



NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2008

Documenting and analysing Tanzanian newspaper articles is one of the activities carried out by YAV staff to monitor and highlight the state of national and local health services. The analyses are available via YAV's external Website.

During 2008 a total number of 1686 health-related articles were documented from the major daily and weekly newspapers, including: Mwananchi, Mtanzania, Tanzania Daima, Daily News, The Citizen, This Day, The Guardian, Kulikoni, Mwana Halisi and Raia Mwema. These health articles varied in terms of focus: from HIV/AIDS, human resource issues, facilities and equipments to mother and childcare, reproductive health, budget and planning, malaria and outbreak diseases.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS received more attention in the newspapers than any other health-related topic during 2008; 528 of the 1686 articles analysed (30%) addressed HIV/AIDS issues. One particular HIV/AIDS story that captured the attention of the Media was the visit of the then President of America – George W. Bush, to Tanzania. Whilst in Tanzania President Bush visited an American-funded HIV/AIDS project. In addition, the HIV/AIDS campaign initiated by President Jakaya Kikwete on voluntary counselling and testing was also a popular story presented in the newspapers. Other popular HIV/AIDS stories included general news on HIV/AIDS education, ARV's and HIV/AIDS financing.

General Health News

General health news occupied 27% of the total articles analysed - about 448 articles of all 1686 reported. This amount was a result of different shaking events which happened in the year 2008. Examples include: President George W. Bush's visit to Amana Hospital in February 2008; the issue of a women being denied treatment from the Amana Hospital even though she was entitled to free treatments due to her heart disease condition, and; the issue of the Heart Institute being evacuated from the NSSF building.

Malaria

Despite the fact that Malaria is the killer disease in Tanzania it did not receive as much attention in the newspapers as had been expected. Only 91 stories related to Malaria were reported during this period – that is only 5% of the total stories analysed.

This fact indicates a possible weakness in the reporters' choice of news issues and therefore raises questions about the newspaper's priorities. With a claim that about 38.5% of all deaths amongst children under 5 and 35.6% of all deaths above the age of 5 are caused by Malaria, newspapers lacks any justification to under report this particular disease. The most stories covered had the following headings: 'Malaria still a big threat', 'President Bush discovered one of the most powerful weapon in fight against

malaria - The magic power mosquito net that wards off malaria' and 'chanjo ya malaria ya karibia', published by Mwananchi newspaper on December 10th '.

Outbreak diseases

Outbreak diseases and other type of diseases occupied 4% and 8% respectively of the total articles analysed, which is about 65 and 130 articles of all the health related stories reported. Most of the newspapers wrote about the precautions and education that Tanzanians should take in order to avoid disasters, for example outbreaks of Ebola or Cholera. Kulikoni, on 22nd November wrote 'Wanasayansi wasema, Ebola iliyotokea nchini Uganda 2007 ni aina mpya' and, 'Elimu yahitajika kwa watoa huduma kupunguza kifua kikuu'.

Mother and childcare and reproductive health

Mother and childcare and reproductive health as a category of health is of great importance but received little attention from the local newspapers throughout 2008. The numbers of stories reported with regards to these topical issues were 28 for mother and child care and 135 for reproductive health out of a total of 1686 stories. These account for 2% and 8% respectively of the articles analysed.

The issue of the death of a pregnant woman that occurred in the Mwananyamala Hospital was the most shaking mother and childcare story reported by both Swahili and English newspapers. Additional issues that caught the Media's attention and were subsequently turned into articles include: the statistics of girl students who have become pregnant over the past 5 years – which is around 18,149 (reported by Mwananchi newspaper, 16th May); the pregnant woman whose baby was delivered on a train and others whose babies were delivered on bridges (reported by Kulikoni on 14th March, and Mwananchi on 12th March respectively); the saga of bed shortages in the maternal wards (Mtanzania, 28th January), and; the fascinating story of the pregnant woman who gave birth without electricity in Zanzibar. (Mwananchi, 2nd January).

According to MoHSW 2006 situational analysis, 8,100 women and more than 45,000 children annually die in Tanzania due to the problems associated with mother and child health care. Still this issue does not given most priority in the local newspapers.

Human resources

Human resources is another health-related issue reported in the Media. It accounts to 86 stories – that is, 5% of all stories collected and analysed. Most of the human resources stories covered the issues of: human resource shortages, corruption and health workers declining ethics.

Such stories include that of the government officials emphasizing ethics and standard code of conduct - for example, Mwananchi on 11th January quoted Deputy Chief Minister of Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar Juma Shanhuna who warned medical personnel on unethical conducts and mistreatment of the patients. Also Mwananchi of 29th August wrote: 'Madaktari watakiwa kukataa rushwa'. The issue of lack of health workers, especially in remote areas also gained attention in the newspapers. For example, *This Day* on 12th December reported 'Simanjiro faces strong shortage of health workers'

Health budget and planning

Health budget and planning is another health category covered in the newspapers. Most of the stories reported were concerned with aid directed to the health sector in order to improve health services. User fees and cost sharing are also included in this category since they are related to the health budgets directly and have some impacts on the whole health sector. Although they were reported in low frequencies, this category occupies a total number of 64 stories which is about 4% of all 1686 health stories reported.

Health facilities and equipment

Health facilities and equipment is another category of analysis which covers issues related to health infrastructure. It explores issues of health facilities, equipments and medical therapies. This category occupied a total number of 111 stories which is about 7% of all 1686 health stories reported for the period of twelve months. Such stories were 'Hospitali ya moyo kujengwa Dar' reported by Tanzania Daima of 21st February, 'Maabara ya kisasa kujengwa hospitalini Amana' reported by Mwananchi of July 22.

Concluding remarks

Generally, health stories in the major daily and weekly newspapers, both Kiswahili and English, during the period from January to December 2008 were dominated with HIV/AIDS stories. Many factors contributed to this, but the major factor is the HIV test drive which was launched by the president Kikwete on July 2007. This campaign involved politicians and other influential figures taking HIV tests in public. This campaign received much attention from the Tanzanian populace and the Media at large. In 2008 there were a lot of general issues on health reported compared to some specific health issues like Malaria, family planning and so on and so forth.

The numbers of health related stories reported in 2008 were greatly effected by the political atmosphere. Most newspapers were crowded with articles on EPA the and Richmond saga, which leaves little room for health.

The graph below provides a clear picture of the information presented in this note. For more information regarding the analysis please refer to the excel spreadsheet and contact YAV's Department for Information and Communication.