


Transformations in journalists' work and therapeutic management of professional pressure

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Abstract

In this article, we approach an unexplored line of analysis and research about the impact of transformations in journalists' work on professional pressure and performance consumption, what we refer to as the process of pharmaceuticalisation of work contexts. We discuss how changes at work lead to increased pressure on journalists and how pressure generates practices and dispositions for using different types of natural and pharmaceutical resources for managing work performance. Our analysis is based on mixed-methods research carried out in Portugal combining integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The results begin by highlighting the impact of work transformations on professional pressure both in terms of working time (workload, pace and working hours) and work demands resulting from professional practices and public scrutiny. The professional pressure that the transformations in journalism have been accentuating has faced journalists with the need to manage new or heavier work demands, which, in turn, can encourage the use of medicines and other therapeutic products to manage personal and professional performance.

Keywords: Journalists, Technological innovations, Work transformations, Professional pressure, Pharmaceuticalisation, Performance consumptions.

Introduction

The current transformations in journalists' work, especially growing automation, more multi-skilling, new forms of relationship with the public, intensification of work paces and longer working hours, generate greater physical, intellectual and emotional demands on them, causing strong professional pressure.

Based on a sociological research project on the consumption of medication and food supplements for performance management (herein referred to as performance consumptions), conducted in Portugal¹, we develop an analysis of how journalists manage the performance demands intrinsic to the nature of their work. To this end, we adopt an analytical approach that articulates the issues concerning the transformations of journalistic work with the issues related to the increase and diversification of the social uses of medicines.

This approach allows us to analyse how journalists use different types of natural and pharmaceutical resources to deal with the work pressures they are subjected to.

The relationship between the experience of using various illicit substances and pressure factors in the context of journalistic work has already been identified and even duly systematised, concluding that professionals are exposed to a relatively increased risk of developing substance use disorders compared to the general population (MacDonald, Saliba and Hodgines, 2016). In this article, a different approach is developed, that does not focus on the use of illicit substances or the potential problems of addiction (or other types of disorders), but rather seeks to explore the process that underlies the dissemination of so-called performance consumption in work contexts.

This incursion invites us to analyse not only the consumption practices, but also the social dispositions of adherence to these resources, since it allows us to understand how the acceptance of the presence of medicines in everyday life and their transformation into an instrument to assist in the responses to the requirements of the work contexts is, in itself, revealing of a cultural disposition to undertake therapeutic investments around purposes that clearly go beyond the health field. Thus, and by assuming themselves as important performance aids, the therapeutic resources become solutions that will be all the more indispensable, the more the rhythms and pressures increase in the daily lives of journalism professional contexts.

Given this framework, the analytical discussion developed in this article seeks to respond to two main objectives. On the one hand, we seek to analyse how changes concerning the various aspects of work translate into increased pressure to perform, which implies identifying the pressure factors inherent in the journalists' work, particularly in terms of the pace of work, specific demands of the professional activity, degree of exposure to risk and the impacts of technology on the (re)organisation of professional practices. On the other hand, we also analyse the practices and social provisions of adherence to different types of natural and pharmaceutical resources to meet professional demands, which presupposes to assess the extent of performance consumption in work contexts, considering the social pressure factors identified and analysed. The discussion is grounded in the evidence produced through diverse sources of information, qualitative and quantitative, resulting from the use of various research techniques, within the framework of a mixed methodology research.

Transformations in journalists' work, professional pressure and performance consumptions

The main transformations in the work of journalists, with impact on increase in professional pressure, occur in two interconnected but distinct areas: in professional practices and in the working times. We highlight the transformations in journalists' tasks and skills, more multi-skilling, new forms of relationship with the public, intensification of work paces and longer working hours (Tavares, Lopes and Gonçalves, 2022).

These transformations have occurred in a context of growing technological innovations and devices that significantly influence the change process as a whole. In this context, journalists' traditional tasks and skills are being progressively overtaken by technological and digital tasks and skills (Örnebring, 2009, 2010; Schnell, 2018; Hayes, 2021). This transformation favours the emergence of a new type of journalism, often dubbed online journalism, cyber-journalism, or network journalism, which is adapted to the online media logic (Deuze, 2008; Schnell, 2018) and also favours the increasing of professional segments, like freelancers,

bloggers and "instagrammers" (Maares and Hanusch, 2020; Josephi and Donnell, 2022; Norbäck, 2022) that simultaneously express new forms of journalism and new models that compete with journalism.

