A Prevention Approach to Bullying News Media: Partnering with Journalists

Reese Hyzer, BS \(^1\) Maggie Bushman, BA \(^1\) Karen Pletta, MD \(^1\) Megan A. Moreno, MD, MSEd, MPH \(^1\)

\(^1\) University of Wisconsin – Madison
School of Medicine and Public Health, Department of Pediatrics

**BACKGROUND**

- Bullying remains a public health issue for teens and is related to negative health outcomes
- News stories about bullying often focus on tragic cases
- Leaves teens feeling fearful and hopeless
- An alternate approach may be to promote bullying prevention in news media

**RESULTS**

Journalists are open to **incorporating prevention information** in news stories on bullying and interested in collaborating with **pediatricians and researchers** to create guidelines

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Journalists would like to write a news article that accurately describes the bullying incident and included prevention information to help adolescents and their families
- Guidelines would help ensure that news articles on this topic address both the details of what happened and bullying prevention information

**ADDITIONAL KEY INFORMATION**

**Participant Demographics**

- \(N = 20\)
  - 70% Female
  - 80% Caucasian
  - Average Age = 42.7 years
  - 55% staff journalists
  - 60% worked with national news organizations
  - 70% worked for print and online newspapers

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank all of the journalists who participated in our study. This work was funded by NIH grant R21HD090221-01A1.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Reese Hyzer
reese.hyzer@wisc.edu
Megan A. Moreno, MD, MSEd, MPH
moreno@wisc.edu

**METHODS**

This study was approved by the University of Wisconsin-Madison IRB.

**Settings and Subjects**

- Identified journalists who had covered youth-focused topics by reviewing published stories on bullying and cyberbullying in:
  - Print Newspapers
  - Broadcast
  - Online Newspapers
  - Magazines
- After informed consent, participants were interviewed over WebEx

**Semi-Structured Interview**

Participants were asked to share:

- Their experiences reporting on bullying and cyberbullying
- Ideas for how journalists could incorporate bullying prevention in news media articles

**Analysis**

- Qualitative thematic analysis was utilized by three coders utilizing the constant comparative approach