

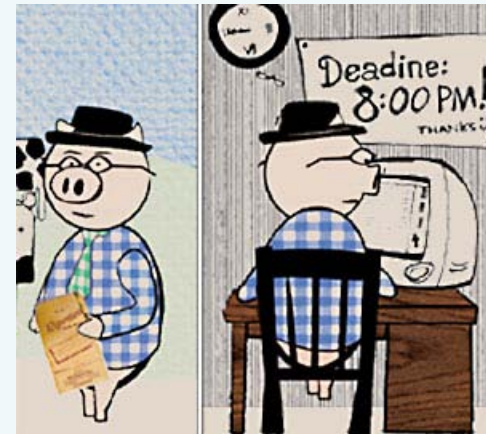
Handling the media in a healthcare environment

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“Tomorrow’s fish & chip wrapping” *Who cares what the media say ?*

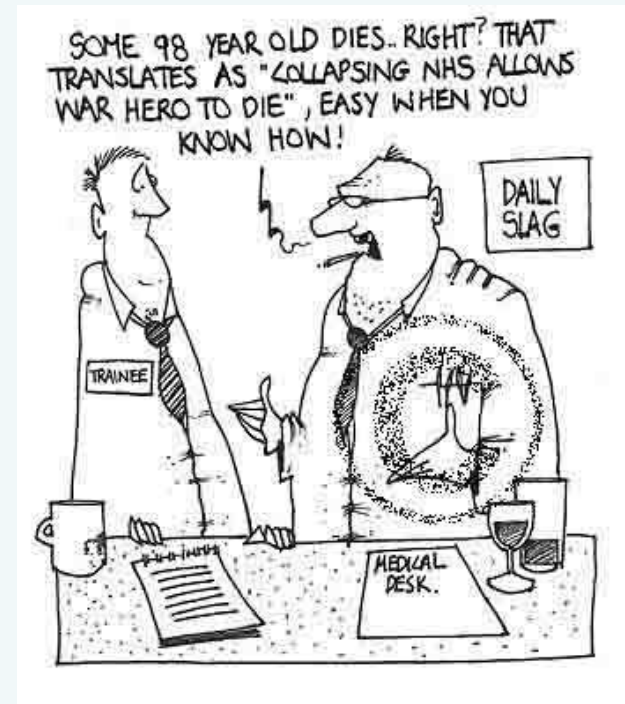
- Important, powerful and here to stay
- Spin doctors ? We wish !
- “Reach the parts others can’t reach”
- Pigs !? Huge and varied industry
- Same sources, but different angles



“Drop the dead donkey”

What makes a story ?

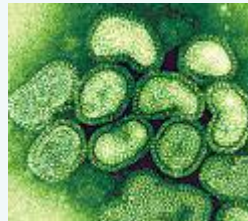
- Profit-driven
- Know customer
- Health is news and sells
- Interesting or entertaining
- Relevance
- Accessibility
- Controversy
- Human interest
- Fast or slow news day



Is our bad news their good news ?

What is a “good” health story ?

- “Hospital blunder”, “Doctor malpractice”
- “Funding issues”, “Postcode lottery”
- “Slanging matches”
- “Best and worst...”
- “Public concerns”
- “Heart warming”, “Tragic story”
- “New research shows...”, “Miracle cure”
- “Celebrities”



Rules of engagement

- Get all the information you need
- PREPARE !
- Be open, honest and transparent
- Don't be 'political' or 'critical'
- Keep it brief and simple – no NHS jargon or business lingo
- Don't get riled. Don't attack the media – they always have the last word
- Do be robust in your responses
- Insist significant errors of fact are corrected
- Accept there are some battles you cannot win
- Do get media publicity into perspective
- Live and pre-recorded: pros and cons
- Remember, its always about the 'patients'



How would you respond ?

NB: These are all 'real stories. Your exec and comms teams are on holiday, you are in charge !

Your hospital is treating a famous patient for cancer

A national tabloid has found out and is planning to run a front page story about the celebrity having cancer

The celebrity is upset about this

You are asked by the newspaper to confirm

How do you respond ?



How would you respond ?

One of your leukaemia patients urgently needs a bone marrow transplant.

His two brothers are perfect matches but live in India and have been refused a visa to travel to England for the transplant.

The patient's wife (who also lives in England as a British citizen) goes to the newspapers.

You are contacted by the newspapers.

How do you respond ?



How would you respond ?

One of your patients is heading up a media campaign about his local PCT's refusal to fund a cancer drug that is licensed but not yet NICE approved.

