

Issues and Insights into Assessing News Media Efforts and Outreach

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How Hard Can It Be?

Can't You Just Issue a Press Release?

“Vical Up, West Nile Virus Vaccine Administered With Its Technology Produce Positive Data”

Vical says in a Phase 1 clinical trial, a West Nile virus (WNV) vaccine candidate administered using VICL's proprietary DNA delivery technology was safe and well tolerated, and produced neutralizing antibody WNV-specific responses in all 11 healthy volunteers who returned for follow-up testing after completing the three-dose vaccination schedule.

And generate some media coverage?

CDC finds many 'sad' 3 days a month

Down in the dumps? Americans reported spending an average of three days a month feeling "sad, blue or depressed," according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey. The survey also found that the more days a month people were sad, the more likely they were to take risks such as going on a drinking binge or not wearing seat belts. Women reported feeling blue 3.5 days a month — about a whole day more than men.

News Media Evaluation – Desired State

- **In-depth, near real-time measurement and analysis of media relations efforts and news media stories**
- **Detailed measures and media metrics, including:**
 - Publication or news program name
 - Type of publication
 - Size/length of article or story
 - Prominence of article or story
 - “Tone” and “accuracy” of the article or story (e.g., “positive,” “negative” or “neutral”)
 - Detailed viewership/circulation data about the news source (e.g., number of readers/viewers, demographics, exposure, reach, impressions, etc.)
- **Advertising equivalency**

Desired Outcomes

- A frame of reference (e.g., a benchmark)
- Improved insight into how media (and public) perceive the issue (e.g., how do they “frame” it)
- Greater understanding of strengths and weaknesses of your news media outreach effort(s)
- Greater knowledge of which journalists are interested in issues and how they follow it
- Clear, unambiguous and convincing information that demonstrates success to management
- Better/greater future success (e.g., better media targeting, better messages, better expectations)
- “Better” “More accurate” news stories

Issues and Challenges in Assessing News Media Outreach Efforts and Outcomes

- The content or core information is almost always the primary determinant of success.
- News media determine news value and angle.
- “Provocative” quotes, “odd” studies and “creative” story frames all help foster media attention
- A story vs. a “topic”
- “Positive” stories generate good will, “negative” stories are more likely to generate visibility, sustained coverage and additional resources.

News content matters most – the more of the first eight, the more interest there will be.

- Controversy
- Contradiction
 - Criticism
- Confrontation
- Catastrophe
 - Gossip
 - Scandal
- Breakthrough
- Human Interest

“Spotlight on ‘Public Health’ – A Benchmark Content Analysis of Press Coverage for RWJ Foundation”

(Walter Lindenmann)

- Study content analyzed 861 newspaper stories found in 201 newspaper editions of seven major newspapers across a span of three years.
- Found:
 - Diseases, conditions and treatments were most often the focus of health stories (74%), followed by reduction of personal risk behavior (43%)
 - “In conclusion, the press regularly writes about public health issues, but mostly, it seems, because of the newsworthiness of these issues, rather than because of their educational or purely informational aspects.”

News media determine news value and angle

“Mississippi Ranked Fattest State in Nation”

