Bedlam
Media Report

@maudsleynhs
#bedlam
Introduction

Our Channel 4 documentary series was first announced in August 2013 but it wasn’t until the title of the series went public at the start of October 2013 that it attracted more attention and really started to generate interest across media and social media sites.

The South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust communications team tried to engage with patients, the general public and potential viewers as much as possible. Our primary aim in taking part in the series was to improve understanding of mental illness, to raise awareness and help to destigmatise.

Initially we had a great deal of positive feedback but there was also concern and criticism about the fact that the series was called ‘Bedlam’.

Bedlam was the product of hard work and negotiations between SLaM, The Garden Productions and Channel 4. An important factor was that Channel 4 wanted a title that would create interest and attract viewers. So did we. We took part because we wanted to try and help shift public attitudes about mental health. You can’t do that if nobody is watching.

It was a tough decision to make as no title is going to be universally acceptable, especially in the field of mental health.

With Bedlam we go ‘back to our roots’. The logic of the name being that South London and Maudsley can trace its origins back to the founding of ‘Bedlam’ in 1247. For the television producers and commissioners, it’s a word that resonates with people who aren’t familiar with the world of mental health. And for those who are familiar they will know the significance of the word and how treatment of mentally ill people has evolved since the ‘Bedlam’ years.

It was called provocative, inflammatory and plenty of other names. Of course the history of treating mental illness is not always positive. Bedlam is a name which is often associated with the incarceration of the mentally ill within the walls of the asylum and charging people money to view the ‘lunatics’. Some felt we would be reinforcing stigma by using this title.

For us this was a chance to make the significant contrast between the history of Bedlam and the way in which mental health services are provided today.

It is almost impossible to quantify but it seems attitudes are very gradually shifting – you only need to look at the enthusiastic conversations erupting on Twitter throughout the series and the feedback we have received so far. All four programmes were, at times, uncomfortable and distressing, but also insightful, inspiring and educational. An underlying theme in the conversations developing on Twitter was that people no longer felt alone, that treatment and recovery were possible in the right setting. The films showed that your tax band or the type of car you drive do not matter when it comes to mental illness - nobody is exempt.

The media response has been encouraging. The deep seated ignorance of mentally ill people in the popular press seemed to have been challenged by Bedlam. We hope this continues.
Bedlam Social Media Report

The tracking of Bedlam’s influence on SLaM’s social media activity began on 24 October, a week before the first episode of the documentary series was due to air. We looked at the response that our social media pages (Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) were receiving as well as the volume of traffic on the SLaM website.

Twitter

During the month Bedlam was on Channel 4:

- the estimated number of accounts reached using #bedlam over the period of the series was 69,147,341.
- the Twitter handle for MaudsleyNHS was mentioned by other users 1,820 times.
- the potential reach of MaudsleyNHS retweets and tweets combined was more than 8 million.
- Sustained conversation on Twitter throughout the series resulted in the MaudsleyNHS account sending out over 1500 tweets and receiving more than 600 replies

The response we received on Twitter throughout the series was overwhelmingly positive. During the month Bedlam was on, SLaM’s Twitter account gained 1,387 followers (fig.1). The most significant leap in followers came after the airing of the second episode of Bedlam. Figures then continually rose as more people were talking about the programme. The sharp rise in followers was due to the increased commitment to tweeting and promoting the series on Twitter.

