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**THE CONTENT OF HEALTH NEWS AND PROGRAMS IN TELEVISION  
IN TURKEY****Abstract:**

It has been observed that publications on health in Turkey increased in recent times, also the number in criticism of this content has been increased. With the increase in publications, analysis and evaluation of the contents of these publications have become important.

From this perspective, this study aims to determine which themes are presented in health news and programs on television and how they are broadcasted.

Content analysis method has been used in order to reach the purpose determined above. The scope the study was constituted of the contents which were broadcasted in 2010.

51.291 video shoots were gained from TV's with approximately 50 keywords of health field in 2010. Sample was taken every fourth day of the year from 365 days media content as a universe by systematic random sampling method. Thus sample framework, which will represent the whole year in different terms at regular intervals, was constituted and 10408 shoots was taken into consideration.

Content analysis coding guide was developed in order to gather the data for realizing the purpose of the study. In this guide 41 primary theme and 452 separate sub category were coded.

The distribution of 10408 shootings about health according to 4 different categories. It was determined that the content about health was broadcasted in the first three months of the year (28.3%); namely January, February and March. The 34,7% of the shootings were broadcasted in the morning whereas the percent of shootings in the afternoon was 21,5%. The percent of the evening broadcasts was 20,7%. Approximately half of the shootings (49,8%) were determined as news. This percent was followed by the health content broadcasts (27,9%). Almost all of the broadcasts were determined as informative type (99,3%). Over half of the broadcasts were found as recommendation (n=5.326; 51,2%).

When the themes in the broadcasts were elaborated, the most elaborative subjects were nutrition (15,5%) and internal medicine / general surgery (14%). The follow-up subjects were beauty, care, losing weight and healthy life (9,8%), oncology and cancer (8,6%) and Ministry of Health (7,2%). When the sub categories of these primary themes were observed, it was determined that the general information was given (over 50%) in these informative expressions.

**Keywords:**

health communication, health news, content analysis

**JEL Classification:** I10

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, medical journalism has been observed to have been paid a special interest in Turkey. In a wide range of information, prescription and advice ranging from 'healthy life', 'diet', 'cholesterol', 'aesthetic operations', 'cellulitis treatment', 'alternative medicine', 'medicinal herbs', 'medicinal stones' to more specific realms are publicized through media. With the rise in the publications on medicine, concerns over accurateness, reliability and validity of the information proclaimed to public rises accordingly. Day by day, people tend to express their desire to lead a healthier and longer life in a healthy environment, and they do not hesitate to exert any kind of effort to accomplish this objective.

Disinformation in such subjects as epidemics, alternative medicine and medicinal herbs in particular may pose adverse effects which are either too difficult or impossible to be reversed. Moreover, several practices based on wrong information which patients apply on their own rather than being recommended by a physician can lead to severe impacts and may result in losses of life in some cases. Official institutions such as Ministry of Health and Radio&TV Supreme Council and some non-governmental organisations bearing responsibility on this issue are calling on media officials to act in a more sensible manner.

Appraisal of medical programs broadcasted on Turkish TV channels makes up the basic objective of this study.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In general, there are two mainstream trends in studies carried on news reports in communication science. While the first of these is the positivist trend focusing on explicit (clear/manifest) meaning using content analysis, the second trend is the critical trend which regards news as a discourse (İnal, 1996: 27). In this study, questions of what and how issues are included in media contents are tried to be replied based on content analysis.

Berelson, the first writer to systematize content analysis for the first time publishing his book in 1952, describes content analysis as 'a technique of research which makes objective, systematic and quantitative descriptions of explicit content of

communication' (Gökçe, 2006: 35). According to Merten's description which is considered to be the most comprehensive one on content analysis of our age is 'a method of researching the social truth through drawing deductions about the obscure features of the content from the explicit features of the social truth' (Gökçe, 2006: 18).

51.291 video shoots were gained from TV's with approximately 50 keywords of health field in 2010. Sample was taken every fourth day of the year from 365 days media content as a universe by systematic random sampling method. Thus sample framework, which will represent the whole year in different terms at regular intervals, was constituted and 10408 shoots was taken into consideration.

Content analysis coding guide was developed in order to gather the data for realizing the purpose of the study. In this guide 41 primary theme and 452 separate sub category were coded. A test of reliability amid coders is also carried out in order to ensure consistency of categorization process and to test whether sorted principles works properly. If one thirds, or even one fifths, of news reports over 100 are observed to have inconsistency, results of the research will be dubbed inconsistent. Nuendorf (2002: 143), who points out to the necessity that at least two independent coders are to bear coding, asserts that all conditions in which reliability between coders are over 0,90 and most of the conditions bearing a rate of 0,80 and upward reliability in between are acceptable. Poindexter and McCombs (2000: 204) emphasizes that the rate of reliability should be over %80. In accordance with this computing method, the last figures as to the consistency calculations subsequent to the renewed coding and training studies as a result of consistency tests carried out every week regularly among coders have been acquired. Accordingly, %83,70 rate of consistency has been computed over the 1,053 program image.

### **3. FINDINGS OF TELEVISION HEALTH NEWS AND PROGRAMS**

All medicine based contents broadcasted in 2010 by 52 different TV channels that both provided service locally and could be watched nationwide through satellite systems were gathered as video recordings by the pursuer media company. In these recordings, only related parts of programs which included the key words related to medicine were included from the beginning to the end. In this practice, whether acquired video recordings based on key word inclusion were related to medicine was

overseen. The ones found to be related to medical content were applied content analysis.

