over a period of three weeks, starting with the Ladoke Akintola Teaching hospital Library due to its proximity, followed by Bowen University Teaching Hospital, and lastly College of Health Sciences, Lautech. A total of 25 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents, and 24 copies were returned, resulting in an approximate return rate of 98%.

3.7. Method of Data Analysis

The primary data analysis method used in this study was descriptive analysis, with data presented in tables using simple percentages and sequences. Specifically, Statistical Product and Service Solution version 26.0 software was employed to analyze the data collected from the field.

4. Result and Discussion

The demographic characteristics of respondents show in table 1 that out of the 24 medical library staff scrutinized, 13(54.2) were male while 11(45.8%) were female. out the 24 medical library staff, 3(12.5%) were library attendant, 10(41.7%) were library officer, 2(8.3%) were principal library officer, 7(29.2%) were library assistant, while 2(8.3) were medical librarian. The age distribution of the respondents show that 3(12.5%) were within the ages range 21 and 25, 3(12.5%) were within ages 26 and 30, 5(20.8%) were within ages 31and 35, and 6(25.0%) were within ages 36 and 40, while 7(29.2%) were 40 and above. The distribution of the respondents by institution shows that 7(29.2%) of the respondents were from Lautech Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso, 7(29.2%) were from Bowen Teaching Hospital, while the remaining 10(41.7%) were from Lautech College of Health Sciences.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Descriptive Variables		Frequency	Percent
Institution	Lautech Teaching Hospital	7	29.2
	Bowen Teaching Hospital	7	29.2
	Lautech College of Health Sciences	10	41.7
	Total	24	100.0
Gender	Male	13	54.2
	Female	11	45.8
	Total	24	100.0
Cadre	Library Attendant	3	12.5
	Library Officer	10	41.7
	Principal Library Officer	2	8.3
	Library Assistant	7	29.2
	Medical Librarian	2	8.3
	Total	24	100.0
Age	21-25	3	12.5
	26-30	3	12.5

Descriptive Variables	Frequency	Percent
31-35	5	20.8
36-40	6	25.0
40 and above	7	29.2
Total	24	100.0

4.1. Objective one: ascertain the level of awareness of Bibliotherapy among medical library staff in Ogbomoso.

Table 2. Level of awareness of Bibliotherapy

Level of awareness of Bibliotherapy	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Mean	SD
Change in mood	10(41.7%)	7(29.2%)	7(29.2%)	0(0.0%)	1.87	.850
Financial difficulties	9(37.5%)	8(33.3%)	7(29.2%)	0(0.0%)	1.91	.829
Substance abuse	3(12.5%)	9(37.5%)	4(16.7%)	8(33.3%)	2.70	1.082
Over reactions	6(25.0%)	7(29.2%)	4(16.7%)	7(29.2%)	2.50	1.179
Low self-esteem	8(33.3%)	6(25.0%)	7(29.2%)	3(12.5%)	2.20	1.062

Table 2 sought to investigate the level of awareness of bibliotherapy among medical library staff in Ogbomoso. the mean value of each response reveal the level of awareness of change in mood bibliotherapy (\bar{x} 1.87); financial difficulties bibliotherapy (\bar{x} 1.91); substance abuse bibliotherapy (\bar{x} 2.70); over reaction bibliotherapy (\bar{x} 2.50), and low self-esteem bibliotherapy (\bar{x} 2.20).

