

UDK 614.253.5:070  
616-036.21COVID-19(497.5)  
Izvorni znanstveni rad  
Primljeno 28. siječnja 2022.

## Representation of the nursing profession in Croatian daily newspapers during the COVID-19 pandemic

**JADRANKA PAVIĆ**

University of Applied Health Sciences, Zagreb

**VIŠNJA BREBRIĆ**

Center for Education Dubrava, Zagreb

**HRVOJE JAKOPOVIĆ, PhD**

Faculty of Political Science of Zagreb University

### ABSTRACT

This paper presents a content analysis conducted with the aim of determining the differences in representation as well as in media coverage and reporting on nurses in Croatia's daily newspapers at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in Croatia and in the period before the crisis. The content analysis confirmed the assumption that the number of reports on nursing in the media would be significantly higher than in the previous period, i.e., before the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, during of the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses were in general positively perceived through the media. This is particularly evident through journalistic forms where the number of reports on nurses/ technicians was 88.89% compared to 11.11% in the pre-pandemic period. The number of interviews with nurses during the pandemic amounted to 95%, compared to 5% in the period before the pandemic, while the number of informative articles amounted to 89.51% during of the COVID-19 crisis, as opposed to 10.49% before the COVID-19 crisis.

**Key words:** nurses/technicians, nursing, newspapers, COVID-19 crisis, media representation

## Introduction

Despite the fact that the role played by nurses in protecting population health is extremely demanding, and in the face of the outcomes achieved by healthcare professionals, the role of nurses in modern society is not sufficiently recognised and the public does not perceive them in the way they actually deserve. The reasons for this status are numerous and are related to the historical heritage that is embedded in strongly manifested hierarchical organisation of healthcare institutions, which implies subordination of nurses to the profession of physicians, a lower number of nurses with a higher-education qualifications, as well as in the fact that nursing is a predominantly women's occupation, which is often associated with a great number of stereotypes, of which neither men employed in nursing are spared.

The reputation of each profession in society is related to the status reflected in various areas: from the position in the work process, social reputation and power to material status, which greatly affects the prospect of one's individual development, as well as the development of the entire profession. Therefore, shaping ideas, forming judgments and drawing conclusions about the value of the nursing profession are closely related to the "voice of the public" which vocalises the views and perceptions of this profession and its image (Greg & Magilvy, 2001).

When speaking about the image of nurses, in the book „Nursing – image and reality” Skoko emphasizes:

”...I did a mini-survey to see how Croatian citizens perceive this profession. On the one hand, most people have associations such as: sacrifice, helping, kindness, helpfulness... However, the second group includes negative associations such as: illness, bossing, harshness, bureaucratization, barriers to doctors... In addition, a significant number of associations relate to sexual illusions, which can be associated with old stereotypes but also cheap movies for entertainment, in which nurses are perceived as sexual objects.” (Skoko, 2009, p.116).

The media play a major role and often influence the formation of public opinion, which frequently gives rise to numerous stereotypes about nurses, their reputation and public opinion towards this profession with the highest number of employees in the healthcare system. The coverage of nursing in the media highly depends on journalists' and editors' decisions to give nurses the opportunity to appear in the newspapers, television and radio. In most cases, journalists are not very often focused on nursing in their media reporting and for that reason nurses have very little opportunity to promote their own knowledge and innovativeness. Many hospitals and healthcare systems hold to their policies of not allowing nurses to have a media appearance (Mason, Isaacs et Colby, 2011). One of the most significant studies in this research area is *The Woodhull Study on Nursing and the Media* (SSTI, 1997) which was conducted by international nursing association Sigma Theta Tau. This study analyzed 20,000 articles, of which 2,600 were on health, published in American newspapers, magazines and other publications. Research has shown devastating results: nurses rarely write or are rarely quoted in topics about health system problems, healthcare guidelines, and the challenges they face in the nursing profession. Nurses are cited or referred to in only 4% of articles on health and in less than 1% of articles in US News & World Report, Time, Newsweek and Business Week nurses were mentioned. On the other hand, doctors and dentists were the source in 43% of newspaper articles (SSTI, 1997).

With the aim of tracking changes in the media coverage of nurses, the study entitled *The Woodhull Study Revisited: Nurses' Representation in Health News Media 20 Years Later*, in which 537 articles that reported on healthcare were analyzed. In the study, nurses were identified as a source in only 2% of citations in articles and were never a source in health policy stories. When cited, nurses mostly commented on their profession (Mason et al., 2018). Similar or significantly worse results were obtained in the research *Analytical Review of Nursing in the Media* in which a content analysis of published articles in the daily press *Večernji list* and *Vjesnik* and the Croatian news agency (HINA) from January 1 to December 31, 2006. It was determined that nurses or the profession of nurses were represented by 0.007% in *Večernji list*, 0.012% in *Vjesnik* and 0.011% in HINA. The content in which the nurses were mentioned was mainly related to occasional topics (Nursing Day) or complaints (negative approach) and through the incidental mention of the nurse within the topics concerning health issues. In the media, nurses were not information sources in the interviews, news, or other media forms (Pavić, 2006).

The attitude of the public towards certain people, events or professions alters on the basis of specific situations in society, crisis situations and situations that cause significant changes in the population (Pavić, 2015). A recent example of this is the current public health crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Croatia did not evade this pandemic which changed the economic, political and economic situation at the global level. It is certain that the media at that time often reported on the pandemic, i.e., the epidemic, communicating on something completely new, something that medicine had not hitherto encountered. There emerged a media interest in nurses who were the mainstay of patient care, organisation, reorganization of departments, triage of patients. It was the time when all professions and all those involved in the treatment of COVID-19 patients were utterly engaged in the process of providing health care, and their significant role in this crisis situation was visible through media coverage. It was through this situation, which was continuously exposed to public attention through media reporting, that the work of nurses, as well as their role in multidisciplinary teams, became more visible.

### **Nurses in the pandemic time**

The World Health Organization designated 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife (WHO, 2020). There is no doubt that the year 2020 was full of challenges for nurses and nursing, since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. In their fight against the coronavirus, nurses made great professional contribution to curbing and suppressing the epidemic, as well as to health care of the sick. By providing health care to patients diagnosed with COVID-19, many nurses around the world were exposed to the deadly virus. The number of confirmed deaths among nurses exceeds 2,200 and with still the high rate of infections in the nursing workforce, overburdened staff experience psychological stress because they are faced with increasing workload (ICN, 2021).

Healthcare facilities around the world experienced numerous changes and various adversities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both in Croatia and around the world, nurses faced a great number of serious and dynamic challenges, which significantly marked their work in a very short time. The changes that overnight became the standard of living and working for the largest population in healthcare - nurses, truly marked the Year of the Nurse. In a very short time, it was necessary to reorganise hospital wards, adapt them to the new situation, specific circumstances, quickly cope with them and make decisions in new, unpredictable and unknown situations and participate in making important decisions at the level of the entire institution. Life and work of nurses in a very short period of time completely changed (Pavić, 2020; Režek & Benceković, 2020).

