Reviewers 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

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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?

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.

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.

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.

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?

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.

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.

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 from 2003. Please check and correct.

This paper examines the content of media, but it would be helpful to incorporate a comment about the quantity. What share of article have 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.

page 10 - please explain NVivo 8. What is it? How is it used? Why is it appropriate in this study?

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have been an academic speaker (and received an honorarium) for PhRMA, the lobbying organization for the US research-based pharmaceutical industry.