Each week the communications team tweeted live during the episodes and tried to respond directly to any questions or concerns that arose during the broadcast. Steps were also taken to assure that the series ‘hashtag’ #bedlam was always mentioned in any tweet that was sent from the MaudsleyNHS account. Regular tweets were sent out every day with updates and information on the programme including links to the SLaM website. On the days that episodes were airing, high profile Twitter users were directly targeted in a bid for them to ‘retweet’ and raise the profile of #Bedlam. Steps were also taken to assure that the series ‘hashtag’ #bedlam was always mentioned in any tweet that was sent from the MaudsleyNHS account. Regular tweets were sent out every day with updates and information on the programme including links to the SLaM website. On the days that episodes were airing, high profile Twitter users were directly targeted in a bid for them to ‘retweet’ and raise the profile of #Bedlam. Research carried out after the airing of the first episode suggested that tweeting mental health charities, other mental health trusts and high profile ‘celebrities’ and politicians such as Stephen Fry and Tessa Jowell also raised the profile of #bedlam. During each episode #bedlam ‘trended’ which implies that a significantly large number of people were talking about it on Twitter - more than any other subject at a certain time. During the first episode #Bedlam was the top subject, trending on Twitter for at least 40 minutes. By the third episode #Bedlam was trending for more than two hours.

Tracking the ‘potential reach’ - that is the projected number of users who would have seen #bedlam on their Twitter feeds - gave an idea of roughly how many people were engaging with the conversation. Numbers were much higher at the beginning of the series, with a projected number of over 21 million accounts during the first episode, talking or reading about Bedlam tweets. The reason for this large number may be explained by the high profile Twitter users tweeting about the programme (Louis Theroux, Alistair Campbell, Anxiety UK charity, Rethink Mental illness charity). For example, Stephen Fry, who has more than six million followers, tweeted about the programme (as seen in figure 2) and the tweet itself which mentioned #bedlam was eventually retweeted more than 150 times by his followers. Projected reach numbers decreased as the series continued, however sustained numbers of #bedlam mentions within tweets and direct mentions of the @MaudsleyNHS handle suggests that organic conversations about the series and mental health in general continued at a very high and consistent level.
The viewing figures for each episode reflect the volume of activity on Twitter.

**Episode one ‘Anxiety’** had a total viewing figure averaging 1.6 million (and a consolidated figure of 2,093,500 million) which is reflected in the number of people talking about Bedlam online. Numbers were steady during the day, but reached their peak at 9pm when the episode aired (fig.3). Episode 1 was the best performing episode on Twitter:

- 8,786 tweets contained #bedlam.
- 21,407,424 million accounts reached with #bedlam.
- 432 mentions of the @MaudsleyNHS handle, reaching 1,264,963 million accounts.

**Episode two ‘Crisis’** had an averaging viewing figure of 1.7 million (and a consolidated figure of 2,015,000 million). Again numbers were steady throughout the day, peaking once at 2pm after tweeting charities and other NHS mental health trusts and reaching their peak at 9pm during the broadcast of episode two.

- 7,602 tweets contained #bedlam
- 14,777,011 million accounts were reached with #bedlam (this may have been due to Rio Ferdinand who has nearly 5 million followers on twitter, tweeting about the show fig.4)
- 322 mentions of the @MaudsleyNHS handle that reached 476,675 accounts.

**Episode three ‘Psychosis’** had an average viewing figure of 1.2 million (and a consolidated figure of just over 1.5 million). Twitter activity was a little different on this episode. The day the hashtag #bedlam was building its online presence throughout the day, but still peaked once again at 9pm during the broadcast. This may explain why #bedlam trended on Twitter for a far more significant period of time (approximately two hours) in comparison to the previous two episodes. Research suggests the nature of the tweets being sent out by @MaudsleyNHS stimulated more conversation (introducing participants, linking helpful websites and recent articles all performed very well).

- 5,277 tweets contained #bedlam
- 7,892,885 million accounts were reached with #bedlam
- 178 mentions of the @MaudsleyNHS handle that reached 206,339 accounts

**Episode 4 ‘Breakdown’** had an averaging viewing figure of 1.1 million (and a consolidated figure of 1.5 million). Twitter activity continued to trend during the day the episode aired, reaching high figures by 10am (fig.5). Again the nature of the tweets that were being sent out by the MaudsleyNHS stimulated more conversation and pointed people towards further links on the SLaM webpage.