### 3.1. Forms of Presentation

Under this title, seasonal dispersion, broadcast zones and dispersion in terms of program quality of TV broadcasts and their style are accentuated. Seasonally broadcasting dispersion of 10.408 directly medicine related video recordings analysed upon audit and sampling framework were appraised in four different categories. As a result of this evaluation, the most abundant content was found to be in the first three months of the year as January, February and March (f=2.947; %28,3). October, November and December made up the second most contend including season with the rate of f=2.835; %27,2. These results reveal the fact that medical news reports were ample in the winter season. While the rate of medicine based broadcasting was %23.6 (f=2.453) in July, August including September which was at the same time Ramadan season, April, May and June had the least medicine based broadcast with the rate of %20,9 (f=2.173).

%34.7 (f=3.616) of the audited video recordings was broadcasted in the morning, while %21,5 (f=2.237) was in the afternoon. The rate of the recordings broadcasted in the evening was %20,7 (f=2.157).

Taking the qualities of the video recordings into consideration, %15,6 (f=1.628) of them are seen to have been broadcasted in the midday bulletins and %12 (f=1.250) of them in prime-time newscasters. Nearly half of the video recordings (f=5.87; %49,8) were detected to be broadcasts in the form of news bulletins. These kind of videos are followed by broadcasts in the form of medical programs (f=2.907; %27,9) ranking the second in frequency. Programmes of debating, talk shows, magazines, life, entertainment, travel, sport, food and generation commenting on medical issues succeeded the formers with the rate of (f=2.314; %22,2).

The style of texts for each video was coded in utmost five categories. So the videos audited accordingly were all determined to behold the quality of being 'Elucidative' with a rete of %99,3. Over half of them were found to have the quality of being 'Advising/Suggestive' with a rate of (f=5.326; %51,2). While %19,7 of the videos (f=2.051) were 'Warning), %10.8 of them (f=1.125) were "Critical'.

When the style of texts were taken into consideration in the context of broadcast type, there is no important variance to be noticed and the quality of being 'Elucidative'

appears to have overwhelmed others. Unlike other broadcasted programs in medical programs, the quality of being 'Advising/Suggestive' has been preferred even more with a rate of %85,1. Besides, the rates of endorsing 'Warning' quality preferred in other programmes including medical ones were detected to be even among all with a rate of %20,6.

### 3.2. Themes (Main Issues)

Themes or the mainstream issues pointed out in the videos were coded as the foremost ten themes. Analysing the mainstream themes, 'Nutrition' arises as the most pointed theme with the rate of  $f=1.612$ ; %15,5; and 'Internal diseases/General Surgery' succeeds it with its rate of  $f=1.453$ ; %14. The others following them are 'Beauty, care, slimming and healthy life' ( $f=1.015$ ; %9,8, 'Oncology and Cancer' ( $f=894$ ; %8,6) and 'Ministry of Health' ( $f=752$ ; %7,2) respectively.

**Table: Themes Endorsed in TV Contents**

		Frequency	%
1	Nutrition	1612	15,5
2	Internal diseases/General Surgery'	1453	14
3	Beauty, care, slimming and healthy life'	1015	9,8
4	Oncology and Cancer'	894	8,6
5	Ministry of Health'	752	7,2
6	Alternative/ Supplementary Medicine	744	7,1
7	Medicine Personnel and their problems	739	7,1
8	Psychological Health	731	7
9	Problems of patients and their relatives	643	6,2
10	obstetrics and gynaecology	640	6,1
11	Cardiology / Surgery of Heart and Cardiac Vein	595	5,7
12	Pharmacy / Pharmacology / Medicine Sector	568	5,5
13	Health Institutions, Hospitals, Health Centres etc.	477	4,6
14	Drug Addiction	406	3,9
15	Physical Treatment and Enhancement	405	3,9
16	Paediatrics	382	3,7
17	Neurology / Surgery of Brain and Nerve System	366	3,5
18	Aesthetics / Cosmetic Surgery	359	3,4
19	Emergency	326	3,1

20	Urology	319	3,1
21	Eye Health	315	3
22	Ocular, Nasal, Throat Health	309	3
23	Mouth/ Teeth Health	255	2,5
24	Baby Care and Health	247	2,4
25	Orthopaedics- Traumatology	236	2,3
26	Cutaneous Diseases / Dermatology	232	2,2
27	Swine Flu	197	1,9
28	Sexual Health	156	1,5
29	Preventive and Family Medicine	146	1,4
30	Environment and Health	130	1,2
31	Others	1222	11,8
	N	10408	

Analysing the dispersion of themes according to their time intervals, nutrition is the most issued theme in the first half of the year. With the effect of Ramadan season, July, August and September are mostly inclusive of texts theming nutrition with a rate of %19. In the last three months of the year, 'Internal diseases/General Surgery' comes to the forefront with %13.9. In the first three months of the year, Medical Personnel and their problems' together with Alternative Medicine' are observed to be mentioned more than the other months. In April, May and June, 'Beauty, care, slimming and healthy life' is seen to have increased its rate. Narratives on the 'Ministry of Health' was on a considerable rise in July, August and September with a rate of %10,7. In the last three months of the year, 'Oncology/Cancer' became the third most issued theme with the rate of %9,9.

## CONCLUSION

The fact that issues intriguing for sophisticated people are dealt with more in medical news and programmes on TV can easily be drawn from the findings.

When endorsed in a proper and sensible way, broadcasts on health and medicine has the potent to enhance health and life quality of individuals, as well. That's because preserving and enhancing health, measures to be taken, training for treatment together with informing can yield socially very positive and profound effects as long as they are carries out properly through media.

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