

Journal of International Scientific Publications:
Media and Mass Communication, Volume 1

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: <http://www.scientific-publications.net>

**PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ETHICS IN LITHUANIAN HEALTH CARE
AND ITS REFLECTION IN MEDIA**

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Abstract

The man's and society's health is one of the most important values of society. In the draft of Lithuania Health system development in the years 2011-2020, those main principles of social ethics are emphasized: social justice, solidarity, availability, equality, which make preconditions to use the health care services of good quality, and involving of citizens in adopting solutions. The role of media in reflecting problems of social ethics is very important. Media, while spreading information connected with health, becomes the inseparable part of national health system. In the article there are analysed the problems of social ethics in health care of Lithuania and reveal how they are reflected in the media of Lithuania.

Key words: Social justice, man's right to health, social ethics, media.

INTRODUCTION

The man's and society's health is one of the most important values of society. The health of a man depends on many factors: genetic factors, the style of life and from a person's attitude towards his own health. Health is not and cannot be only the care of a state. No less responsible for his health is a man himself. The duty of a state is to guarantee man's right to resources and availability of health services. For this reason contemporary health policy must answer difficult questions: what state can do and what state must do in the sphere of health care in order to guarantee the health of a person and society, is it possible and is it necessary to try to strengthen the health of every person, is it moral to make people care for their own health and other (Cribb, 2005). Therefore, health care is such a sphere, in which person's and society's health problems integrate very closely. The state must protect people from the threats to their health, must strengthen the abilities of each individual and of the whole society to overcome those threats, to guarantee the availability of medical services, to guarantee the right of people to healthy environment, as a necessary condition to a dignified life and guarantee the right to use other constitutional rights. (Valstybės, 2002).

In the draft of Lithuania Health system development in the years 2011-2020, those main principles of health policy are emphasized: social justice, solidarity, availability, equality, which make preconditions to use the health care services of good quality, and involving of citizens in adopting solutions. The health care becomes more and more oriented to a patient, and becomes more individualized, when the patient is treated as an active subject of health care, and not only as an object of provision of such services.

In order to reform the whole health care system it is important to consider ethical principles. The reform cannot start from only the legal basis, because legal regulation always includes the rationing and institutionalization of values. The need itself to reform the legal system of health care occurs then, when society perceive the need of new values, and begin to act according to them in daily life. Therefore, this transformation of values begins from the transfer of ethical values to corresponding conception of the law (the logization of the values), which forms the new legal consciousness (psychologization of values). The legal consciousness realize itself in legal decisions and in the function of state institutions (the materialization of values). This difficult process of transformation should be a guide for media in its function to inform the society and in forming its attitude towards the guarantee of the principle of social justice in health care.

The role of media in reflecting problems of social ethics is very important. Good contact between patient and the personnel of health care, and their mutual trust is a very important part of the process of solving the patient's problem, not rarely also a guarantee. Media, while spreading information connected with health, becomes the inseparable part of national health system. Does Lithuania's media helps to form and maintain this positive connection? While introducing the strategies of health strengthening there is a tendency of dominating medicalization and behaviourist (conduct) models in the media and the main strategic problems of strengthening of social health – the maintenance of health in the sphere of social rightness, unemployment, misery, and disbalance of ecosystem, stress and other are left behind. Especially these questions – unemployment (64 %), economical status (49%), rising prices and taxes – are most important problems in Lithuania and in Western countries according to the data of Eurobarometer in autumn of 2009.

The goal of the work – is to identificate the problems of social ethics in health care of Lithuania and reveal how they are reflected in the media of Lithuania.

Methods: the monitoring of material in media, document analysis.

THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ETHICS AND THEIR SOLVING IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

There are three ethic values in the basis of health care policy: health as a fundamental right, social justice and solidarity. The concept “man's right to health“ is complicated according to its content, in which social and individual aspects can be differenced (Birmontienė, 2007, Bieliūnienė, 2005). They are determined by social ethics, which is determined by political ideology, traditions and the level of economical development of the country. Man's right to health (more precisely right to health care) is understood not only as state's duty to care for health of society, which means the right to health resources, quality health services, their equal-rights availability, the keeping of principles of solidarity and social justice, while providing health services. Therefore, man's right to health care, as a social right of a man, is not absolute, i.e. cannot be fully guaranteed, because it depends not only from organizational actions of a state, but also from individual characteristics of a man, and is realized by active actions of the state, while it is organizing the health care of individual and society, according to established content of international and national rights. Therefore a right to health care must be understood as a right to resources, goods, services and conditions, necessary to guarantee the best state of health, but can not be understood as a right to be healthy (Čelkis, 2010). Therefore, in the evaluation of health care we meet the dual ethical characteristics – in the levels of individual and state. The ethical norm of health policy must include both those levels. It is understood as an elimination of health discrepancies at national scale and realization of legalities and principle of social justice in health policy. And this means equal rights, an attention to most vulnerable citizen groups and availability to health and medical care.

Journal of International Scientific Publications: Media and Mass Communication, Volume 1

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: <http://www.scientific-publications.net>

One of the main documents of international law, which establishes the man's right to health care, is International Covenant on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights of United Nations (1966). In the 1 part of the article 12 of this pact is said that states, the countries of this pact acknowledge every man's right to have possibly best physical and psychic health. Therefore, first time according to international document it was established, that every man is granted not only the right to health but also a right to have the best health possible (Čelkis, 2010). The states were obligated to take any means necessary, that their citizens could have physical and psychic health of the highest attainable level. According to S.Gevers (2004), firstly, there is a need to take steps, which would guarantee healthy working conditions, healthy living environment and health education, in order to protect from the outside threats, such as unsafe drinking water and nourishment, and on the other hand this means, that member countries must guarantee availability of health care services of sufficient quality to all the citizens, taking into account the needs and the situation of the most vulnerable groups.

Lithuanian law system in accordance to basic value regulations corresponds with European tradition, and from the view of patient's rights Lithuania's name is often mentioned among the leaders. In national documents there are embedded the principals of solidarity, rightness, service availability and other principles irrespective of race, sex, income and other differences. A right to a health care, as the duty of a state to care for a health of society and as an individual right, is confirmed in the Constitution of Lithuanian Republic (2008), in the 1 part of article 53 it is said that, „the state provides for the health of its people and guarantees medical care and services when a person is sick, the law determines the order of the provision of free medical help in state medical institutions to the citizens“. The patient rights are regulated in more detail by Lithuanian Republic Civic Code (Valstybės, 2002), Lithuanian Republic Law of Patient rights and damage compensation (Valstybės, 1996), and by other laws and law acts. It is important to emphasize, that right to a health care is understood as a constitutional duty of the state to care for health of the whole society – as a social right, and not as a individual (patient's) right (Birmontienė, 2007). The continuity of these principles is embedded in declared priorities of the President of Lithuanian Republic (2008) and in the 15th programme of state activity (2008). The guarantee of a certain health care level should be included in the minimal constitutional rights, such as a right to minimal living level, main lodging (settling), to school education and professional training. In some countries, including Lithuania, the patients' right and state's responsibility for availability of quality health care are confirmed by laws but because of relatively low level of economical development of Lithuania in the context of European Union, because of continuing transformation from administrative economy to market economy, and because of even slower change of values, and slow realization of man's rights to health and social justice in this sphere, problem of realization in our country, as in many other post-communist countries, is more actual than in democratic West countries. The most notable scale of these problems is in countryside, in which still resides every third citizen of the country and in which social economic transformation, which began in 1990, happened and is still happening more painfully and more contradictory as is shown by scientific research (Kalėdienė, 2010).

In summary we can deduce, that health care is that sphere, in which the questions of individual and social ethics are most noticeably integrated and the solving of these questions demands economical, political and legal solutions, and not only the continual incitement to sacrifice in order to make quality health care services more available.

THE ROLE OF MEDIA WHILE IMPROVING THE IMAGE OF HEALTH CARE

According to theory of social constructivism, the media constructs the social meanings and offer them to society, and society further constructs the social reality, taking into account or not to presented symbolic media constructions.

