

# The Relationship Between Medical Television and Medical Anxiety



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## Introduction

Media is a relevant vessel of communication. Media comes in many forms; movies, tv, books, news, social media, etc. People use the media to learn information, for entertainment, and more. However, there are times where the media does more harm than good. Media can spread misinformation, influence people in the wrong direction, and make people anxious. Through this project, I aim to study the correlation between media and anxiety, using the artifact of medical television.

## Research Question

Does watching the portrayal of countless diseases through the medium of medical television cause increased medical anxiety in its viewers?

## Literature Review

- The media is historically anxiety inducing (Nekliudov)
- Medical television's purpose should not be to educate or influence (Stanek)
- Medical television can be inaccurate (Burzynska)
- Medical television implies that some diseases are more common than they actually are (Wary)
- Medical television contributes to spreading awareness about medical conditions and social issues (Mahmoud)

## Methodology

Focus groups were conducted for this research. To get the members for these groups, snowball sampling was utilized. To be a participant in the focus group, one must be over 18 and have familiarity with medical television. Participants in the focus groups are students, faculty, and staff from Messiah University in Mechanicsburg, PA. There were 2 focus groups conducted, with 3-5 members per group. The groups lasted a half hour and were conducted over Zoom. The focus groups consisted of both guided and open-ended discussions.

## Results

- When content shown in medical television relates to someone's real life, it causes more anxiety
- When content shown in medical television does not relate to someone's real life, it does not cause as much anxiety
- Random and outlandish diseases and injuries can make someone anxious about it happening to them
- Medical television is exaggerated accuracy
- People do not rely on medical television for medical information
- Medical television has the potential to spread information and misinformation, as well as cause anxiety in viewers

## Conclusion

This question was answered during the research, but there was no explicit answer, which was unexpected. The participants all had different opinions but came to the vague consensus; the amount of medical anxiety has depends on the viewer and their personal circumstances and underlying conditions.



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