- 3,906 tweets contained #bedlam
- 5,882,209 million accounts were reached with #bedlam
- 1061 tweets contained the word bedlam without using the hashtag
- Retweets were significantly higher at 395 (compared to the previous week at 187)
- @MaudsleyNHS mentions were also higher than previous weeks, hitting 395 tweets
Some examples of the conversations that were taking place on Twitter throughout the series are shown below. (Figures 7 and 8)

**Facebook**

Again, feedback on Facebook has been positive. ‘Fans’ of the South London and Maudsley’s NHS Foundation Trust page increased 36.6% from 765 to 1045 throughout the Bedlam series.

- The page had an organic reach overall for the posts it made about Bedlam of 13,405
- These posts also gained a total of 358 ‘likes’

The posts that gained the most attention were posts made following the airing of the first show, bringing in a total reach of 2087 Facebook accounts. The most successful post made during the series was the announcement of the viewing figures for the first episode, which had a reach of 1090 and gained 45 likes. (fig.6)

**SLaM website - Bedlam on C4 Page**

As a consequence of our online referrals to the SLaM website, traffic on the site increased. Throughout the course of the series on Channel 4, the designated Bedlam page on SLaM’s website received 19,439 unique views.

- The section of the Bedlam on C4 website that received the most traffic was ‘Behind the scenes’ with a total of 2195 unique views
- The highest unique views came on 7 November (broadcast date for episode two) with the media landing page receiving 4622 unique views and the Bedlam on C4 landing page receiving 3661 unique views.

The visits that each page received were:

- Behind the scenes: 2195 unique views
- Crisis: 2187 unique views
- Psychosis: 1825 unique views
- Anxiety: 1323 unique views
- Breakdown: 1210 unique views
YouTube

There were no definitive spikes of views on the days the episodes were on however there is a marked increase of views during the month that the series was on.

- From 24 September to 23 October: **4081 individual views**
- From 24 October to 23 November: **4596 individual views**
- **Within the month there was a 13% increase in views on the YouTube channel.**

Appendix

**Figure 1:** An increase in Twitter followers during the series

![Twitter followers chart]

Followers vs Select a metric


8,000

4,000

Oct 24, 2013
Oct 30, 2013
Nov 5, 2013
Nov 11, 2013
Nov 17, 2013

followers
**Figure 2:**  Stephen Fry tweet in support of Bedlam

**Figure 3:**  Figures showing the how far the tweets about #Bedlam reached during episode one
Figure 4: Rio Ferdinand tweet on 7 November – Episode Two of Bedlam

Figure 5: Figures from Episode Four of Bedlam (Breakdown)
Figure 6: Most successful Facebook post during the series

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Figure 7: Conversations taking place on Twitter during Episode 1 (Anxiety)

- **timcoupland @timcoupland**
  - Moving & so emotive #bedlam - remarkable openness, honesty and bravery! A proper insight, well done @Channel4
  - Retweeted by NHS Maudsley

- **Sue Baker @suebakerTTC**
  - Like the explanation that we all have intrusive thoughts at times #bedlam
  - Retweeted by NHS Maudsley

- **Neuroskeptic @Neuro_Skeptic**
  - @antsarentgens @david_colquhoun @LiaisonLawson @TimetoChange @MaudsleyNHS It takes a genius to make good TV out of the 'everyday'
  - Retweeted by NHS Maudsley

- **Flintshire Mind @flintshiremind**
  - Watching #bedlam on C4? If you're affected by any of the issues call @samaritans on 08457 908090, or email: jo@samaritans.org.
  - Retweeted by NHS Maudsley

- **EIP NEPFT @eip_nepft**
  - @MaudsleyNHS: "I don't want to be a waste of a human! James #Bedlam" #EIS #normanlamb #psychosis #mentalhealth
  - Retweeted by NHS Maudsley

- **Sue Baker @suebakerTTC**
  - If you are watching #bedlam and want to do something to help end stigma join us @TimetoChange
  - Retweeted by NHS Maudsley

- **Simone Marshall @AFX7**
  - Utterly brilliant and moving documentary. What an insight, and a brave young man. #Bedlam @MaudsleyNHS pic.twitter.com/qfAC478Xjo
  - Retweeted by NHS Maudsley
#bedlam is an empathetic look at mental illness. I was in that hospital and it's great to see it presented so unsensationally @MaudsleyNHS

9:40 PM - 31 Oct 2013

Stephanie Merritt @thestephmerritt Oct 31
@HadleyFreeman @MaudsleyNHS Isn’t it good? My brother is training there at the moment. Very moving stories.

