

HEALTH MAGAZINES IN PORTUGAL: PUBLISHING TRENDS FROM 1993 TO 2025

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ABSTRACT

Although there is no clear consensus on what constitutes specialized journalism, health journalism is widely understood as fulfilling a civic role by translating complex medical and scientific information into accessible narratives for the public. This study maps the landscape of Portuguese health magazines between 1993 and 2025, analyzing their circulation patterns and thematic orientations. Drawing on longitudinal data and content classification, the findings identify three distinct phases in the sector's evolution. The first phase (1993–2006) is marked by expansion and editorial specialization, with a growing number of publications targeting niche audiences such as parents, women, and fitness-oriented readers. The second phase (2007–2016) reflects a period of contraction, characterized by declining circulation figures and the gradual disappearance of several titles, in line with wider economic pressures affecting the media industry. The third phase (2017 onwards) reveals a context of structural fragility, shaped by digital transition, audience fragmentation, and instability in media ownership.

Keywords: *Portuguese health magazines; trends; circulation; mapping*

Introduction

Specialized or beat journalism is defined by stable thematic boundaries, established source networks, and audience expectations (Becker & Vlad, 2009). Health journalism has emerged within this framework as a distinct editorial niche, although it is often still analyzed through the lens of generalist news practices (Hinnant, 2009). Much of the existing literature emphasizes journalistic routines, professional interactions, and the use of sources in shaping specific discourses (Marinho et al., 2012). However, health journalism increasingly reflects specialized professional logics and source dynamics that distinguish it from general reporting models (Magin & Maurer, 2019).

In this context, magazine studies provide a valuable lens through which to understand the intersection of commercial imperatives, audience segmentation, and editorial identity. Magazines operate by blending journalism, branding, and entertainment, often fostering trust through visual storytelling, expert personas, and emotional engagement (Holmes & Nice, 2012; Abrahamson, Prior-Miller, & Emmott, 2015). These characteristics are particularly evident in niches such as health, fashion, and lifestyle journalism. Nevertheless, Portuguese health magazines remain under-researched despite their presence in the market since the 1990s. Their study is critical to understanding how these publications mediate biomedical knowledge, foster lay health literacy, and reflect broader structural pressures in the print media ecosystem (Briggs & Hallin, 2016; Araújo, 2016).

Health Journalism: Towards the Magazine's Allure

The definition of journalistic specialization remains contested, both among professionals and within academic literature (Conde, 2005; Pérez, 1998; Tavares, 2009). Authors typically distinguish between generalist reporting

and professional specialization, the latter marked by deep topical engagement and the formation of thematic editorial sections (Borrat, 1989). Specialization often results from cumulative professional experience, leading to enhanced domain knowledge, curated networks of sources, and narrative proficiency (Marchetti, 2005).

This in-depth approach allows for the development of journalistic content organized by topics, subtopics, and thematic coherence. Such specialization implies command over a specific conceptual lexicon, sustained source relationships, and recognition by editorial leadership (Hovden & Knapskog, 2015). A central trait of specialized journalism is its capacity to produce credible, high-quality information tailored to informed and engaged audiences (Markina, 2010).

Health journalism, in particular, has historically aligned with journalism's civic mission due to its relevance to public welfare and behavior change (McAlister, 1995). From the early stages of mass journalism, coverage of epidemics and health crises has been regarded as a journalistic duty, requiring reliable, accessible information for both public authorities and general audiences (Barrera Páez, 2016). As Hodgetts et al. (2008) assert, health news occupies a prominent place in media agendas and plays a formative role in shaping public behavior, particularly through the construction of disease-related narratives.

The challenge of health reporting lies in translating technical and scientific language into accessible narratives without compromising accuracy (Tanner, Friedman, & Zheng, 2015). This often results in a dependence on institutional health sources, which, while authoritative, may limit the journalist's critical autonomy. Nonetheless, health journalism is pivotal to advancing health literacy by interpreting and disseminating complex medical information (Figenschou, Thorbjørnsrud, & Hallin, 2023). The act of simplifying scientific language for lay consumption is increasingly framed as a civic responsibility (Hodgetts et al., 2008).

Recent scholarship identifies a shift in narrative strategies within health journalism. Journalists are increasingly moving beyond their traditional roles as scientific translators to embrace storytelling techniques that emphasize human-interest angles and emotional resonance (Figenschou, Thorbjørnsrud, & Hallin, 2023). This narrative aims to enhance public engagement and broaden the reach of health-related content across diverse media platforms (Saffran, 2021).

Health journalism in the magazine format is particularly susceptible to these trends. In the United States, for example, health magazines have significantly influenced how audiences conceptualize wellness and illness (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). Len-Ríos and Hinnant (2014) argue that the consumption of health magazines correlates with readers' health literacy levels, particularly in gendered formats like women's magazines, which often blend health advice with aspirational lifestyle content. However, this also opens space for the reinforcement of gendered stereotypes and mixed health-lifestyle messages.