These were the moments when nurses subordinated their private lives to their profession, to the battle against the unknown virus, dedicatedly saving human lives, at the same time risking their own lives and health, which is why they were often called heroines on the covers of various daily newspapers. Thus, *Slobodna Dalmacija* wrote: "They are heroines, on the first line of defence, they are the first barrier to the coronavirus," (Družijanić, 2020). During the coronavirus epidemic, many celebrities recognised the sacrifice made by all health professionals. For example, Liam Gallagher, the former Oasis frontman, said that these brave women and men were doing an amazing job and that we were fortunate to have them. In gratitude to them, he organised a concert at London's O2 Arena in London, *Glas Slavonije* (T.K., 2020) reported. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who himself became a victim of the coronavirus and was therefore especially grateful to the medical technicians who nursed him during his illness and hospitalisation, said: "And the reason in the end my body did start to get enough oxygen was because for every second of the night they were watching, and they were thinking and they were caring and making the interventions I needed," (*Jutarnji list*, 2020). *Sky News* reported that Johnson especially praised the treatment provided by doctors and nurses and said: „ I owe coronavirus doctors and nurses my life after treatment. I can't thank them enough," (*V.Mo.*2020) German politicians called them "heroes and heroines of everyday life". Therefore, the heroines and heroes were applauded on the terraces, balloons were released, fireworks were organised (Dragojević, 2020).

Given the findings of the research on the media representation of the nursing profession in the media throughout history and new situations during the coronary crisis, the question arises, how much the publics recognized the importance of the nursing profession in medical treatment processes and their involvement in the health crises.

## Research objective

The aim of this research was to determine representation and the manner of media coverage of nurses/technicians in the time when the coronavirus epidemic emerged in Croatia and in the time before the pandemic. Furthermore, the aim was to determine whether the period of crisis, in which nurses were the bearers of healthcare activities, significantly affected their representation in the media. Moreover, the aim of the research was to determine the differences in the form, the manner of media reporting on nurses and text content during these periods. This research covered relevant articles published in the daily newspapers *Jutarnji list*, *Večernji list*, *24 sata*, *Slobodna Dalmacija* and *Glas Slavonije*. The aforementioned newspapers were chosen for several reasons - they have a long tradition of publication in the Republic of Croatia, they have their own readership that is passed down from generation to generation, as well as a high newspaper circulation. The research was conducted in the period from 1 September 2019 till 1 December 2019, i.e., before the pandemic, and in the period from 15 February 2020 until 15 May 2020, i.e., in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Hypotheses

H1 There are statistically significant differences in representation of nursing in the media during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the previous period. The number of reports on nursing in the media is expected to be significantly higher than in the previous period.

H2 There are statistically significant differences in the way the media report on nursing during the coronavirus pandemic compared to the previous period due to:

1. the journalistic form
2. the manner of writing
3. text content.

## 1. Materials and methods

The articles published in the newspapers under scrutiny were analysed in the above specified periods in terms of the following items: the number of articles and the journalistic form which showed whether it was a news story, an informative article, an interview, a report, a commentary or other. Furthermore, the content analysis covered the manner of writing about nurses/technicians, the manner of writing about attitudes of the public/individuals towards nurses and the analysis of the manner of writing about attitudes of the public/individuals towards nurses/technicians by taking either a positive or a negative approach, divided into the following categories: professionalism, empathy, status and relations with others, appearance, expressions of gratitude and complaints.

For this purpose, two matrices were created. Each of them was named after the observed period in question: the Autumn matrix (N=57) and the Spring matrix (N=348). A unit of analysis was one news article. The total number of news articles published in determined period was included in this analysis. Interrater reliability (two coders) was tested with Cohen's kappa coefficient which indicated "almost perfect agreement".

Subsequently, it was necessary to determine the form of writing, i.e., whether it was a news story, an informative article, an interview, a report, a commentary/review or other. The manner of writing about nurses implied the necessity of classifying articles into the following sections: positive writing, negative writing, neutral writing or incidental mention of nurses. The manner of writing about the public's attitude towards nurses included expressions of gratitude and complaints.

The content of a text about nurses - a positive approach included professionalism with an emphasis on expertise, reliability, responsibility, accuracy, then empathy with an emphasis on devotedness, willingness to help, kindness, warmth. The content of texts further included the status / relations with others, which related to hard work, inadequate working conditions, denied rights, abuse of nurses by patients and families. It also included the appearance related to the tidiness and visual aspect of the nurse. The content of texts on nurses with a negative approach included the same categories as the content with a positive approach. The analysis of the articles was qualitative and quantitative.

In the processing, the methods of descriptive statistics shown in graphs and tables were used.

### Statistical methods used in the research

#### Chi-square test

The results of the Chi-square test with Fisher's correction for small samples will be presented as part of the research. The Chi-square test belongs to the non-parametric tests and is based on the frequency distribution within the contingency table (and not on the variable); the data are assumed to be from a randomly selected sample. This test is used when the researcher wants to determine whether some of the obtained (observed) frequencies deviate from the frequencies expected under a particular hypothesis.

The following pages will present the testing with respect to the selected parameters of the analysis in relation to the Autumn and Spring matrices and the observed newspapers. The testing will be conducted by means of the Chi-square test with Fisher's correction for small samples.

Table 1: Comparison of the number of articles according to the observed periods of analysis

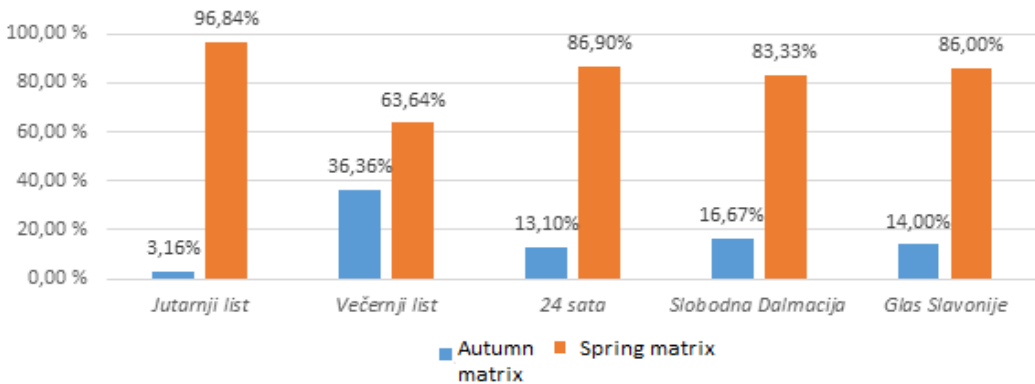
Daily newspaper	Autumn matrix		Spring matrix		Total		p*
	Number of articles				N	%	
	N	%	N	%			
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	5	3,16 %	153	96,84 %	158	100,00 %	<b>p &lt; 0,001</b>
<i>Večernji list</i>	28	36,36 %	49	63,64 %	77	100,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	11	13,10 %	73	86,90 %	84	100,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	6	16,67 %	30	83,33 %	36	100,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	7	14,00 %	43	86,00 %	50	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

If the level of significance in *Number of articles* is observed, it can be seen that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed daily newspapers. 96.84% of articles in *Jutarnji list* were recorded in the *Spring matrix*, while 36.36% of articles in *Večernji list* were recorded in the *Autumn matrix*.

Chart 1. Comparison of the number of articles according to the observed periods of analysis



Source: Created by the authors

Data concerning the Autumn matrix are provided on the following pages.

