
Frequency of Scholarship on Counselling Males in the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy* Fréquence des études sur le counseling auprès des hommes dans la *Revue canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the frequency with which studies on boys/men are represented in Canadian counselling scholarship, as embodied in the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy* (CJCP). To address this question, a quantitative content analysis was conducted of articles published in CJCP from 2000 (Volume 34, Number 1) to 2011 (Volume 45, Number 2). Results indicate that authors and researchers who publish in CJCP overwhelmingly study females rather than males, at a ratio of about 12 to 1. This raises questions regarding the absence of boys/men in Canadian counselling scholarship and provides a defensible rationale for the further study of males and counselling.

RÉSUMÉ

Les auteurs de cet article examinent la fréquence à laquelle des études sur les garçons ou les hommes sont représentées dans le milieu canadien de la recherche en counseling, d'après les publications parues dans la *Revue canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie* (RCCP). Pour trancher la question, on a procédé à une analyse quantitative du contenu des articles publiés dans la RCCP du premier numéro de l'an 2000 au numéro deux de 2011. Les résultats observés indiquent que les auteurs et chercheurs qui publient dans la RCCP favorisent largement les études portant sur les femmes plutôt que sur les hommes, dans une proportion de 12 contre 1. Cela suscite un questionnement concernant l'absence des garçons ou des hommes comme sujets d'études en counseling au Canada et constitue une justification de poursuivre la recherche sur les hommes et le counseling.

As noted in the call for manuscripts for this special edition of the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy* (CJCP), the time has come for the counselling and psychotherapy profession to examine, adapt, or change models and approaches to better meet the needs of male clients. Whereas well-established guidelines exist for ethical and effective practice with girls and women (American Psychological Association, 2007; Canadian Psychological Association, 2007), comparable efforts to adapt and reform counselling and psychotherapy theories and models to better

serve the unique needs of males have yet to be published. Studies of psychotherapy usage in the U.S. have found that women make up two-thirds of all clients seeking psychological help (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Hetzel, Barton, & Davenport, 1994; Vessey & Howard, 1993), and one study estimated that only one in seven men seek services from a mental health professional at some point during their lifetime compared with one in three women (Collier, 1982). In contrast to this usage, the existing literature argues that underreported and underdiagnosed mental health illnesses, such as depression, contribute to the higher rates of suicide in men (Evans, Frank, Oliffe, & Gregory, 2011; Oliffe & Phillips, 2008).

Gender equality literature highlights that men may obtain gendered privilege across various domains of their lives, raising the question among some as to whether men and masculinity need to be studied (Liu, 2005). Although counselling and psychotherapy practices aspire to reduce the deleterious effects of privilege, they also seem to largely exclude the culture of masculinity. Brooks (2010) explained that the currently predominant therapeutic culture holds some responsibility for men's typical aversion to counselling and psychotherapy. In a chapter entitled "How Psychotherapy has Failed Boys and Men," Brooks (2010) introduced masculinity from a cultural perspective, explaining that psychotherapy has been slow in adapting to many cultural groups, especially boys and men. Further, this frequent aversion to help-seeking amongst males contributes to higher-than-needed costs for them and others in their lives, such as violence, sexual misconduct, substance abuse, depression, and suicide (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Brooks, 2001). Overall, the failure of the counselling and psychotherapy profession to cogently and consistently apply cultural competency to working with men and masculinity has contributed to higher-than-acceptable dropout rates for the small minority of men who even attempt counselling in the first place (Deering & Gannon, 2005; Ogrodniczuk, 2006).

The relationship between counselling and psychotherapeutic practice and scholarly research is intimate and synergistic. It is perhaps best exemplified by the scientist-practitioner model of professional training, but it is also pertinent to the practitioner-scholar model. Stricker (1992) stated that research-driven practice is considered ethical, as practitioners who are informed by research are likely offering a superior brand of services as compared to those who practice in ignorance of such knowledge. However, if knowledge is absent or inadequate, practitioners must labour more to offer effective and evidence-based services, and it becomes questionable the extent to which such services are truly based on solid evidence. This position points to the abundance or absence of scholarly research in a field as an influencing factor in the quality of clinical practice, and may help explain the gap between the culture of masculinity and mainstream counselling practice.

