

CHAPTER 5

INFODEMIC SPREADS AS FAST AS THE PANDEMIC ITSELF¹: HEALTH JOURNALISM IN COVID 19 PANDEMIC PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main missions of the media is ensuring the public to be informed accurately, in this context, to assume a public responsibility. Especially in times of crisis, mass media are the primary source of information for the public. The coronavirus epidemic that emerged in late 2019 and has influenced the world in 2020 has created a social anger and panic all over the world. Mass media is one of the most important channels in which people from all walks get information on the subject. However, when we look at the general view of the news in the pandemic process, it is seen that there is news flow that is far from informing the public and may create fear and panic. Therefore, it has been observed that the information on health has been deformed due to the reasons such as more clicking of the news and making it sensational. In the process, two main problems were encountered, such as the high number of news reports and the presentation of the news away from ethical principles. Health journalism has more importance than other news categories. Since the final result that is likely to affect is human life, overcharge, romance, and non-referential health advice should definitely be avoided in such news.

“In the speech of 15 February 2020, Redros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization, said,” We are fighting not only an epidemic, but also an infodemia. “ 12 weeks later, it was seen that there was an overwhelming and intense 24/7 Covid 19 outbreak publication in news.” (Niblock, 2020: 1). According to the World Health Organization, infodemia is another epidemic that turns disease anxiety into a psychological crisis and is more dangerous

¹ This sentence is inspired from this phrase: “misinformation about COVID -19 has spread as fast as the pandemic itself” (Kyriakidou, M., Morani, M., Soo, N., & Cushion, S., 2020: 1).

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Covid 19, World Health Organization, <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19>