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Media analysis of Organ Donation and Transplant: Ethical Implications

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- ## Introduction
- ❖ Organ transplants is often the only option for patients facing organ failure
 - ❖ Organ donation is constantly promoted to alleviate the shortage of organs and to decrease the wait list.
 - ❖ In Canada, in 2012, 1,900 transplants were performed, 3,404 patients were awaiting transplants, and 481 patients either withdrew or died while waiting on the transplant list[1].
 - ❖ In China, "About 1.5 million Chinese people need transplants but only around 10,000 operations are performed annually due to a lack of donors"[2].
 - ❖ People with disabilities are one group that often faces the issue of organ transplant and donation.

- ## Objective
- ❖ To ascertain what kind of coverage people with disabilities and other social groups received;
 - ❖ What social issues were mentioned.

- ## Methods
- ❖ Analysis: Thematic analysis using the analytical framework of Disability Studies
 - ❖ Sources: Various newspapers (Calgary Herald (local newspaper), the Canadian newsstand – a database of 300 Canadian newspapers including the two Canadian newspapers with National scope, a Chinese, a UK, a USA and a Malaysian newspaper.

Table 1 : Search Hits of Different Newspapers with the terms organ transplant/organ donation and disabled people/people with disabilities or patient in the full text of an article

Newspaper	Organ transplant and disabled people	Organ transplant and people with disabilities	Organ donation and disabled people	Organ donation and people with disabilities	Organ transplant and patient	Organ donation and patient
Canadian Newsstand Complete n=300 Canadian newspapers	9	14	6	7	1087	3202
New York Times	0	0	1	1	241	152
The Star (Malaysia)	2	0	7	0	0	0
The Guardian	9	1	15	4	332	912
China Daily	0	0	0	0		1964

Table 2 Social Groups mentioned in organ donation/transplant newspaper coverage

	Calgary Herald n=353	Canadian Newsstand n=11870	China Daily n=357
Aboriginal people	0	10	0
Babies	40	305	11
Business	47	2304	71
Caregiver	1	72	0
Child	125	1575	70
Doctor	133	1558	193
Elderly	9	221	8
Expert	40	306	107
Family	155	5559	120
First Nations	0	41	0
Government	75	2104	87
Immigrant	2	40	2
Indigenous people	0	1	0
Industry	23	367	27
Infant	14	375	5
Inuit	0	21	0
Nurses	27	691	1
Parent	66	408	59
Patient	151	2267	240
Physician	41	483	13
Prisoner	10	139	61
Professional	33	431	24
Senior	24	567	23
Teen	16	462	28
The poor	6	129	3
Women	82	1077	27
Youth	13	512	11

Table 4: The mentioning of the term ethics

Search term	Canadian Newsstand n=11870	Calgary Herald n=353	China Daily n=357
Ethics	445	15	12

REFERENCES

- [1] Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) e-Statistics on Organ Transplants, Waiting Lists and Donors. Available online: Available at: http://www.cihi.ca/CIHI-ext-portal/pdf/internet/REPORT_STATS2012_PDF_EN (30th January, 2013),
- [2] China Daily, Experts discuss organ transplant demand. China Daily 2013.

Table 3 Themes mentioned in the newspapers

	Calgary Herald n=353	Canadian Newsstand n=11870	China Daily n=357
Access	21	465	9
Afford	8	227	14
Assisted suicide	2	27	2
Cost	56	1235	55
Discrimination	1	37	1
Do not resuscitate	0	4	0
Down Syndrome	2	11	0
Equality	1	23	1
Equity	0	43	1
Euthanasia	2	37	4
Human right	0	4	1
Quality of life	13	425	9
Waiting list	47	1757	46

- ❖ Inclusion criteria: source had to cover organ transplant or organ donation
 - ❖ Coding: Inductive and deductive using the software Atlas.ti[©]
 - ❖ Data generated: quantitative and qualitative (not shown here)
- ## Results and Discussion
- ❖ Disabled people are hardly visible to invisible in all newspaper sources investigated (Table 1 and 2).
 - ❖ We found that little to no coverage also existed for Aboriginal People, the elderly, and immigrants (Table 2).
 - ❖ Many social justice and other social themes are little covered in the newspapers (Table 3).
 - ❖ Ethics is hardly covered (Table 4).

Conclusion

- ❖ Newspapers set a discourse around organ transplants and donation that exclude socially disadvantaged groups which we argue is an ethical issue.
- ❖ Equally problematic is that ethics as such is not a theme in the coverage
- ❖ On the other hand many social justice issues received no to little coverage which we argue is a gap in need to be rectified.