Defining Health Journalism and Its Editorial Context in Portugal

Health journalism occupies a strategic position at the crossroads of science communication, medical reporting, and public service (Araújo, 2016). It carries a civic obligation to translate scientific evidence into accessible narratives for lay audiences (Hodgetts et al., 2008). This translational function is central to the professionalization of the beat, requiring journalists to maintain both scientific accuracy and communicative clarity while navigating complex institutional ecosystems.

A distinction must be made between health journalism and lifestyle journalism. While the latter often relies on aspirational narratives, soft news, and personal testimonials, health journalism is expected to uphold standards of evidence-based reporting and serve the public interest (Len-Ríos & Hinnant,

2014). Nonetheless, these boundaries are increasingly fluid. Figenschou, Thorbjørnsrud, & Hallin (2023) demonstrate that legacy media outlets increasingly incorporate affective storytelling, blurring the line between factual reporting and emotional engagement. Similarly, reliance on institutional sources can reduce journalistic autonomy and promote dominant biomedical discourses (Tanner, Friedman, & Zheng, 2015).

In Portugal, the revitalization of the publishing sector following the revolutionary period (1974–1979) facilitated the proliferation of specialized titles for increasingly segmented audiences (Sousa & Lima, 2023). The post-revolutionary liberalization (1979–1995) and subsequent convergence era (1995–present) enabled the institutionalization of editorial beats, including health journalism.

Health-focused publications catered to growing public interest in wellness, disease prevention, and biomedical information. Their editorial trajectories map onto broader societal trends, such as increased consumer awareness and the mediatization of health (Gustavo & Completo, 2014). Yet, like other niche publications, they are vulnerable to commercial pressures and structural constraints within the print media industry (Conboy, 2005).

Further contributing factors include platform convergence, advertising volatility, and ownership concentration (Chandra & Kaiser, 2015). The digital transition intensified these dynamics, reshaping value chains and exacerbating financial pressures on print magazines (Stam, 2021).

Despite the importance of this editorial category, research on the history of health magazines in Portugal remains limited. While sports, business, and cultural journalism have received scholarly attention, the health specialization within magazines remains largely unexplored (Silva et al., 2017). This study seeks to address this gap by tracing the trajectory of Portuguese health magazines in relation to broader

press trends and the logics of editorial specialization. Taking this into consideration, this research work was designed to respond to the following questions: i. How have Portuguese health magazines evolved in terms of publication trends, thematic focus, and distribution strategies?; ii. What does the trajectory of Portuguese health magazines reveal about the sustainability of specialized print journalism in the context of digital media expansion?

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative longitudinal analysis with qualitative thematic classification. Its objective was to map the landscape of Portuguese health magazines, analyze their distribution and thematic orientation, and contextualize their evolution within the broader challenges facing the news media sector.

Three main data sources informed this research: (a) Audited reports from the Associação Portuguesa para o Controlo de Tiragem e Circulação (APCT); (b) The Lisbon Digital Newspaper Library; and (c) Company filings and trade press reports. Health magazines were defined as periodicals whose mission statements explicitly commit to evidence-based medical information aimed at improving individual or public health. Titles primarily focused on fitness, fashion, or general lifestyle were excluded, unless their content addressed medically grounded health topics. Magazines produced by scientific societies and targeted at professional audiences, such as *Viver Saudável*, which is dedicated to nutritionists, were also excluded. *Saúde Actual*, founded in 2001, stands out in the Portuguese health magazine landscape for its holistic approach to health. The publication covers a wide range of topics, including complementary and alternative medicine, nutrition, environmental health, and overall well-being, reflecting an integrative perspective on health. In 2025, the editorial direction reported an average monthly circulation of approximately 5,000 copies. However, as the magazine is

not registered with the APCT, its circulation data is not independently verified. For this reason, and to ensure consistency and comparability across the sample, *Saúde Actual* was also not included in the present analysis.

Each selected publication was analyzed based on:

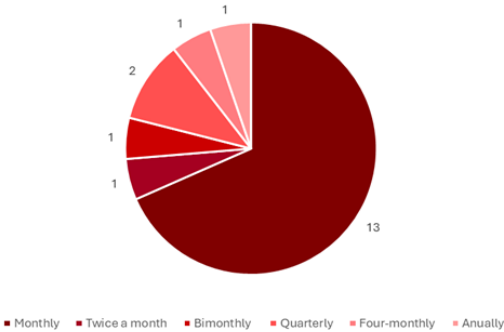
- i. Period of paid print and digital publication;
- ii. Annualized figures for paid print circulation and digital edition sales;
- iii. Thematic coverage and content organization.

