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CHARLENE ELLIOTT AND JOSH GREENBERG (EDS.),
COMMUNICATION AND HEALTH: MEDIA, MARKETING AND RISK.
SINGAPORE: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2022, 344 PP.

Review
UDC 316.77+613(048.83)
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First published in 2022, *Communication and Health: Media, Marketing and Risk* is edited by Charlene Elliott, who holds a dual professorship of communication, media, and film as well as kinesiology at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, and Josh Greenberg, professor of communication and media studies at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Though the worrying times of the coronavirus pandemic shone a spotlight on the complex intersection between communication and health, the introduction to the volume states firmly that it, is “not a book about the COVID-19 pandemic” (p. 2). Rather, it aims to present new critical analyses on the nexus of communication and health from diverse standpoints.

The book opens with a short foreword (pp. v-viii) by noted health law scholar Timothy Caulfield, who notes the timeliness of the volume and its general importance for the field. This is followed by co-editor Charlene Elliott’s Introduction (pp. 1-15), which also bears the subtitle of “Communication and Health”. In echoing the book’s title, Elliott underscores that the novel usage of the term differs from the more established field of health communication because of the critical attention it pays to the interwoven nature of both aspects. In recognizing the need for greater critical focus on communication in this context, she locates the term within the appropriate theoretical literature, after which an overview of the book’s contents is given. Separated into four thematic segments, it comprises fifteen unnumbered chapters

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written by nineteen scholars who primarily – but not exclusively – have a background in communication studies.

The first thematic bloc, 'Representing Health', centres on how communication and health are portrayed in the mass media – for example, news, on television, in the press, and even on posters. As such, co-editor Josh Greenberg's opening chapter (pp. 19-37) discusses the general importance for communication research of moving away from solely focusing on media representations of health towards a more holistic analysis – i.e., with greater exploration of contextual aspects such as broader journalistic practices and the public's reception of health-related media content. Subsequently, Layla Cameron's study (pp. 38-55) is a qualitative examination of how fatness is framed on television. This is done via a theoretical analysis of the popular American reality television show *My 600lb Life*, situating the programme's participants' attempts to lose weight and undergo bariatric surgery within the literature on anti-fat and weight stigma. And with the title of "Who wants to live forever? You want to live well", Kirsten Ellison's contribution (pp. 56-72) analyses articles from dozens of popular science publications to evaluate how anti-ageing narratives are depicted, noting the importance of good health with regard to the contrast between length of life and quality of life. The first section's final chapter is by Sheryl N. Hamilton (pp. 73-97), whose study examines the visual communication modalities of public health through handwashing posters disseminated by the health authorities in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, including with relevant visual examples.

The second section, 'Marketing and Promoting Health', analyses the influence and impact of advertising and consumption in communication. As such, co-editor Charlene Elliott (pp. 101-121) examines how and why vitamin supplements were marketed to children, performing a detailed content analysis which explores not only advertising-related aspects but also nutrition. Daniel J. Robinson's historically-focused contribution (pp. 123-141) jumps back in time to the 1970s, where he provides an overview of the marketing communications used by the Canadian cigarette industry at that time. Returning to the present day, Emily Truman (pp. 143-163) examines the contemporary dynamic surrounding online social media influencers and their role in communicating dietary and health-related content. This is done through the prism of what these influencers represent, promote, and their degree of perceived authenticity. Lastly, Kate Holland reflects on how schemes raising awareness of mental health are marketed and disseminated (pp. 165-187),

providing a critical evaluation of concepts such as mental health literacy and mental health first aid.

Entitled 'Co-producing Health', the third section opens with the book's only multi-authored collaboration (pp. 191-207), by Sara L. Martel, Matthew Strang, Nikita Singh, Salima Shariff, and Seema Marwaha, who undertake a narrative analysis of videos depicting patients' stories as featured on the websites of healthcare institutions, detailing how communication analysis can be important for healthcare policy and practice. The popular 'Movember' awareness-raising initiative is the subject of Matt Ventresca's chapter (pp. 209-230), which examines this global campaign through the lens of social media, charities and branding, and broader concepts of men's health and masculinity. Subsequently, Tina Sikka (pp. 231-249) offers a detailed theoretical analysis of how good health is indeed a socially-constructed concept.

The studies in the fourth section, 'Managing Health: Troubling Surveillance and Communicating Risk', all revolve around questions pertaining to the digitalisation of modern society and its impact on communication and health. As such, Svetlana Smirnova (pp. 253-270) analyses related implications of usage of the popular health tracker Fitbit, followed by Sandra Robinson's (pp. 271-289) study of the health implications of big data. Devon Grayson's contribution (pp. 291-314) deals with the important and potentially polemical area of vaccine communication from an ethical standpoint. Finally, the volume closes with Penelope Ironstone's study (pp. 315-333). Subtitled 'Mediation, discourse, and masks', she enumerates some of the various challenges which the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated, before analysing discourses relating to masks through a communication studies lens.

As illustrated by the preceding summary, *Communication and Health: Media, Marketing and Risk* is a compilation of much-needed critical insights on the important intersection between communication and health. As a brief aside, which is also noted in the Introduction (p. 6), the book's thematic contributions centre largely on the Anglophone world. Though this does give cohesion to the edited volume, subsequent research could be broadened to possibly involve studies from other linguistic and cultural contexts. Within the range of topics analysed (e.g., from reality television to cigarette marketing to data surveillance), the individual chapters are all characterised by their academic rigour and will certainly be of value beyond the realm of communication studies. Accordingly, this book will be a seminal reference

not only for scholars of communication studies, but also for those working in public health, medical humanities, business and management, and other allied disciplines.

Reference

Elliott, C., & Greenberg, J. (Eds.) (2022). *Communication and health: Media, marketing and risk*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-4290-6>

Primljeno: 15. 9. 2023.

Prihvaćeno: 26. 9. 2023.