Comunicare la scienza nel mondo digitale

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Il topolino e la montagna (if it scares it airs)

Mountains Out of Molehills
A timeline of medio-inflamed fears

Information is Beautiful
Ideas, Issues, Knowledge, Data — Visualized!
Editorial

Does the media support or sabotage health?

Perhaps the health-care sector is guilty of painting a caricature of journalists as unscrupulous hacks and ill-informed pundits, rather than as objective communicators of health information and informers of public debate. However, the more responsible the press appear, the less the general public seem to like it. People do not seem to be interested in straight reporting of health issues; mainstream media need to maintain their audiences, and controversy sells.

The Lancet
Controversy sells

Mad Cow Cuts

MIS-\-INFORMATION
\- PANIC
\- RUMOR
\- CHEF-\- \- FRACTION
\- HYSTÉRIA
\- FEAR
\- CONFUSION
\- ALARM
\- JITTERS

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Editorial

Does the media support or sabotage health?

The media are integral to getting people involved in their own health by promoting and highlighting health issues, and rolling public discourse will allow health topics to become central issues of democracy. However, the public need clear and accurate information. Responsible reporting should not only fall on the shoulders of reporters, but also on scientific publishers, scientists, and health-care workers who can promote evidence-based medicine in the media. For example, in the UK, scientists have the Science Media Centre, which is committed to encouraging and supporting experts to become more effective at engaging with the media, to debunk the myths around big controversial stories that hit the headlines.
Every Scientists-versus-Journalists Debate Ever

Good Journalists

- Good Scientists

Bad Journalists

- Bad Scientists

Ed Yong

Not Exactly Rocket Science

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MEDICINE AND THE MEDIA

OBSERVATIONS

Two clicks away from Britney?

Can the health stories in the lay press maintain integrity when they are competing for attention with the antics of international celebrities? **Rebecca Coombes** reports from a conference

Any doctor who has ever snorted in derision at some less than accurate media health story would have enjoyed the spectacle last week of a group of newspaper journalists who turned out to answer for their trade’s perceived sins at a national debate about standards in health reporting.

*BMJ* | 14 FEBRUARY 2009 | VOLUME 338

Stories by health journalists have to compete for readers’ attention among reams of lifestyle and celebrity coverage

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The EBM researcher’s perspective on science reports (1993)

1. Is it clear to whom the information in the report applies (i.e. to which population the evidence is applicable)?
2. Are facts clearly distinguished from opinions?
3. Is the assessment of the credibility (validity) of the evidence clear and well-founded (not misleading)?
4. Is the strength or magnitude of the findings (effects, risks or costs) that are the main focus of the article clearly reported?
5. Is there a clear and well-founded (not misleading) assessment of the precision of any estimates that are reported or of the probability that any of the reported findings might be due to chance?
6. Is the consistency of the evidence (between studies) considered and is the assessment well-founded (not misleading)?
7. Are all of the important consequences (benefits, risks and costs) of concern relative to the central topic of the report identified?
8. Based on your answers to the above questions, how would you rate the overall scientific quality of the report?

A. Oxman et al, Journal of Clinical Epidemiology 1993
Review Criteria for evaluating news stories

1. The availability of the treatment/test/product/procedure
2. Whether/how costs are mentioned in the story
3. If there is evidence of disease mongering in the story
4. Does the story seem to grasp the quality of the evidence?
5. How harms of the treatment/test/product/procedure are covered in the story
6. Does the story establish the true novelty of the approach?
7. How the benefits of the treatment/test/product/procedure are framed
8. Whether the story appeared to rely solely or largely on a news release
9. Is there an independent source and were any possible conflicts of interests of sources disclosed in the article?
10. Whether alternative treatment/test/product/procedure options are mentioned

G. Schwitzer et al. Healthnewsreview.org

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Press Releases

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Welcome to PR Newswire for Journalists, where you as a member decide what press releases you want to view & when/how you want to view them.
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PR, IR, Marketing, Media and other news from Business Wire

How Much Does It Cost To Write A Press Release "Now"?
By Fred Godish, Marketing Specialist, Business Wire /Los Angeles

Many visitors reach our blog by searching Google for "How much does it cost to write a press release?" which leads them to a 2007 blog post by former Business Wire VP Monika Manicki. In the six years since that post, we have heard from PR professionals that have voiced many concerns not just about the cost of writing a release, but how to justify the relevancy of press releases in the age of social media. We decided to revisit the question, using an analytical approach.