Quantitative data were standardized to annual totals to ensure comparability. For qualitative content analysis, five issues per title were purposively selected. Descriptive statistics are reported in percentages to facilitate comparison across titles.

Results

Between 1993 and 2025, a total of 19 health magazines were identified as circulating in Portugal, with publication frequencies ranging from monthly to annual. Monthly publications predominated within the sample, followed by quarterly titles, reflecting a strong preference for regular dissemination of health-related content (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Distribution of the periodicity of health magazines in Portugal since 1993



The classification of health magazines into six thematic categories was made to reflect the main dimensions of health communication addressed in the Portuguese print media landscape, namely: Parenting; Child Health; Physical Activity; Nutrition; General Prevention; and Mental Health. These categories are consistent with a broad, multidimensional understanding of health and align with public health frameworks that encompass physical, mental, and social well-being.

The “Parenting” category brings together magazines primarily focused on pregnancy, childbirth, and parental roles, in which health is framed through the lens of caregiving and family dynamics. The titles *A Nossa Gravidez* (*Our Pregnancy*), *Mãe Ideal* (*Ideal Mother*), and *Pais & Filhos* (*Parents & Children*) emphasize maternal health, parenting practices, and expert guidance. This distinction is justified because these publications approach health through the lens of family and caregiving, rather than individual health alone. Although closely related to parenting, the “Child Health” category isolates magazines that specifically address children’s physical development, early-life care, and pediatric health. Examples include *Bebé Saúde* (*Baby Health*), *Bebé D’Hoje* (*Today’s Baby*), and *O Nosso Bebê* (*Our Baby*). The separation from “Parenting” highlights a more clinical and developmental perspective, focused directly on the child as a subject of health.

The “Physical Activity” category includes magazines that promote health primarily through exercise, fitness, and sport, such as *Men’s Health*, *Sport Life*, and *Performance*. It reflects the growing importance of lifestyle-based health, where physical activity is presented as an evidence-based tool for disease prevention and well-being. Magazines such as *Saúde à Mesa* (*Health at the Table*) and *Viva Melhor em Boa Forma* (*Live Better in Good Shape*) fall into the “Nutrition” category due to their emphasis on diet, healthy eating habits, and nutritional knowledge. Nutrition emerges as a specialized, autonomous field within health communication and is treated separately from general lifestyle or fitness.

The “General Prevention” category encompasses magazines with a broader scope, such as *Prevenir* (*Prevent*), *Visão Saúde* (*Visão Health*), and *Viver com Saúde* (*Living with Health*), which address health promotion, disease prevention, and public health issues. These publications justify a separate category because they adopt a holistic and preventive approach, integrating multiple dimensions of health rather than focusing on a single domain. The “Mental Health” category is primarily represented by *Psicologia Atual* (*Current Psychology*), which focuses explicitly on psychological well-being, emotional health, and scientifically grounded mental health content. While other magazines, such as *Women’s Health* or *Pais & Filhos* (*Parents & Children*), also cover mental health topics, these are not their central focus, as they place greater emphasis on broader lifestyle, parenting, or physical health issues. For this reason, only *Psicologia Atual* is classified as a dedicated mental health magazine.

Figure 2 presents a longitudinal overview of health magazines published in Portugal between 1993 and 2025, organized by period of activity. The visualization highlights the temporal distribution and overlap of publications, revealing a clear expansion of the sector in the early 2000s, followed by a gradual decline in the number of active titles after 2010.

The peak period occurred between 2006 and 2010, when the highest number of magazines was simultaneously in circulation. Several titles, particularly those focused on parenting and child health, were concentrated in this period. From 2010 onwards, a progressive reduction in print publications is evident, with many titles ceasing to be published. By the most recent period, only a small number of magazines remain active, indicating a contraction of the print health magazine market, likely associated with the transition to digital media and changes in content consumption patterns.

The analysis of circulation trends from the databases is consistently available up to 2021. To ensure comparability across

publications, circulation figures up to this year were used as the main reference point for longitudinal analysis. Nevertheless, it is important to note that four magazines remain active beyond this period: *Prevenir* (Prevent) and *Visão Saúde* (Visão Health), for which data extend to 2024 and 2022, respectively, as well as *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*, which continue to be published at the time of writing. For *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*, however, only partial data are available beyond 2021, covering two quarters of 2022.

In order to provide a more comprehensive characterization of the contemporary landscape, the quantitative analysis is complemented by a qualitative assessment of recent developments, particularly regarding the media groups that currently own and manage these active titles. This combined approach allows for a more robust interpretation of the sector, capturing not only circulation trends but also structural transformations in the Portuguese health magazine market.

