Universität Basel

Publication

Content, evaluations and influences in newspaper coverage of predictive genetic testing: A comparative media content analysis from the United Kingdom and Switzerland

Predictive genetic testing often entails challenging decisions about preventive measures and uncertain health-related risk predictions. Because of its increasing availability, it is important to assess how to debate it publicly. Newspaper content analysis represents a common and reliable way to investigate public discourse retrospectively. We thus quantitatively compare broadsheet newspaper coverage about predictive genetic testing in the United Kingdom and Switzerland during the period of 2011-2016 regarding content, evaluations, stakeholder influence, and trigger events. British coverage was more extensive and positive and included more personal stories. Swiss coverage had more focus on political issues. Angelina Jolie's announcement about her double mastectomy was the most important coverage trigger. Researchers were the most frequently cited stakeholder group, but stakeholders from government and civil society were also represented. Our results thus reflect a movement toward a more active public engagement with predictive genetic testing. The findings help to improve and enrich public engagement regarding predictive genetic testing.