At the same time, this transformation results in a greater standardization of journalists' work, translated in more repetitive and low-complexity tasks, with a reduced degree of indeterminacy, whose execution does not involve the mobilization of analytical knowledge that requires interpretation, critical perspective, complexity, flexibility, creativity and are, simultaneously, devoid of autonomy (Tavares, Lopes and Gonçalves, 2022). In this perspective, José Rebelo (2014) states that, integrated in a production chain, journalists, especially the younger ones, tend to intensively perform uncreative tasks, according to routines set by other professionals. The author further notes that investments in new information and communication technologies can convert journalists into mere "content producers". This scenario, framed by a job market in permanent recession, closure of companies, association in companies of multimedia groups and reduction of staff, generates the deregulation of professionals' careers and, in general, the deregulation of the job market, resulting in the precariousness of contractual ties (Rebelo, 2014; Pacheco and Rebelo, 2014; Garcia, Matos and Silva, 2021). The survey carried out within the scope of OberCom - Observatório da Comunicação (Crespo et al., 2017), revealed that 43,7% of journalists in Portugal were bound to an employer through precarious contracts. This context has consequences in increasing the heterogeneity, fragmentation and internal hierarchy of the professional group (Rebelo, 2014; Garcia, Marmeleira and Matos, 2014; Miranda and Gama, 2019).

A transformation in journalists' work related to the introduction of new digital skills, which causes considerable professional pressure, is multi-skilling (Örnebring, 2010; Casula, 2021). In fact, a journalist's job involves more and more simultaneous tasks in several areas, including the production and dissemination of news, reporting, collection of statements, interpretation and analysis, drafting the text, photography, filming, video editing and the use of a variety of software (Avilés et al, 2004; Witschge and Nygren, 2009; Cardoso et al., 2012; Garcia, Marmeleira and Matos, 2014; Ribeiro and Resende, 2017).

Technological innovations in terms of information and communication also have an impact on the increased scrutiny and pressure of the public on the work done by journalists (Deuze and Witschge, 2018) that is subject to permanent, exposure, since it occurs at any time on social media and digital platforms (Tavares, Lopes and Gonçalves, 2022). This process constitutes a particularly demanding interaction for journalists, places great pressure on performance and results in considerable emotional wear and tear (Simunjak and Menke, 2022).

Another of the main aspects of transformation in journalists' work is working time, which, according to Anttila et al. (2015), could ultimately mark a transition from an industrial to a post-industrial working-time regime. Work routines tend to exert pressure for quick production, with a short time to complete, contextualize, confirm the sources and carefully prepare news and texts. An important pressure factor for journalists is to reconcile the requirements of journalistic work with the tight deadlines of the different phases of journalism (collection, evaluation and production) (Örnebring, 2009; Witschge and Nygren, 2009; Ribeiro and Resende, 2017; Schnell, 2018; Harro-Loit and Josephi, 2020).

The intensification of the workload and pace of work and, in particular, the increase in working hours, and the irregularity and flexibility of working times, put journalists in permanent contact with their work, in terms of both time and place. With current technological resources, work can be done anywhere and at any time,

leaving individuals constantly accessible for work (Bittman, Brown and Wajcman, 2009; Örnebring, 2009; Castillo and Agulló, 2012; Hayes, 2021).

Considering these structuring transformations of journalists' work, our line of argument seeks to highlight how their impact on work paces and pressures generates a dynamic that promotes greater openness to and adherence to therapeutic resources. Medication use thus participates in new forms of adjustment to multiple social pressures, becoming a privileged resource for managing cognitive, physical, or relational performance raised by professional work pressure.

In theoretical terms, our approach draws on the concept of pharmaceuticalisation to analyse the extent to which medicines and food supplements are mobilised for performance management, particularly professional performance. Originally understood as 'the transformation of human conditions, capacities or capabilities into pharmaceutical matters of treatment or enhancement' (Williams, Gabe and Davies, 2009, 37), the concept of pharmaceuticalisation highlights a set of changes in people's relationship with medicines because their use goes far beyond their therapeutic and preventive function. The shift away from their strictly therapeutic purposes to other modalities of use also encompasses purposes of management and improvement of personal performance.

Based on the changes in work organisation models and the consequent processes of work intensification, it is important to analyse how these induce the perception of the need for performance management (whether at a cognitive, bodily or relational level), converting these performance needs into potential targets for medication intervention. This theoretical framework allows us to assess the expansion and expression of the performance consumptions (i.e. the use of medicines and food supplements to manage physical, intellectual, or relational performance) in the work contexts of journalists, but also the social dispositions of adherence to these resources. The acceptance of the presence of medicines in daily life and their transformation into an instrument to help respond to work requirements (Egreja and Lopes, 2021) is, indeed, a significant fact, given that it reveals a cultural disposition towards medication for purposes that go beyond the field of health (Coveney, 2014; Lopes et al, 2015; Ballantyne, 2021).

The use of therapeutic resources as auxiliary tools to cope with the pressure factors is, therefore, relevant empirical evidence to further explore the heuristic potentialities of the concept of pharmaceuticalisation in analytical contexts focused on the transformations in the nature of professional work. We are therefore interested in exploring how journalists deal with work pressure and how they tend to manage the performance imperatives intrinsic to their work.

