

English Abstracts

Joan Bleicher / Claudia Lampert: Health and Illness as Topics of Media and Communications Research. An Introduction (Gesundheit und Krankheit als Themen der Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft. Eine Einleitung), pp. 347 – 352

The introduction by the two main editors of the special-theme issue highlights the growing significance of the subject of health and provides an overview of the current state of research in the USA and Germany. In line with the structure of the special-theme issue, the subsequent focus is initially on the spectrum of health communication offerings and its thematic and aesthetic dimensions. The second part turns its attention to the aspect of intended and non-intended effects of health communication. Current changes in health communication in a changing media environment form the conclusion.

Keywords: communication science, effects of health communication, health, health communication, illness

Gary L. Kreps: Trends and Directions in Health Communication Research, pp. 353 – 365

This article provides an overview of key areas for health communication research. Health communication is an exciting applied area of social scientific inquiry that examines the important roles performed by human and mediated communication in the delivery of health care and the promotion of health. The evolving scope and direction of health communication research is examined and suggestions are provided for advancing health communication scholarship throughout the world.

Keywords: health communication; relevant health information; communication science; intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational and societal levels of communication analysis; health informatics; tailored message interventions; health campaigns

Joan Kristin Bleicher: Forms of Presentation of Medical History on Television (Darstellungsformen von Medizingeschichte im Fernsehen), pp. 366 – 381

This article focuses on an examination of the content-related and formal presentation characteristics of the thematisation of medical history in different fictional and non-fictional television programme types. The text takes into account the general conventions of communication in television, the influence of broadcaster strategies on the communicated contents and the interactions with lines of tradition of history communication in other popular forms of narration from the fields of literature and film. Literature and film present role patterns of the doctor, which serve to personalise medical history topics on television. The overview of the genre spectrum and of the conventions of presenting medical history shows fundamental themes, dramaturgies and means of presentation, which determine the presentation of medicine in the media.

Keywords: documentation, fictional genre, health communication, medical history, television aesthetics

Christian Floto: Medical Programmes on TV and Medical History – a Dosage and Dispensing Problem on the German Television Market? (TV-Medizinsendungen und Medizingeschichte – ein Dosis- und Darreichungsproblem auf dem deutschen Fernsehmarkt?), pp. 382–394

The article examines the extent to which medical history aspects are at all thematised in German TV programmes, the degree to which this takes place in connection with programmes relating to medicine or other programmes, and the type of programmes in which this occurs. A comparison between the Anglo-American programmes offered and the TV programme schedules here shows that there is an astonishing opulence and differentiation of programmes on scientific subjects there, which is unparalleled in Germany. Furthermore, the magazine programme type predominates among German television programmes dealing with medical topics, whereas, for example, many of these – medical history – topoi on the Anglo-American market are realised, broadcast and sold in “long form” as documentations. Among others, programme traditions, “learned reciprocity”, a different value rating of documentation, programme planning aspects and cost aspects are mentioned as reasons for this difference. In addition, the author points to deficits on the producer side in correlation with traditional neglect or reduction of medical history interrelationships. However, an international relativisation of the differences observed so far is to be prognostically expected due to the content demand for broadcasting slots, output and purchasing package deals, and independent licence-holders among private broadcasters.

Keywords: medical history, programme planning, scientific topics on television, science magazine programmes, science documentations

Anthony Ferri: Communicating Heart Disease: Myth and Magic, pp. 395–430

Media portrayals and the myths they construct about heart disease continue to make concrete and dramatize medical science beyond its fundamental context and foundation. This paper examines the role of myth in communicating about heart disease in the media. Far more than simply disseminating inaccurate information or myths about heart disease, the media may be, unwittingly, creating an environment encouraging heart disease through its dramatic portrayals. Analysis includes how myths are experienced and function in American culture as well as some of the implications. The media portrayal of heart disease is shown to be more myth than science resulting in misinformation about the disease for media audiences.

