Bibliotherapy has occasionally been used as a counseling technique. However, most reports are basically single-case studies and the psychological effect of this approach remains unclear. Two experiments using 96 healthy college volunteers were conducted to determine how the reading of emotionally positive, negative, or neutral passages affect one’s mood and level of distraction. Study1 revealed that participants felt more relaxed after reading positive poems with either personal or social content than after reading negative ones, and they felt least refreshed and calm after reading negative poems with personal content. Study2 showed that participants reported less depressed feelings both after reading an excerpt from an explanatory leaflet and after a controlled rest period. These results were discussed in terms of the mood congruence effect. Future research may evaluate the effects of reading novels, manga, and life teachings on self-narratives and views of life in normal and clinical populations.

Keywords: bibliotherapy, outcome study, mood.

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