It is obvious that the information is not objective, information is, as journalist understands it, and it depends on the culture of news presentation. The society's information means – are peculiar filters, which select received information. Therefore the process of social constructivism happens in the structures of media itself and it reveals itself in selection of the news, which is neither accidental, nor subjective. It happens according to the schemes of interpretation, importance and actuality, which are determined by bureaucratic institutions, which are either the sources of events or they are initiating them. The society's information means in part structuralize the problems which are considered actual in society. If the particular problem is much reported by various media channels, it is considered more actual in society and political arena. Though there are various factors, which can make influence on causal connection among the content of media, the opinion of the state and solutions adopted by political government (Rapolienė, 2010).

The agendas of media and state make influence on the agenda of political government, which structuralize the priorities of the media. The contrary effect is also possible, when the priorities of the state determine the agenda of the media. This should also be true in the sphere of the health care. While acting in market conditions, media takes into account the interests of audience and most often tries to meet their demands. Agendas of media and state are closely connected. On one hand media is an important source of information for political government institutions. On the other hand, society's information means, such as government control mechanism and guardians of public interest, pays especially much attention to political news.

This strategic position is important to the relation between health care and media. What do health professionals expect from mass media? First of all they expect basic understanding of health care problems, the rise of prestige of doctor's profession, the participation of medias in forming the healthy lifestyle, and also cooperation and right and constructive reflection of health care questions for the sake of patients. That would be an opposite to powerful commodity advertising, which does not stimulate the improvement of health and promotion of healthy lifestyle. In consumer society the most successful are those strategies, which always emphasize, that a commodity not only meets the buyer's needs but also brings benefit to health. Convincing people, that they invest money towards their own health becomes very important while trying to sell medicaments, food supplies, and ecologically clean products. However people often becomes the hostage of limited information, unable of critical evaluation. That is why the research opposite to commercialized media content is an important task, in order to form a new approach of journalists, while reflecting the questions of society's healthiness.

It is important to emphasize a high degree of trust towards mass media and health care system in Lithuania. According to data of the poll in 2012, 3-15 of May, the trust for health care in Lithuania is 40,8 %. Similar data was achieved concerning media – 37,8 %, of the people asked. (Lietuvos, 2012).

The problems of health care is not neither necessary, nor sufficient condition, that they would come into agendas of society or policy, therefore very often, only after the misfortune or tragedy happens, the media, together with society and government pays attention to the problem, which already exists for a certain time. Media is concerned not only to inform, but also to meet the expectations of people, therefore it continuously searches for new, interesting, often controversial themes. Often the controversy of an event or a problem, its controversy and its contradictoriness becomes valuable information for mass media. One of these problems is suicides.

For many years Lithuania according to a number of suicides, falling to 100 000 citizens, is a leading country in European Union (and in whole Europe). According to the data of Eurostat (Eurostat, 2011), in the course of 12 years (1998–2009) Lithuania is in the first place, and the second place is divided among other countries (Hungary – 5, Latvia – 4, Slovenia – 2 times, Estonia – 1 time). The difference in indexes of suicides falling to 100 000 residents, changes from 6,1 to 16,7. This index in Lithuania

Journal of International Scientific Publications: Media and Mass Communication, Volume 1

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: <http://www.scientific-publications.net>

compared with the EU average during 12 years was higher 3–4 times. This means that in this aspect Lithuania is especially exceptional EU country.

Scientists researching suicidal behaviour among actions leading to suicide indicate imitative effect of media – it presents detailed, romantic image of suicide to persons, which find themselves in complicated life situations. The biggest influence of media in this aspect can be on children and teenagers. According to a data of World Health Organization, over 50 researches were carried, from which the deductions were made about the effect of presentation of suicides in media for imitative suicidal behaviour of people (media consumers) (WHO, 2008). Lithuania's specialists of suicide prevention, psychology scholars are providing recommendations for journalists for few decades, how to responsibly prepare and distribute information concerning suicides. For education of journalists on that theme the seminars were organized, and by various other ways (popular articles and brochures, regular connections with the authors of the articles) the information was spread.