Methods

This article is a result of a research project in which one of the aims was to ascertain the relationship between journalists' work contexts and their management strategies for the pressure on them to perform. Our research used integrated qualitative and quantitative methods, playing on the strength that this combination brings to a study. This option was adopted because we recognise that it has the advantage of obtaining information from a variety of sources of information resulting in the production of knowledge about the regularity of variables and indicators with quantified and measurable data and exploring the reasons underlying the perceptions and practices in work contexts (Saks and Allsop, 2019; Creswell, 2021).

Within the framework of a mixed-methods research, focus groups, questionnaire and interviews with journalists were carried out in three sequential phases. The decision to limit the study universe was based on a relatively homogeneous population as a reference in terms of the nature of their work. This avoided the risk of dispersion of the analysis, which would be high if we considered a more heterogeneous population. Based on this criterion, the segment studied was written press journalists and not a set of journalists that would include, for example, those in the audio-visual field, as the nature of their work is different.

Focus Group

In the initial phase of the project, the aim of the focus groups was to gather information on the subject and contribute to the subsequent phases, including the design of the questionnaire. Two focus groups were conducted in Portugal's two main cities involving nine journalists (five in Lisbon and four in Porto) from the country's main newspapers, appointed by professional associations and the trade union. Five of the nine participants were men and four were women, four were under 30 years old and five were over 30 years old, five had less than 10 years of professional experience, and four had more than 10 years.

The focus groups' plan was divided into three parts: work contexts (nature of work, with an emphasis on the unpredictability of journalistic work, work conditions and relationship with the public); work-life balance, with an emphasis on the irregularity of working hours; and strategies for managing professional pressure, with an emphasis on performance consumptions (their expression in the professional culture of journalists, use of medicines or supplements to sleep management, to improve concentration at work, to reduce physical fatigue and energy boost, to increase relational capacity and to improve physical appearance). The focus group sessions were fully transcribed and underwent content analysis to construct the analytical categories. The data were then coded with MAXQDA.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative information on journalists' perceptions and practices in their work and their ways of managing professional pressure. The questionnaire was tailor-made, drawing on elements from existing literature on these subjects. It was pre-tested on 18 respondents and the necessary changes were made as suggested by its results.

The first dimension was operationalised through a set of indicators and questions, of which the following are used in this article:

- i) intensity of work pace ("How would you describe the pace of your daily work", in a scale of five points, from "not intense at all" to "excessively intense");
- ii) number of daily working hours ("On average, what is the total amount of hours you work per day?");
- iii) work schedule ("What type of work schedule do you currently have?", with the categories "Fixed hours – Daytime", "Fixed hours – Night-time", "Shift work (including nights)", "Shift work (only in the daytime)", "Flexible hours/no fixed schedule", "Other");
- iv) non-predictable working times ("In the last month, how many times were you asked on short notice (under 24h) to work at different hours from your regular schedule?");

- v) degree of exposure to risks ("How do you rank your degree of exposure to the following risks and/or conditions when you exercise your work as a journalist:", with the categories "Accidents involving transport or equipment", "Thefts", "Blackmail/threats", "Physical attacks", "Physical exhaustion", "Mental exhaustion", "Pressure to achieve results", "Competition among colleagues", in a scale of six points, from "none" to "extremely high");
- vi) work daily demands ("Please signal how demanding, on a daily basis, is your main professional activity, concerning the following aspects:", with the categories "Physical strength", "Physical stamina", "Physical agility", "Concentration", "Memorization", "Mental acuity", "Emotional control", "Conflict management", "Communication skills", in a scale of five points, from "not demanding at all" to "extremely demanding");
- vii) work-life balance ("In the last month, how often have you:", with the categories "Kept worrying about your work when you were no longer on the job.", "Felt too tired after work to perform some necessary household/family tasks.", "Felt your work prevented you from devoting your family the time you wish you could.", "Felt your work and/or your family kept you from having time for other activities you would like to engage in.", in a scale of six points, from "never" to "constantly").

The second dimension was operationalised through a set of indicators and questions, of which the following are used in this article:

- i) medication use to manage performance ("Regarding the following medicines and natural products/supplements, signal if you have ever used them or not:", presenting the list of consumption purposes included in Table 5);
- ii) acceptability of medication use to manage performance ("Please signal the degree to which you (dis)agree with the following statements:", presenting the sentences included in Table 7, in a scale of five points, from "completely disagree" to "completely agree").

The questionnaire also included a section to collect sociodemographic data (age, gender, region).

An online questionnaire - using the Qualtrics platform (2020) - was distributed to journalists recruited mainly through collaboration agreements with the journalist's trade union [Sindicato dos Jornalistas] and Casa da Imprensa - Associação Mutualista, which sent it to their members, and through informal contacts with journalists who recruited other colleagues. A form on an online questionnaire platform was created to collect contact details of possible respondents by sending an invitation to participate in the study. If they agreed to participate, they entered their email addresses in the form.