4.2. Objective two: examines the bibliotherapy services provided by medical libraries in Ogbomoso.

Table 3. Bibliotherapy services provided by the library

Bibliotherapy services provided by the library	Highly Available	Available	Not Sure	Not Available	Mean	SD
Audio visuals	8(33.3%)	7(29.2%)	3(12.5%)	6(25.0%)	2.29	1.197
Pamphlets	8(33.3%)	8(33.3%)	4(16.7%)	4(16.7%)	2.16	1.090
Fiction	7(29.2%)	9(37.5%)	5(20.8%)	3(12.5%)	2.16	1.007
Visuals	8(33.3%)	8(33.3%)	3(12.5%)	5(20.8%)	2.20	1.141

Table 3 went further to examine the bibliotherapy services provided. Majority of the respondents (\bar{x} =2.29) indicated that audio visual information resources bibliotherapy services are provided by their medical library; quite a number of them (\bar{x} =2.16) noted that pamphlet sharing bibliotherapy services are provided by their medical library; (\bar{x} =2.16) also agreed that fiction books bibliotherapy services are provided by their medical library, and lastly, some of the respondents (\bar{x} 2.20) indicated that visual information resources bibliotherapy services are provided by their medical library.

4.3. Objective Three: accesses the usage of bibliotherapy for depression management hospital among patients.

Table 4. Usage of Bibliotherapy for Depression Management

Usage of bibliotherapy for depression management	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
To help the patient discuss a problem more freely	13(54.2%)	9(37.5%)	0(0.00%)	2(8.3%)	1.62	.875
To show a patient that there are more solution to his/her problem	13(54.2%)	8(33.3%)	2(8.3%)	1(4.2%)	1.62	.824
To enable patient know that he/she is not the first to encounter such problem	8(33.3%)	11(45.8%)	4(16.7%)	1(4.2%)	1.91	.829
To expose the patient to solutions to his/her problems	13(54.2%)	9(37.5%)	1(4.2%)	1(4.2%)	1.58	.775

Table 4 seeks to access the usage of bibliotherapy for depression management hospital among patients.

Quite a number of the respondent (\bar{x} =1.62) agreed that the use of bibliotherapy helps a patient discuss his/her medical problem more freely; Many of them (\bar{x} =1.62) noted that the use of bibliotherapy is a way of showing a patient that there are more ways to treat his/her illness than the conventional drugs and injuctions; a considerable number of the respondents (\bar{x} =1.91) affirmed that the use of bibliotherapy is a way of enabling a patient to know that he/she is not the first to encounter whatever medical condition he/she is battling with, lastly most of them (\bar{x} =1.58) agreed that the use of bibliotherapy is a way to expose a patient to alternative medical therapy that may help treat his/her medical condition.

4.4. . Objective Four: ascertain the frequency of use of library information resources for bibliotherapy services for mental depression management.

Table 5. Frequency of usage of library information resources to solve mental depression

Frequency of usage of books to solve mental depression	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Not Used	Mean	SD
Religious book	4(16.7%)	7(29.2%)	6(25.0%)	7(29.2%)	2.66	1.090
Journal	11(45.8%)	8(37.5%)	4(16.7%)	0(0.0%)	1.70	.750
Fictions	5(20.8%)	6(25.0%)	9(37.5%)	4(16.7%)	2.50	1.021
Non-fictions	6(25.0%)	8(33.3%)	4(16.7%)	6(25.0%)	2.41	1.138
Science books	13(54.2%)	5(20.8%)	5(20.8%)	1(4.2%)	1.75	.944
Psychology books	11(45.8%)	9(37.5%)	1(4.2%)	3(12.5%)	1.83	1.007

Table 5 provides answers to the preferred library information resources used by the respondents in the management of mental health patients. These include: Religious book (\bar{x} =2.26); Journal (\bar{x} =1.70); Fictions (\bar{x} =2.50); Non-fictions (\bar{x} =2.41); Science books (\bar{x} =1.75), and Psychology books (\bar{x} =1.83).