The longitudinal analysis of health magazines in Portugal reveals a dynamic trajectory marked by periods of expansion, contraction, and subsequent restructuring of the sector. Rather than presenting individual titles in isolation, the results point to broader patterns in editorial orientation, circulation trends, and market sustainability. It is therefore possible to identify three phases in the evolution of Portuguese health magazines, which we outline below.

Figure 2 Longitudinal overview of health magazines published in Portugal between 1993 and 2025



Phase 1: Expansion and Specialization (1993–2006)

The first phase is characterized by a steady increase in both the number of publications and their circulation volumes. This period culminates in 2006, when the market reached its highest level of diversity, with 12 health magazines in circulation. Cumulatively, print runs also peaked in the same year, reaching 675,378 copies (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Number of printed circulations of health magazines from 1993 to 2021 in Portugal

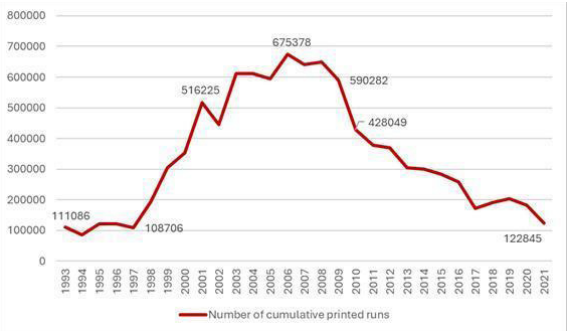
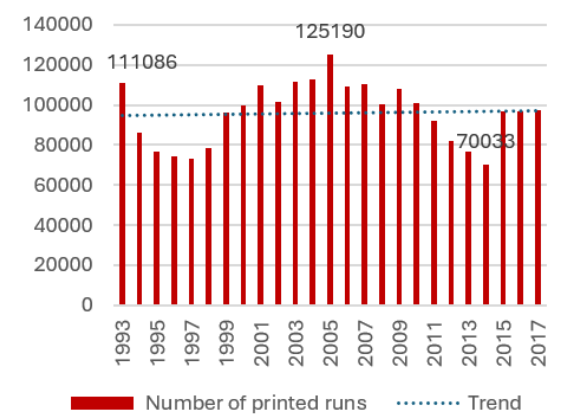


Figure 4 Distribution of printed runs of *Pais & Filhos* from 1999 to 2012 in Portugal



This expansion was supported by the emergence of highly specialized publications targeting distinct audiences. Parenting and child health magazines, such as *Pais & Filhos*, *Crescer*, and *Bebé d'Hoje*, dominated the landscape, often achieving substantial circulation figures. For instance, *Pais & Filhos* maintained consistently high distribution levels over more than two decades (Figure 4), while *Bebé d'Hoje* reached an average annual circulation of approximately 52,000 copies (Figure 5). These publications were typically structured around expert-driven content, reinforcing their role as trusted sources of health information.

Figure 5 Distribution of printed runs of *Bebé D'Hoje* from 1999 to 2012 in Portugal

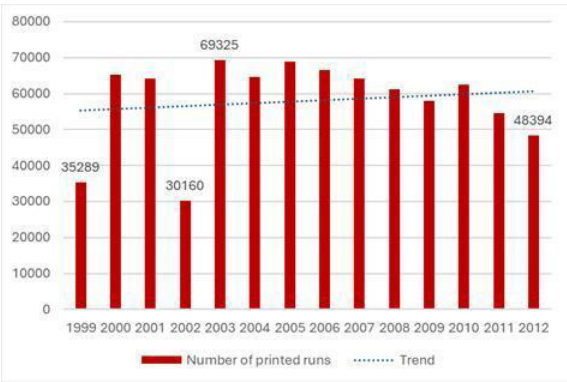
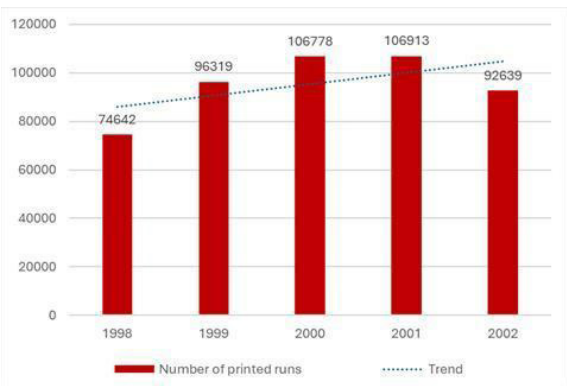


Figure 6 Distribution of printed runs of *Viver com Saúde* from 1998 to 2002 in Portugal



Simultaneously, other thematic niches began to consolidate. Titles such as *Viver com Saúde* (Figure 6) and *Viva Melhor em Boa Forma* (Figure 7) reflect an early diversification into general health and lifestyle-oriented content, while *Performance* (Figure 8) illustrates the growing relevance of fitness and nutrition as editorial domains. Overall, this phase demonstrates a strong

