



Representation of Social Groups in Newspaper Coverage of Organ Transplants and Donations

JENNIFER CHEUNG¹, GREGOR WOLBRING²

¹Bachelor of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta Canada, Jennifer Cheung <cheungjf@ucalgary.ca>

²Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Dept. of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada <gwolbrin@ucalgary.ca>



Introduction

❖ Organ transplants have become a viable option and solution for patients facing organ failure for the past 50 years. In turn, organ donation has been constantly promoted to increase the supply of organ donors to alleviate the shortage and give hope to patients on the wait list. Anyone is susceptible to organ failure, and therefore potentially needs an organ. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI),^[1] 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. 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]

Objective

❖ We wanted to understand how much and what kind of coverage various social groups especially disabled people received, in the coverage of the topic of organ transplants and donations in various newspapers

Methods

1. News articles were gathered from three Canadian newspapers the Canadian news stand a database of 300 Canadian newspaper a Chinese, UK and Malaysian newspaper for a local, national, and cross-cultural perspective.
2. The *Calgary Herald*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *National Post* articles were downloaded from ProQuest Newsstand Complete through the University of Calgary.
3. The *China Daily* articles were downloaded from the *China Daily* website. Canadian Newsstand, the Guardian (UK) and the Star (Malaysia)were searched on their webpage
4. A frequency content analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti[®], a qualitative research software to investigate the context of the problems facing organ transplants and donations.

Table 1: Frequency of Mentioning of Different Social Groups

Code	Calgary Herald		China Daily		Globe & Mail		National Post	
	Total Hit count (n=)	Article Hit count(n=)	Total Hit count (n=)	Article Hit count(n=)	Total Hit count (n=)	Article Hit count(n=)	Total Hit count (n=)	Article Hit count(n=)
Aboriginal People	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Indigenous People	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
First Nations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
elderly	1	1	11	8	2	2	3	3
senior	6	4	26	23	7	7	17	9
women	15	9	51	27	27	11	26	12
female	7	3	15	14	4	3	2	2
men	11	6	27	22	31	11	35	16
male	13	5	24	20	7	6	5	3
Youth/teen	2/39	2/16	11/39	11/28	4/20	2/8	3/10	2/7
child	125	43	162	70	178	65	182	50
Infant/babies	22/9	7/5	8/30	5/11	26/44	9/12	18/18	13/8
immigrant	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	3
prisoner	74	20	112	51	116	17	70	15
government	112	50	136	87	145	70	172	61
doctor	193	74	465	193	275	106	272	84
physician	37	19	13	13	76	35	61	27
industry	15	11	31	27	16	10	25	15
business	23	14	121	71	49	21	248	177
corporate	0	0	5	5	10	6	7	6
professional	22	12	28	24	31	18	14	12
expert	45	20	162	107	54	30	59	33

Table 2. Search Hits of Different Newspapers with the terms organ transplant/organ donation and disabled/people with disabilities

Newspaper	Organ transplant and disabled	Organ transplant and people with disabilities	Organ donation and disabled	Organ donation and people with disabilities
Canadian Newsstand Complete (n=300 newspapers)	61	14	77	7
New York Times (USA)	9	-	3	1
Malaysian Star	2	-	7	-
The Guardian (UK)	9	1	15	4
China Daily	6	0	5	0

Results and Discussion

- ❖ In total, there were 179 articles from the *Calgary Herald*, 367 articles from the *China Daily*, 258 articles from *The Globe and Mail*, and 177 articles from the *National Post* which were analyzed for social group visibility.
- ❖ We found that no article covered Aboriginal people, immigrants or the elderly more than 3 times which highlights the fact that very minimal to no articles focus on these groups (table 1).
- ❖ Even with an international comparison between the three Canadian newspapers with the *China Daily*, there is not much difference in the visibility of social groups in the media as shown in Table 1.
- ❖ As to disabled people the invisibility also is evident in newspapers from numerous sources (Table 2)
- ❖ Approximately a bit over a quarter of the articles cover government: 34.46% in the *National Post*, 27.93% in the *Calgary Herald*, 27.13% in the *Globe and Mail*, and 23.71% in the *China Daily*.
- ❖ Doctor shows up in half of all the articles. In contrast, the code physician shows up in less than one fifth of all articles
- ❖ We conclude that socially disadvantaged groups are under-represented indicating that newspapers are a problem for socially disadvantaged groups

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-external/pdf/internet/REPORT_STATS2012_PDF_EN (30th January, 2013),
 [2] China Daily, Experts discuss organ transplant demand. China Daily 2013.