Using DMU Figshare to facilitate cross-disciplinary, multi-national collaboration on mental health literacy using narrative interviews and theatre methodology

A case study of team collaboration at De Montfort University

Key points:

- Professor Raghu Raghavan, Dr. Nadia Svirydzenka, and Dr. Amanda Wilson and their colleagues are collecting narrative interviews and visual documentation of how rural and urban communities in Kerala, India understand mental health literacy using cross-discipline collaboration.

- A Figshare project space has been created to store and share anonymized transcriptions and translations of narrative interviews for analyzing and discussion across colleagues from various institutions globally.

- For researchers looking to embark on a similar area of research, they suggest as much forward-planning as possible to ensure you are able to share meaningful data in a controlled, appropriate way.

Raghu, Nadia, and Amanda are affiliated with the Mary Seacole Research Centre, an interdisciplinary research institute that brings together researchers from health humanities, psychology, environmental science, creative technologies, theatre-makers, and more.

One of their current research projects looks at how rural and urban communities in Kerala, India understand mental health literacy using theatre methodology.

"We're interested in giving voice to the groups and populations that can be ignored or don't have the space or agency to tell their stories around mental health and their experiences," said Nadia. "We then transform those narratives into theatre pieces and digital stories as a way to engage with these communities around mental health literacy and portray their experiences to the community as a way of connecting and talking about something that's sensitive and stigmatized in a removed and protected way."

Interviews are being collected in India by Research Fellows based at the two participating NGOs: MEHAC Foundation and Mental Health Action Trust with the support from colleagues at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) andith support from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS). Wider project network also consists of colleagues from Loughborough University, Middlesex University, University College London, and King's College London and UK-based Excavate theatre and India-based Lokadharmi theatre.
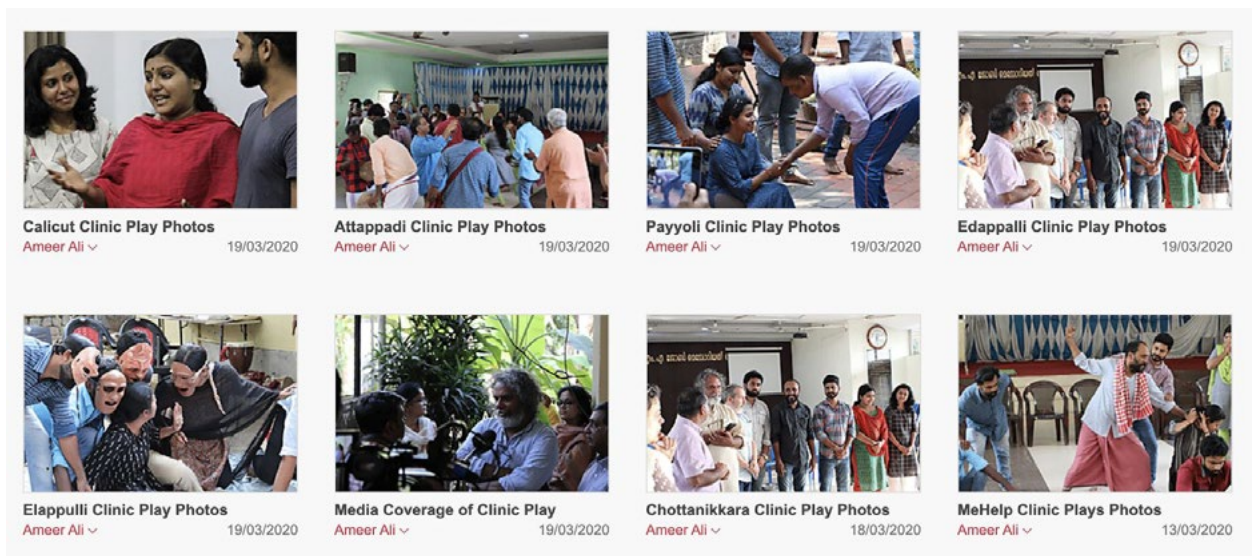
Visit https://dmu.figshare.com/ to see all the images the project team have made public from their clinic plays.

Recently, the project team from the UK, India, and partner Kerala-based Lokadharmi theatre group have engaged with clinics in four locations in Kerala, which offer medical care for local patients, including palliative care and mental health support. Context specific interactive plays were developed for these clinical settings (sensitive to local culture and customs) and engaged local service users, their carers, and local community members in depictions of anonymised stories that have been collected in this project. Colleagues and team members supported by Lokadharmi theatre actors and research fellows that have collected the narrative interviews lead discussions about mental health literacy with the audience, which were also recorded.

The research group uses a Figshare project for privately collaborating and sharing their transcribed and translated clinical interviews. "We're using Figshare so the whole team can read, analyze, and discuss the data," said Nadia. "Figshare is the hub where, from different parts of the world, we can tap in and read the narratives without sending them through email and compromising confidentiality. For that, it has been really useful."

For Raghu and Amanda, having a singular place to store the data and documentation saves time. "One of the features that attracted me to DMU Figshare was that it was easy to provide supplemental data to publishers if it's all in one place," said Amanda.

The project team will make the anonymized narrative data publicly available once it's completed and have started making images from the clinic plays public on DMU Figshare.

For researchers looking to embark on a similar area of research, Nadia suggests as much forward-planning as possible to ensure you are able to share as much of the data as possible in a controlled, appropriate way. "For us, it's about the participants' stories and giving them agency and protecting them," said Nadia. "To conduct this research in their best interest, think about where your points of data are, where you're getting them from, and how you're protecting those individuals. Having transparency with them from the start helps the researchers when the time comes to share the data."

Professor Raghu Raghavan is a professor of mental health in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at De Montfort University.

Dr. Nadia Svirydzenka is a senior lecturer in psychology in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at De Montfort University.

Dr. Amanda Wilson is a lecturer in psychology in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at De Montfort University.

References:
1. https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/centres-institutes/msrc/index.aspx

Get in touch:

figshare.com
info@figshare.com