Figure 7 Distribution of printed runs of *Viva Melhor em Boa Forma* from 1998 to 2009 in Portugal

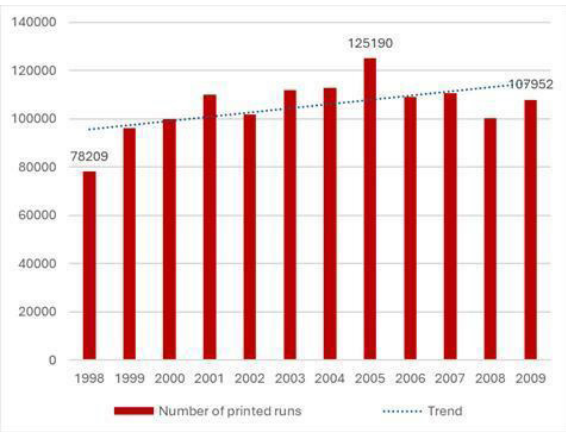
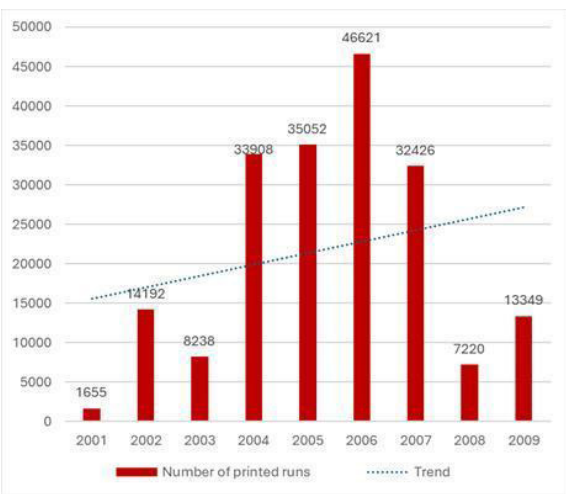


Figure 8 Distribution of printed runs of *Performance* from 2001 to 2009 in Portugal



alignment between editorial specialization and audience demand, supported by stable print-based business models.

Phase 2: Contraction and Market Decline (2007–2016)

The second phase is marked by a sharp decline in both circulation volumes and the number of active titles. Several magazines experienced decreasing print runs during this period,

Figure 9 Distribution of printed runs of *Crescer* from 1995 to 2010 in Portugal

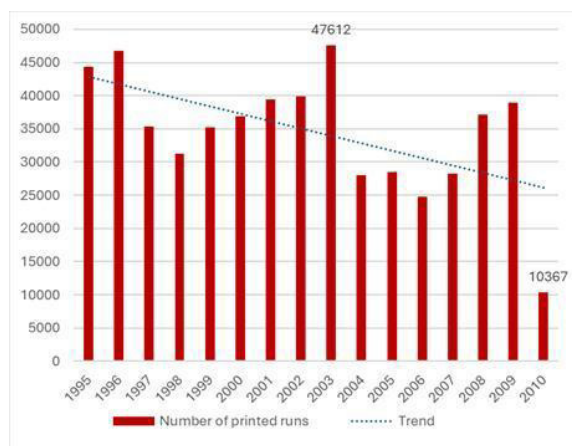
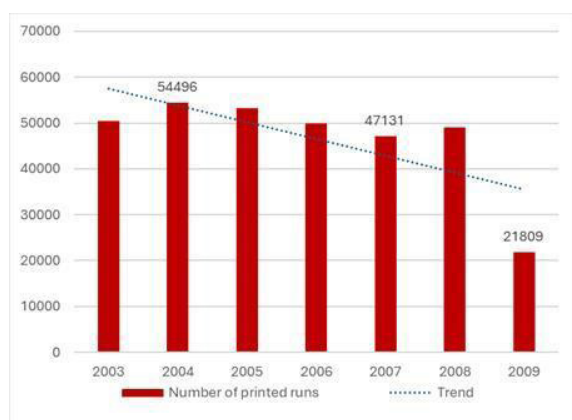


Figure 10 Distribution of printed runs of *Mãe Ideal* from 2003 to 2009 in Portugal



including *Crescer* (Figure 9), *Mãe Ideal* (Figure 10), and *A Nossa Gravidez* (Figure 11), all of which showed downward trends prior to their discontinuation. Even publications that had previously demonstrated growth, such as *Bebé Saúde* and *Performance*, were unable to sustain long-term viability.