Keywords: health communication, heart disease, media, myth, narration theory

Stephanie Lücke / Patrick Rössler / Corinna Willhöft: Appetisingly Wrapped, but Hard to Digest? Presentation and Effect of Nutrition in Mass Media: A Research Overview (Appetitlich verpackt, aber schwer zu verdauen? Darstellung und Wirkung von Ernährung in Massenmedien: ein Forschungsüberblick), pp. 407–430

One aspect of the ever-developing field of health communication has received little attention so far: the influence of media consumption on the nutritional behaviour of the population. Messages on nutritional themes, however, are omnipresent in the mass media – in advertising, in cooking programmes, in scandal reporting, and in feature films. The lack of attention for this research topic would appear to be all the more astonishing in view of the great significance of a balance form of nutrition for the health of the indi-

vidual, since nutrition-dependent illnesses account for approx. 30 per cent of health system costs. This article explores and systematises the findings of German-language and international research work on print media and television with reference to the various contexts, within which nutrition can be thematised. These are (1) journalistic reporting, (2) advice formats, (3) non-fictional entertainment, (4) fictional entertainment and (5) advertising. In the second section, identifiable research desiderata are presented in view of previous work and an ongoing research project is briefly outlined, which attempts to close the initial gaps.

Keywords: Eating disorders, health communication, media framing, exploratory content analysis, agenda setting function, nutrition in mass media, nutritional behaviour, media effects

Eva Baumann / Lars Harden / Helmut Scherer: Between Celebrity Quirk and Gene Defect. On the Presentation of Eating Disorders by the Press (Zwischen Promi-Tick und Gen-Defekt. Zur Darstellung von Essstörungen in der Presse), pp. 431 – 454

The phenomenon of eating disorders conceals psychosomatic (addictive) illnesses, which have become a pressing problem in our society. On the one hand, many people are directly or indirectly affected, on the other hand, the illness is not only attributable to individual but just as much to social causes and involve the corresponding consequences. This leads to a need to also tackle the problem at a social level. To enable this, a public discourse is required, which, last but not least, takes place via the presentation of the illness in the media. On the basis of an explorative quantitative content analysis, the article provides an insight into the thematisation contribution the media make with respect to the eating disorder problem. The findings of a full survey of sixteen press publications of differing genres from the year 2000 indicates how significant the illness is in the media and on the basis of which frames and via which actors and in which way the phenomenon is described. On the one hand, many articles only deal with the subject in passing or non-specifically. On the other hand, typical reporting patterns can be identified, which indicate a differentiated approach to the illness. In these cases, reporting either moves close to the image presented in specialist psychological literature or the phenomenon is interpreted from a socio-critical perspective or reduced to problem relating to nutritional science.

Keywords: agenda setting function, eating disorders, exploratory content analysis, health communication, media framing

On the Self-Image of Medical Journalists – An Interview with Christoph Fischer (Zum Selbstverständnis von Medizinjournalisten – ein Interview mit Christoph Fischer), pp. 455 – 460

The interview with the medical specialist and editor of the newspaper Bild shows which news value health topics have in the print media from the perspective of a practitioner and the objectives with which they are placed in a popular magazine. The basic criteria for the selection of topics are appeal and exclusivity, which are supplemented by specifically popular elements, such as the linking of news with life counselling. Furthermore, topics need to be personalised in order to achieve a special impact. Illnesses and healing methods are above all interesting when they relate to prominent names.

Keywords: journalistic self-image, medical journalism, news selection, popular journalism, scientific journalism

Claudia Lampert: Health Promotion through Entertainment? On the Potential of the Entertainment Education Approach for the Promotion of Health Awareness (Gesundheitsförderung durch Unterhaltung? Zum Potenzial des Entertainment-Education-Ansatzes für die Förderung des Gesundheitsbewusstseins), pp. 461 – 477

With reference to the catchphrase “entertainment education” (EE), a variety of efforts have been made in the USA since the end of the Sixties to specifically integrate prosocial and health-promoting topics into entertainment offerings in the media. On the basis of this approach, numerous radio and television soap operas were produced, particularly for developing countries. The article takes a look at the question, on the basis of international studies, of how far this approach can contribute towards health promotion. Existing evaluation studies almost unanimously confirm that entertainment education projects possess a health-promoting potential. According to the study, the strengths of the approach lie, on the one hand, in the sensitisation of the recipients to certain health topics and, on the other hand, in the promotion of interpersonal (peer) communication relating to health-relevant topics. Furthermore, the programmes led in many cases to a critical reflection of one’s own views and attitudes and motivated behavioural changes at an individual and social level. As, however, the approach had mainly been tested in countries in the so-called Third World, the concept is only transferable to a limited degree to western industrialised countries and its media environments.

