

ABSTRACT

Background: „Methanol poisoning“ case is a sequence of events that began in the autumn of 2012, when a mass series of methanol poisoning occurred throughout the Czech Republic. The case had great coverage by Czech media. The way that the mass media informed about the involvement of the poisoning cases (health-threatening events with the drug dimension) and how they fulfilled their public role remains to be one of the important problems of contemporary addictology theories.

Aims: The primary goals of this paper were both quantitative and subsequently qualitative analysis of the selected time period of methanol poisoning cases (from 3 September 2019 to 5 April 2018 in terms of their interpretation and presentation in national printed Czech media).

Sample and Methods: A homogenous sample of 366 articles was analyzed using 33 research variables. The source of news for coding was the Newton media monitoring media database. The collected data were sorted into pivot and association tables and subjected to statistical analysis. Using standard tools (Pearson's chi-squared test), predicted hypotheses about the correlation (dependence) of acquired attributes were confirmed or rejected. Pareto analysis identified the most influential media.

Results: The research has answered a number of specific questions: What style (68,5% journalism, 33,6 news), forms (38,5% information form; 36.8% interviews), how profound articles are (Aha! 80% solely poisoning; Haló noviny 52,4% marginally) and with what message (tabloid 60 - 80% negative) articles were reported by newspapers. How close-fitting (Právo and MF Dnes full match of over 60%) and harmonized (cannot be distinguished) were subtitles. How detailed was the information on symptoms of poisoning and first aid (76,2% not included). What space did experts have to express to comparison to politicians and officials, and whether it was properly referenced (13,4% missing; 30,6% vague) to news sources. Whether and to what extent downplaying, distorting and misleading claims appeared (7,4%). Statistically 6,3 times more chance of information about the symptoms and health consequences of poisoning, if the addictologist gets the space. The most influential daily newspapers (covering 80% of the media space about methanol poisoning) were identified MF Dnes, Právo and Lidové noviny.

Conclusion: The presented study should contribute to a deeper understanding of how the Czech media perform their function when reporting on public health threatening events and thus allow addictologists specific interventions for better cooperation with the media.

Keywords: methanol, methanol poisoning