He is using his life-savings and selling his home to pay for the drug privately at your hospital.

His consultant, who recommended this drug to him, has told a local BBC reporter he is happy to do an interview "if allowed".

What do you advise?



How would you respond ?

One of your teenage cancer patients, who has lost her hair as a result of chemotherapy, has complained direct to her local newspaper about being refused entry to a nightclub under the ban they have on 'skinheads'.

The newspaper is covering the story, but also wants to include a comment from you.

How do you respond ?



How would you respond ?

A nurse at a neighbouring hospital has been suspended for harming patients.

The story makes headlines news.

You are asked to comment.

How do you respond ?



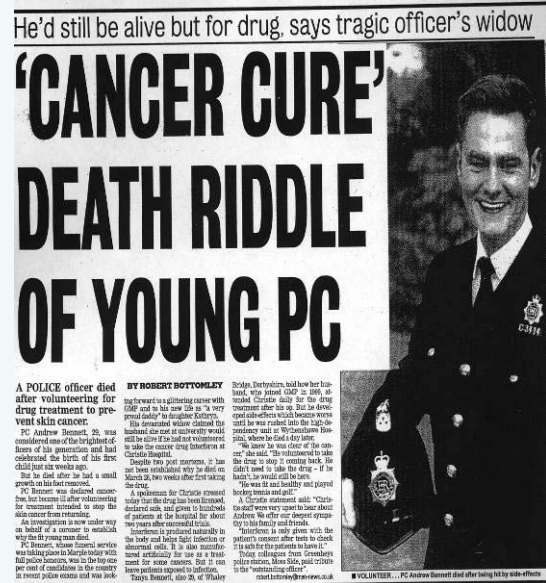
How would you respond ?

The family of a patient who recently died at your hospital go straight to their local newspaper and severely criticise the care and treatment he received.

A journalist contacts you before the story is published and asks you to respond to the family's list of your "failures".

Some of the information provided by the family is totally inaccurate.

How do you respond ?



Media quiz: interviews

- 1: For a radio or TV interview should you talk:
 - a) slower than normal
 - b) the same
 - c) Faster

- 2: For a radio or TV interview should you talk:
 - a) louder than normal
 - b) the same
 - c) quieter than normal

- 3: For an over-the-phone radio interview is it better to do it:
 - a) standing up
 - b) sitting down

- 4: For a TV interview is it better to wear:
 - a) patterns
 - b) red & green
 - c) blue & yellow
 - d) black & white

- 5: For a TV interview is it better to look at:
 - a) the interviewer
 - b) the camera
 - c) in between the camera and interviewer

Media quiz: interviews

6: You should you imagine you are talking to an:

- a) 10 year old
- b) 13 year old
- c) adult

7: You should prepare to get the following number of key messages across – whatever the subject

- a) two
- b) three
- c) five

8: The ideal answer to any question is:

- a) 5 – 10 seconds long
- b) 15 -25 seconds
- c) 30 – 40 seconds

9: If you are asked a question you can't answer - because you don't know the answer or for confidentiality reasons - you should:

- a) Explain why
- b) Say 'no comment'
- c) Give a general, non-specific answer

Media quiz: cancer coverage

10: Of all tabloid stories about cancer, what percentage are about breast cancer ?

- a) 23%
- b) 33%
- c) 43%

11: Of all broadsheet stories about cancer, what percentage are about breast cancer?

- a) 18%
- b) 28%
- c) 38%

12: How much press coverage does bowel cancer get, compared to other cancers ?

- a) 7%
- b) 17%
- c) 27%

13: What percentage of breast cancer stories have a celebrity link ?

- a) 8%
- b) 18%
- c) 28%

Media quiz: surveys

- 14: In the last MORI poll for the DH what percentage of people listed TV/radio as their common source of information about health ?
- a) 48%
 - b) 38%
 - c) 28%
- 15: In the last MORI poll for the DH what percentage of people listed newspapers as their common source of information about health?
- a) 49%
 - b) 39%
 - c) 29%
- 16: In the last MORI poll for the DH people from which part of the country said they were most likely to get information via TV/radio ?
- a) Midlands
 - b) North
 - c) South
- 17: In the last MORI poll for the DH readers from which newspaper are the least satisfied with the NHS ?
- a) Daily Mail
 - b) Guardian
 - c) The Sun
 - d) The Mirror
 - e) Daily Telegraph
 - f) The Times

Thank you

Any questions ?