Table 2. Form

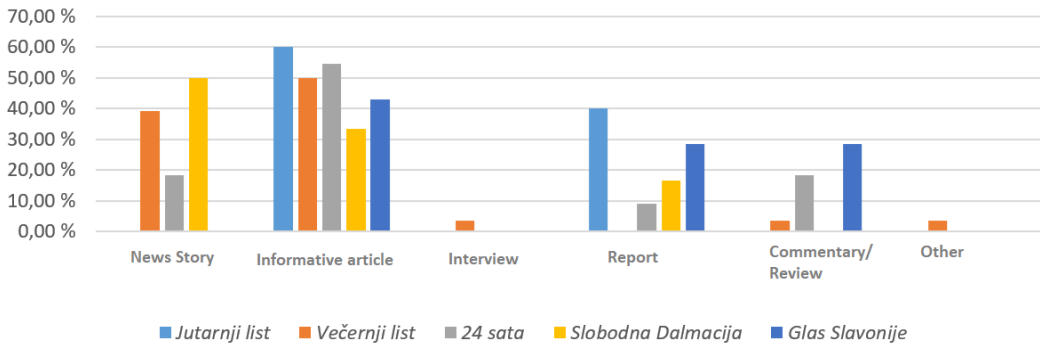
Daily newspaper	News story		Informative article		Interview		Report		Commentary / Review		Other				p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	0	0,00 %	3	60,00 %	0	0,00 %	2	40,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	5	100,00 %	0,234
<i>Večernji list</i>	11	39,29 %	14	50,00 %	1	3,57 %	0	0,00 %	1	3,57 %	1	3,57 %	28	100,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	2	18,18 %	6	54,55 %	0	0,00 %	1	9,09 %	2	18,18 %	0	0,00 %	11	100,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	3	50,00 %	2	33,33 %	0	0,00 %	1	16,67 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	6	100,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	0	0,00 %	3	42,86 %	0	0,00 %	2	28,57 %	2	28,57 %	0	0,00 %	7	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

The level of significance of the Chi-square test between *Form* and *Daily Newspapers* is 0.234 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, no statistically significant difference was identified for the observed variables.

Chart 2. Form



Source: Created by the authors

Table 3. Manner of writing about nurses/technicians

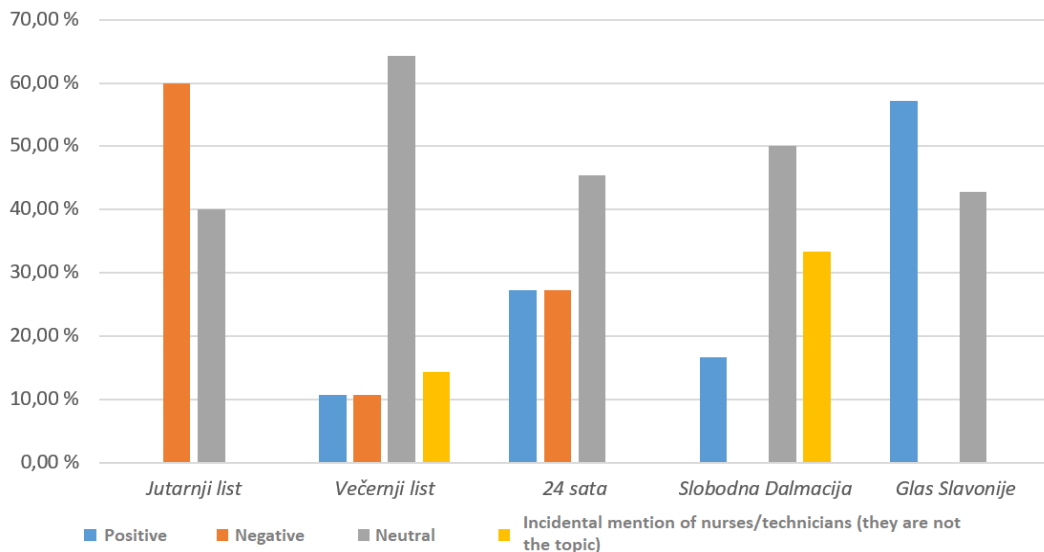
Daily newspaper	Positive		Negative		Neutral		Incidental mention of nurses / technicians (they are not the topic)		Total		p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	0	0,00 %	3	60,00 %	2	40,00 %	0	0,00 %	5	100,00 %	0,021
<i>Večernji list</i>	3	10,71 %	3	10,71 %	18	64,29 %	4	14,29 %	28	100,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	3	27,27 %	3	27,27 %	5	45,45 %	0	0,00 %	11	100,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	1	16,67 %	0	0,00 %	3	50,00 %	2	33,33 %	6	100,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	4	57,14 %	0	0,00 %	3	42,86 %	0	0,00 %	7	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

When the level of significance in *Manner of writing about nurses/technicians* is observed, it can be established that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p = 0.021$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed daily newspapers. In this sense, *Večernji list* had the largest share of neutral writing (64.29%), while the greatest number of positive articles was published in *Glas Slavonije* (57.14%).

Chart 3. Manner of writing about nurses/technicians



Source: Created by the authors



**Table 4: Content of texts about nurses/technicians – positive approach**

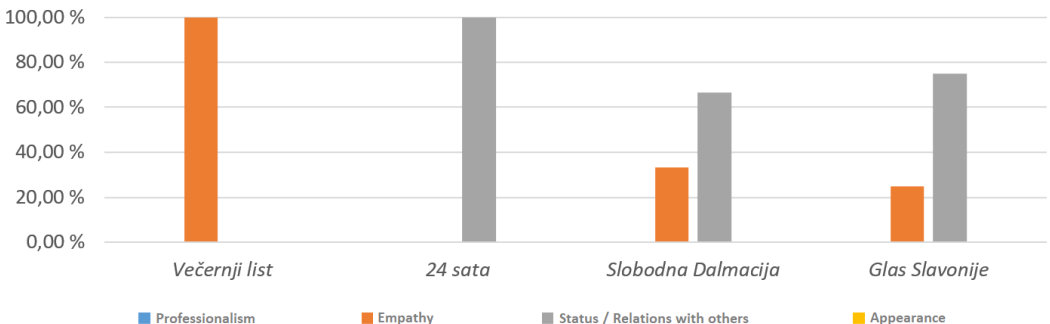
Daily newspaper	PROFESSION-ALISM (emphasis on expertise, reliability, responsibility, accuracy)		EMPATHY (devotedness, willingness to help, kindness, warmth)		STATUS / RELATIONS WITH OTHERS (hard work, inadequate working conditions, denied rights, abuse of nurses by patients and families)		APPEARANCE (visual aspect, tidiness)		Total		p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<i>Večernji list</i>	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	<b>0,034</b>
<i>24 sata</i>	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	0	0,00 %	1	33,33 %	2	66,67 %	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	0	0,00 %	1	25,00 %	3	75,00 %	0	0,00 %	4	100,00 %	

\*Fisher's exact test

Source: Created by the authors

Analysis of *Content of texts on nurses/technicians - a positive approach* shows the value of Fisher's exact test which is  $p = 0.034$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed daily newspapers. No newspapers mentioning *Professionalism* or *Appearance of nurses/technicians* were recorded.