Keywords: entertainment, entertainment education, health awareness, health campaigns, health communication, health promotion

Christoph Gassmann / Peter Vorderer / Werner Wirth: A Heart for the Black Forest Clinic? On the Persuasion Effect of Fictional Television Entertainment with Reference to the Example of the Willingness to Donate Organs (Ein Herz für die Schwarzwaldklinik? Zur Persuasionswirkung fiktionaler Fernsehunterhaltung am Beispiel der Organspende-Bereitschaft), pp. 478 – 496

Over 10,000 people in Germany are currently waiting for a lifesaving donor organ, whereas, at the same time, 85 per cent of the organ removals that are not carried out fail to materialise because of a refusal to have the organ removed, not because of medical reasons. In the past, a number of international studies in the tradition of communication research and psychological persuasion research analysed the effectiveness of campaigns disseminated by the mass media in the form of specialist texts and films on the willingness to donate organs. Up to now, it has not been clarified whether it is also possible to positively influence the willingness among viewers to donate organs via fictional entertainment – the programme offering with the most intensive usage. A pretest/post-test experiment with control group (N = 67) examines this question. The findings confirm the potential of fictional television entertainment to achieve persuasive effects. After viewing an excerpt of the ZDF series “Black Forest Clinic”, which promotes a positive attitude towards donating organs, the attitudes and willingness of viewers to take action corresponds significantly more strongly with this view than before viewing.

Keywords: persuasion, fictional television entertainment, attitude, action willingness, informedness, prosocial effects, elaboration-likelihood model, affective disposition theory, empathy, involvement

Constanze Rossmann: For Information on Risks and Side Effects please Ask the Patients. A Study on the Presentation of Doctors in Hospital Series and their Influence on the Image of Doctors among Patients (Zu Risiken und Nebenwirkungen fragen Sie die Patienten. Eine Studie zur Darstellung von Ärzten in Krankenhausserien und ihrem Einfluss auf das Arztbild von Patienten), pp. 497 – 522

Doctor and hospital series have been screened on German television since the Sixties, but a marked boom first took place at the end of the last century. Recent content analyses of the series reach contradictory insights (miracle healer versus problematisation), German effects studies are missing altogether, although the question of their influence is becoming increasingly relevant against the background of growing financial and staffing deficits. The cultivation study presented here, therefore, takes a renewed look, in an initial stage, at the presentation of doctors in hospital series in order to examine, in a second stage, the influence of series on the image of doctors among patients. The quantitative content analysis of four episodes respectively of eight hospital series shows that the physicians are still stereotyped and idealised, which, as shown by the findings of the two-wave panel study of 157 hospital patients, also finds its expression in a more positive perception of the doctors by the patients: frequent viewers of hospital series rate the doctors more positively than infrequent viewers, personal experience in a hospital, however, again weaken the cultivation effects.

Keywords: cultivation, image of doctors, hospital series, hospital soaps, genre specific cultivation

Christian Schemer: Slim and Ill through Media Beauties? On the Effect of Attractive Female Media Actors on the Body Image of Women (Schlank und krank durch Mediens Schönheiten? Zur Wirkung attraktiver weiblicher Medienakteure auf das Körperbild von Frauen), pp. 523 – 540

In the USA and in Europe, the dissatisfaction with one's own body and psychogenic eating disorders have increased over time among women. At the same time, the image of women in the media has become increasingly slim. It suggests itself, therefore, that the increase in body image problems among women is attributable to the omnipresence of slim and attractive women in the media. Such a presumption assumes that women viewers or readers passively take in media contents and orientate themselves to the ideals presented there. This popular effects hypothesis, however, cannot be upheld against the background of the research findings so far on the impact of attractive media actresses on the body image of women. In particular on the basis of the social learning theory and of the theory of social comparative processes, it can be proven that the effects process is influenced by the personality attributes of the recipients, which can predispose them for or protect them from negative media effects.

Keywords: bodily attractiveness, media effects, theory of social comparative processes, body image

Linda Neuhauser / Gary L. Kreps: The Advent of E-Health. How Interactive Media Are Transforming Health Communication, pp. 541 – 556

The World Health Organization estimates that half the burden of disease and disability in industrialized countries is due to behavioral risk factors like smoking, physical activity, and diet. Health communication interventions have demonstrated their powerful in-

fluence on a broad range of health behaviors. However, to maximize their effectiveness on a population level, it is necessary to coordinate both interpersonal and mass media communication strategies. E-health communication mediated by computers and other digital technologies has the potential to link, extend and “personalize” both new and traditional media channels. In experimental studies, e-health interventions involving multiple media show significantly improved behavioral outcomes. The long-term success of these multi-channel health communication interventions will depend on collaborative efforts, rigorous research, and development of new and powerful communication intervention strategies. This paper describes the development of e-health communication interventions, provides initial empirical evidence for their impact on behavior, and suggests strategies for applying e-health interventions to national and international health promotion.