The article 49 of the Ethical Code of Lithuanian journalists and publishers explains how ethically to provide information about suicide in media. The article states, that a surname of a person connected with suicide or an attempted suicide is not to be mentioned, also the persons helping to identify that person should not be mentioned; while announcing this information it should be mentioned with special care the motives and circumstances of suicide, and it is also desirable to announce about provision of psychological and social health. Therefore, for an inspector of journalists ethics, who supervise that a media should abide the law, and for commission of journalists and publishers, which decides the solutions concerning ethics of media, have the guidelines in consideration of the cases of inappropriate presentation of suicides in media content. However concrete and detailed criteria of inappropriate presentation of suicide in media they are still determined only in recommendations of socially active mental health specialists, which can be considered without any legal or ethic obligation. So far, politicians in legal aspect and also journalists and publishers in ethic aspect leave sufficiently large freedom to journalistic „creation“ to arrange publications or programmes about suicides.

In summary, we can deduce that part of media respects its audience, always takes into account recommendations, which are understandable for an emphatic individual for presentation of suicides in the media. The other part of media activists look at their audience as a selfless mass in the market of enterprises and takes into account these recommendations only when it is useful for them, i.e. it will not be profitable for them to pay fines, or they will feel the threat of losing the audience.

No less problematic sphere in Lithuania's media is the presentation of genetically modified organisms (GMO). The research works of Eurobarometer (Eurostat, 2011) shows, that Europeans identify the main sources of environment protection as such: television (73%), and social network (29%), and radio (23%). However in the reports of the media there is always emphasized, that the society lacks information about GMO, with explanation, that there matter is vague, that scientific research are still carried, that there are a lot of unanswered questions, which are connected with the use and control of GMO, that scientists and specialists themselves cannot answer, what would be possible consequences of the usage of GM food, what will be the effect of GM plants on biovariety, because one cannot foresee and know possible GMO consequences either for human, nor environment. The future of GMO in Lithuania depends on the attitude which is formed in the media.

The research of presentation of biotechnologies in the media reveals, that Lithuania's media often becomes a battlefield between GMO supporters and adversaries, while hoping for society's favour and agreement. One side supports the development of the science of biotechnologies, research of genes, GMO adaptation in medicine and in industry. These articles tell about the benefit of GMO, perspectives, and main participants are scientists and businessmen. The other side pays attention to the risk connected with GMO, control and the education of society. In this case the main participants are politicians and environmentalists, which view GMO negatively. During the interviews scientists

valued critically the readiness of Lithuania's journalists to write about such complicated issues, emphasizing their unreadiness and the need for professional science journalists. Often journalists are blamed for disinformation and search for sensations. The journalists themselves admit during the interviews, that the subject of GMO should be written more broadly, one must go deeper into the subject and that all themes connected with GMO are important. But it is often noted, that the society itself is not concerned neither with stem cells, nor in cloning, nor in gene research, that Lithuanians are more concerned with pulp fiction and criminals, that biotechnologies is not an attractive theme to the readers. But our opinion is, that there should appear journalists from health professionals or genetics, who could more professionally and more attractively influence and form the attitudes of society.

THE MYTHS OF MEDIA ABOUT DRUGS AND DRUG - ADDICTION

Continual supervision of media carried by Drug Control Department near the Government of Lithuanian Republic shows, that during the recent years the interest is growing of Lithuania's media in drug control and drug-addiction prevention. The biggest attention is paid to criminal themes (most popular themes – cleverly hidden drugs in the parcels sent to criminals, the arrest of drug dealers and their trials). However most of the of the problems arise not while providing criminal news about the drugs, but while depicting problematic spheres, while providing educational information. It is especially important that such information about drugs in the media would not incite curiosity and will not become a hidden advertisement for drugs.