**Chart 4. Content of texts about nurses/technicians – positive approach**



Source: Created by the authors

Table 5: Content of texts about nurses/technicians – negative approach

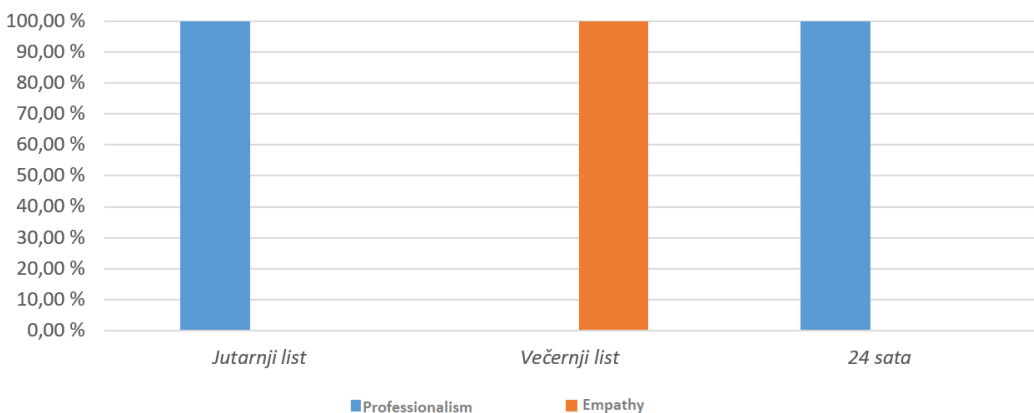
Daily newspaper	Nurses								Total	p*	
	PROFESSION-ALISM (unprofessional conduct, unreliability, unethicity)		EMPATHY (arrogance, lack of empathy, cold manner)		STATUS / RELATIONS WITH OTHERS (laziness, negligence, inadequate communication, privileged position)		APPEAR-ANCE (sex appeal, immoral behaviour)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			N
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	1	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	1	100,00 %	0,057
<i>Večernji list</i>	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	3	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	

\*Fisher's exact test

Source: Created by the authors

The level of significance of *Fisher's exact test* between *Content of texts on nurses/technicians - negative approach* and *Daily newspapers* is 0.057 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, no statistically significant difference was identified for the observed variables.

Chart 5: Content of texts about nurses/technicians – negative approach



Source: Created by the authors

Data concerning the Spring matrix are provided on the following pages.

Table 6. Form

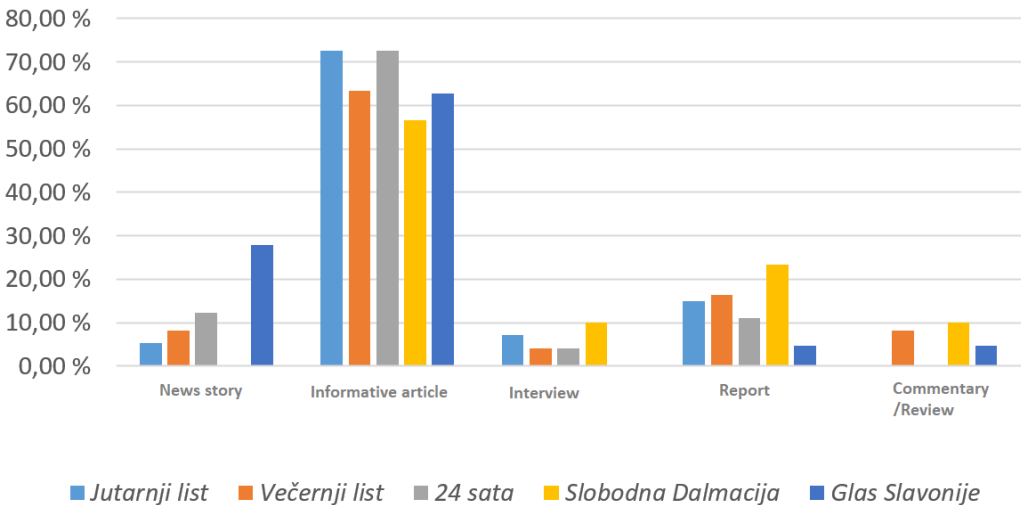
Daily newspaper	News story		Informative article		Interview		Report		Commentary / Review		Total		p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	8	5,23 %	111	72,55 %	11	7,19 %	23	15,03 %	0	0,00 %	153	100,00 %	p < 0,001
<i>Večernji list</i>	4	8,16 %	31	63,27 %	2	4,08 %	8	16,33 %	4	8,16 %	49	100,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	9	12,33 %	53	72,60 %	3	4,11 %	8	10,96 %	0	0,00 %	73	100,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	0	0,00 %	17	56,67 %	3	10,00 %	7	23,33 %	3	10,00 %	30	100,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	12	27,91 %	27	62,79 %	0	0,00 %	2	4,65 %	2	4,65 %	43	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

If the level of significance in *Form* is observed, it can be seen that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed daily newspapers, with most informative articles, interviews and reports recorded in *Jutarnji list*.

Chart 6. Form



Source: Created by the authors

Table 7: Manner of writing about nurses/technicians

Daily newspaper	Positive		Negative		Neutral		Incidental mention of nurses / technicians (they are not the topic)		Total		p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	33	21,57 %	2	1,31 %	26	16,99 %	92	60,13 %	153	100,0 %	<b>p &lt; 0,001</b>
<i>Večernji list</i>	26	53,06 %	1	2,04 %	16	32,6 5%	6	12,24 %	49	100,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	9	26,47 %	1	2,94 %	11	32,35 %	13	38,24 %	34	100,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	18	60,00 %	1	3,33 %	4	13,33 %	7	23,33 %	30	100,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	12	27,91 %	0	0,00 %	5	11,63 %	26	60,47 %	43	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

In the analysis of *Manner of writing about nurses/technicians*, it can be noticed that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was observed with regard to the observed daily newspapers, with the most negative, neutral and incidental articles recorded in *Jutarnji list*.

Chart 7. Manner of writing about nurses/technicians



Source: Created by the authors

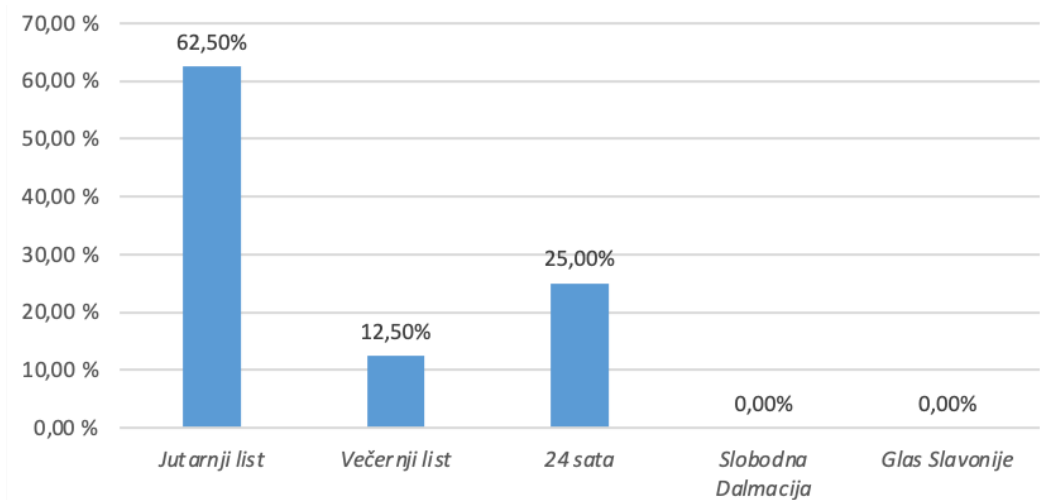
**Table 8: Manner of writing about the public’s attitude towards nurses**

Daily newspaper	Expressions of gratitude		Complaints		p
	N	%	N	%	
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	5	62,50 %	0	0,00 %	--
<i>Večernji list</i>	1	12,50 %	0	0,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	2	25,00 %	0	0,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	
Total	8	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	

Source: Created by the authors

If the data for *Manner of writing about the public's attitude towards nurses – Expressions of gratitude* are observed, it can be seen that 62.50% were recorded in *Jutarnji list*, 12.50% in *Večernji list*, while 25.00% in *24 hours*.

