

Publication

Influence of content, events and culture on the public discourse about medical genetics in Switzerland - A quantitative media content analysis

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Medical genetics is a broad and expanding field with many important implications for society, but knowledge about media coverage of this topic from recent years is lacking. This study aims to identify topics in medical genetics emerging in print media coverage in Switzerland by quantitatively analysing their occurrence in the public media discourse and assessing culturally conditioned differences between two Swiss language regions. We conducted a quantitative media content screening of print media and news agencies in the German- and French-speaking regions of Switzerland, and eight topics were identified. They demonstrate the large variety of topics in medical genetics present in public discourse. Coverage was dominated by legislative voting on genetics issues and by the preventive surgeries of the Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie. We found only small differences between the language regions, and coverage was strikingly similar for most variables.

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