This contraction is also visible in aggregate terms. Following the 2006 peak, total print circulation entered a sustained

Figure 11 Distribution of printed runs of *A Nossa Gravidez* from 2011 to 2017 in Portugal

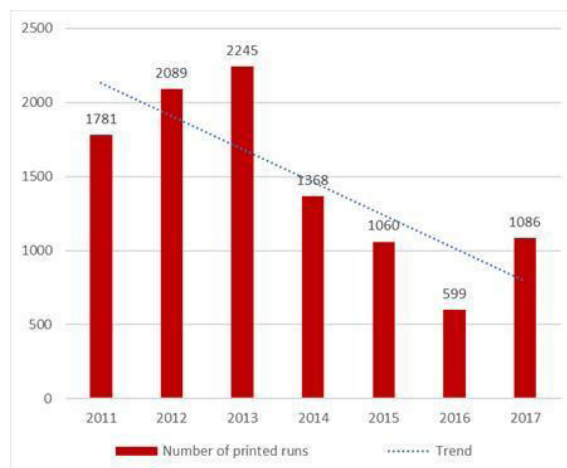
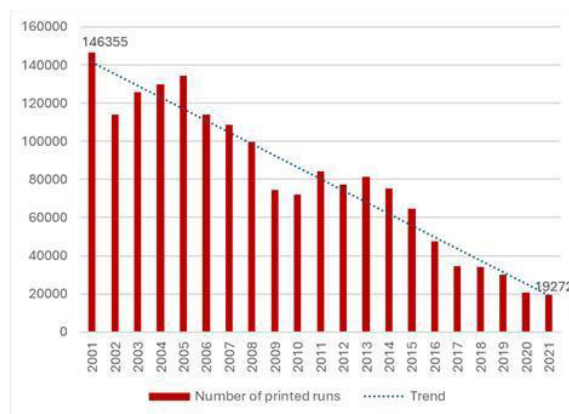


Figure 12 Distribution of printed runs of *Men's Health* from 2001 to 2021 in Portugal



downward trajectory. The decline affected both niche and generalist publications, suggesting structural challenges across the sector rather than isolated failures.

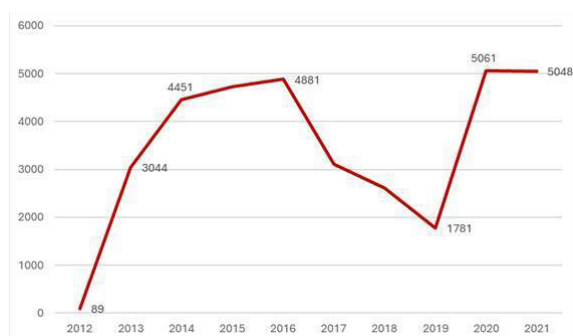
Publishers faced rising production costs, especially for paper, and declining advertising income. The closure of *Crescer, Pais & Filhos* and *Viva Melhor em Boa Forma*, and the eventual insolvency of Motorpress Lisboa, the media group that owned these titles, underscore the severity of this collapse.

Despite this downturn, some titles maintained relative stability. *Men's Health*, introduced in 2001, achieved its highest circulation at launch and sustained a long-term presence in the market (Figure 12). However, even in these cases, the broader trend points to decreasing readership and increasing pressure on print-based models.

Phase 3: Digital Transition, Media Ownership Crisis and the Fragility of Health Magazines (2017–onwards)

The shift towards digital distribution intensified from the mid-2010s onwards, with most health magazines adopting hybrid models combining print and online platforms.

Figure 13 Number of paid digital runs of health magazines from 2012 to 2021 in Portugal



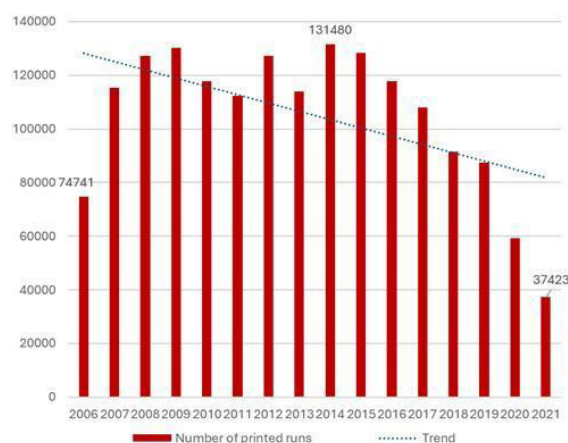
In 2012, paid digital publications began to appear in Portugal. After growing until 2016, the number began to decrease from 2016 to 2019. In 2020, it reached a maximum of 5061 copies (Figure 13).

The most recent phase is defined by a deep structural crisis affecting the media groups. While earlier phases reflected expansion and contraction in editorial supply, this period is marked by instability at the level of media ownership, with direct consequences for the sustainability of specialized health titles.

These structural weaknesses became more visible following the collapse of Motorpress Lisboa. The case of *Prevenir*, one of the most established health magazines in Portugal, illustrates the dependence of specialized titles on the financial viability of their parent companies. Despite its strong market presence throughout the 2000s and early 2010s (Figure 14), the magazine was unable to survive the collapse of How, its editorial group, which ceased operations in 2024 as part of the broader closure of the group's publishing activity.