**Chart 8. Manner of writing about the public’s attitude towards nurses**



Source: Created by the authors

Table 9: Content of texts about nurses/technicians – positive approach

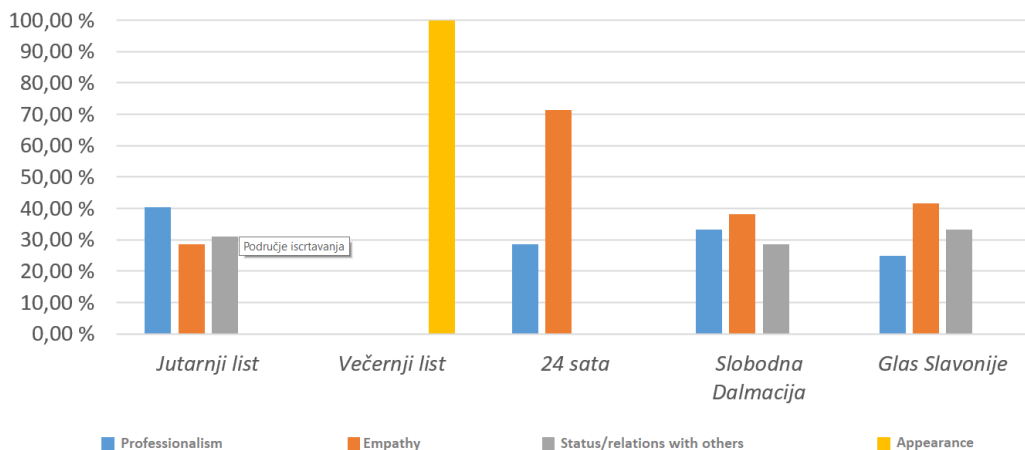
Daily newspaper	PROFES- SIONALISM (emphasis on expertise, reliability, re- sponsibility, accuracy)		EMPATHY (devotedness, willingness to help, kindness, warmth)		STATUS / RELATIONS WITH OTHERS (hard work, inadequate working conditions, denied rights, abuse of nurses by patients and families)		APPEAR- ANCE (visual aspect, tidiness)		Total		p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	17	40,48 %	12	28,57 %	13	30,95 %	0	0,00 %	42	100,00 %	0,008
<i>Večernji list</i>	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	1	100,00 %	1	100,00 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	2	28,57 %	5	71,43 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	7	100,00 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	7	33,33 %	8	38,10 %	6	28,57 %	0	0,00 %	21	100,00 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	3	25,00 %	5	41,67 %	4	33,33 %	0	0,00 %	12	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

If the level of significance in *Content of texts on nurses/technicians – positive approach* is observed, it can be seen that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p = 0.008$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed daily newspapers, with *Jutarnji list* convincingly recording the greatest number of articles.

Chart 9. Content of texts about nurses/technicians – positive approach



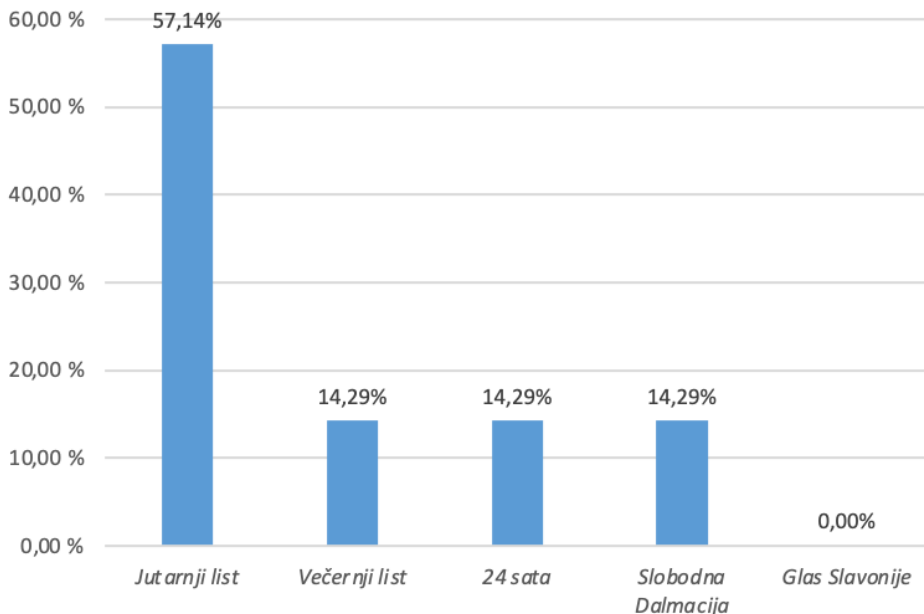
Source: Created by the authors

**Table 10: Content of texts about nurses/technicians – negative approach**

Daily newspaper	PROFESSION-ALISM (unprofessional conduct, unreliability, unethicity)		EMPATHY (arrogance, lack of empathy, cold manner)		STATUS / RELATIONS WITH OTHERS (laziness, negligence, inadequate communication, privileged position)		APPEAR-ANCE (sex appeal, immoral behaviour)		Total		p
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<i>Jutarnji list</i>	4	57,14 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	4	57,14 %	
<i>Večernji list</i>	1	14,29 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	1	14,29 %	
<i>24 sata</i>	1	14,29 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	1	14,29 %	
<i>Slobodna Dalmacija</i>	1	14,29 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	1	14,29 %	
<i>Glas Slavonije</i>	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	
Total	7	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %	7	100,00 %	

Source: Created by the authors

If the data for *Content of texts on nurses/technicians – negative approach* are observed, it can be seen that 57.14% of texts relative to professionalism were recorded in *Jutarnji list*, 14.29% in *Večernji list*, 14.29% were recorded in *24 hours*, while 14.29% in *Slobodna Dalmacija*.

**Chart 10. Content of texts about nurses/technicians – negative approach**

Source: Created by the authors

The data for the Autumn and Spring matrices with regard to the total occurrence of the observed variables are presented below.