In Lithuania's media the myths are popular about drug problem. Often a drug user is represented as intoxicated, untidy, with inclination for stealing, unemployed and antisocial person. But some of the modern drug-users are perfectly socially adapted, they have a job and even aspirations in career, and their attitude towards drugs – strictly that of a consumer. For a certain time they may not feel some serious consequences from drug abuse for their job, studies, career and personal life. Another myth – that if as much as possible frightened images and „terrifying“ illustrations be used, the more young people would be discouraged from drugs. There are obvious facts, that only frightening images are not effective, because the frightening is based on the consequences, which occur after long usage of drugs, and this does not effect people only experimenting on drugs, because they do not consider themselves as drug-addicts. Apart from that young people, while reading such „overly terrifying“ reports, think, that drug usage is more spread than it actually is, therefore for them drug usage looks as a normal phenomenon, the acknowledged norm in society. There can occur in the media such reports, that only certain part of the population suffer from drugs, the majority of population do not use drugs and have no connection with them. There is a dangerous myth that drugs are divided into „hard drugs“ and „light drugs“. The empirical researches show, that all drugs incite addiction. And there is another myth – an attitude, that damage-diminution programmes stimulate liberalization of drug policy, and that there is a tendency in the world to renounce damage- diminution programmes. Damage-diminution programmes are applied in all EU countries, USA and in other countries of the world. A lot of scientific researches were carried, which prove the effectiveness of damage-diminution programmes (they diminish the possibility to contract HIV, hepatitis B and C and other).

LIFE REFLECTIONS OF ELDERLY AND DISABLED IN THE MEDIA

Following the strategy of National overcoming of the consequences of aging (2004), the formation of the positive image of older people in Lithuania was acknowledged as a task of state level.

In media of Lithuania and in Western countries the heterogeneity of aging is not being embraced. In advertisement, television and in press elderly people are represented stereotypically, they are

Journal of International Scientific Publications: Media and Mass Communication, Volume 1

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: <http://www.scientific-publications.net>

considered to be non competent, weak, complaining, not possessing social skills, but at the same time as kind, supportive and wise. The images are divided in two categories: elderly people are represented as happy, healthy, rich or as vulnerable, miserable and suffering from dementia (Rapolienė, 2010).

In most cases elderly people are the victims: found dead, with bruises, burned, being robbed, deceived by „telephone swindlers“, fake postmen, passer-by teenagers, suffering from the home violence. In most cases their offenders are their children and grandchildren. The dominating criminal reports form an image of elderly people as weak, naive, and offended, especially women, which is also characteristic in the Western countries. The offenders are people of younger generation, often close members of the family. Noticeable institutionalization of old age emphasizes the image of older people as powerless and dependent on the care of younger people. The positive pole in Lithuania's media is represented not as an image of a senior citizen as healthy, rich, pleasantly passing his leisure, but an image of the fighter in the past, the activist of society and a deportee. Therefore in an image of the elderly people there is clearly emphasized motive of political and private offence (Rapolienė, 2010).

According to a data of Lithuanian Republic Social security and work ministry (2012), the number of disabled people in Lithuania corresponds to a data of United Nations Organization, that on a world scale the number of disabled people constitute 10 % of all population. Ruškus J. and Daugėla M. (2003) carried out a research *The structure and purposefulness of social physically disabled image in Lithuania's media (newspapers)*. According to the authors, the research shows, that the structure of representation of physical disability in media is multi dimensional and has more than one meaning. From one side, persons with physical disability are shown as realizing their deficiencies and are able to overcome them. From the other side they are just an object of the attitude and procedures of medical institutions. This is the only scientific research work about the representation of the socially vulnerable groups in Lithuania's media.

There were almost no research works carried in Lithuania, about how media represents people with mental disorders. In 2009 researchers of Umea, Vilnius and Bordeaux universities carried out a research (2009), which goal is to produce and extend knowledge about what image of mentally disturbed person is formed in Lithuania's media and compare it with the images in medias of Norway and Sweden.

In Sweden B.Höijer and J.Rasmussen (2005) carried out a research about the representation of violence and crimes, connected with psychical health problems in the biggest newspapers of the country and in the most famous television news show *Rapport*. They reached the conclusion, that in most of the articles and news reports the journalists do not make the difference between the person and a crime. The statement „mentally insane“ is often used as an explanation of the motive of the crime. It is also stated that in news reports it is almost impossible to find the other attitude towards a killer with a mental disorder. The researchers are worried about such presentation of news and images of mental disorders to people.

Similar researches (Morlandstø, 2011) were carried out in Norway, in order to reveal, how the psychic health and persons with mental disorder are represented in national and regional newspapers. The research showed that, journalists want to represent the experience of persons with mental disorder, but they talk very rarely to these persons. Instead of them, journalists talk to doctors and politicians. Because of a certain distance between the media and the problems of persons with mental disorder, in most cases in news reports about crimes and psychical health, it is indicated as a reason for violent crime.