Trust in News, the media group which played a central role in the Portuguese magazine sector, is another critical example.

Figure 14 Distribution of printed runs of *Prevenir* from 2006 to 2021

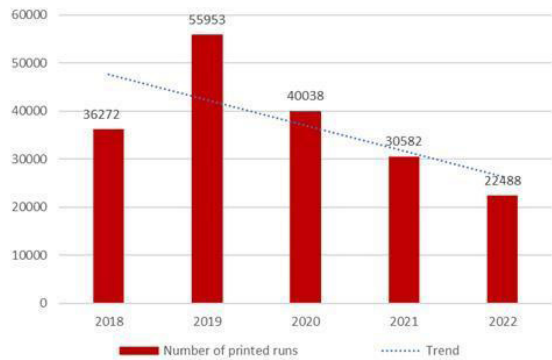


Founded in 2018, the group concentrated a significant portfolio of titles, including *Visão* and *Visão Saúde*, one of its segments.

On 4 December 2024, *Trust in News* was declared insolvent, triggering a chain reaction across its publications. This event had a direct impact on health magazines, as it disrupted editorial production, distribution, and workforce stability. In October 2025, creditors approved the cessation of the company's activity, effectively leading to the shutdown of multiple titles within its portfolio, including health-oriented publications.

A similar dynamic affected *Visão Saúde*, also published within the same media group. Although positioned as a more information-driven and medically oriented publication, its trajectory was ultimately shaped by corporate instability rather than editorial performance. Following the collapse of Trust in News, uncertainty regarding ownership and continuity placed the magazine in a precarious position, reflecting how specialized health journalism is structurally dependent on broader media conglomerates. After a steadily declining number of print runs until 2022 (Figure 15), the magazine ceased production in 2024.

Figure 15 Distribution of printed runs of *Visão Saúde* from 2018 to 2022

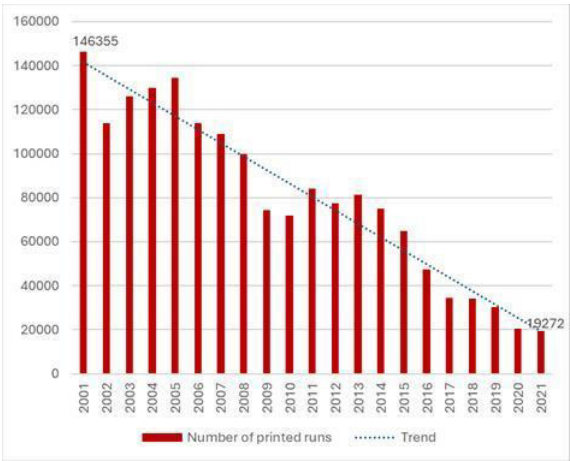


As of 2026, the outcome of the *Trust in News* case remains unresolved, reflecting the structural instability of the Portuguese magazine sector. In March 2026, the Supreme Court of Justice revoked the previous decision and approved a new insolvency plan, reopening the possibility of corporate restructuring and suspending the group's dissolution.

Concurrently, an alternative and unprecedented response emerged from within the newsroom itself: journalists from *Visão* launched a crowdfunding campaign to acquire the magazine's title at auction and ensure its editorial continuity under independent ownership. Despite the success of this initiative, the future of the group's titles remains uncertain, contingent on judicial outcomes and the economic viability of emerging ownership structures.

In parallel, international franchise titles such as *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*, typically operated in Portugal through licensing agreements with national publishers, demonstrate a slightly different, yet equally fragile, model. These magazines rely on global branding combined with local adaptation, often integrated into diversified media groups. *Men's Health*, for instance, invested in digital expansion strategies to strengthen

Figure 16 Distribution of printed runs of *Men's Health* from 2001 to 2021



its online presence and audience engagement. However, this shift reflects a repositioning away from print rather than a stabilization of the magazine as a traditional editorial product, as Figure 16 points out. Similarly, *Women's Health* maintained visibility through a hybrid content strategy combining health, fitness, and lifestyle, but remained exposed to declining print revenues and market fragmentation.

Discussion

The evolution of health magazines in Portugal between 1993 and 2025 provides a comprehensive perspective on the structural transformations affecting specialized print journalism, particularly within the health communication domain. Drawing on longitudinal circulation data and thematic classification, this trajectory can be interpreted across three main phases: expansion and specialization, contraction and decline, and structural fragility within a reconfigured media ecosystem.