This process was designed to ensure that the responses were not constrained or conditioned by unequal power relationships in the work context, which might happen if the questionnaire was sent via the newsroom employers. As a result, contact details of 368 willing participants were collected and the research team sent them the questionnaire. A total of 145 responses were received. This non-probability sample was distributed throughout the Portuguese mainland and was balanced in terms of gender (F-54.5%; M-45.5%), and years in the job (20 years or less - 48.3%; more than 20 years - 51.7%).

Data from the questionnaire were analysed statistically using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). In addition to univariate analyses, bivariate analyses were performed, running t-tests of mean differences and Chi-square tests of independence. Results were significant at 0.05. New variables were also built to combine some of the initial indicators and measures. Principal component analysis (PCA) were conducted in

order to reduce dimensionality and increase the interpretability of the data. The resulting composite variables underwent reliability tests (Cronbach's alpha) and were shown to be of high or very high reliability.

Interviews

In the final phase of the project, semi-structured interviews (n=17) were conducted with questionnaire respondents who agreed to be interviewed, to dig deeper into the information obtained in the questionnaire. Nine of the 17 interviewees were men and eight were women, 7 were under 45 years old and 10 were over 45 years old, 9 had less than 25 years of professional experience, and 8 had more than 25 years. The interviews were conducted online using videoconferencing platforms, largely due to pandemic restrictions, though they were originally planned to be face-to-face. Anonymity was also ensured and only the audio was recorded. The interviews lasted a total of 17 hours, at an average of one hour each.

The interview script was divided into two parts: professional practices and pressure factors (daily work, main pressure and wear and tear factors, effects of technological innovation, work-life balance), strategies for managing professional pressure (perceptions of medication use for performance, use of medication to manage performance, reasons for the relative invisibility of medication use in journalists' discourse). The aspects covered in the interviews were to some extent similar to the ones discussed in the focus groups, but with the advantage of being approached in greater depth, because they took place in the final phase of the project and aimed at deepening the information, while the focus groups took place in an exploratory phase and aimed to get exploratory information.

The interviews were fully transcribed and underwent categorical content analysis, leading to the construction of analytical categories informed by the literature and empirical data. The data were then coded using MAXQDA.

All stages of the research abided by the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and were approved by the Ethics Committee of Egas Moniz (protocol code CE 857, February, 2020). All participants received, read and signed an informed consent form with information about the content and aims of their participation. The anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected were ensured at all times.

Findings and Discussion

The impact of work transformations on professional pressure

The pressure of work time

The transformations in journalists' work are generating new forms of professional pressure. Although a broader set of factors of change has been identified in research, as expressed in the theoretical framework of this article, one of the main factors that generate greater wear and tear on journalists is the changes in work time. These changes are caused by an intensification of workload, work pace and work schedules that puts journalists in permanent, overwhelming contact with their work. This results in greater overlapping and blurring of boundaries between the professional and private spheres.

There is an overall perception on the part of the vast majority of the journalists surveyed that the pace of work is very intense (73.1%). Two of the different but interconnected factors that affect work pace and

accentuate the pressure on journalists are: 1) the intensification of the workload due to the demand for immediate responses and 2) the range of working hours.

Although this reflects differently in some organisational contexts, in general terms the workload and pace of work have intensified, as work practices are increasingly subject to shorter deadlines, demands for immediate responses, pressure for rapid production and greater productivity and volume of work in the shortest time possible. This is a general trend in journalists' work, in which demand means adapting professional practices to pressure for immediate publication, creating tension between deadlines and demands for quality:

Conditioned by the press deadline of the newspaper (...) one thing we are increasingly losing, and that is time (...). We are often asked for the best of both worlds, which is in-depth work in a short time - "do as much as possible in as little time as possible" (Focus Group, Participant 4).

The pressure of work time is also visible in journalists' perceptions of the professional risks to which they are exposed. A principal component analysis (PCA) was conducted to analyse the degree of occupational risk exposure as perceived by journalists. Seven items were included in the questionnaire to identify and measure different risks, resulting in two indicators: "accidents, thefts and physical violence" and "Exhaustion, pressure and competitiveness" (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: PCA for degree of exposure to risks

Items	Rotated factor loadings	
	PC1	PC2
Accidents involving transport or equipment	.009	.901
Thefts	.181	.908
Physical attacks	.373	.719
Physical exhaustion	.597	.249
Mental exhaustion	.838	.046
Pressure to achieve results	.873	.095
Competition among colleagues	.682	.184
Variance (%)	35.1%	32.3%
Total variance (%)	67.4%	

KMO=0.758; $p < 0.001$

Table 2: Degree of exposure to risks (means)