Keywords: e-health, health communication, online health communication, Internet health communication, health informatics, health behavior, health interventions, health media

Irene Neverla / Georg Fiedler: Suicide Forums on the Internet. Overview of the State of Research and Further Perspectives (Suizidforen im Internet. Überblick zum Forschungsstand und weiter führende Perspektiven), pp. 557 – 571

On the Internet, there are websites, newsgroups, mailing lists and chatrooms that have suicide as their subject. They range from factual information from professional suicide prevention institutions or the exchange of ideas between people with a suicide risk to drastic descriptions of suicide methods. The article initially deals with suicide as a social phenomenon and theme in various forms of communication before concentrating on “suicide” in newsgroups, mailing lists, forums and chat groups. It presents empirical findings on the forms of offerings on suicide forums and the ways they are used. At a theoretical level, it is suggested that suicide forums should be viewed as social spaces with public character. Suicide forums fulfil functions of the construction of identity, social relations and virtual communities in a Net-specific frame of communication. The empirical and theoretical stocktaking leads to the research thesis that the Internet offered a specific potential for people who suffer from an acute or chronic suicide risk. A form of self-controlled and protected communication becomes possible, to which users can contribute otherwise taboo thoughts at any time and anonymously, from which they can also, however, pull out again at any time. Like every real social relationship, communication on the Internet also involves risks as well as specific socio-emotional gratifications and thus opportunities for people with a suicide risk.

Keywords: chat rooms, internet, newsgroups, suicide, suicide forums, suicide prevention

Sibylle T. Kim / Scott C. Ratzan: Direct-to-Consumer Communication. An Analysis of the Current Environment in the USA and Europe, pp. 572 – 598

“Direct-To-Consumer” advertising (DTCA) of prescription medications – currently only authorized in the United States and New Zealand and under consideration in the European Union – is a subject of some controversy. Advocates suggest it is a useful, even empowering form of patient communications that results in better educated consumers. They claim that earlier diagnosis, medication use, and an improved compliance with drug regimen lead to better long-term health and reduced hospitalization costs. Oppo-

nents, on the other hand, say DTCA stimulates an inappropriate and unnecessary demand and use of brand prescription drugs, has a negative effect on doctor-patient relationship, will lead to increased drug expenditures, and diverts funds from research and development activities. Since the 1997 decision by the United States Food and Drug Administration to ease regulatory restrictions on mass media use to promote prescription medicine directly to patients, drug companies tripled their annual DTCA spending from US \$790 million in 1996 to nearly \$2.5 billion in 2001. Recently the European Parliament – in the process of reforming the existing pharmaceutical legislature – rejected a proposal to relax the rules that currently ban DTCA of prescription drugs to European patients. An ongoing debate is ensuing about how to best provide patient information on prescription drugs without putting additional stress on already tight budgets in countries with universal healthcare insurance.

Keywords: Direct-to-consumer advertising, pharmaceutical legislation, patient empowerment, doctor-patient relationship, drug expenditures, public health outcome

Nina Hautzinger: The informed patient – challenge for pharmaceutical communication (Der informierte Patient – Herausforderung für die Pharmakommunikation), pp. 599 – 613

The Internet plays an increasingly important role in health communication. Various actors publish offerings on health themes on the Internet. A new kind of information and communication structure has emerged on health topics, which are utilised by recipients in a purpose-orientated way. This has consequences for the patient role, which is in a process of change – away from the passive layperson towards the responsible, informed patient. Other actors in the health system are affected by these developments, for example, the pharmaceutical companies. Pharmaceutical communication traditionally takes place via medical experts as intermediaries. For some time now, the patients have also joined this circle as an important direct target group. The latest empirical findings of a Swiss study show that pharmaceutical companies have acknowledged the changing patient role, but that a patient-orientated communication strategy has only been realised to a limited degree so far.

Keywords: Health communication, informed patient, Internet, organizational communication, pharmaceutical communication