**Table 11: Form with regard to the observed periods of analysis**

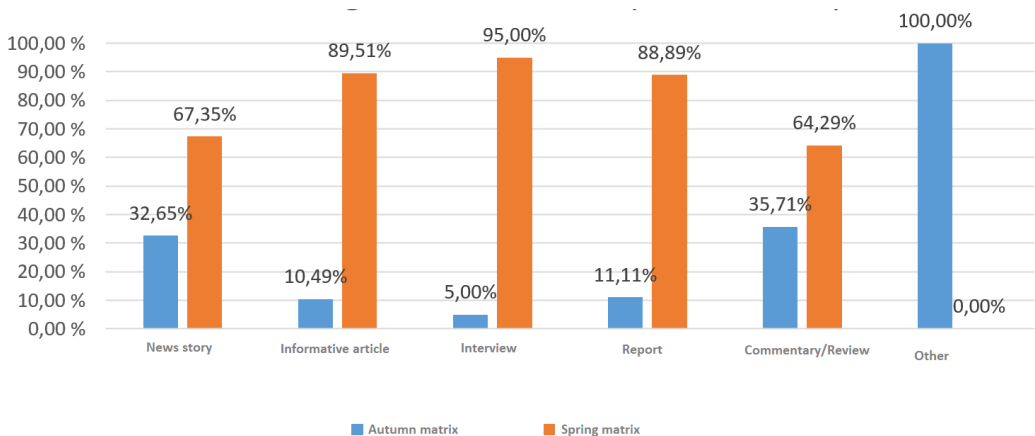
	Autumn matrix		Spring matrix		Total		p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
News story	16	32,65 %	33	67,35 %	49	100,00 %	p < 0,001
Informative article	28	10,49 %	239	89,51 %	267	100,00 %	
Interview	1	5,00 %	19	95,00 %	20	100,00 %	
Report	6	11,11 %	48	88,89 %	54	100,00 %	
Commentary /Review	5	35,71 %	9	64,29 %	14	100,00 %	
Other	1	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	1	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

When the level of significance in *Form* is observed, it can be seen that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed matrices, with 32.65% of news stories appearing in the *Autumn matrix*, while 89.51% of informative articles appearing in the *Spring matrix*.

**Chart 11. Form with regard to the observed periods of analysis**



Source: Created by the authors



**Table 12: Manner of writing about nurses/technicians with regard to the observed periods of analysis**

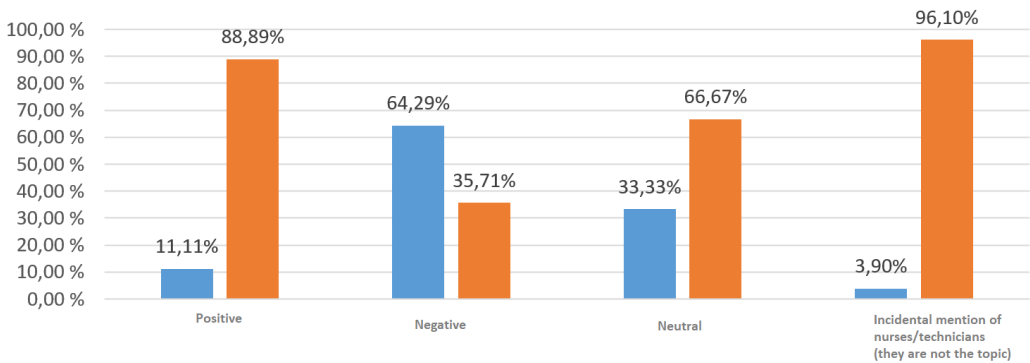
	Autumn matrix		Spring matrix				p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Positive	11	11,11 %	88	88,89 %	99	100,00 %	p < 0,001
Negative	9	64,29 %	5	35,71 %	14	100,00 %	
Neutral	31	33,33 %	62	66,67 %	93	100,00 %	
Incidental mention of nurses/technicians (they are not the topic)	6	3,90 %	148	96,10 %	154	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

In the analysis of the *Manner of writing about nurses/technicians*, it can be noticed that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p < 0.001$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed matrices, where 33,33% of neutral articles were recorded in the *Autumn Matrix*, while 96.10% of incidental mentions were recorded in the *Spring Matrix*.

**Chart 12. Manner of writing about nurses/technicians with regard to the observed periods of analysis**



Source: Created by the authors

**Table 13: Content of texts about nurses/technicians – positive approach with regard to the observed periods of analysis**

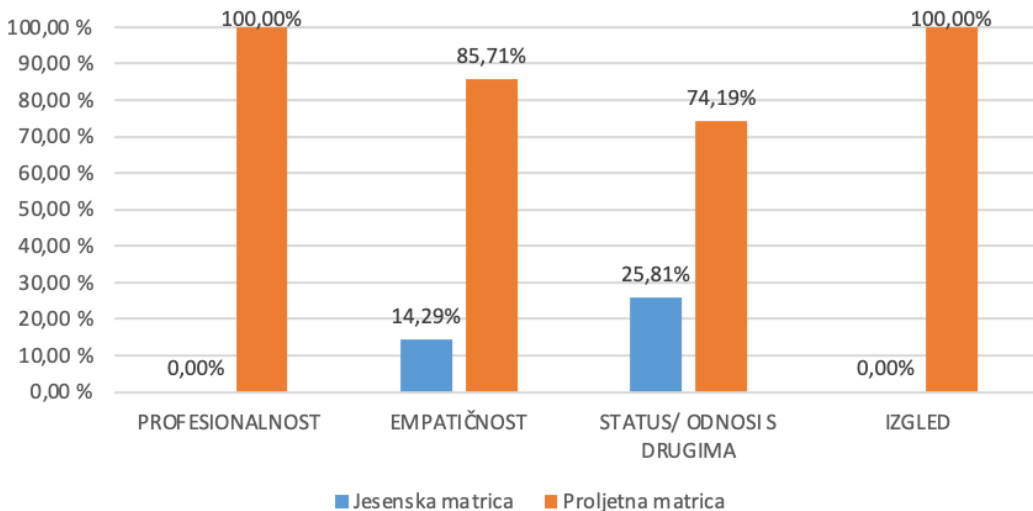
	Autumn matrix		Spring matrix		Total		P*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
PROFESSIONALISM (emphasis on expertise, reliability, responsibility, accuracy)	0	0,00 %	29	100,00 %	29	100,00 %	0,033
EMPATHY (devotedness, willingness to help, kindness, warmth)	5	14,29 %	30	85,71 %	35	100,00 %	
STATUS / RELATIONS WITH OTHERS (hard work, inadequate working conditions, denied rights, abuse of nurses by patients and families)	8	25,81 %	23	74,19 %	31	100,00 %	
APPEARANCE (visual aspect, tidiness)	0	0,00%	1	100,00 %	1	100,00 %	

\*Chi-square test

Source: Created by the authors

By analyzing *Content texts on nurses/technicians – positive approach*, it can be seen that the value of the Chi-square test is  $p = 0.033$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that a statistically significant difference was identified with regard to the observed matrices. 25.81% of articles relative to *Status / Relations with others* were recorded in the *Autumn matrix*, while 100.00% of articles referring to *Professionalism* were recorded in the *Spring matrix*.