Risks	Mean
Accidents, thefts and physical violence (index) $\alpha=0.836$	2.37

Accidents involving transport or equipment	2.26
Theft	2.38
Physical attacks	2.46
Exhaustion, pressure and competitiveness (index) $\alpha=0.763$	3.97
Physical exhaustion	3.30
Mental exhaustion	4.61
Pressure to achieve results	4.40
Competition among colleagues	3.58
Global risk exposure index $\alpha=0.836$	3.25

Scale from 1 (none) to 6 (extremely high) risk.

n=145

Journalists identified "mental exhaustion" as the greatest risk factor in their work (mean of 4.61). Among the main risks, the pressure to achieve results (mean of 4.40) was also very relevant. This response certainly results from the pressure on journalists' work and, in particular, that resulting from the intensification of the workload, work pace and working hours.

Along with the intensification of the workload and pace of work, there are significant changes in different dimensions of working times that are expressed in the extension, irregularity, flexibility, unpredictability and absence of prior planning of schedules.

A direct consequence of these changes was the high number of daily working hours. Most of the survey respondents worked more than eight hours a day (60%). This percentage is in line with the survey carried out within the scope of OberCom - Observatório da Comunicação (Crespo et al., 2017) in which 60.7% of journalists surveyed say they work more than 40 hours a week. This data is also in line with the country report referring to Portugal in the scope of "Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS) 2012-2016" (Novais and Henriques, 2016), in which it is noted that "a large majority of respondents reported an increase in their average working hours" (77.6%). Long working hours were a strong factor of pressure and wear and tear present in the journalists' work:

When someone has really long working hours (...) it is completely exhausting (...). Working (...) fourteen hours (...) has become the norm; it is not the exception (...) a trend that gets worse as time goes by (...). There are people who have lunch and dinner at the newspaper (...). It's too much for anyone (Focus Group, Participant 1).

In addition to the extensive schedules there is shift work, including nights (81.4% of the journalists do not have a fixed daytime schedule, and 71.7% work at night) and weekends (85.5%). The panorama of working hours and schedules is a factor of pressure that increases when schedules are neither planned nor predictable (in the last month, with respect to the moment they answered the questionnaire, 56.6% were asked to work outside normal working hours, with little advance notice) or when the work is urgent and the intensity and pressure are constant.

In addition, the place and time in which journalists have to work is unpredictable, making it impossible to plan schedules in advance:

It is not unusual for something to happen (...) at 5 pm and then you only leave at midnight, or after midnight, because it is really important (...). There was an attack (...), an attack on Libya and we had to cover it (Focus Group, Participant 4).

Another factor is the unpredictability of events and journalists' work situations:

Sometimes I don't know where I'm going; I don't know where the fire is. I still have to go and look for the command post and I don't know where. It is often like that, in places in the middle of the woods (E02).

In this sense, work has a totalising nature:

We have a job that, in practice, never shuts down (...). I leave work and stop thinking about it, (...) then, the 7 o'clock news comes on and that's it, I'm listening to it again (...). Then I arrive home and I'm getting messages about the breaking news (...). The feeling among journalists is that if we disconnect, we are missing the boat (...), if we miss a detail in a story (Focus Group, Participant 5).

Permanent contact with work establishes continuity between the work and private spheres, generating an overlap and a blurring of boundaries between the time devoted to work and leisure, the domestic space and the workplace, with no clear separation between people's occupation and the other spheres of their lives. The intensity and permanence of work extend concerns of the job beyond working time. Therefore, 91.7% of the respondents stated that they continued to worry about work even when they were no longer at work. The overlap between the professional and private spheres is causing a growing difficulty in reconciling, balancing, and separating them. Journalists are increasingly "connected" to their work through permanent contact, due, in the first instance, to the little time available for a private life, or because working hours are irregular or flexible or work situations and occurrences are highly unpredictable and it is hard or even impossible to plan working hours and, consequently, leisure times, which generates marked work-life imbalances. These imbalances are expressed in the fact that 87.6% of the respondents felt "too tired after work to do some of the domestic/family chores", 82.8% "felt that work prevented them from dedicating as much time to the family as they would like" and 76.6% "felt that work and/or family prevented them from having time for other activities that they would like to do".

The pressure of work demands

The wear and tear caused by an intense work pace also has to do with multi-tasking. In this context, a journalist's job increasingly involves simultaneous performance of tasks and use of skills in a number of areas, which may be related to journalism or new technologies:

Today we have journalists who write and film footage for video production. They have editing programs and they know how to edit. They work directly in the back office, so they work on the website and can do anything from a multimedia report to a print news story. It is versatility that requires not only great skills in different tools and technologies but also great agility of thought. If we look at it, it requires knowing how to communicate in different languages (E17).

There is a wide variety of topics in just one day (...). We are writing, and we jump from one piece to another, and the articles are not even finished yet (E01).

