

P02-259

THE PICTURE OF MENTAL DISORDERS IN CZECH PRINTED MEDIA

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Background and aims: It's known that media significantly contribute to the stigmatisation of mental disorders themselves, as well as the people suffering from such ailments. The aim of our study is to provide content analysis of media messages covering the topics of mental health and psychiatry.

Methods: The study sample comprises the media messages pertaining to the topic of mental illness collected by using the database of the Newton IT monitoring system. The articles were chosen from 6 printed most widely read daily periodicals, the period under consideration were 5 separate weeks randomly selected from the year 2007.

Results: 184 articles with mental illness as main content were found, including 110 in broadsheets and 74 in tabloids. Global impression of the message was negative in 76% of articles in tabloids and in 33% in broadsheets. The most represented diagnosis were Substance use disorders that were mentioned in 22% of all articles, on the other hand the representation of Neurotic disorders was quite low - 2% of all articles, Psychotic disorders were mentioned in 7% of articles.

Conclusions: The results relate to only a short time period, however, suggest that the degree of stigma of mental disorders in the Czech printed media is high and should be further analysed. The main outcome is to formulate the recommendations for media in order to meet anti-stigmatising objectives and thus improve media coverage, minimize discrimination practises and increase help seeking behavior.