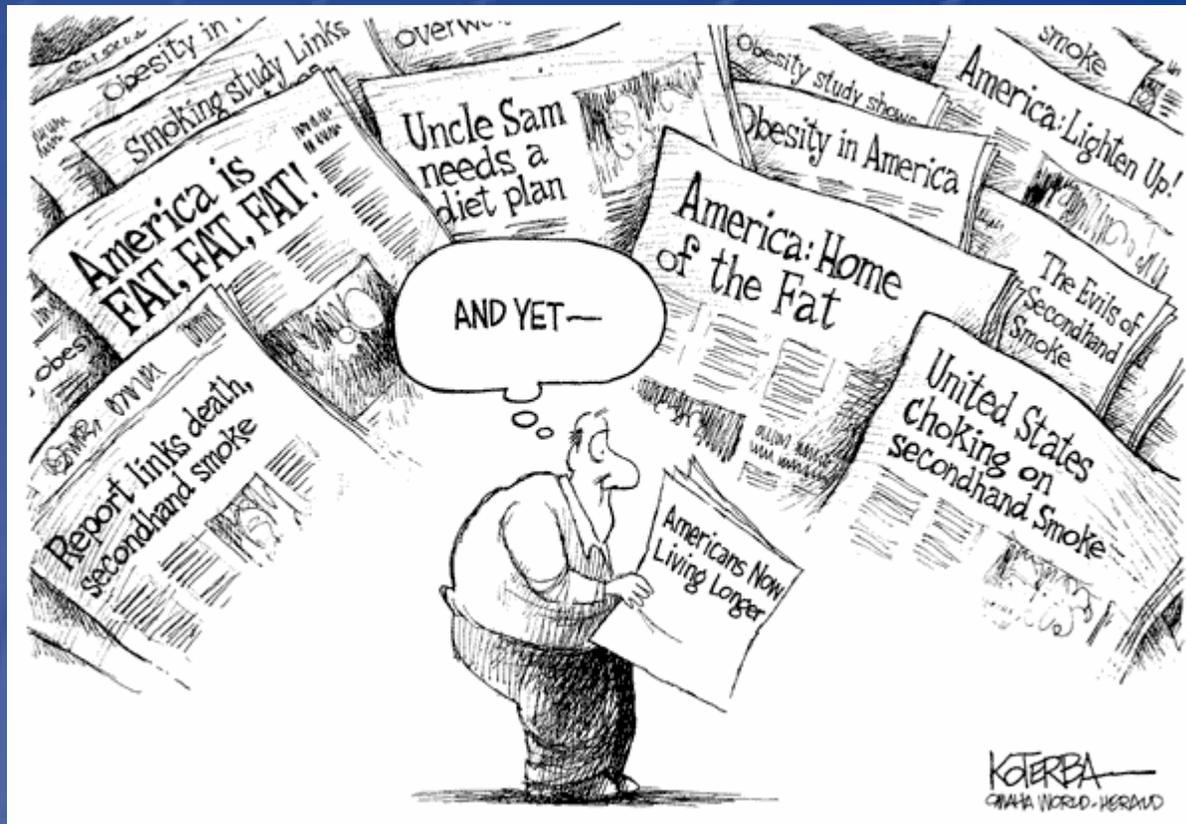
By Emily Wagster Pettus, Associated Press

Tuesday, August 28, 2007

JACKSON, Miss. -- Mississippians need to skip the gravy, say no to the fried pickles and start taking brisk walks to fight an epidemic of obesity, experts say. According to a new study, this Deep South state is the fattest in the nation.

It also became the first state to crack the 30 percent barrier for adults considered obese, with West Virginia and Alabama just behind, according to the Trust for America's Health, a research group that focuses on disease prevention.

With individual successes often creating
a contradictory picture. . .



“Provocative” quotes foster media attention

- The former US Department of Agriculture researcher said she told the CDC researchers that in her 20 years of experience, what she does is what other microbiologists also do. “No it's not,” (CDC person) said. “Everybody here heard that and they go, 'What the hell?'”
- “I can't tell you the symptoms of Avian flu because I'm not a chicken.” (State health director in 2006)
- “I don't want to put too much lipstick on a pig- binge drinking happens across all beverage types. The propensity to drink heavily is deeply ingrained.”

“It’s Brew City for a Reason”

Milwaukee Journal, 8/23/2006

- On Tuesday, Forbes.com names Milwaukee “America’s Drunkest City” on a list of 35 major metropolitan areas ranked for their drinking habits.
- The report put Milwaukee above Las Vegas (#14) and Miami (#31) and warned of the serious trouble Milwaukee could experience based on its alcohol consumption.
- The data: CDC’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey 2004

“Readiness and Capacity of Librarians in Public Libraries to Implement a Breast Cancer Outreach and Screening Campaign in Medically Underserved Communities”

Cancer, Culture, and Literacy Supplement, November, 2005

- “Little work has been done to examine the potential role of public libraries in providing access to cancer screening, diagnosis, and clinical trials.”
- “Health outreach to medically underserved residents has not been a primary mission of (the public libraries in Queens, New York).
- Results indicated: 1) “Many librarians lacked the knowledge about cancer and cancer information resources to participate optimally,” and 2) library managers were unconvinced that librarians should be engaging in health outreach.