To analyse the pattern of work demand, a principal component analysis was conducted with the nine items in the questionnaire measuring the daily demands of journalists' work. Three indicators were then created: "physical demand" (including physical strength, stamina, and agility), "intellectual demand" (concentration,

memory and mental agility), and "emotional demand" (emotional control, conflict management, and communication skills). The new composite variables result from the sum of the set of items in each dimension. The "global demand index" was created from computation of all nine items (Tables 3 and 4). These indicators, which express the different types of demands journalists are faced with during their professional activity, were based on existing scientific production on this subject and identification of issues raised by the participants in the focus groups.

Table 3: PCA for work daily demands

Items	Rotated factor loadings		
	PC1	PC2	PC3
Physical strength	.904	.006	.108
Stamina	.853	.042	.082
Agility	.922	.047	.038
Concentration	-.001	.822	.113
Memory	.224	.763	.157
Mental agility	.010	.819	.137
Emotional control	.198	.240	.812
Conflict management	.041	.152	.870
Communication skills	-.345	.572	.382
Variance (%)	28.9%	26.0%	18.2%
Total variance (%)	73.1%		

KMO=0.752; $p < 0.001$

Table 4: Work daily demands

Demands	Mean
Physical demand index $\alpha=0.927$	1.96
Intellectual demand index $\alpha=0.853$	4.23
Emotional demand index $\alpha=0.757$	3.97
Global demand index $\alpha=0.822$	3.81

Scale from 1 (not at all demanding) to 5 (extremely demanding)

n=145

The intellectual component was considered the most demanding (mean of 4.23) of the three components, while significant weight was also given to emotional demand (3.97). In contrast, perception of the physical demand of the work was particularly low (1.96). These values are related to the nature of journalistic work, which is of a clear intellectual nature, in which the physical component carries less weight. The journalists reinforced the predominance of the intellectual component in the four most demanding aspects of their work, three of which clearly fall within this component, namely concentration (94.5%), mental agility (92.4%) and memory (73.8%).

The intellectual demands are associated with adaptation to digital technologies, which is linked to one of the most profound changes in the nature of journalists' work in recent decades, resulting from the progressive decrease of traditional tasks and skills and the expansion of digital ones, a transformation which, as already mentioned, is at the core of the emergence of a new type of journalism:

In the old days, a journalist was someone who obviously had knowledge of the subject he wrote about (...), he had to have the ability to synthesise, the ability to criticise, the ability to write, the ability to question... But nowadays there are journalists who have to know how to program, edit audio, video and images; they have to know a lot more stuff (E16).

The main emotional demand is predominantly associated with the ability to communicate, highlighted by the respondents as the main requirement of their job (94.5%). The ability to communicate directly is one of the components of journalists' work that generates greatest pressure, wear and tear and emotional demands. These are related to scrutiny of the work and the particularly demanding, intense and permanent interaction with the public, strongly mediated by technological resources:

We all get e-mails from readers saying "You don't understand any of this; you got it wrong here and again there" (...) and this is often done in public comments (...). There is a concern about exposure of errors and the consequences that this can sometimes have (...). Anyone who spends time reading all the comments on our pieces is destroyed (...). We are often treated as the enemy by several sides of the same story (Focus Group, Participant 5).

The impact of work pressure on performance consumption

The pressure on professional performance that the transformations in journalists' work have been accentuating, as presented and discussed above, faces journalists with the need to manage new or increasing work demands. It is therefore important to understand the extent of performance consumptions in the work context as part of performance management goals in response to work pressure (Egreja and Lopes, 2021). This refers to the use of pharmaceuticals or food supplements/natural products for cognitive, physical or relational performance management (i.e. human conditions that go beyond health and illness) (Lopes et al, 2015; Raposo and Rodrigues, 2021). In this section, we analyse consumption practices and attitudes to consumption.

Patterns and purposes in performance consumption

In order to operationalise performance use of medicines or supplements, survey respondents were asked about ten different purposes, covering both cognitive/relational and physical/body performance. In the first case, it includes consumptions to sleep, to stay awake, for concentration, for memory, to relax/calm down and to improve the mood. In the second case, it includes consumptions to increase physical energy, to lose weight, for sexual performance and to increase muscle mass (Table 5). These purposes were selected for their focus on daily management of performance, extending beyond disease treatment or prevention, as operationalised in previous studies (Lopes et al, 2015) and were also derived from the results of the focus groups, in which a relation between work pressure and these types of medication use was reported.

