Author's response to reviews

Title: Framing access to medicines in developing countries: an analysis of media coverage of Canada's Access to Medicines Regime

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Author's response to reviews: see over
September 23, 2009

Editors
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Re: Journal Resubmission of “Framing access to medicines in developing countries: an analysis of media coverage of Canada's Access to Medicines Regime”

Please reconsider our manuscript for publication in your journal, *International Health and Human Rights*, as a Correspondence Article. We have addressed all reviewers' comments and we have appended responses to their comments in bullet point form on the following pages.

The manuscript has not been published elsewhere. We look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

Ms. Laura C. Esmail
Reviewer's report

Title: Framing access to medicines in developing countries: an analysis of media coverage of Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime

Version: 2 Date: 26 July 2009

Reviewer: Kristina Lybecker

Reviewer's report:
Major Compulsory Revisions:

page 8 - the methodology section should be extended to explain how the articles were chosen. How were the 11 newspapers selected? Why? What did the entire sample look like? What was the justification for those selected or was it random? Is the selection broad enough and inclusive enough?

page 9 - the methodology section should also explain how the 90 articles were selected. How large was the entire sample? Over 5 years this sample only amounts to one article every 3 weeks. For a major news issue that seems to be a very small sample. What was the justification for the articles selected? Is it statistically representative of the entire universe of coverage? What checks have been done to assure this?
  - Please see clarification on pages 7 and 8. We did not design a sampling strategy based on random probability sampling. Rather it was a sampling strategy that is widely accepted and commonly used in qualitative research called 'purposeful sampling'. Purposeful sampling is the strategic selection of information rich cases based upon the purpose and resources of a study (Patton 2002). In this study, 'cases' refers to newspapers.
  - We included the most widely circulated publications in each province, which suggests that we captured the most influential newspaper media.

pages 11-39 - none of the quotes taken from newspaper articles are identified or have the sources cited. Each time a quote is included to illustrate the authors' point, the source should be credited and recorded.
  - References have been added.

pages 11-37 - the information presented on each of the search terms could easily be compiled into a chart that would be easier to see and interpret. This would more concisely and effectively present the results of the coding. This could be done to complement the existing text.
  - The chart has been added at the end of the paper.

page 42 - the discussion notes that "readers will be able to apply lessons learned from this case to other literature." What are the lessons learned? It is unclear that the analysis has gone far enough in determining what may be applied to other cases.
• We extended the analysis and lessons learned in the discussion and conclusion sections (pp 40-45). Making recommendations on how the media should be used is beyond the scope of this study, as it is dependent upon which stakeholder’s perspective one assumes; however, we did speak to the implications of how the media was used in this case.

Conclusions - the paper fails to clearly describe why this study matters. The paper breaks down the use and appearance of each of the search terms, but does not go on to synthesize why this is important and what may be gleaned from the project. Can the authors make recommendations for how the media should be used?
• Frequency of terms and framing context were better synthesized in the Discussion and Conclusion (pp 40-45) sections.
• As mentioned above, making recommendations on how the media should be used is beyond the scope of this study, as it is dependent upon which stakeholder’s perspective one assumes; however, we did speak to the implications of how the media was used in this case.

Conclusions - there is no evidence that media shaped policy at all. If we are to be concerned about how media is utilized, it must be clearly spelled out that it has an important impact on policy.
• The case for the impact of the media on policy was added to the Background section (page 6) and elaborated upon in the Conclusions (pp 44-45). In particular, media coverage and civil society’s focus on particular elements of the regime correspond to government policy choices but the impact appears to have been limited.

Minor Essential Revisions:

page 2 - the paper does not establish that media framing impacted policy goals or the policy process. If this study is of interest, it must be established that the media impact mattered.
• Please see page 6. While it cannot be proven that the media directly caused certain policy outcomes, we make the case that the media was an important factor in these policy debates and therefore had potential to impact the policy product.
• Also, we state on page 7 that "[o]ur research questions can only address the representation of issues through the analysis of media messages; therefore, we can only infer the potential or intended effects of newspaper coverage on the public, and therefore its potential role in the policy process."

Discretionary Revisions:

page 5 - "in 2003, the World Trade Organization waived Article 31(f) of the TRIPS Agreement" The cite for this quote dates from 2001, yet the information is
This paper examines the content of media, but it would be helpful to incorporate a comment about the quantity. What share of articles has been examined? In the context of general press coverage, was this a prominent issue or a small item? Putting this in context for your readers would be very helpful.

- As mentioned above, the sampling strategy was not based on random probability sampling. The degree of representativeness of our sample is based upon the readership, scope and diversity of the newspapers selected. Table 1 shows the weekly circulation statistics for the newspapers selected. We selected the most highly circulated newspapers in each province across the country.

- Please see page 6 for context of how prominent an issue this was in the media.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Reviewer’s report

Title: Framing access to medicines in developing countries: an analysis of media coverage of Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime

Version: 2 Date: 4 July 2009

Reviewer: Thomas Faunce

Reviewer's report:
Important topic as Canada was the first nation to try to implement this TRIPs exception...so valuable case study

Minor essential revisions
Need to accurately reference all the quotes. It doesn't make sense as a piece of research without these.
  • References added.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.