Details

Hadley Freeman @HadleyFreeman Oct 31
@thestephmerritt @MaudsleyNHS So great - I was there a long time ago but it was amazing.

Details

Lisa Rodrigues @LisaSaysThis Oct 31
@HadleyFreeman Love your honesty. I run mental health services + it took me too long sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/about/news/art...

Details

Saima Yaqoob @SaimaYaqoob Oct 31
@LisaSaysThis @hadleyfreeman Really moved by your courage and honesty... thankyou!

Details

Lisa Rodrigues @LisaSaysThis Oct 31
@SaimaYaqoob hey x
Figure 8: Conversations taking place on Twitter during Episode 2 (Crisis)

Liz Kendall MP
@leicesterliz

#Bedlam 1 of most powerful tv progs I've seen - showing impact of mental illness on families as well as patients @MaudsleyNHS @Channel4

Gary Stevens @garysout
@leicesterliz @MaudsleyNHS @Channel4 If Mr Cameron had his way ATOS would assess them & 99.9% would be found fit and able & have benefit cut

Damo @Damo_SW
@leicesterliz @PaulJRethink @MaudsleyNHS vie abuse of power IMO.

Dr Alyx Cole-King @AlysColeKing

"@MumsVoice: @leicesterliz @MaudsleyNHS @Channel4 it's sometimes tougher on families than the individual" Yes Pt often 'tip of the iceberg'

Dr Alyx Cole-King @AlysColeKing
.
@MumsVoice @leicesterliz @MaudsleyNHS @Channel4 If we do not adequately support families/carers not providing full care...& needs to change
Figure 9: Live Twitter feedback and conversation during Episode 3 (Psychosis)

Figure: Tweet from Amy.

Maybe people shouldn't judge Tamara for substance use when they've not had lived experience of her mental health problems.

#bedlam

9:23 PM - 14 Nov 2013

Reply to @thisisamy_

christine peppitt @CPeppitt

@thisisamy_ people are always quick to judge others, seems to be a sad fact of life now.

Kerry Larmour @Kelly_Larmour

@thisisamy_ where can I watch this? #Bedlam

Natalie Trice @natailierrico

@thisisamy_ very sad story x

Amy. @thisisamy_

@Kelly_Larmour 4 :) it'll be on +1

Kelly Larmour @Kelly_Larmour

@thisisamy_ thank-you!:-) I will watch it at 10 then:-)

Scott Hogg @scotthogghphoto

@thisisamy_ @MaudsleyNHS What Laura said...
Figure 10: Live Twitter feedback during Episode 4 (Breakdown)

NHS Maudsley @MaudsleyNHS 21 Nov
'Sylvia: “It seemed as though people were dying all around me and it was like it was my fault. I don’t know why I thought that.” #Bedlam

Petrolhead999 @Petrolhead999 21 Nov
'It’s so heartbreaking to see Lorraine, she was a nurse for 25 years, and now she doesn’t even know her name. So sad. #bedlam

Shaun Lintern @ShaunLintern 21 Nov
'Ok so #Bedlam is a tragic watch.

David Edwardson @SnappyViking 21 Nov
'Everyone should try and understand mental health more. Watching #Bedlam will be making a good start.

