

Reasons and Countermeasures for the Proliferation of Broadcast Health Care Programs in China

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Abstract:

The early twenty years of the 21st century were an important decade for Chinese radio to survive in the cracks, both in the glorious moment of rapid development of traffic broadcasting and in the profit-seeking problem of the proliferation of health care programs. This paper explores the reasons for the proliferation of health care programs in Chinese broadcasting in the first two decades of the 21st century and proposes corresponding countermeasures.

Keywords:

Chinese Radio, Health Care Programs

1. Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, China's broadcasting has been reformed with remarkable results and has achieved unprecedented rapid development. However, in the early two decades of the 21st century, a problem has emerged that is objectionable to the majority of audiences, that is, the proliferation of health care special programs. In this paper, we try to analyze the current situation and causes of this phenomenon, and put forward our countermeasures in this regard.

2. Causes

As we all know, health care special programs are all based on the slogan of "delivering medical information and facilitating patients' access to medical care", but most of these programs have become a form of program advertising disguised as introducing the products of the medical institutions. This kind of hidden advertisement appears as a program with a host and a "medical expert", so it is easy to gain the trust of the audience, thus widening the channel for medical institutions to sell their products and attract "customers". However, according to media surveys and audience reactions, most of these programs disregard the interests of the audience, spreading illegal content, constantly misleading the audience, and greatly damaging the physical and mental health of patients and their interests. According to the monitoring statistics of Beijing Advertising Monitoring Center, in 2005, the

publication rate of suspected illegal advertisements in mass media in Beijing was 0.76%, among which the publication rate of suspected illegal advertisements in broadcast media was as high as 2.28%. Among the suspected illegal radio advertisements, medical service advertisements accounted for 71.40% of all suspected illegal advertisements.

As a medical institution, why did it act in such a way without regard to the safety of the people? As a media station, why did they let it spread without regard to their own image? We believe there are several important reasons.

2.1. Media Traits Triggered Association Initiatives

2.1.1. Media Limitations Force Themselves to Cross the Line

Broadcast media advertising has obvious limitations of its own, which are: shallow impression of sound and invisible, poor preservation of fleeting and low trust. These media limitations lead broadcast media, which depend on advertising for survival, to eagerly seek advertising partners, which leads to the behavior of cooperating with illegal advertisers in order to enhance program revenue. Despite the three directives of the national business administration and health departments, they could not stop the broadcast media from crossing the line for survival.

2.1.2. Media Advantages to Attract Business Investment

Although the broadcast media has many defects, as a profit-making business, it is more important to combine its own needs with the advantages of the media. Therefore, after repeated consideration, businessmen (especially health care businessmen) focus on the advantages of radio: interactivity, strong sense of communication, wide coverage and audience, low fees and high density, and highly targeted audience refinement. Due to the development needs of both parties and the influence of media qualities, the marriage between broadcast media and health care business coincided, and quickly produced huge multiple benefits.

2.2. Audience Demand Enhances Speculative Effectiveness

It is not enough to have the wishful thinking of the media and the business to make the advertisement effective; the audience's demand for healthcare services has become the essential reason for the current boom of this kind of program. For example, the elderly listeners, a considerable number of elderly people are loyal listeners of the radio, accounting for about 20% of the entire listenership. Listen to a long and stable, although low income but still has a certain spending power. In particular, their own health problems have led to the elderly listeners' love to radio health care programs. This boosts the spending power of this group in this particular area. Businesses (drug dealers, hospitals, etc.) see this feature and seize the characteristics of the elderly who are frail and sickly and eager for health, and gullible. They release problematic medical advertisements in a targeted manner, which can be said to have obvious results.

2.2.1. Weak Regulations Cause Ineffective Punishments

In China, there are relevant laws and regulations governing the restrictions on medical service advertisements, such as the Advertising Law and the Measures for the Administration of Medical Advertisements. The radio and television administration also promulgated the Interim Measures for Radio and Television Advertising

Broadcast Management on January 1, 2004, which for the first time comprehensively regulated the content, authenticity and legality of radio and television advertisements, the total amount of broadcast, ad insertion and broadcast supervision in the form of a decree of the General Administration. However, in the face of these laws and regulations, medical institutions, pharmaceutical businesses, and radio stations often continue to break through the restrictions of the clause in order to achieve their promotional effects in advertisements, using the names or testimonials of patients or doctors in their advertisements, and many advertisements are untrue and suspected of misleading consumers, among other problems, for the sake of common interests. The fundamental reason for the weakness of laws and regulations is that when punishing illegal advertisements, most of the punishments stay at the level of stopping the publication of illegal advertisements and imposing fines of more than double or less than five times of the advertising cost in serious cases, and such punishments are very weak in comparison with the relatively low advertising costs of broadcasting and the relatively high profits of medical institutions, and some laws and regulations do not have corresponding punishment rules. This makes it difficult for advertising regulatory authorities to work without sufficient deterrence to make the media strictly review the medical service advertisements they publish.