4.5. Objective five: examine the challenges being faced by medical library staff towards using bibliotherapy services for managing deviant behaviours in patients

Table 6. Challenges faced by medical library staff towards using bibliotherapy services for managing deviant behaviours in patients

Corrective measures of bibliotherapy used for depression management	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
Materials not up to date	8(33.3%)	7(29.2%)	6(25.0%)	3(12.5%)	2.16	1.049
Inadequate resources for Bibliotherapy	9(37.5%)	9(37.5%)	2(8.3%)	4(16.7%)	2.04	1.802
Limited space for users	8(33.3%)	4(16.7%)	6(25.0%)	6(25.0%)	2.41	1.212
Materials not well organized	6(25.0%)	9(37.5%)	3(12.5%)	6(25.0%)	2.37	1.134
Inadequate of staffing	9(37.5%)	3(12.5%)	10(41.7%)	2(8.3%)	2.20	1.062
Lack of infrastructure	4(16.7%)	10(41.7%)	7(29.2%)	3(12.5%)	2.37	.923
Book theft and mutilation	6(25.0%)	10(41.7%)	5(20.8%)	3(12.5%)	2.20	.977

Table 6 investigated the challenges being faced by medical library staff towards using bibliotherapy services for managing deviant behaviours in patients. Almost all the items in this category were agreed by the respondents to be a challenge. Challenges being faced by the respondents include: Materials not up to date (\bar{x} 2.16); inadequate resources for Bibliotherapy (\bar{x} 2.04); Limited space for users (\bar{x} 2.41); Materials not well organized (\bar{x} 2.37); Inadequate of staffing (\bar{x} 2.20); Lack of infrastructure (\bar{x} 2.37) and lastly Book theft and mutilation (\bar{x} 2.20).

5. Discussion of Findings

The study found that the medical library staff in Ogbomoso have a good understanding of the symptoms that bibliotherapy can help with, including mood changes, financial difficulties, substance abuse, overreactions, and low self-esteem. The study also revealed that all the library information materials that were examined were readily available for use in bibliotherapy services. This is consistent with the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (2015) findings that books, literature, games, art and music activities, and discussion groups are commonly used interventions in bibliotherapy services.

The study showed that bibliotherapy services in medical libraries are used to help patients discuss problems more openly, provide patients with alternative solutions to their problems, and show patients that they are not alone in their struggles. These findings are similar to those of De Vries, Brennan, Lankin, Morse, Rix and Beck (2017) who suggested that bibliotherapy can address a wide range of challenges, including physical, psychological, emotional, social, and cognitive health. Additionally, Wang, Bressington, Leung, Davidson and Cheung (2020) conducted a meta-analysis

and found that bibliotherapy can improve self-efficacy, reduce depression and anxiety in individuals with neurocognitive disorders.

Furthermore, the study found that a majority of the medical library staff reported that the information materials available in their libraries are frequently used for bibliotherapy, except for works of fiction, which are only occasionally used. This finding is in line with the research of Kidd and Castano (2013), who suggested that books can serve as a therapeutic tool because immersing oneself in a book can offer a means of escape and improve the reader's empathetic capacity.

The medical library workers face several challenges in using bibliotherapy services for managing deviant behaviors in patients. These challenges include inadequate resources and limited space for users. Additionally, materials may not be well-organized, there may be a lack of staffing and infrastructure, and issues such as book theft and mutilation may also arise. This finding is consistent with the study of Shehu et al. (2015), who identified challenges faced by users such as power outages, information overload, and irrelevant information.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The practice of using self-help books as therapy to address personal challenges is referred to as bibliotherapy. This approach has gained popularity as an alternative therapy for mental and psychological issues. This study found that medical library workers in Ogbomoso have a good understanding of bibliotherapy, particularly in relation to symptoms such as mood changes, financial difficulties, substance abuse, overreaction, and low self-esteem. Despite the challenges identified, it is evident that bibliotherapy has been embraced as a viable form of medical treatment by medical library workers in Ogbomoso.

Based on the findings and identified gaps, the following recommendations were proffered:

- a. Medical library workers should be mandatorily equipped for bibliotherapy services.
- b. They should be given opportunity to render bibliotherapy services.
- c. The hospital management should encourage the use of the service on their patients.

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