**Chart 13. Content of texts about nurses/technicians – positive approach with regard to the observed periods of analysis**



Source: Created by the authors

**Table 14: Content of texts about nurses/technicians – negative approach with regard to the observed periods of analysis**

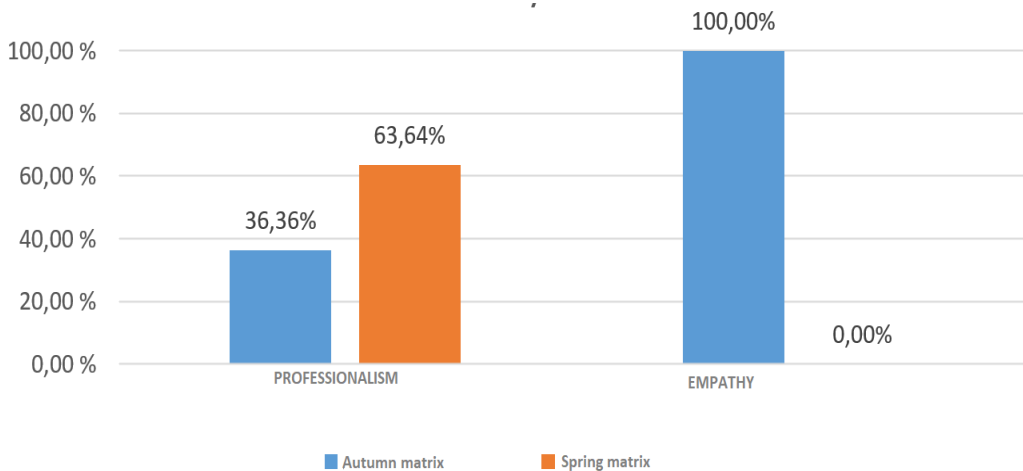
	Autumn matrix		Spring matrix		Total		p*
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>PROFESSIONALISM</b> (emphasis on expertise, reliability, responsibility, accuracy)	4	36,36 %	7	63,64 %	11	100,00 %	0,192
<b>EMPATHICITY</b> (devotedness, willingness to help, kindness, warmth)	3	100,00 %	0	0,00 %	3	100,00 %	

\*Fisher’s exact test

Source: Created by the authors

The level of significance of *Fisher's exact test* between *Content texts on nurses/technicians - negative approach* with regard to the observed periods of analysis is 0.192 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, no statistically significant difference was identified for the observed variables.

**Chart 14. Content of texts about nurses/technicians – negative approach with regard to the observed periods of analysis**



Source: Created by the authors

## 2. Discussion

The results obtained by this research indicate that media space is opening to nurses and that much more was written about nurses during the COVID-19 crisis than in the previous period. The research shows that at the time of the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, 348 articles on nurses/technicians were recorded in the selected daily newspapers, while in the period before the epidemic there were a total of 57 articles. Considering the journalistic form used during the pandemic – it is certainly worth pointing out that the total number of reports on nurses/technicians amounted to 88.89%, compared to 11.11% in the period before the pandemic. The number of interviews with nurses during the pandemic amounted to 95%, compared to 5% in the period before the pandemic. Furthermore, there were 89.51% of informative articles during the pandemic, as opposed to 10.49%, which were published before the pandemic. The manner of writing about nurses/technicians which included a “positive approach” during the pandemic amounted to 88.89%, the neutral way of writing was recorded in 66.6%, while the cases of incidental mention of nurses/technicians were recorded in 96.10%. The manner of writing with a “negative approach” was recorded in the period before the pandemic, specifically in 64.29% of articles.

The manner of writing related to the public's attitude towards nurses/technicians included expressions of gratitude and complaints. During the pandemic, 100% of the articles conveyed expressions of gratitude.

Content of texts with a positive approach to nurses referring to professionalism (including expertise, reliability, responsibility and accuracy) was present in 100% of articles, while empathy (including devotedness, willingness to help, kindness and warmth) was identified in 85, 71% of the articles published during the pandemic.

Furthermore, content of texts with a positive orientation towards nurses (including status, relations, hard work, inadequate working conditions, denied rights, abuse by patients) in media writing during the pandemic was recorded in 74.19% of the articles. In the analysis of content of texts with a negative presentation of nurses in terms of professionalism and empathy, no statistically significant difference between the Autumn and Spring research matrices was identified. This study can be a starting point for other research in this area, which questions the representativeness of nurses (as the most numerous profession in the health system) in the media.

## 3. Conclusion

A comparison of these results with the results of previous research (O'Leary et al., 2021; Bagnasco et al. 2020) shows that the coronavirus pandemic encouraged the media to write more about nurses. The research conducted in Croatia showed that the media's interest in nurses significantly increased during the COVID-19 crisis, compared to the observed period before the pandemic. During the COVID-19 crisis, 348 articles on nurses/technicians were recorded in the selected daily newspapers, while in the pre-epidemic period there were a total of 57 articles. This confirmed the first hypothesis that there were statistically significant differences in representation of nursing in the media during the COVID-19 pandemic and before this period. The research confirmed the hypothesis that the number of reports on nursing in the media would be significantly higher than in the period before the pandemic. The second hypothesis was also largely confirmed. It turned out that there were visible differences in the way the media reported on nursing during the coronavirus pandemic compared to the previous period. This is particularly evident in terms of journalistic

forms where the number of reports on nurses/technicians amounted to 88.89%, compared to 11.11% in the pre-pandemic period. The number of interviews with nurses during the pandemic amounted to 95%, compared to 5% in the period before the pandemic. Furthermore, there were 89.51% of informative articles during the pandemic, as opposed to 10.49%, before the pandemic. In addition, analysis of the manner of writing as well as text content showed that nurses were positively perceived through the media during the pandemic in most of the articles.

The pandemic significantly burdened the healthcare system, claimed many lives and gave rise to global public concern about the outcome of the disease, thus fostering a continuing need to inform the public. For this reason, it influenced the great interest of the media in reporting on how the health care system functions, but also on the personal life experiences of patients and healthcare professionals associated with the COVID-19 crisis. In spite of the fact that the nursing profession is demanding *per se* – regardless of the pandemic, and although the importance of nursing in the health system and in terms of medical treatment outcomes is crucial, it was not attractive enough to the media. Professional identity is to some extent also social identity (Miers, 2000), it is formed by the interaction of culture and discourse (Yazdannik, Yekta, & Soltani, 2012), and nursing practice is based on the moral values that nursing promotes through health care (Matulić, 2007). All of this constitutes the identity of the nursing profession, which is often overshadowed by the profession of physicians, to which it is inferior in the eyes of the public (Bridges, 1990). The period of the pandemic was the reason why the work of nurses became more visible, thus drawing the media and public attention, which was confirmed through this research. Nevertheless, this research is now the basis for new research that will be aimed at establishing whether being taken aback by an unknown situation has “opened the eyes” of the public about the value of nursing or, as the author of the article “What it means to be a hero today” (Dragojević, 2020) states:

“What will happen when this crisis is over? When the situation normalises and the crisis falls into oblivion, will everything be as it was before the crisis – bonuses will be reserved for 'tie wearers', and former 'heroes and heroines' will disappear in their grey and invisible everyday life? Another aspect of this story about the new 'heroes and heroines' is interesting. 'It is good to do good' is a maxim that is well-known to everybody and is – by and large – approved by all. In light of this idea, it is worth noting that in it was in this period of crisis that humanity and humanitarian work gained special space, both in the media and in our perception”, (Dragojević, 2020).

