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Perception of the media image of health care in society

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Abstract

Introduction and purpose: The mass media deal with, among others creating the image of health care. Most often, information published in the media is negative because it aims to show sensation and increase the interest of recipients. To present the perception of the media image of health care in society.

Material and method: The research was carried out using the author's questionnaire. 210 responses were collected and analyzed.

Results: The study involved men (29%) and women (71%). Majority (89.52%) of respondents were in favor of an unfavorable or neutral overall image of health care created by the media. Information reached almost 70% of respondents on long queues for visits to specialists, half a year or more. The respondents (83.81%) also drew attention to references spreading in publishers about the lack of staff among medical workers. However, most people (69.52%) did not share the healthcare model shaped by the "fourth authority" based on their experience.

Conclusions: Based on the analysis, a negative media impact on the healthcare picture was confirmed. The data suggests that society does not quite agree with the media image of healthcare.

Keywords: media; doctor; image; healthcare; society

Introduction and purpose

The media are called the "fourth power" for a reason. They have techniques that affect the viewpoint of many issues among the population. Recently, publishers have been focusing on issues related to medicine. They mainly present negative aspects of it, including bribery and medical malpractice that, in fact, do not characterize every individual in the healthcare system [1]. They also spread the "fashion" for filing lawsuits regarding even trivial medical mistakes against doctors. They pay attention to incomprehensible communication of information about diseases by specialists and their negative personality traits. In this way, they undermine professional qualifications of the physicians and also affect the limited trust of patients [2].

Publishers also disseminate information on staff shortages among doctors and nurses [3]. They announce messages about deaths of people waiting for help in the Hospital Emergency Departments or the arrival of paramedics [4]. They also share other traumatic situations that take place in hospitals, among others - lack of proper conditions for patients and insufficient number of beds in wards.

The mass media stormily present unequal access to health services for the general population [5]. "Clinic queues are getting longer. People without 'knowledge' in the staff are at their ends." This influences the growing anxiety and uncertainty among the society, because it is concerned about its health and life [6].

Purpose

The presented study was conducted to illustrate how the public perceives the image of doctors created by the media.

Material and methods

210 people took part in the study. The diagnostic survey method was used based on the author's own survey. The survey was disseminated via the Internet. The average age of respondents was 31 years. Below is the percentage distribution of sex, education and place of residence of the respondents.

Gender	N	%
Women	149	70.95
Men	61	29.05

Table 1. Gender distribution of respondents.

Education	N	%
Elementry	16	7.62
Lower secondary	10	4.76
Vocational	7	3.33
Secondary	72	34.29
Postgraduate	21	10.00
Higher	84	40.00

Table 2. Education distribution of respondents.

Place of residence N%	N	%
Village	50	23.81
A town over 10,000 up to 30,000 people	42	20.00
A town over 30,000 up to 100 thousand	44	20.95
A town over 100,000 up to 200,000 people	20	9.52
A town over 200,000 people	54	25.72

Table 3. Distribution of respondents' place of residence.

Respondents' answers were described using numbers and percentage distribution.

Results

Statistically significant differences were found between the overall media assessment of medical staff. The majority of respondents indicated a "negative" answer (65.71%) in their opinion.

Positive (N)	%	Neutral (N)	%	Negative (N)	%
22	10.48	50	23.81	138	65.71

Table 4. Media evaluation of health care in the opinion of respondents.

The most frequently chosen of all possible answers regarding the expected time of medical examinations in specialists was a waiting period of over 6 months (45.24%). The respondents also chose the term "half a year" (21.90%).

Week (N)	%	Month (N)	%	3 months (N)	%	Half year (N)	%	More than half year (N)	%
19	9.05	24	11.43	26	12.38	46	21.90	95	45.24

Table 5. Waiting time for a visit to a specialist according to publishers.

The results of the study showed a disagreement regarding the procedure for notifying patients about their state of health created by the 'fourth authority'. The respondents' opinions on this issue were divided, as 60% of them signaled the publication of reports in the media about incomprehensible transmission of data about the disease by doctors.

Understandable information (N)	%	Incomprehensible information (N)	%
84	40.00	126	60.00

Table 6. Assessment of how physicians provide information about the disease or treatment in relation to media reports.

The available amount of time devoted to patients by doctors was assessed similarly. Over 2/3 people indicated that the time devoted to patients created by media during the tests was too short.

Sufficient time (N)	%	Not enough time (N)	%
65	30.95	145	69.05

Table 7. Evaluation of time for proper examination by doctor based on publishers' reports.

There were also differences in opinions of respondents regarding occupational burnout reported by publishers. Only about 34% respondents were in favor of the image of doctors as professional group that does not have this syndrome.

Occupational burnout of doctors (N)	%	No occupational burnout of doctors (N)	%
138	65.71	72	34.29

Table 8. Evaluation of the burnout in doctors according to the media reports.

There was a noticeable difference between the respondents determining a sufficient number of hospital employees, and in particular physicians based on information provided by the media. Only about 16% of respondents received information about a sufficient number of specialists per number of patients.

Sufficient number of physicians(N)	%	Insufficient number of physicians (N)	%
34	16.19	176	83.81

Table 9. Evaluation of sufficient number of physicians according to media reports.

Very similar results were observed regarding the number of nurses, as 80% of respondents pointed to the lack of sufficient staff in this professional group in the media.

Sufficient number of nurses (N)	%	Insufficient number of nurses	%
42	20.00	168	80.00

Table 10. Evaluation of sufficient number of nurses according to media reports.