The first phase (1993–2006) was characterized by sustained growth in both the number of publications and their circulation volumes, culminating in a peak in 2006. This period reflects a strong alignment between editorial specialization and audience demand. Health communication was organized around clearly defined thematic niches, particularly parenting and child health, which together accounted for a significant proportion of titles. Publications such as *Pais & Filhos*, *Crescer*, and *Bebé D'Hoje* achieved high and stable circulation figures, supported by expert-driven content and a strong emphasis on health literacy.

This phase also coincided with a pre-digital media environment in which print magazines functioned as primary sources of credible health information. This provided a way to access complex information in a simplified and reliable format, produced by professional journalists. The predominance of monthly periodicity further reinforced their role in providing

regular, structured dissemination of health knowledge. Additionally, the emergence of thematic areas such as physical activity, nutrition, and general prevention illustrates an early diversification of health communication, aligned with broader public health priorities centered on lifestyle and behavioral determinants of health.

The second phase (2007–2016) marks a period of contraction, characterized by a sharp and sustained decline in both circulation volumes and the number of active titles. Following the 2006 peak, print runs entered a downward trajectory across all categories, affecting both specialized and generalist publications. This decline reflects structural pressures rather than isolated editorial failures. Several magazines exhibited decreasing circulation trends prior to their discontinuation, indicating a progressive erosion of market viability.

This contraction must be understood within the broader context of the global financial crisis and its impact on the Portuguese media sector. Rising production costs, particularly for paper, combined with declining advertising revenues, significantly weakened the economic foundations of print journalism. Between 2009 and 2010 alone, print circulation dropped by nearly 28%, marking a structural shift in the viability of niche print journalism. Publishers faced rising production costs and declining advertising income. The health magazine sector, heavily reliant on print-based models and vulnerable to market volatility, suffered disproportionately.

The closure of key titles and the insolvency of major publishing groups, such as Motorpress Lisboa, underscore the systemic nature of this crisis. Importantly, the decline affected all thematic categories, suggesting that even well-established niches, such as parenting and child health, were unable to sustain long-term viability under changing market conditions.

The third phase (2017–2025) reflects not a recovery, but a transition towards structural fragility, shaped by digital

transformation, changing audience behaviors, and instability in media ownership. While some titles persisted or emerged during this period, namely *Men's Health* and *Women's Health*, their trajectories reveal adaptive strategies rather than sectoral stabilization. These magazines increasingly adopted hybrid models that combine print and digital platforms, but circulation data indicate that digital expansion has not offset the decline in print readership. Importantly, these titles are less dependent on a single national publisher than earlier magazines; however, they remain embedded in fragile business models reliant on advertising revenues and brand extension strategies. Their continued presence does not indicate a recovery of the sector, but rather an adaptation to constrained economic conditions.

More broadly, this third period coincides with a systemic crisis affecting Portuguese media groups, characterized by restructuring processes, layoffs, and financial instability. The collapse of Trust in News in 2024, which directly impacted *Visão Saúde*, illustrates how specialized health publications are structurally dependent on the financial viability of parent companies. In this context, the sustainability of health magazines is no longer determined solely by editorial performance or audience demand, but increasingly by corporate and ownership dynamics.

Taken together, the post-2017 period reveals a shift from market contraction to structural fragility driven by ownership instability and economic constraints. Health magazines emerge as particularly vulnerable within this environment: they are highly dependent on parent media groups, have limited capacity for digital monetization, and face increasing competition from unregulated online health content.

Despite the expansion of digital media, the transition has not resulted in a revitalization of health journalism. Although paid digital editions emerged in the early 2010s and experienced a temporary increase, particularly during the COVID-19

pandemic, these gains were not sustained. Instead, the digital shift has contributed to audience fragmentation, reduced revenue stability, and increased competition from informal and non-verified sources of health information.

This transformation has important implications for public health communication. The decline of specialized, expert-driven health magazines represents not only a contraction of a media sector, but also a reduction in the availability of curated, evidence-based health information. While earlier publications were characterized by strong editorial mediation and expert involvement, contemporary health communication is increasingly dispersed across digital platforms with varying levels of credibility.

In this context, the recent developments surrounding *Visão* point to the emergence of alternative funding models as potential, albeit uncertain, pathways for the sustainability of specialized magazines. This case illustrates a broader shift in media financing logics, where traditional revenue streams are increasingly complemented or replaced by hybrid and community-driven models. Crowdfunding, philanthropic funding, and reader-supported ownership structures are gaining prominence as mechanisms for sustaining journalistic activity, particularly in niche sectors such as health communication. These models align with a growing body of research that emphasizes sustainability as a multidimensional challenge encompassing not only economic viability but also editorial independence and social value (Medina & Rodríguez, 2025). Similarly, the rise of journalism philanthropy (Lincoln, 2025) and alternative ownership structures reflects an ongoing reconfiguration of power relations within the media ecosystem, where audiences and civil society actors assume a more active role in supporting journalistic production.

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