

Abstract

The term medicalization refers to the process through which a previously nonmedical issue newly becomes conceived of as a medical one. The aim of this thesis is to show how the utilization of this concept can help lead to a better understanding of the contemporary phenomenon of mass antidepressant consumption. I attempt to demonstrate here that the rise in antidepressant use, which has been occurring worldwide in the last few decades, must be understood as the result of a host of factors, among which a key role is played by changes in the conception of certain emotional states, previously understood as normal, as symptoms of mental illness. Aside from a general analysis of the factors that contribute to the consumption of these medications, the thesis also contains my own case study of one of them, namely the ways in which antidepressants are portrayed by the media. I focus on articles, published between the years 1996 and 2016 in Czech national newspapers and attempt to show how discussions about antidepressants, despite their relative neutrality, by accenting a medicalized frame of understanding mental problems help to create an environment, which supports their consumption.