Valuable research results, which were obtained by comparing how different disabled groups are represented in newspapers in Canada and Israel. The results showed that persons with mental disorder

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ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: <http://www.scientific-publications.net>

in most cases are represented negatively than persons with physical disability. The researchers deduced that media strengthens the negative image of disabled and especially persons with mental disorder. H.Stuart (2011) emphasizes, that media „presents highly dramatized and distorted image of persons with mental disorder, especially emphasizing the danger and criminal nature“. She also indicates, that more positive and more precise representation of persons with mental disorder in the media would accordingly change the attitude of society and disabled people's attitude to themselves. The general tendency of such articles states that people in the press are condemned earlier, before the court does it.

How does Lithuania look in the view of Scandinavian scientists? What is the main source of information of the articles in Lithuania, which deal in one way or another about the theme of mental disorders? In most cases the source was not mentioned precisely, therefore we can deduce that the source was journalist himself. Police was the most identifiable source of information – 17% of articles. The other mostly identifiable source was a psychiatrist – 16% of all articles. As a source of information the persons with mental disorder constitute only 10% of articles. Politicians, the specialists of care and welfare (for example social workers, nurses and other) were mentioned as the rarest source of information – only 4% of articles.

While analysing what is the source of information according to the main themes of articles, one can notice, that when the main theme is mental disorder, the source of information is someone else (36% of articles, in which the most probable source is – the journalists themselves), after that goes the psychiatrists (17% of articles), and only after them – the persons with mental disorder (14% of articles). In the articles about „crime“ the main source of information is the police (29% of cases), judges and lawyers. When the main person of the article is a person with mental disorder (38% of articles), he is indicated as a source of information only in 22% of articles. Therefore, even in those cases, when the article is written about persons with mental disorder, they are allowed only occasionally to have a voice.

In the articles chosen for analysis there is almost no statistic information about mental disorders (such information is indicated only in 4% of the articles). We can say that journalists do not try to ground their statements with statistic data (or facts). Also the information is not provided about the organizations, which provide information in situations of crisis – in suicide cases and other. Whereas from media one can expect socially responsible actions – to provide information about the organizations, which provide help in cases of suicides and like situations, after that, when they are covered in press (Ljuslinder, 2011).

The differences stated in the research among three countries – in comparison with Norway, in Lithuania's and Sweden's media are much less reports about the policy of psychical health and legal acts. Also in Norway the articles of debate nature are much more popular (debates, chronicle, letters of readers, leading articles and caricatures) than in other two countries. In Lithuania the situation is quite opposite, because the theme of mental health policy in public space is absolutely not discussed. About the increased interest one can judge from the comments on the articles in internet sites, which often turns into discussions and debates. It is probable that after some time has passed, the discussions of mental health policy in Lithuania will move to public space.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Health care is such a sphere, in which questions of individual and social ethics are mostly integrated and their solution requires economical, political and legal solutions, and not only continual incitement to sacrifice in order to make quality health care services more available.

2. The ethics norm of health policy is understood as an elimination of health discrepancies at national scale and realization of legalities and principle of social justice in health policy. And this means equal rights, an attention to most vulnerable citizen groups and availability to health and medical care.
3. Man's right to health care, as a social right of a man, is not absolute, i.e. cannot be fully guaranteed, because it depends not only from organizational actions of a state, but also from individual characteristics of a man. Therefore a right to health care must be understood as a right to resources, goods, services and conditions, necessary to guarantee the best state of health, but cannot be understood as a right to be healthy.
4. Media, while spreading information connected with health becomes the inseparable part of national health system. Good contact between patient and the personnel of health care, and their mutual trust is very important part of the process of solving the problem, not rarely also a guarantee. The health professionals expect basic understanding of health care problems, the rise of prestige of doctor's profession, the participation of medias while forming the healthy lifestyle, and it would be an opposite to powerful commodity advertisement, which forms the consumer's view to the formation of healthy lifestyle.
5. There is a tendency of dominating medicalization and behaviourist (conduct) models in the media, and the main strategic problems of strengthening of social health – the maintenance of health in the sphere of social justice, unemployment, misery, disbalance of ecosystem, stress and other are left behind.

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