Robin Hosking @robinhosking 21 Nov
'#Bedlam is one of the best health series on TV I’ve ever watched. Frank, well produced and informative. I hope all the pts featured continue

DAVE MSc @DaveReadle 21 Nov
'Sad to see lives changed by mental illness channel 4 #bedlam

Georgia Belam @GeorgisBelam 21 Nov
'We are a society that values perfection. & as you get older it it gets harder & harder to remain perfect.' Dr Howard, on #bedlam
Channel 4 Bedlam media report

During October and November 2013 *Bedlam* was written about in the press (both online and in print) and mentioned on television 155 times. Articles were mainly positive with the series consistently being chosen as the ‘critics’ choice’ within the television review sections. The articles had an average daily circulation of over 322,000 in October and 379,000 in November. The average space that was allotted to *Bedlam* was 280cm² (excluding those that appeared online). In depth articles were overall positive, the following is a selection of the type of articles that appeared:

As the series continued articles with more of an in-depth analysis continued to appear. Here are a few examples:

*The Evening Standard* printed a piece about James, who features in the first episode, as well as the *Radio Times* who conducted an interview between Dr Martin Baggaley and Alaistair Campbell, both pieces were printed prior to the first episode. After the airing of the first episode response from the press was overwhelmingly supportive and positive, as noted in an article featured in the Daily Mail: “*this hour long documentary about people with extreme anxiety was an illuminating and brace investigation of what obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) really is*”. 
Reviews of the series continued to be positive, Grace Dent in the Independent Weekend Magazine noted that although the series may not have achieved what it had set out to do, the article was titled: ‘For all we learn about mental illness on TV, we may as well be gawkers at a 17th century freak show’ it was still a well-made and delicate piece of television “Bedlam – which has full access to The Maudsley Hospital in South London, which traces its roots in treating the mentally ill back to 1247 – is sensitively produced and totally compelling.”

Bedlam continued to appear in the ‘top picks’ and TV choice sections of magazines and newspapers throughout the series. The following are a selection of the reviews and listings that the programme was receiving:
The only critical piece of press came from *Private Eye*, who believed the series did nothing to distinguish between “the notorious “freak shows” at the original hospital – when day trippers and tourists came to view the disturbed an unhappy – and their modern equivalent in fly-on-the-wall shows that capture people in extremis”.

As the series continued more articles about how mental health is portrayed within society were published, in particular an article written by the director David Nath published by *The Independent* highlighted the media’s influences on mental health patients: “Lloyd’s deep-rooted anxiety about his diagnosis was a product of years of sensation and inaccurate media reporting about the risks posed by paranoid schizophrenic patients living in the community”.

Reviews and television listings continued to highlight the success of the series.

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**Bedlam**

9pm, Channel 4

Final instalment of this generally excellent and sensitive series about the South London & Maudsley hospital, the oldest psychiatric institution in the world. Previous episodes have examined the treatment of patients suffering anxiety, psychosis and sudden mental health emergencies. This episode visits the ward treating patients over the age of 65. The speed with which someone’s faculties can desert them is terrifying. But the example of a former patient, now volunteering in the ward, permits hope to flicker. *Andrew Mueller*

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Overall *Bedlam* coverage in the press, both online and in print was positive and encouraging, including extensive coverage in the Radio Times, Evening Standard and The Guardian.

Radio Times: “It’s gripping, dramatic, often troubling television, but also uplifting in the way it shows people can and do get better”.

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Evening Standard: “James told the Standard he hoped the programme would help to destigmatise mental health and create a wider understanding of OCD.”

The Guardian: “It’s brave of Bethlem’s staff and patients to open its doors to the cameras...For the viewer it’s fascinating, because it’s a rare peek inside a fascinating institution few of us get to see.”

Bedlam – TV review
A brilliant insight into obsessive-compulsive disorder sufferers’ difficult lives sheds light on everyone’s personal demons

Sam Wellstand
The Guardian, Friday 1 November 2013
Jump to comments (16)

For me it’s the number seven, unoriginally. If I’m crossing the road I like to do it in seven steps – or 14, 21 etc, depending on the width of the road. Same with going up and down stairs and escalators. Often it will involve a few giant steps, or a little tin-step shuffle at the top/bottom/other side of the road. It’s quite easy to disguise.
**Bedlam - Blogs**

More than 50 blogs were written during the series, some from regular contributors who posted several blogs. Here is an example of few. Most were also posted on twitter or facebook.