2.2.2. Lax supervision Leads to Abnormal Growth

In addition to the constraints of laws and regulations, the lax supervision of such advertisements by industrial and commercial departments at all levels is also an important reason for the aggressive growth of health care advertisements.

3. Countermeasures

3.1. Improve Laws and Regulations, Strengthen Disciplinary Measures

In view of the special nature of the medical service industry, the state and local departments should continuously improve the relevant laws and regulations, so that there are laws to follow, feasible according to the law, moderate law enforcement, and effective punishment. In particular, they should strengthen disciplinary measures against medical institutions and broadcasting media that publish illegal medical and health care product advertisements. [1]

3.2. Raising Legal Awareness and Forming a Chain of Autonomy

Medical and health care products that are substandard or falsely advertised can pose health and life risks to consumers and endanger society as a whole. In front of such a major issue of right and wrong, advertisers and media should not be profit-oriented and money-oriented. Therefore, from advertisers and advertising companies to media and audiences, they should constantly strengthen their legal awareness and people-oriented. So that all the links in this chain can realize their responsibilities and thus form an autonomous and harmonious chain.

3.3. Adjusting the Operation Mechanism and Eliminating Illegal Operation

Since the operation mechanism of media advertising in China has been in a state of confusion for a long time, this also affects the selection and broadcasting supervision of media advertisements. A large number of low-quality, false and deceptive advertisements are disseminated by the media, which endanger the society and the public. Therefore, efforts must be made to adjust the advertising operation mechanism,

so that the media advertising dissemination can take the road of standardization and scientific use. In recent years, China's radio has also begun to try more specialized advertising agency, and has achieved certain effective results. Such as the Central People's Broadcasting Station's three sets of programs: "The Voice of Economy", "The Voice of Music", "The Voice of the City" advertising are to take the form of advertising agency. In order to improve the overall strength and cope with the market competition, Beijing Radio, which is more specialized and market-oriented, has implemented the system of "unified management and unified operation, with the whole station acting as an agent in different industries" since 2004, which divides the scope of agency and reduces the friction among the agencies in the scope of advertising business, and at the same time encourages advertising companies to form a relative monopoly. This relative monopoly is conducive to the professional operation of advertising companies, which can concentrate on the industry they represent and develop advertisers in depth. As a radio station, it can also reduce its own pressure to a certain extent by transferring its advertising business to an advertising agency. The radio station can then concentrate on the program itself and improve its brand image. Only by continuously adjusting and upgrading the advertising operation mechanism can illegal operations be effectively eliminated.

3.4. Enhance Departmental Coordination and Strengthen Supervision

Government regulatory departments at all levels should enhance coordination and communication with each other to form a unified understanding in order to enhance the effectiveness of governance. At the same time, it is also necessary to strengthen supervision and strengthen crackdown measures, which is the only way to form an orderly and standardized advertising market. For example, the reasonable and effective joint meeting system of Hangzhou's advertising management department, the severe and powerful market governance methods, the efficient and competent management team and the perfect unified management measures have enabled Hangzhou's advertising market to embark on the road of standardization, and its long-term governance mechanism has begun to bear fruit. Data show that the average rate of illegal advertising in its major news media dropped from 3.85% in 2004 to 1.15% in 2005, and continued to drop to 0.86% in the first half of 2006, with the situation of false advertising basically curbed. Its regulatory work has also been affirmed by the State Administration for Industry and Commerce in the 2005 national assessment of special rectification work to rectify false and illegal advertisements ranked first in the overall score. Enhancing the coordination and communication among the departments of industry and commerce, health, and drug supervision, constantly strengthening supervision, and achieving joint management and comprehensive treatment will surely receive obvious and long-term results.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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