A story vs. a “topic”

Story

- Single day of coverage, whether as a news story or feature
- May be prominent, but may not in terms of placement
- Difficult to get medium to do again (i.e., we’ve already done that story)
- Little/low likelihood of generating public or target audience awareness

“Topic”

- Multiple days of coverage and stories, including editorials and opinions
- Likely prominent in terms of location (e.g., front page)
- Media interest sustained via new developments and issues
- Higher likelihood of generating public or target audience awareness of issue

“Positive” vs. “Negative” stories – Opposite outcomes?

- “Teen Smoking Decreases”
- “Childhood Vaccination Rates at Highest Levels”
- “Sharp Decline in Number of Cases of Foodborne Illnesses”
- “Cases of multidrug resistant TB being effectively managed”
- “Teen Smoking Increases”
- “Childhood Vaccinations Rates Drop Significantly”
- “Sharp Increase in Number of Cases of Foodborne Illnesses”
- “Multidrug resistant TB cases pose growing health threat”

Approaches and Ideas for Evaluating Media Outreach and Efforts



Create Frames of Reference

- Number of major media stories that include explicitly mention of CDC or CDC spokesperson/subject matter expert
 - Tracked daily
 - Summarized monthly and annually
 - Also tracked/summarized by major media (monthly)
- Number of media stories prompted by or appearing in the aftermath of CDC press release
- Number of “participants” at CDC press briefings (including by type)

Frames of Reference - examples

- Number of major media stories that include explicitly mention of CDC or CDC spokesperson/subject matter expert
 - On average, 25-35 daily
 - Around 750 to 1000 per month
- Number of “participants” at CDC press briefings (including by type)
 - In 2007, ranged from 45 (for release of some preliminary data on foodborne illness) to 253 (for update on multidrug resistant tuberculosis case)

CDC mentions by Major Print Media

(January – July, 2007)

- Associated Press 722 stories
- New York Times 258
- Washington Post 251
- Reuters 246
- Atlanta Journal-Constitution 184
- USA Today 163
- Health Day 124
- Wall Street Journal 109

Number of media stories prompted by or appearing in the aftermath of CDC press release

“CDC Advisory Committee Recommends Shingles Vaccine”

- Over 100 stories, AP and other news wire

“CDC Launches Multi-State Study on Autism”

- Tens of stories, AP wire

“CDC Announces week-long event to focus on importance of flu shots”

- Tens of stories, AP wire

“Public Health Thank You Day – Director Statement”

- Zero media pickup

“CDC launches Get Informed. Get Diagnosed” campaign

- Zero media pickup

Track/Document Proactive and Significant Media Efforts and Activities – Recent Examples

- Participation in press conference and media activities related for release of the “State of Aging and Health 2007 report (e.g., radio media tour)
- ESPN’s “Behind the Lines” show on preventing and controlling staph infections among athletes
- National Influenza Immunization Vaccination Week
- Inviting reporters to observe CDC’s pandemic flu preparedness exercises
- Release of the 2007 National Immunization Survey findings

Track Spokesperson/SMEs Quotes

- Helps identify what types of statements get included in stories
- Helps prepare spokespeople in the future
- Helps us understand how SMEs frame and talk about issues and topics
- Are spokespeople/SMEs bringing the agency, science, public health efforts to life? (i.e., making them relevant to broader and/or targeted audiences)

Strategically Utilize Content Analyses

- Most helpful for . . .
 - High profile issues or events that last over days, weeks or months (e.g., influenza immunization efforts)
 - Issues or events that involve conflict, controversy, or extensive use of risk communication principles
 - Recurring efforts (e.g., National _____ Week or Month)
- With analyses focusing on . . .
 - Headlines/frame
 - Focus or emphasis of story (e.g., lead paragraphs)
 - People being quoted / what's being quoted
 - Editorials, op-eds, letters to editors

Apply “Organizational Excellence” Approach to Media Relations Activities

- Requires identifying factors and characteristics that one believes are indicators of effective operations and activities.
- These include:
 - Quality of the content (e.g., percentage of press releases that facilitate news stories)
 - Ability and skill of spokespeople, particularly subject matter experts
 - Timeliness of media response

Desired Outcomes

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Thanks!



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