Table 5: Consumption by purpose (medicines and supplements)

Purpose	Has used or usually uses
To sleep	45.5%
To relax/calm down	38.6%
To increase physical energy	27.6%
For memory	21.4%
For concentration	17.9%
To lose weight	15.9%
To improve mood	15.2%
To stay awake	6.2%
To increase muscle mass	6.2%
For sexual performance	4.8%

n=145

In line with the characteristics of journalists' work and the performance demands associated, the highest use was for cognitive/relational purposes. Consumption "to sleep" is at the top of the list (45.5%) and meets their sleep management needs (Rodrigues et al, 2021) that the intense pace of work imposes and that extends to other spheres of life. In addition to these, the other most prominent purposes were "to relax/calm down" (38.6%), "for memory" (21.4%), "for concentration" (17.9%) and "to improve mood" (15.2%). Two purposes with considerable high figures in physical performance were "to increase physical energy" (27.6%) and "to lose weight" (15.9%).

This pattern is even more evident if we look at the following combined consumption indicators, which were built for synthetic measurement of the overall dimension of the phenomenon and for comparative and correlational analyses. The overall consumption indicator refers to respondents who said that they had used or usually used at least one product for at least one purpose. Consumption was relatively high (69.7%). This reveals the dissemination of such types of consumption which appear to work as performance aids in journalists' work contexts.

A finer analysis, comparing consumption for cognitive-relational purposes with that for physical purposes (indicators constructed in the same way as the previous one, segmenting the two types of purposes) shows that the former is clearly higher than the latter (60.7% and 40.7%, respectively), which is consistent with the fact that the main demands among journalists are of a cognitive and emotional nature.

While these results are in themselves indicative of dynamics of a significant use of medicines and other therapeutic products in the sphere of personal and professional performance, the observation of the relationship between work pressure factors and performance consumption reinforces the fact that work contexts, due to their characteristics, can encourage such consumptions.

Table 6: Relationship between work pressure factors and performance consumptions (mean difference)

	Consumption indicator	Mean
Intensity of work pace	Consumption	3.90*
	No consumption	3.66*
Job demand		

Physical demand index	Consumption	1.98
	No consumption	1.91
Intellectual demand index	Consumption	4.28
	No consumption	4.12
Emotional demand index	Consumption	4.00
	No consumption	3.91
Global demand index	Consumption	3.42
	No consumption	3.31
Degree of exposure to risks		
Accidents, thefts and physical violence	Consumption	2.46
	No consumption	2.16
Exhaustion, pressure and competitiveness	Consumption	4.06
	No consumption	3.78
Global risk exposure index	Consumption	3.35*
	No consumption	3.03*

* $p < 0.05$; T-test

Intensity of work pace: Scale from 1 (not at all intense) to 5 (excessively intense).

Professional activity demand: Scale from 1 (not at all demanding) to 5 (extremely demanding).

Degree of exposure to risks: Scale from 1 (None) to 6 (Extremely high).

n: Consumption=101; No-consumption=44

As shown in table 6, there is a relationship between work pressure factors and performance consumptions. In fact, among the respondents who consume products for performance purposes, the mean value of the perception of all the factors analysed (perception of exposure to risks at work, intensity of work pace, job demand) was higher than among non-consumers.

However, the differences between consumers and non-consumers are not of the same magnitude, and not all work-related pressure factors seem to significantly contribute to the use of medicines or supplements aimed at improving daily performance. The factors more related to this use are the exposure to risks and the intensity of work pace. Concerning the perception of global risk exposure, the difference in means is statistically significant. The same occurs with the intensity of pace, although with a smaller difference. If we consider, as mentioned above (Table 2), that "mental exhaustion" was identified as the main risk to which journalists are exposed and that this factor is strongly associated with the intensity of work pace, we can conclude that there is a clear relationship between performance consumptions and these two work pressure factors.

In the case of various types of demands, the differences are considerably smaller, mainly the physical and emotional demands. These results reveal that it is not so much the demands associated with work that raise the performance consumptions but rather the way in which work is performed, under strong pressure and at a high pace. Therefore, the main purposes for consuming medicines and supplements (to sleep, to relax/calm down) are to manage the exhaustion caused by work pressure.

The use of medicines or supplements as a response to the pressures and demands of work also come up in the discourses during the interviews. The two following excerpts illustrate how these types of consumption are used for these purposes. While, in the first case, the use of supplements aimed to improve cognitive performance in everyday work, the second illustrates how work pressures extended beyond the places and times in which it was done, with medication used to deal with the difficulty of "switching off".

I started taking supplements, and it was to improve my mental performance (...). I felt that I needed to take something to have more mental stamina, because I also took them when I was studying and so I already knew that I would need them if I had more demands on me (E03).

I know that what often happens is that you need help to turn your mind off and not so much to keep it on. It will always be medication to sleep or relax (...). I know of people who take and have to take medication to sleep, so that the brain stops thinking about what it has been thinking about for twelve hours before that (E07).

These results suggest the existence of a relationship between the nature and contexts of journalists' work, and the consumption of medicines and supplements for performance purposes. These characteristics are pressure factors and seem to work as drivers for consumption, aimed at managing or improving work performance, but also in other spheres of life, given the consequences of professional demands on personal and family life.

