

SEPTINTOJI TARPTAUTINĖ KONFERENCIJA

THE 7th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

2026 m. liepos mėn. 7-10 d., Vilniaus universitetas, LIETUVA

7th-10th of July, 2026, Vilnius University, LITHUANIA

**EVOLIUCINĖ MEDICINA:
ŽMOGAUS RAIDOS PERSPEKTYVOS IR SVEIKATA
BESIKEIČIANČIOJE APLINKOJE**

**EVOLUTIONARY MEDICINE:
PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH
CONSEQUENCES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

Rengėjas:

Vilniaus universiteto Medicinos ir sveikatos mokslų
Doktorantūros mokykla, VU Medicinos fakultetas

Organized by

the Doctoral School of Medicine and Health sciences
at Vilnius University, VU Faculty of Medicine

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RADIATION PROTECTION IN HEALTHCARE: THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE

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Background and Aim: Although the use of ionising radiation for healthcare purposes began in the early 20th century, until today, radiation protection is often a misunderstood topic. Based on empirical evidence, news media have become highly effective channel for conveying a health related topics, including radiation protection. The aim of this study was to assess the prevalence of healthcare-related radiation protection topics in the most popular news portals of Lithuania.

Materials and Methods: The data was collected using a questionnaire-based instrument. A qualitative analysis of publications of three largest Lithuanian online news websites was performed. In total, 505 publications published from 2019 to 2025, found using search-phrases "nuclear accident," "ionising radiation," "radiation" (in Lithuanian), were analysed. Afterwards, the quantitative analysis on the distribution of publications by different topics was performed.

Results: The majority (40.4%) of publications indicated that ionising radiation has negative effects on health, and a quarter (21.19%) specified those effects. Most frequently indicated risks to health were cancer (15.05%) and burns (3.96%). Other health-related factors, like birth defects, cataract, infertility, bronchitis or shortened life expectancy, were indicated in less than 1.0% of publications. Sensitivity to ionising radiation differences in various groups such as children, pregnant women or elderly individuals were indicated in a small proportion of publications (respectively, 2.18%, 1.98%, and 0.2%). Also, a small proportion of publications (5.15%) indicated healthcare as one of the radiation application fields, fewer than 5% referred to specific procedures.

Conclusions: Although health effects of ionising radiation are commonly indicated in news media publications, only a minority indicate healthcare as a field where ionising radiation is used. While new publications disproportionally cover certain topics, poor public knowledge about ionising radiation may occur as a result.

Keywords: healthcare communication, ionising radiation, radiation protection, news media