The analysis also showed insufficient access to medical services disseminated in the media. Almost 2/3 of respondents said that it is not pictured as universal and equal for everyone.

Universality and equality of medical services (N)	%	No universality and equality of medical services (N)	%
71	33.81	139	66.19

Table 11. Evaluation of universality and equality of medical services according to media reports.

In addition, there were differences in the opinions of respondents regarding the approval of the health service model shaped by the "fourth authority". Of all respondents, as much as 69.52% disagreed with the news provided by publishers on this subject. About 30% were in favor.

Approval (N)	%	Disapproval (N)	%
64	30.48	146	69.52

Table 12. Approval of health service model shaped by the media.

There were also significant statistical differences between opinions on the media image of health care depending on its assessment based on respondents' own experience. Among those who positively assessed the media image, half of the respondents had the same opinion about primary health care. Importantly, the majority of respondents (30.95%) were convinced of the negative media image of the healthcare service, despite a positive self-assessment. The second largest group (25.24%) were respondents who expressed negative opinions on both subjects.

Statistic	Chi-square	df	p
Chi² Pearson	21.13832	df=8	p=0.00679
Chi ² NW	20.25101	df=8	p=0.00943
Fi	0.3172675		
contingency factor	0.3024122		
Cramér's V	0.2243420		

Table 13. Statistical differences between respondents who approve and don't approve the work of healthcare and their view on the image of it created by the media.

How do you assess the work of the health service based on your own experience?	What do you think is the image of health care created by the media? Neutral	What do you think is the image of health care created by the media? Negative	What do you think is the image of health care created by the media? Positive	
Rather positive	23	60	6	89
% of the column	46.00%	43.48%	27.27%	
% of the row	25.84%	67.42%	6.74%	
% of total	10.95%	28.57%	2.86%	42.38%
I don't have an opinion	13	20	3	36
% of the column	26.00%	14.49%	13.64%	
% of the row	36.11%	55.56%	8.33%	
% of total	6.19%	9.52%	1.43%	17.14%
Positive	6	5	5	16
% of the column	12.00%	3.62%	22.73%	
% of the row	37.50%	31.25%	31.25%	
% of total	2.86%	2.38%	2.38%	7.62%
Negative	1	10	1	12
% of the column	2.00%	7.25%	4.55%	
% of the row	8.33%	83.33%	8.33%	
% of total	0.48%	4.76%	0.48%	5.71%
Rather negative	7	43	7	57

% of the column	14.00%	31.16%	31.82%	
% of the row	12.28%	75.44%	12.28%	
% of total	3.33%	20.48%	3.33%	27.14%
Total	50	138	22	210
% of the total	23.81%	65.71%	10.48%	100.00%

Table 14. Differences between opinions on the media image of health care depending on its assessment based on respondents' own experience.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate the accuracy of the hypothesis about the impact of the media on the image of healthcare. By presenting current events on the subject of medical institutions, you can create their appropriate image, as well as strengthen or weaken a given opinion. However, information on the functioning of these institutions is usually negative, which significantly affects the opinion about them in society.

The databases were reviewed for articles on society's perception of the media image of healthcare.

The article by A. Czerw turned out to be significant, therefore the results obtained in this study were compared to it. According to the author's publication, the public most often considered the image of health care created by the media as "negative" (67.95%). 1.32% marked "positive", and 16.54% and 14.17%, respectively, "objective" and "difficult to say" [7]. Comparing statistics with the study group, the statements turned out to be extremely similar. 65.71% of respondents negatively assessed the image of "media" medical staff. However, many more people were in favor of a positive approach (10.48%). The rest of the respondents (23.81%) indicated a neutral image.

According to A. Czerw, waiting time for a specialist (30.81%) and staff shortage (40.45%) are one of the more common problems raised by the "fourth authority" [7]. Respondents in the surveyed group also noticed this problem, as 45.24% of them received information about visits whose estimated time of completion was estimated over 6 months. However, data on the insufficient number of doctors according to media was recorded by as much as 83.81% of people. The A. Czerw survey also showed that for almost half of the respondents (43.57%) the media were not a reliable source of information about the healthcare system. Only 16.44% of respondents were convinced of their credibility [7]. The respondents' answers also show that about 70% did not agree with the negative image of health care provided by publishers.

In the work, attention was paid to the correlation of a positive assessment of the media image of health care facilities with their own approval of these places [7]. Comparing the data, the relationship of these opinions was also obtained. Half of the positively evaluating the health service image shown in the media described their own experiences related to this topic in a "good

light". In the analysis of M. Machul, attention was drawn to the creation of a negative image of nurses by the media. The survey shows that, especially on the Internet, job shortages were often very often shown, i.e. the insufficient number of professionally active people per number of patients. 68% of respondents stated that [3]. The results of the study showed the same opinion, as up to 80% of respondents declared that the media showed deficiencies in nursing staff. The media rarely portray a positive image of healthcare professionals. Messages that put it in a negative light are usually strongly emotionally marked, so they carry more viewership [8].

Conclusions

The results of the survey, literature analysis and published research results point to the negative role of the media in creating the image of health care. Because of too hostile activity, it is necessary to limit the role of publishers.

It becomes indispensable to focus the work of the media on balanced events taking place in reality and necessary to inform the public about situations in the medical environment. In reporting, the key is to stop sharing excessively critical data, as well as the obligation to introduce the principle of objectivity. Each person has the right to have their own opinion without pre-imposed values.

It is important to remember the positive aspects related to the healthcare activities of citizens. It is important to focus on its proper role, which is to save human health and life, which journalists should remind.

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