**Spiked Online**

*Bedlam: a humane perspective on mental health*

recently, the unduly nature of public debate around mental-health issues has become starkly apparent. Back in September, the decision of Asda and Tesco to sell tasteless ‘mental patient’ Halloween costumes provoked a campaign led by celebrity campaigners Alastair Campbell and Stan Collymore, leading the supermarkets to swiftly remove the outfits from sale. A few weeks later The Sun newspaper created further uproar with a shrill headline declaring ‘1,200 killed by mental patients’.

While well-intentioned, such campaigns can often be unhelpful. As Ken McLaughlin argued on spiked at the time, interpreting these issues through the prism of personal offence tends to obscure rather than clarify the public understanding of the topic. Amid the enormous complexities of the discussion, we find ourselves simultaneously told to view ourselves as at risk of vaguely defined mental-health issues, and yet damned for not differentiating well enough between the different conditions.

Channel 4 are to be commended, then, for new series *Bedlam*, which sheds a clear
Bedlam - Blogs

It’s on the telly, stupid

CHANNEL 4’s BEDLAM OFFERS A GLIMPSE INTO OTHER PEOPLES’ PRIVATE HELLS

Posted on October 29, 2013 by Black Mountain Editorial

Each and every one of us, no matter how well-balanced and normal we think we are, has a foible. Some of us are more furred-up than others, but the people who allowed us a glimpse into their own private nightmares in this opening episode of Channel 4’s new series Bedlam, were among the top one percent of Britain’s most anxious.

We were, of course, at the South London and Maudsley psychiatric institution (aka the Bethlem Royal Hospital – aka Bedlam), where we were introduced to – among a couple of others – Helen, who was convinced she spent every waking minute shaving strangers in rubbish bins – and James, a young man whose life had been ruined for years by his crippling fear of selling himself in public.

On the face of it, Helen’s story seemed open and shut – she just needed to understand that her totally irrational terror of doing harm to other people was all in her head. Until we were told this paralyzing anxiety had cost her a long-term relationship and forced her to become a virtual prisoner in her own home for two years. So much for open and shut… A stay at the institution looked to be her best chance of getting the help she needed.

Likewise James, an articulate, intelligent young man who was absolutely terrified of shouting himself in public. His story took up a little more of the programme, though quite rightly, as it emerged his demons were a great deal more monstrous than having an in-trouser accident.

As a viewer burdened with neither Helen nor James’ anxieties, it would have been simple to sit with my arms folded and dismiss their issues as plain daft or easy to get over. But watching James in the middle of a therapy session, confronting his most horrific fear, was heartbreaking.
Bedlam - Blogs

NOT disordered

I'm NOT disordered

22 year old girl diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, currently a detained patient in a long-term out of area Psychiatric Hospital.

Thursday, 14 November 2013

TV Review: Bedlam, Episode 3

This is the third episode in the Channel 4 series and this one is titled: Psychosis. I was looking forward to this episode as it’s something I’m interested in. I find it baffling to think how your mind can play tricks on you to such an extent that you begin to see things that aren’t there. In the beginning of my mental health problems, I was hospitalized to rule out psychosis (although they didn’t tell me that at the time) and during the admission I met a lady on the PICTU (Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit) who never spoke a word of sense the entire four months. I was there and it was frightening sometimes to see someone that poorly. I guess, in a way, I thought I might relate to this episode a bit since I have visual, auditory and tactile hallucinations though they are stress-related and not psychosis. I’ve decided to write this post a little differently to the others about this series and so, the post will be separated by each patient that was focused on in this episode.