## References

- Bagnasco, A., Catania, G., Gallagher, A., Morley, G. (2020). Media representations of nurses in the pandemic: Just doing our job? *Nursing Ethics* 27 (4), 901-905. doi:10.1177/0969733020926352
- Bridges, J.M. (1990). Literature review on the images of the nurse and nursing in the media. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 15 (7), 850-854. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.1990.tb01917.x Available on: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1365-2648.1990.tb01917.x>
- Dragojević, D. (2020). Što danas znači biti heroj. *DW*. 2020; 23 April. Available on: <https://www.dw.com/hr/što-danas-znači-biti-heroj/a-53209267>
- Družijanić, M. (2020). Naši reporteri s heroinama borbe protiv korone: od umora se doslovno rušimo, svoje danima ne vidimo, a ljudi od nas okreću glavu. Gore je nego u ratu. *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 5. travnja. Available on: <https://slobodnadalmacija.hr/split/nasi-reporteri-s-heroinama-borbe-protiv-korone-od-umora-se-doslovno-rusimo-svoje-danima-ne-vidimo-a-ljudi-od-nas-okrecu-glavu-gore-je-nego-u-ratu-1014235>
- Gregg, M. F., Magilvy, J. K. (2001). Professional identity of Japanese nurses: bonding into nursing. *Nursing and Health Sciences* 3, 2001., 47-55. doi: 10.1046/j.1442-2018.2001.00070
- International Council of Nurses (2022). The COVID-19 Effect: World's nurses facing mass trauma, an immediate danger to the profession and future of our health systems, 13 January 2021, Available on: <https://www.icn.ch/news/covid-19-effect-worlds-nurses-facing-mass-trauma-immediate-danger-profession-and-future-our>
- Jutarnji list (2020). Detalji iz bolnice: Kako je Boris nadigrao koronu, Medicinska sestra kojoj je zahvalio što ga je spasila: „Kad sam ga ugledala, ostala sam u nevjerici.” 13 travnja 2020. Available on: <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/svijet/detalji-iz-bolnice-kako-je-boris-nadigrao-koronu-medicinska-sestra-kojoj-je-zahvalio-sto-ga-je-spasila-kad-sam-ga-ugledala-ostala-sam-u-nevjerici/10203664/>
- Matulić, T. (2007). Identitet, profesija i etika sestinstva, *Bogoslovska smotra*, 77 (3), 727-744.
- Mason, D. J., Nixon, L., Glickstein, B., Han, S., Westphal, K., Carter, L. (2018). The Woodhull Study Revisited: Nurses' Representation in Health News Media 20 Years Later, *J Nurs Scholarsh*, 50(6), 695 - 704. doi: 10.1111/jnu.12429
- Mason, D. J., Isaacs, S.L., Colby, D. C. (2011). *The Nursing profession: development, challenges and opportunities*. Jossey-Bass.
- Miers, M. (2000). *Gender Issues and Nursing Practice*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- O'Leary L, Erikainen S, Peltonen L, Ahmed W, Thelwall M & O'Connor S (2021) Exploring nurses' online perspectives and social networks during a global pandemic COVID-19. *Public Health Nursing*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.12994>
- Pavić, J. (2020). Iskustva na 'prvoj crti' obrane od koronavirusa, iskustva iz prakse, *Glasnik zdravstvenog veleučilišta u Zagrebu*, 2020 (9), 16-17. <https://www.zvu.hr/wp-content/uploads/Glasnik-009.pdf>

Pavić, J. (2015). Perspektive sestrinstva u medijima. U: S Mandić et al. (ed.), *Zbornik III Simpozij s međunarodnim sudjelovanjem o temi: Prepoznatljivost rada medicinskih sestara/tehničara u sustavu zdravstva 7-8*. Fakultet zdravstvenih studija Sveučilišta u Mostaru, Sveučilišna klinička bolnica Mostar, Udruga/ udruženje medicinskih sestara/tehničara FBiH.

Pavić, J. (2006). *Analitički osvrt na sestrinstvo u medijima*. Diplomski rad. Zdravstveno veleučilište.

Režek, B., Benceković, Ž., (2020). Medicinske sestre - tehničari KBC-a Sestre milosrdnice u doba Covid 19 pandemije. <http://sestrinstvo.kbcsm.hr/medicinske-sestre-kbc-a-sestre-milosrdnice-u-doba-covid-19-pandemije/>

Sigma Theta Tau International. (1997). *The Woodhull study on nursing and the media: Health care's invisible partner*. Center Nursing Press. <http://hdl.handle.net/10755/624124>

Skoko, B. (2009). Imidž odgovara na pitanje-tko su oni? U: J. Pavić et al. (ed.), *Sestrinstvo-imidž i stvarnost*. 111 – 127. HKMS.

T. K. (2020). Gallagherov koncert za medicinare. *Glas Slavonije*. <http://www.glas-slavonije.hr/430090/9/Gallagherov-koncert-za-medicinare>

V.Mo. (2020). Boris Jonson pohvalio doktore i medicinske sestre: dugujem im svoj život. Ne mogu im dovoljno zahvaliti. 13 April 2020. *T portal*. <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/boris-johnson-zahvalio-doktorima-i-medicinskim-sestrama-u-bolnici-dugujem-im-svoj-zivot-ne-mogu-im-dovoljno-zahvaliti-foto-20200411>

Yazdannik, A., Yekta, Z. P., Soltani, A. (2012). Nursing professional identity: an infant or one with Alzheimer, *Iran J Nurs Midwifery Res.*, 17 (2), 178-186.

WHO (2020). Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, <https://www.who.int/campaigns/annual-theme/year-of-the-nurse-and-the-midwife-2020>.

## Izješavanje o medicinskim sestrama/medicinskim tehničarima u hrvatskom dnevnom tisku tijekom COVID-19 pandemije

JADRANKA PAVIĆ

Zdravstveno veleučilište, Zagreb

VIŠNJA BREBRIĆ

Centar za odgoj i obrazovanje Dubrava, Zagreb

dr. sc. HRVOJE JAKOPOVIĆ

Fakultet političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

### SAŽETAK

U radu je prikazana analiza sadržaja provedena s ciljem utvrđivanja razlika u zastupljenosti, ali i medijskoj pokrivenosti i izvještanju o medicinskim sestrama u hrvatskim dnevnim novinama na početku krize COVID-19 i u razdoblju prije krize u Hrvatskoj. Analiza sadržaja potvrdila je pretpostavku da je broj objava o sestrinstvu u medijima bio značajno veći za vrijeme krize nego u prethodnom razdoblju, odnosno prije krize COVID-19. Konkretno, tijekom pandemije COVID-19 medicinske sestre općenito su bile pozitivno percipirane kroz medije. To je posebno vidljivo kroz novinarske forme gdje je broj izvještaja o medicinskim sestrama/tehničarima iznosio 88,89% u odnosu na 11,11% u razdoblju prije pandemije. Broj intervjua s medicinskim sestrama tijekom pandemije iznosio je 95%, u odnosu na 5% u razdoblju prije pandemije, dok je broj informativnih članaka iznosio 89,51% tijekom krize COVID-19, nasuprot 10,49% prije pandemije. COVID-19 kriza.

**Ključne riječi:** medicinske sestre/tehničari, sestrinstvo, novine, koronakriza, reprezentacija u medijima