Acceptability of performance consumption

Following our analysis of performance consumptions in journalists' work contexts, we now consider another equally relevant indicator in order to assess their management of demands with recourse to medicine solutions. The indicator in question is the acceptability of these consumptions, which enables us to assess to what extent resorting to therapeutic resources is an acceptable, plausible option, given the pressure and demands that mark the working contexts of journalists.

In fact, the permeability towards performance consumptions as practical solutions managing work pressures is an element denoting a normalisation of different social uses of therapeutic resources. This means that journalists are also willing to use medication for purposes beyond the field of health or illness.

To operationalise this indicator, we measured the degree of agreement or disagreement with the acceptability of consumptions as a response to the demands of journalists' work. We considered different dimensions of these demands (physical, intellectual and relational demands) (Table 7).

Based on statements of acceptability among the different demands and the use of medicines and/or supplements to manage or improve performance, we found that agreement or disagreement regarding consumptions as a resource varied depending on whether the demands were physical or intellectual.

Table 7: Acceptability of performance consumptions

	Disagree completely/ partially		Agree completely/ partially		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1 - The physical demands of journalism make it acceptable to use medicines and/or supplements to increase energy.	81	61.4	51	38.6	132	100.0

2 - The intellectual demands of journalism make it acceptable to use medicines and/or supplements to enhance performance.	64	48.9	67	51.1	131	100.0
3 - The relational demands of journalism make it acceptable to use medicines and/or supplements to manage relationships with others.	94	71.8	37	28.2	131	100,0

In the former case, the physical demands, which, as we have seen, were not perceived as particularly intense in journalists' work, were not a justifying factor for openness to and acceptance towards putative consumption (38.6% agreed, while 61.4% disagreed).

In the latter case, there was a degree of openness to the use of medicines and supplements when intellectual demands were considered, although ambivalently, with practically half expressing agreement (51.1%) and disagreement (48.9%) with the acceptability of consumption for these purposes. In any case, the slight predominance of agreement is expected, especially if we consider that intellectual demands are the highest in journalists' work.

The following excerpt highlights openness to the use of therapeutic resources, if the circumstances and demands of the work so require.

I don't think it's inevitable, but I think it's understandable (...). Colleagues who feel the need to be more awake or more able to work longer hours and feel they need some help, I think it's understandable. (E07).

In the case of relational aspects (Statement 3), acceptability is notably lower (28.2%), which suggests that this dimension tends to be perceived as extrinsic to the nature of journalism and, therefore, less open to legitimisation.

Considering the predominance of consumption for cognitive-relational purposes, there is a correlation between the acceptability of consumption and the existence of effective consumption practices, since those who have used these products are more likely to consider their use acceptable in circumstances of intrinsic professional demands. Specifically, the mean of agreement is higher among those who consume (3.29), compared to those who do not (3.05). We can conclude that accumulated experience renders consumption more acceptable, particularly if the circumstances of professional demands are more intense.

This relative propensity of journalists for cultural acceptance of consumption in relation to the intellectual demands of the work, although it depends on the type of consumption and the circumstances that legitimise it (Pegado, 2016) ends up creating the conditions for the demands of performance to be considered as a matter which can be addressed through pharmacological management.

Conclusion

As expressed in the literature and confirmed by the results of the research work through the application of qualitative methods (focus group and interview), the transformations of journalists' work generate new forms of professional pressure and great wear and tear caused by an increase in work time and pace of work, more multi-skilling and the particularly demanding interaction with the public.

Given the abovementioned changes our aim was to explore how journalists deal with new or increasing work pressure and how they tend to manage the performance imperatives intrinsic to the nature of their work. In this sense, our analytical approach has allowed us to understand how strategies for managing this pressure on performance can lead to the mobilisation of medicines and food supplements. The use of medication to help meet the work requirements is indicative of the way in which professional pressure factors can act as drivers of consumption, which means that, in these circumstances, the relationship with therapeutic resources is supported by a logic of managing everyday social imperatives, particularly those related to professional performance.

In the context of journalistic work, the increase in professional pressure has concrete effects on performance consumption, which was particularly reinforced by the empirical evidence analysed. The consumption of medicines and/or food supplements is, effectively, more frequent as the perception of journalists that their professional activity is more intense, demanding and exposed to greater risks increases. In this sense, it is fair to say that the professional and social pressure that journalists are confronted with fosters the need to manage work demands, leading to performance consumption in work contexts. The use of therapeutic resources as auxiliary tools to cope with the pressure factors brings, therefore, relevant empirical evidence to further explore the heuristic potentialities of the concept of pharmaceuticalisation in the daily life of journalists' professional contexts.

To conclude, we would like to add that the scarcity of studies on journalistic work on this topic suggests the need for future international comparative studies that examine the interconnections between pressure factors in journalist work and pharmaceuticalisation of work performance, both conceptually and empirically.

Notes

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