So How Much Does It Cost to Write a

Look for the money

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So How Much Does It Cost to Write a

Look for the money
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So, Seriously, How Much Does it Cost To Write a Press Release?

If the press release produced in 2007 took 100 hours to produce, it is fair to say the 2013 release will take longer through adding multimedia content including video, infographics, and social interaction. Comparing apples to apples, the release would need to include any available resources to make it as competitive as possible today. Hiring staff for the cost to write a press release today would be $7,500.

Assuming a median rate of $50 per hour, and 150 total hours of collective work, the cost to write a press release today would be $7,500. Once again, obviously it depends on the release but the company is still making a significant investment.

Is it worth it?

Every medical researcher develops systematic and nonsystematic mechanisms for reducing and filtering what would otherwise be an overwhelming flow of scientific information. Our evidence suggests that a lay publication may serve as one of these filtering mechanisms, even for scientists. This effect seems to persist for at least 10 years after a journal article appears. It is not certain whether other lay media (e.g., newsmagazines and broadcast news programs) also function as filters of information derived from medical research, and whether the use of such lay filters prompts some scientists to overemphasize certain medical articles and deemphasize others.

It appears that the direct transmission of information in the medical literature (i.e., the journal) is enhanced or amplified by secondary transmission in the lay press (i.e., the Times). Further research would be required to determine whether the lay press not only amplifies but also distorts the transmission of medical information to the biomedical community.
… a need for greater investment…

releases. The results in this case study suggest a need for greater investment in media support for scholarly journals publishing research that sparks interest to a broad news audience, as it could increase citations.

A summary of a three-year project

Sharon Mathelius, Ginny Pittman and Jill Yablonski-Crepeau
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Learning Publishing, 25: 207–212
doi:10.1080/20120307
Methods to improve the reporting and interpretation of drug company press releases are desirable to prevent misleading media coverage.

Conclusions: Pharmaceutical company press releases frequently report basic study details. However, readers should be cautioned by the preliminary nature of the data and lack of identified limitations. Methods to improve the reporting and interpretation of drug company press releases are desirable to prevent misleading media coverage.

Quality of Pharmaceutical Industry Press Releases Based on Original Research

Bindee Kurita, Elana C. Schneid, Chaim M. Bell

Conclusions: Abstracts at scientific meetings receive substantial attention in the high-profile media. A substantial number of the studies remain unpublished, precluding evaluation in the scientific community.
Press Releases by Academic Medical Centers: Not So Academic?

Background: The news media are often criticized for exaggerating coverage of weak science. Press releases, a source of information for many journalists, might be a source of these exaggerations.

Objective: To characterize research press releases from academic medical centers.

Design: Content analysis.

Setting: Press releases from 10 medical centers at each extreme of U.S. News & World Report’s rankings for medical research.


Results: Academic medical centers issued a mean of 49 press releases annually. Among 200 randomly selected releases analyzed in detail, 87 (44%) promoted animal or laboratory research, of which 64 (74%) explicitly claimed relevance to human health. Among 96 releases about primary human research, 22 (23%) omitted study size and 32 (34%) failed to quantify results. Among all 113 releases about human research, few (17%) promoted studies with the strongest designs (randomized trials or meta-analyses). Forty percent reported on the most limited human studies—those with uncontrolled interventions, small samples (<10 participants), surrogate primary outcomes, or unpublished data—and 50% lacked the relevant cautions.

Limitations: The effects of press release quality on media coverage were not directly assessed.

Conclusion: Press releases from academic medical centers often promote research that has uncertain relevance to human health and do not provide key facts or acknowledge important limitations.

Primary Funding Source: National Cancer Institute.

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Communicating medical science: new press release labelling system launched

Tuesday 3rd July 2018

The Science Media Centre (SMC) has launched a new press release labelling system this week to help journalists navigate emerging research findings.
The Problem With Sugar-Daddy Science

The MIT Media Lab has an integrity problem. It’s not just that the lab took donations from Jeffrey Epstein and tried to conceal their source. As that news was breaking, Business Insider reported that the lab’s much-hyped “food computer” didn’t work and that staff had tried to mislead funders into thinking it did. These stories are two sides of the same problem: sugar-daddy science—the distortion of the research process by the pursuit of money from ultra-wealthy donors, no matter how shady.

Grazie!

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“I blame the media.”