

## Chapter 2

# Addressing Healthcare On–Line Demand and Supply Relating to Mental Illness: Knowledge Sharing About Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis Through Social Networks in Italy and France

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study presented in this chapter explores the influence of social networks in directing and shaping the supply of, and demand for, healthcare services – specifically systems and therapies for the treatment and rehabilitation of mental disorders. For this purpose, knowledge sharing and co-construction processes of social representations of psychoanalysis and psychiatry, the images of the relevant professionals (psychoanalysts and psychiatrists), and their social practices are investigated within*

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## **Addressing Healthcare On-Line Demand and Supply Relating to Mental Illness**

*the social arenas provided by digital media 2.0, namely some of the most popular social networks. The authors collect a substantial corpus—a total of 6762 statements—of public, spontaneous conversations on Facebook, Twitter, and Yahoo! Answers. These are analyzed with the text clustering method of Descending Hierarchical Classification by means of the Alceste software. Thanks to the cross-national perspective of the study, they identify different psycho-social scenarios between the two national contexts (Italy and France) in which the social demand for health care and supply relating to mental illness has in recent decades been animated by the controversial debate on psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and the institutional practices with large impact on society and laypeople outside the circles of experts and professionals. Confirming their hypotheses, the results show specific strategies for the promotion by users involved in communicative processes in the social networks—under the relevant communicative constraints—of specific claims for the treatment and rehabilitation of mental disorders, and of the relative services in healthcare sectors.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

*Health is personal, something in which each of us is individually invested. We patients were scared of our health statuses, unprepared for hospital experiences, and lost in the confusion of healthcare, grasping at the information healthcare marketers pushed at us. No wonder the approach wasn't working – traditional marketing doesn't fit in healthcare (Boyer, 2011, p. 1).*

The study presented in this chapter explores the influence of social networks in directing and shaping the supply of, and demand for, healthcare services – specifically systems and therapies for the treatment and rehabilitation of mental disorders. For this purpose, knowledge sharing and co-construction of social representations of psychoanalysis and psychiatry, the images of the relevant professionals (psychoanalysts and psychiatrists) and their social practices are investigated among the members of some of the most popular social networks (de Rosa, 2011b, 2012b, 2013b) within the social arena provided by digital media 2.0.

This study is a part of the research project led by de Rosa (see 2011a, 2011b, 2012b; de Rosa & Fino, 2012; de Rosa, Bocci, & Fino, 2012a and b) entitled *Psychoanalysis, its Image and its Public. Fifty Years Later*, a cross-national – Italy and France – follow-up on the historic, seminal research on social psychology carried out by Moscovici (1961, 1976) on the level of penetration of psychoanalysis in French society – *Opera Prima* – which gave rise to the definition of the *social representa-*

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