“Fifty years ago, you’d simply put someone with mental illness out and shoo them away. I was so nonchalant about the figure of the amount of mental health sufferers in the community. I wasn’t sure of the extent and I’ll always be told that my CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse) had a big caseload but I never appreciated just how big it was. I didn’t like something the voiceover man said: ...”life all around you...” made it sound like mental health sufferers are some kind of infestation.

Tahara
I was giggling away at Tahara singing through the mirror at the beginning of
Clinical Psychology and Well-Being: Approaches, Applications and Issues.
(as experienced by Dr Gordon J Milson and guests)

SOME REFLECTIONS ON BEDLAM
November 15, 2013 by Clinical Psychology and People - in Screengrabbed

Bedlam on Channel 4 has been the most talked about programme regarding Mental Health that I can remember. Certainly the development of social media has had a major impact on this. Doreen @mentalcapital’s blog on the social media reaction for further insight into this.

http://mentalcapitalblog.wordpress.com/2013/11/15/bedlam/ ...

I have been impressed with certain aspects of the programme, notably the individual’s courage to share some very difficult moments of their lives with the watching public. These are, I’m sure, a number of ethical dilemmas involved in filming someone who is deemed to “lack capacity”. But there is no time/space to go into this here and in reality I’m not the best one to do that.

I think the way that the programme makers have involved the families in the filming is encouraging, although sadly, I’m not entirely convinced that this reflects how services often approach working with families of people with mental health difficulties.

The professional’s think largely come across positively and appear as caring and genuinely concerned. The Social Worker on last night’s programme seemed to be trying his best to do the best by the people he was seeing as were the psychiatrists I saw in the last episode. I don’t necessarily agree with the way (unfrome) was spoken to about staying in hospital and it appeared in many ways to be a de facto detention, but overall the psychiatrists I’ve seen come over pretty well.

Someone noted to me on twitter that merely showing people in this way will reduce stigma. I’m not sure it will. It will raise awareness but that’s different (see my previous post on that topic) will it help people see that we can have mental health difficulties? Will it combat stigma, just by looking?

Bedlam, as a hospital, has a history, which is why there was concern over the title, for example:
Taking part in Channel 4’s Bedlam: a review

By Sarah Hall, November 27, 2011

“’The nut house is over there,’ or ‘there’s the boney bin’ are just some of the phrases we hear from people passing by Maudsley Hospital, part of South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM).

Those comments come from a lack of knowledge, a fear of the unknown and an ignorance that has unfortunately become norm in our society. I always think if they came inside and saw the invaluable work that goes on there, they would feel differently but of course people who are not exposed to mental illness don’t get to see the realities of dealing with it.

Until now, Bedlam has enabled us to open our doors to the public, to show them what we really do. It has allowed people a glimpse of the complex world of mental illness, one they may never have had the opportunity to see before.

Our primary objective was to improve understanding of mental illness
Taking part in Channel 4's Bedlam

By Simon Dayley, October 31, 2013

I have been asked to write a blog about my thoughts and feelings about BEDLAM, the documentary that was shown last night on Channel 4. I am the Head of the Anxiety Disorders Residential Unit (ADRU) featured in the programme. I'm the guy looking very odd, walking in the woods talking about "intrusive thoughts".

The documentary would never have happened without the residents involved taking a big risk and opening up some of their most personal problems to a TV audience of millions. I think they were extremely brave to do this. I know they did so in the belief that by showing their problems, suffering and progress they can give hope and inspiration to others. Well I think they did that admirably and I'm sure it will help people recognise some of the problems they themselves may have and offer hope that they are not alone and that help is available.

In the past we had been approached by various TV producers who saw potential for a TV programme showing the types of problems we treat and the work we do at the unit. I was always open to the possibility but, when the Eden Productions team, who had a great track record of excellent documentary making with One Born Every Minute and 24 hours in A&E, approached us, I felt assured that they would do a sensible, non sensationalist job of portraying the issues involved.

