

Spotlight on...



HOARDING

In the last several years, reality-based television shows have been capturing the attention of viewers world-wide. In actuality, however, reality television has been around for decades. Debuting in 1948, Allen Funt's *Candid Camera*, (based on his previous 1947 radio show, *Candid Microphone*), broadcast unsuspecting ordinary people reacting to pranks. It has been called the "granddaddy of the reality TV genre."ⁱⁱ

Today, with the advent of cable television, the tv viewing public has become privy to much more than our parents ever anticipated. Who knew, for instance, that it would become acceptable to watch a woman give birth? On tv? And we don't even really know her... 😊

Currently, there are three shows on cable television that showcase hoarding: "Hoarders" (A&E), "Hoarding: Buried Alive" (TLC) and "Confessions: Animal Hoarding" (Animal Planet). *But what is hoarding and why are television viewers so interested in these shows?*

According to a compulsive hoarding research project done at the Boston University School of Social Work, compulsive hoarding is defined as the acquisition of and failure to discard items that appear to be useless or of little value. In 1996, researchers (Frost & Hartl) identified three features that define compulsive hoarding:

- ∂ The accumulation and failure to discard a large number of possessions that appear to most people to be useless or of limited value,
- ∂ Excessive clutter in living spaces that precludes activities for which the rooms were designed, and
- ∂ Significant distress or impairment in functioning caused by the hoarding.

This definition distinguishes hoarding from collecting, in which individuals maintain collections of objects that are generally considered interesting and valuable (Stekette & Frost, 2007).



According to MayoClinic.com, hoarding, also called compulsive hoarding and compulsive hoarding syndrome, can be a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). But many people who hoard do not have other OCD-related symptoms, and researchers are working to better understand hoarding as a distinct mental health problem.

The Labor Day weekend season 3 debut of Hoarders (2 back-to-back episodes) drew 3.7 million and 3.8 million viewers respectively (it is A&E's top telecast of the year to date). *Why does this reality show about hoarding garner this type of ratings?* "The American fascination with it is that it's an exaggeration of a trait that many people share," said Dr. Kenneth Weiss, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. "A lot of people know people who are pack rats, who collect stuff and cannot get rid of it, and compulsive shoppers, who buy and accumulate things they do not need."

For more information about hoarding, check out the following sites:

www.masshousing.com

<http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/library/hoarding/DS00966.html>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hoarding/DS00966>

<http://www.ocfoundation.org/hoarding/>



Heart Trouble? Herbal Remedies to Avoid

In early 2010, a report by Mayo Clinic indicated that there are more than 25 herbal products that can be dangerous for heart patients on medication. For instance, ginseng, ginkgo, garlic, black cohosh, St. John's wort, hawthorn, saw palmetto, and Echinacea can dilute, intensify or exacerbate the side effects of prescription heart drugs such as blood thinners and cholesterol-lowering statins. For more information, go to http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20340370_1,00.html .

ⁱ Author unknown. (2010, October). Mark your calendar and save. *All You*, 10, 34.

ⁱⁱ Reality television. (2010, September 28). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 19:10, September 29, 2010, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Reality_television&oldid=387486776

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