

Presentation of obesity in Swiss-German newspapers from 1955 to 2005

Project: 368

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This dissertation examines the question, how Swiss German media cover the topic of overweight. Over the last years overweight has gained an increased interest in the Swiss media. The public awareness for overweight and obesity in Switzerland was raised in the mid 1980ies. In newspapers the topic gained public interest in the 1990ies, parallel to the publication of the fourth Swiss report on nutrition, with its presentation as pre-stage of a disease. The medicalization of the overweight topic is mostly limited to the quality papers. The tabloid press privilege aesthetic and moral-ethic focuses.

Compared to its representation in scientific publications, the representation of overweight in public media shows a time delay of at least 10 years. Therefore we can conclude that overweight is a scientific topic which has been picked up fairly late by the public media. Since the beginning of the 1990ies the discourse in the scientific literature is concentrating more on the social meaning of obesity and no more on the individual-medical part.

The results of the newspaper analysis show the dominance of an individualistic depiction of overweight as a personal nutrition problem. This framing should be enlarged to the presentation of the responsibility of the society in order to establish efficient and long lasting politics of prevention.

Key Words:

Obesity, framing, print media, overweight, adiposity, content analysis, newspaper analysis, Switzerland