The cameras soon became a familiar sight on the unit.
Bedlam - Blogs

Time to Change

Taking part in Channel 4's Bedlam, episode 4: Breakdown

By Tony Rao, November 21, 2012

Doctors who chose a career in psychiatry will tell you that there is often a look of disapproval from other doctors when you tell them that you want to specialise in mental health.

I remember the puzzled expressions on the faces of doctors and colleagues when working in a medical ward and informing them of my chosen career path. It was almost as if they thought I was wasting my time.

Little did they know that I had chosen my career well before medical school, influenced heavily by my mother who was a psychiatrist looking after a 200-bedded community hospital for people with learning disabilities.

Having grown up accompanying her on ward visits during my school holidays, I cannot pretend that witnessing behaviour and social interactions from some of the people living there did not make me feel frightened and uncertain about how to respond. Little wonder then that public opinion is shaped by a poor understanding of mental illness, much of which fosters stigma and the discrimination that follows.

At first, I was extremely sceptical about the ethics of filming...
The paradox of Bedlam - can entertainment really help to tackle stigma?

By Huma Munshi, November 14, 2013

Channel 4 launched its documentary series Bedlam recently to share the stories of people who experience significant mental health problems. I watched with interest, as someone who both experiences a number of the issues outlined and who accesses services from the South London and Maudsley. Often our stories are sensationalised with headlines, such as recently by the Sun newspapers, so an opportunity to hear the reality of our daily struggles is something I welcome.

This programme cannot be reviewed without discussing the title “Bedlam”. Channel 4 explained the use of the title on their website.

A conscious decision was made to use a provocative name

To attract more viewers a conscious decision was made to use a deliberately provocative name. This is the problematic nature of using mental illness in an entertainment form, which is essentially what
What did you think about #bedlam

November 23, 2013  Depression, Mental illness  depression, mental illness, stigma

Wow! I'm not sure I should answer this question, I'm not sure I can answer this question and the reason I'm not sure is I don't think I know how to answer this question properly?

#bedlam, for me personally, was brilliant. horrendous, interesting, wrong, eye opening, upsetting, scary, disappointing, thought provoking and many many more things!!!

I wasn't going to watch it. I didn't think I would even watch but I got a message on Facebook from a friend to remind me it was on and that I could watch it. I didn't and I didn't watch it with a lot of trepidation!!!

I was really worried that the programme would upset me and it did, but perhaps in a good way? The first episode was called "Anxiety" and was mainly about Anxiety and OCD. I think most people have some anxiety and OCD in their lives but this was different level. Anxiety and OCD had basically put these brave people lives on an hold. My memory isn't very good at the moment but I think the main stories had fairly uplifting outcomes at the end. It was very interesting to see how such intense cases could be controlled (if that's the right word). One of my thoughts during and after the programme makes me feel ashamed but have promised myself. I would always be honest on here, I have spoken about it to a pr:
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Channel 4 research taken from approximately 400 viewers showed how opinions have changed since Bedlam:

The results showed that:

Attitudes towards mental health

89% of viewers said that the series brought an important taboo issue to a mainstream audience.

88% of viewers said that the series made them realise that anyone could suffer from mental illness at some point in their lives.

87% of viewers said that the series made them realise that people should be just as sympathetic to mental health issues as any physical health ailment.

80% of viewers said that the series made them think about how we can change attitudes towards people suffering from a mental health condition.

77% of viewers said that the series helped to dispel myths about mental health.

73% of viewers said that, having watched the programme, they think that the mental health services should be able to intervene in people’s lives – rising to 79% for those who have either suffered from a mental health condition or have a friend or family member who has.

Portrayal of mental health patients and staff

86% of viewers said that the series highlighted the hard work of NHS staff in treating mental health.

80% of viewers said that the series provided a view of mental health that they hadn’t seen before on television.

79% of viewers said that the series portrayed mental health sufferers in a more positive light than the media tends to.

Viewer appreciation

91% of viewers rated the series as either excellent or good, rising to 95% amongst 16-34 year olds and 99% for those who watched all four episodes.