




Media Representations of Elder Abuse

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Nursing Home

Background

- Large nursing home in North County Dublin.
- Capacity of over 100 beds.
- Complaints from relatives & concerns from HSE Nursing Home Inspectorate.
- Complaints generally from period September 2003- June 2005: Lack of general supervision, unnecessary restraint, hygiene, rough handling during care-giving interactions.

Primetime Investigates 'Home Truths'

- Raised questions in the Irish Parliament (Dail Eireann)
- Catalyst to public media discourses of the nursing home in particular, but of nursing home care in general.
- Caused a 'newsmaking controversy' and provided the basis for a media template (Kitzinger 2000)

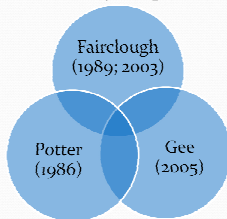
Newspaper discourses

- Key reference points which carry influential associations in public perceptions and identities (Barak 1988).
- Construct a **particular version** of the event (Murphy 2004, Frewin *et al.* 2009).
- **STUDY AIM:** To examine how newspapers constructed elder abuse in reportage following the television broadcast of a programme which disclosed maltreatment of older people in a nursing home.



Methodologies

- Tradition of critical discourse analysis.
- Focuses on the relationship between discourse & wider social practices.
- Focus on how credible knowledge is established through the use of subject positions and identities.



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Archival examination of newspaper articles
30/1/05-28/2/05 (n=2) & 31/5/05-30/6/05 (n=114).

Findings

- Patterns of reportage and linguistic devices
- Constructing elder abuse in newspaper reportage
- Constructing identities
- Resistance to dominant discourse



Discussion

- Newspaper reportage is a recontextualisation of event.
- Language represented populist attitudes- difference in tabloid & broadsheet.
- Focus on concrete events rather than thematic discussions.
- Identities
- Ideological debate



Limitations & recommendations

Limitations

- Focused on general pattern of reportage
- Other media patterns in radio and television
- Post event review of media coverage



Recommendations

- Consider language used to report elder abuse: polarisation of views and emotive terms
- Be aware of consequences of particular reportage
- Further research
