



Representation of Social Groups in Newspaper Coverage of Active Aging



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Introduction

The World Health Organization revealed in 2002 the report *Active ageing: A policy framework* [1] describing active aging as the “process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” [1]. According to the 2012 Eurobarometer (report of a survey of European citizens) on active aging active ageing has many facets such as ability of older people to be employed, to contribute actively to society as volunteers and family carers and the ability to live independently made possible through suitable housing and infrastructure [2]. The same report notes however that the dynamic of living longer, of ageing longer is seen as a threat instead of an achievement and that older people are seen to be a burden to the working-age population[2].

Objective

One objective of this study was to generate qualitative and quantitative data on which social groups are visible in the media coverage of active aging and related terms

Methods

1. News articles were gathered from two Canadian newspapers, the Canadian newsstand a database of 300 Canadian newspapers and one US newspaper
2. The *Calgary Herald* (*Canadian newspaper with local reach*), the *Globe and Mail* (*Canadian newspaper with national reach*) and the *New York Times* (*US newspaper with national reach*) articles were downloaded from ProQuest Newsstand Complete through the University of Calgary. The Canadian newsstands a Proquest database accessed through the University of Calgary webpage was investigated for quantitative data on the webpage without downloading articles.
3. A content analysis for the downloaded articles was conducted using Atlas.ti[®], a qualitative research software to investigate the context of active aging coverage

Table 1: groups mentioned in media articles covering active aging" OR "advanced aging" OR "natural aging" OR "mindful aging" OR "aging well" OR "longitudinal aging" OR "successful aging" OR "healthy aging")

Codes	Canadian Newsstand (n=300 newspapers) 4569/100%	Calgary Herald 161/100%	The Globe and Mail 149/100%	The New York Times 209/100%
Aboriginal People	13/0.2	0/0	0/0	0/0
Business	865/18.9	20/12.4	20/13.4	35/16.7
Caregiver	174/3.8	11/6.8	1/0.67	2/0.95
Corporate	80/1.75	6/3.7	4/2.67	9/4.3
Family/ies	1666/672//36.3/14.7	46/16//28.5/9.9	42/11//28.1/7.38	62/20//29.6/9.5
First Nation	18/0.39	5/3.1	0	0
Gerontologist	69/1.51	4/2.4	1/0.67	10/4.78
Government	738/16.15	13/8.0	21/14.0	28/13.4
Indigenous People	0	0	0	0
Industry	309/6.76	13/8.0	13/8.7	18/8.61
Inuit	10/0.21	0	0	0
Immigrants	81/1.77	13/8.0	4/2.68	1/0.047
Nurses	179/3.91	7/4.3	5/3.35	6/2.87
Parents	621/13.59	21/13	13/8.7	25/11.96
People with Disability	42/0.91	0	0	1/0.047
Physicians	198/4.33	13/8.0	7/4.6	15/7.17
Society	1298/28.4	34/21.1	19	42/20.09
Therapist	280/6.12	3/1.8	5/3.35	12/5.74
Women	1281/28.0	48/29.8	55/36.5	76/36.36
The poor	17/0.3	0	0	3/1.43

Results and Discussion

- ❖ There were n= 4569 article on active aging and related terms in the Canadian newsstand database; n=161 in the Calgary Herald; n=149 in the Globe and Mail and n=209 in the New York Times
- ❖ We conclude based on the results in Table 1 that socially disadvantaged groups such as disabled people, indigenous people, immigrants and the poor are under-represented in the media coverage of active aging indicating that newspapers are a problem for socially disadvantaged groups

Results and Discussion continues

- ❖ As to disabled people the WHO report states, “The word “active” refers to continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force. Older people who retire from work and those who are ill or live with disabilities can remain active contributors to their families, peers, communities and nations” [1]
- ❖ The WHO report states further that, “The Populations with low incomes, ethnic minorities and older people with disabilities are the most likely to be inactive” [1]
- ❖ Given whom the WHO report [1] identified as being most inactive one should expect these groups (e.g. disabled people) to gain more attention in the media.
- ❖ Furthermore given that the WHO report highlights the need for culturally-appropriate community activities it seems indigenous people and immigrants should be covered more given they have different cultures and that the public has to gain knowledge on culture of aging and aging well including active aging and the barriers faced by groups of different culture which includes immigrants, ethnic minorities and indigenous people.

REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. Active ageing: A policy framework Geneva: World Health Organization [Online], 2002, p. 1–60. http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/active_ageing/en/index.html
2. European Commission Active ageing; Online, 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_378_en.pdf