One obvious role of a scholarly professional journal is to facilitate knowledge dissemination and communication within the research and practice communities and between researchers and practitioners. However, a specialty journal can also serve to indicate the topics that appear to be most valued and dominant in professional discourse. For this special issue, we sought to address the question: How well are men represented in CJCP scholarship? We conducted a frequency-

based, quantitative content analysis of articles published in CJCP (known until 2010 as the *Canadian Journal of Counselling*) from 2000 (Volume 34, Number 1) to 2011 (Volume 45, Number 2). No such analysis has yet been conducted in the Canadian context, and CJCP is the only Canadian journal devoted exclusively to counselling and psychotherapy research and practice. Consequently, analysis of its content serves as a useful proxy, arguably representing the larger body of Canadian scholarship on counselling men. This analysis provides current objective documentation of the amount of Canadian scholarship on counselling men and boys, and represents the initial step of a larger content analysis currently underway that will more thoroughly explore a wider host of other variables related to gender in CJCP. For the purposes of this special edition, this analysis is limited to examining how frequently Canadian counselling scholarship, as embodied in CJCP, exclusively examines boys/men (versus exclusively girls/women), whether the gender focus was intentional or incidental, and what types of research design/methods were used in studies of boys/men.

METHOD

A content analysis was conducted of 234 articles from CJCP, dated from 2000 (Volume 34, Number 1) to 2011 (Volume 45, Number 2). Articles were excluded if they were either book reviews or responses to previously published articles. Articles were read by the first author and third author independently, and several variables were recorded. First, the articles were examined to determine if there was an explicitly stated gender focus on participants. This stage involved searching for documented evidence within the article that the authors intentionally sought to examine one gender exclusively (versus circumstances where the gender dominance was incidental, such as due to a convenience sample). Next, each article was determined to be either research or non-research, based largely on the presence of a systematic and described research method and data collection. In line with Creswell (1997), case studies involving notable analysis of the data (as opposed to pure description) were considered qualitative research studies. Next, each research article was categorized as qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods. Interrater agreement on coding the variables between the two coders was close to 100% (95.7% on gender focus, 97.0% agreement on whether the article was research or not, and 90.2% agreement on whether the study was qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods). The discrepancies were resolved by the vote of the second author, the most senior and experienced member of the research team, creating a majority vote situation.

RESULTS

There were 234 articles analyzed, of which 40 (17.1%) were determined to intentionally study either males or females exclusively, while 194 (82.9%) did not have an intentional, exclusive focus. These results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Categorization of Gender-Focus x Type of Article

	Research		Nonresearch		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Intentionally female	33	14.1	4	1.7	37	15.8
Intentionally male	2	0.9	1	0.4	3	1.3
No gender preference	104	44.4	90	38.5	194	82.9
Total	139	59.4	95	40.6	234	100.0

Thirty-seven articles (15.8% of all articles) were determined to intentionally study females, while three articles (1.3%) intentionally studied males—that is, girls/women are represented in gendered scholarship at a ratio of over 12:1 (i.e., over 1200% more frequently). Two out of the three intentionally male-exclusive journal articles were empirically based: the first examined a relational perspective to vocation development and suggested male-appropriate counselling interventions (Spain, Bédard, & Paiement, 2004); the second examined white male counsellors' experiences working with First Nation clients (Smith & Morrisette, 2001). Thus, only one of these empirical articles is actually centred on male clients or students. The single male-oriented non-empirical article reviewed masculinity and school violence prevention for male youth (Stoltz, 2005).

DISCUSSION

This analysis sought to understand male representation in Canadian counselling scholarship provided in CJCP. Examining published articles in CJCP over the past 11 years reveals almost a complete absence of research targeting boys/men and almost no scholarship exclusively about male clients. The results indicate that authors and researchers who publish in CJCP overwhelmingly study females rather than males, at a ratio of over 12 to 1. In a recent content analysis of the journal *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, Wong, Steinfeldt, Speight, and Hickman (2010) stated that the three most frequently addressed topics were mental health, such as mental illnesses, stress, well-being, and self-esteem; relationships, including marriage, relationships, friendship, and interpersonal issues; and violence, such as abuse, aggression, and sexual harassment. This analysis provides emerging trends in masculinity scholarship in the U.S. that may be extended to future research on counselling Canadian boys and men.

In sum, we know relatively little about the characteristics, processes, and outcomes of Canadian males in counselling, compared to Canadian females, especially as represented in CJCP publications. These findings support the hypothesis that Canadian counselling research and scholarship is seriously neglecting boys and men. However, it is still possible that most Canadian research on counselling males is being published in other outlets, such as in American counselling journals. However, a cursory examination of the PsychInfo database for articles published within the last three years from those affiliated with the five accredited and sci-

entist-practitioner Canadian counselling psychology programs (that are probably more likely to produce a higher yield of published scholarship) indicates that this is likely not the case. Therefore, this state of affairs potentially leaves Canadian counselling and psychotherapy practitioners with a small research base from which to provide gender-sensitive and evidence-based interventions with boys and men.

In sum, this brief analysis provides an indication of the need for further research and scholarship on how best to provide counselling and psychotherapy services to male clients. Men have been shown to be vastly underrepresented in both the counselling room and published articles in CJCP. Consequently, this special edition of the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy* is well timed to address this growing concern.

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