Preeminence of psychopathological over other medical references in names of Spanish Punk groups (1981-2010)

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Introduction

The relevance of the study of the social representations of mental disorders in the products of the popular culture has been argued previously. In a subcultural level, we hypothesize that the psychiatric field could be more present than other areas of the Medicine. Regarding the studies of the popular music, and taking in account subcultural aspects of identity affirmation, this communication addresses the references to Psychiatry and mental disorders and its comparison with other medical references in names of Punk groups (Spain, 1981-2010).

Objectives

1. To address the relative importance of psychiatric disorders versus other medical problems (non psychiatric) in a subcultural musical genre.
2. To describe the main medical and psychiatric disorders used in the naming of Spanish Punk groups

Methods

Quantitative content analysis.

Results

The names of 418 Spanish Punk groups were analyzed. 16.50% of them were associated with the Psychiatry and mental disorders versus a 5.98% for other medical references (Figure). Most of psychiatric names were associated with substance use and psychotic disorders (50.72% and 15.94%, respectively). Regarding medical names, references to medical treatments (16%) and infectious (16%) and genital diseases (16%) were the most frequent.

Examples

From top to bottom and from left to right: "Withdrawal Syndrome"; "Gangrene"; "Psychotic"; "Antibiotics"; "Schizophrenics"; "Cirrhosis"

It is to be noted that both of these groups have names related to medical terms ("Scurvy" and "Scrotum cancer") and album names related to psychiatric terms ("Schizophrenia" and "Hallucinosi", respectively)

Discussion

Psychiatric disorders are more frequent than other medical references in the names of Spanish Punk groups. It can be related to subcultural identity processes in which mental disorders work as an expression of "otherness". Despite of the existence of other highly dramatic medical diseases (e.g., cancer), mental disorders remain the main focus of attention if we attend to the artistic interest expressed in our sample.

For comparisons with other music genres more studies are warranted.

The study of the social representations of mental disorders can be useful in medical education, patient and family psychoeducation, as well as in the fight against stigma, among others.