

PW01-203 - PREDICTORS OF STIGMATIZING AND DESTIGMATIZING ARTICLES ON MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE PRINTED MEDIA: A CENTRAL EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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Objectives: Many studies describing print media representations of mental illnesses have showed that these depictions are frequently negative and contribute to consequent stigmatization of people with mental illness. The main objective of this international study was to identify predictors of stigmatizing and nonstigmatizing articles on mental illness in Czech Republic, Croatia and Slovakia.

Methods: The study sample comprised all articles pertaining to the topic of mental illness (N=450) chosen from 6 most widely read newspapers and magazines identified during five weeklong periods in 2007. The presence of stigmatization and destigmatization statements was coded and articles were grouped in positive, neutral, mixed and negative clusters. Negative/positive ratio (NPR) was used to assess the predictor value of different features of the article regarding stigmatization.

Results: 61.8% of articles contained some stigmatizing statements towards persons with mental illness. The highest NPR was found in articles published in tabloids (6.8), on the front page (3.7) and in the articles where psychotic disorder was mentioned (7.4) and mentally ill person figured as a source of information (1.8). Lowest NPR was found in magazines (0.6), articles in later sections (1.7) that mentioned eating disorders (0.3) and scientific surveys (0.1).

Conclusions: There is a high level of stigmatizing statements in the studied articles. As the strongest predictors of stigmatizing content we have identified articles that are published in tabloids and articles with reference to psychosis. Contrary to this, eating disorders had the least stigmatizing depiction as well as articles containing scientific data.