

Abstract

The bachelor thesis addresses the media representation of elderly in the Czech press and its transformation before, during, and "after" the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic was a crucial period for the media representation of elderly, as seniors were identified as one of the most at-risk groups, age became the main determining variable of risk, and there was a great wave of ageism. The research was conducted using quantitative content analysis, and media articles (n=450) were manually coded. The chi-square test was used to evaluate statistical significance. The main finding is that in all periods, aging is associated more with negative sentiment, and during the pandemic, there were statistically significant changes in its representation. Older people were significantly less associated with positive sentiment during this period, and there was a considerable increase in ambivalent sentiment (positive and negative at the same time). During the pandemic, elderly were most associated with the theme of help and security, where seniors were portrayed as passive, sick, and incompetent, and therefore must rely on other active members of society. Stereotypical and distorted representation can lead to discrimination and marginalization of seniors, both during times of crisis and beyond, and therefore, it is important to address this issue in public debate. With the accelerating aging of society, this issue is becoming increasingly relevant.