

News Coverage of HIV/AIDS in Selected South African Newspapers

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ABSTRACT This paper investigates HIV/AIDS coverage in selected South African newspapers. The rationale for the paper hinges on the fact that the media's role in informing society about social issues, such as HIV/AIDS, is of paramount importance. The paper adopted, principally, the content analysis method and, as a supplement, discourse analysis. Four daily newspapers were content-analysed, namely: Daily Dispatch, Daily Sun, Sowetan and The Star. A total of 288 editions of newspapers, spanning a period of twelve months (January to December 2010) were sampled. This paper is informed by agenda setting theory. Discourse analysis was used to determine the compliance of these newspapers to media guides on the use of appropriate language or terminologies. The results revealed that HIV/AIDS coverage by these newspapers is reasonable even though the prominence given to HIV/AIDS issues is dissatisfactory in terms of placement on the page, headline font size and number of paragraphs devoted to HIV/AIDS stories.