Analyzing Women's Representation in the Health Care Field on American Television from 1965-2015

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The purpose of this study is to determine if, how, and how much women’s representation has changed in health care as shown through American television (1965-Present) to help understand how popular culture portrays and treats women within the health care field. It was hypothesized that women’s representation in the health care field on American television has become less stereotypical and more equitable as determined by the nine-point quantifiable rubric from 1965-2015. The nine-point rubric underwent inter-rater reliability tests twice with ten experienced raters. The researcher reviewed 500 medical dramas from twenty-nine different American television shows, representing one hundred seasons. Through the quantitative content analysis, women’s representation in the health care field on American television’s average scores consistently went up by decade from 10.20 for 1965-1974 to 33.50 for 2005-2015, which supported the hypothesis and was very highly significant at .001. Results were also tracked for the nine rubric categories (score range 0-5)—actual presence (1.28 for 1965-1974 to 4.45 for 2005-2015), Medical Bechdel Test (.88 for 1965-1974 to 3.74 for 2005-2015), story line (1.53 for 1965-1974 to 4.49 for 2005-2015), screen time (.89 for 1965-1974 to 3.51 for 2005-2015), balance of power (.82 for 1965-1974 to 3.81 for 2005-2015), physical depiction (1.75 for 1965-1974 to 3.92 for 2005-2015), medical procedures (.87 for 1965-1974 to 3.92 for 2005-2015), race and gender (1.13 for 1965-1974 to 3.14 for 2005-2015, and sexual harassment (1.04 for 1965-1974 to 2.55 for 2005-2015) with significance noted in these sub-sets.

Awards Won: