



A Snapshot of Media Coverage on Healthcare

Introduction

Healthcare for all South Africans is a priority of Government; it is also one of the major challenges facing the country. The provision of quality healthcare is outlined in Outcome 2 ("A long and healthy life for all South Africans") of the 12 Strategic Outcomes of Government. To achieve this, the Department of Health has committed to four objectives/outputs during this term of Government.

These are:

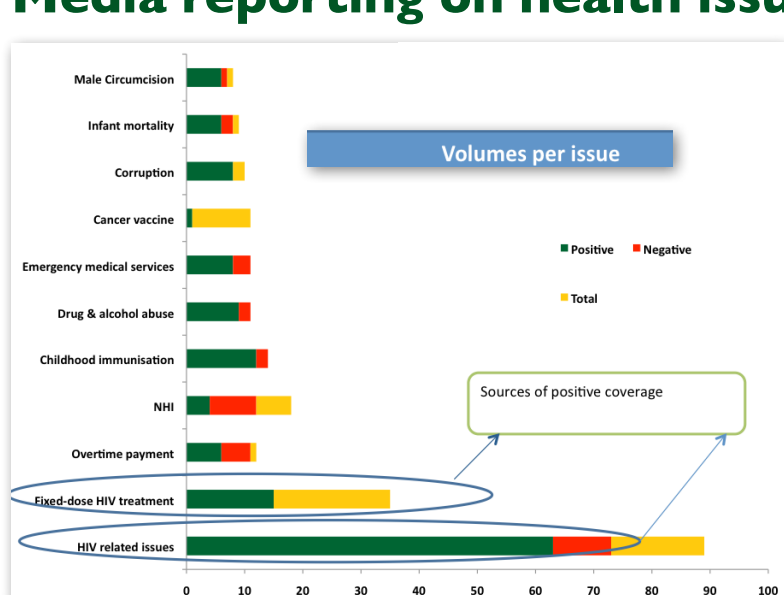


Other Health priorities are:
NHI, Primary Health Care and Maternal and Child Health

How the media reported on various health issues and activities

Over the past nine years health received the lion's share of coverage noted in media monitoring of the top Government priorities. There has been a pronounced shift in reporting from negative to positive since South Africa rolled out its comprehensive HIV and Aids strategy.

Media reporting on health issues: April to May 2013



When assessing media coverage on health issues during **April and May 2013**, HIV-related programmes, particularly the launch of the Fixed-Dose ARV Combination pill attracted most coverage. The tone of reporting was notably balanced, with more positive than negative coverage.

63% decline in HIV among South African children!

The 63% decline in HIV among South African children added to the positive sentiment namely that Government is doing more to deal with HIV and Aids in the country.

SANAC aims to have 3 million people receiving ARV treatment by 2015!

The announcement by the South African National Aids Council (SANAC) that it aims to have 3 million people receiving ARV treatment by 2015 was positively received by media.

The Department of Health's strategic approach to fight HIV, Aids and TB in an integrated way was carried by media; however reporting on HIV tended to overshadow that of TB.

The Budget Vote delivered by the Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi also attracted positive coverage. The introduction of a cancer vaccine to be administered at schools received positive coverage, whilst the messages on the NHI attracted mixed reaction.

Coverage from the publication, South African Health Review focused on concerns by medical professionals and funding issues relating to the rollout of the NHI.

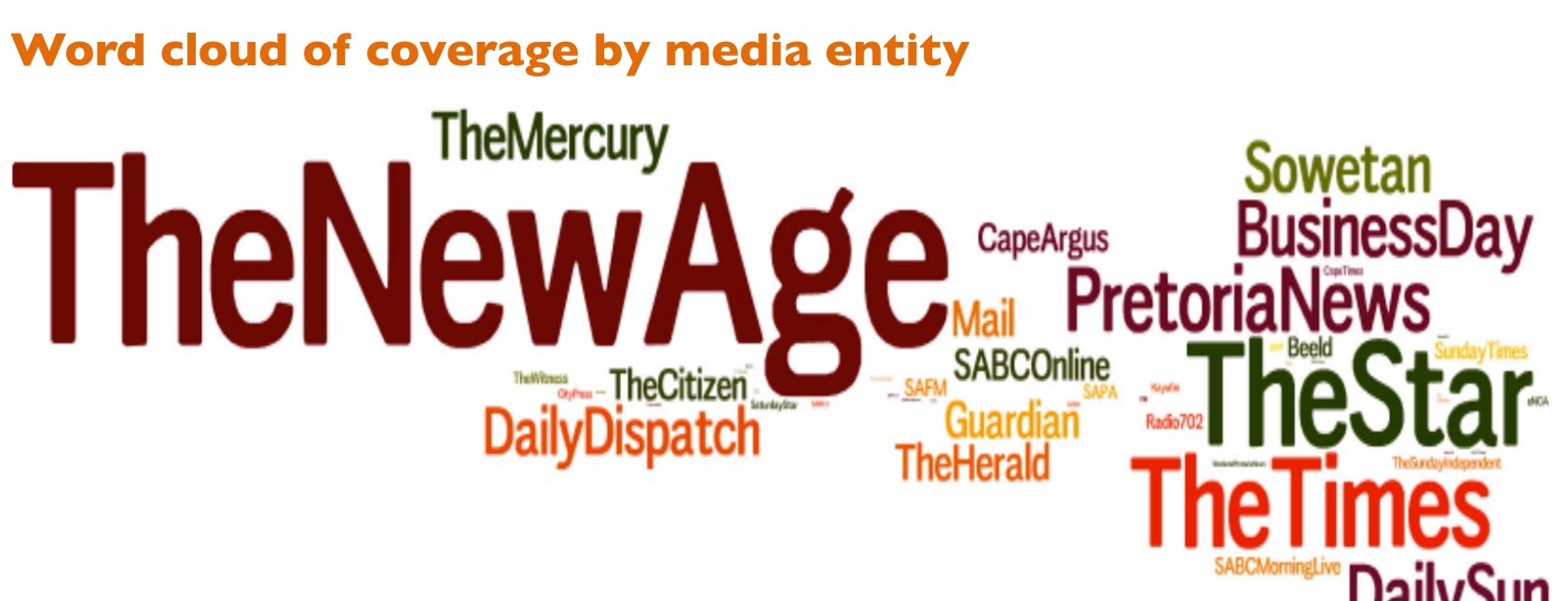
In the legislative environment, coverage around drug and alcohol abuse was driven by debates about plans to ban liquor advertising. Business and other sectors were instrumental in putting messages about the negative impact that this was likely to have on the economy and sports in the country.

Throughout this period, Minister Motsoaledi was at the forefront in communicating messages on health. This largely contributed to the positive slant in media reporting.

Coverage on provincial health issues

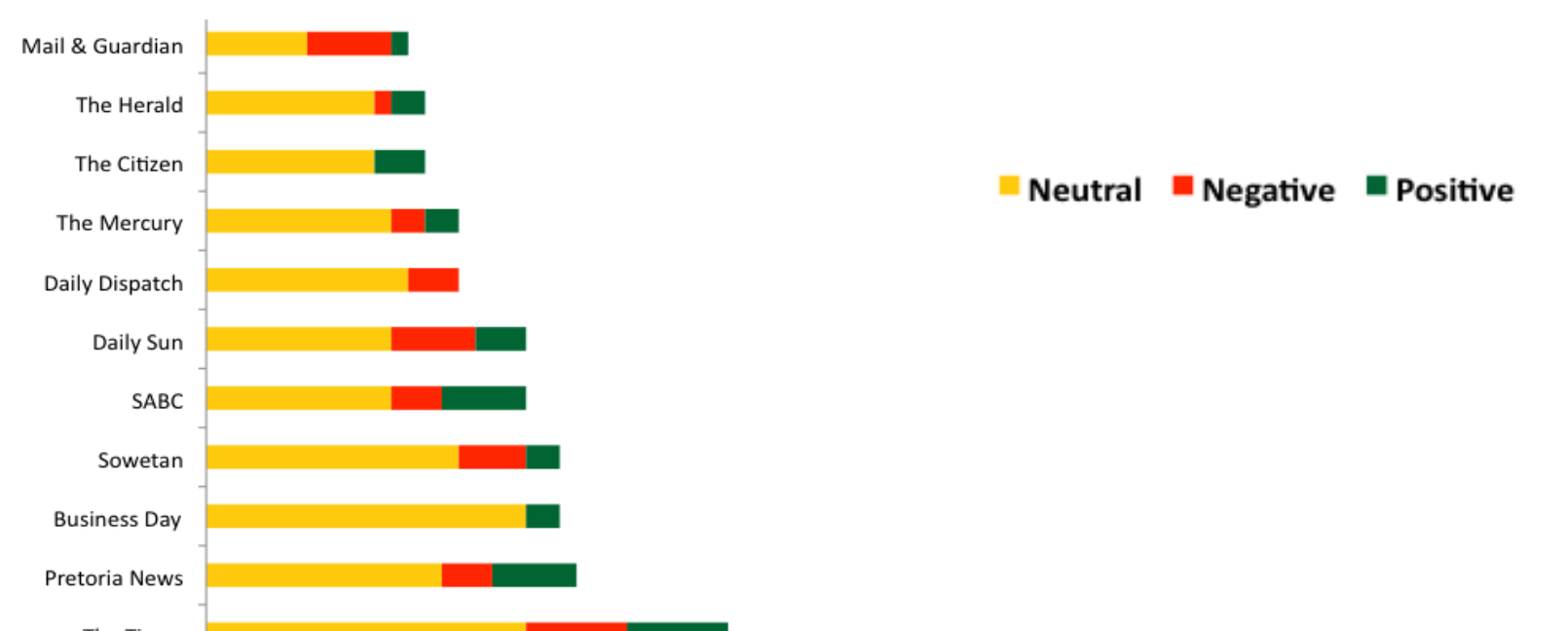
Provincial health issues that remain in the environment over a period of time, often add to the negativity in the overall debate about health. The challenge emanating from disputes about overtime pay for medical staff in Gauteng remained in the environment for a prolonged period. In other provinces, coverage was spread between issues relating to childhood immunisation, training of nurses, hospital management and medicine supply.

Word cloud of coverage by media entity

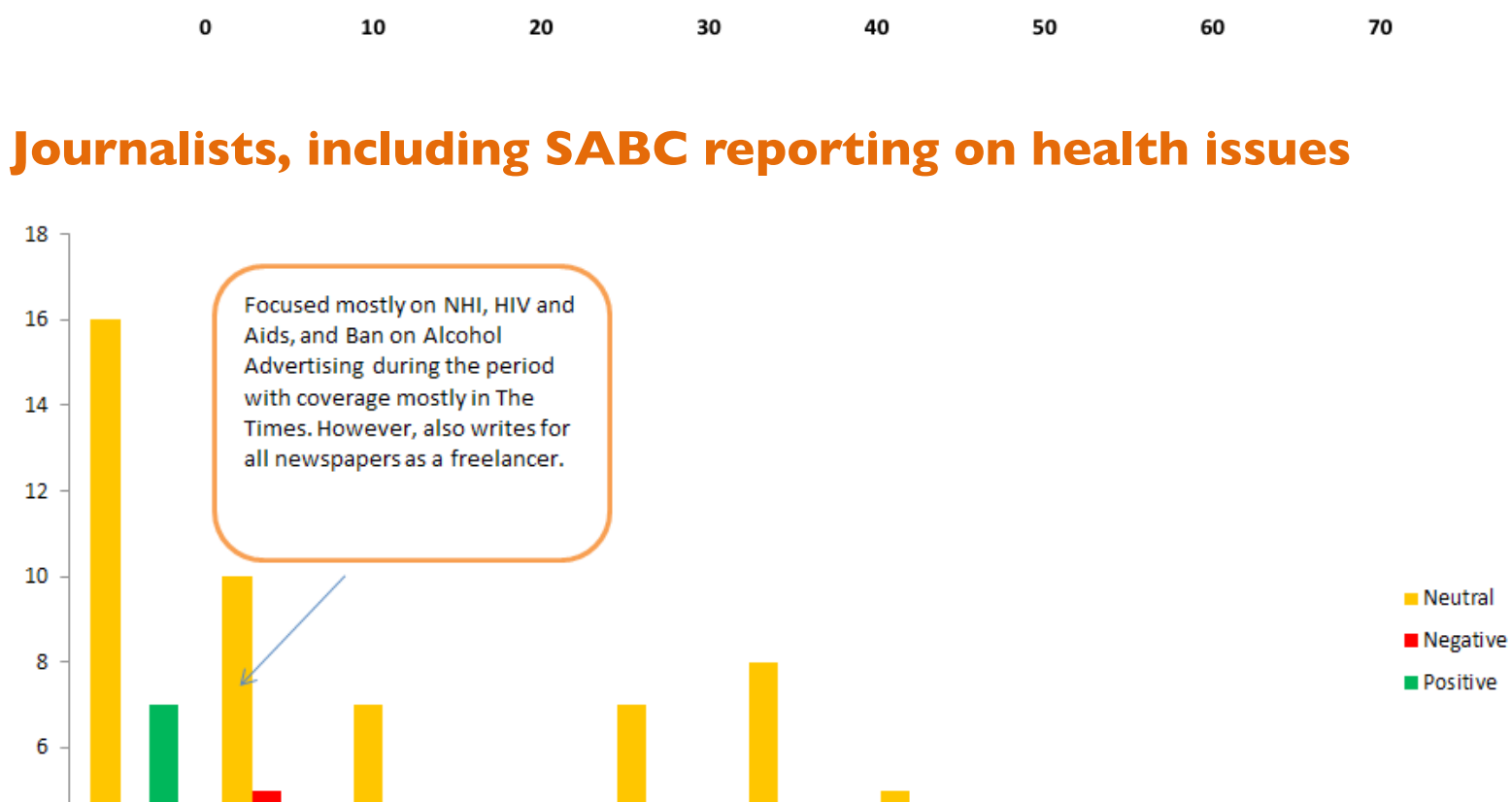


The New Age provided the highest volume of coverage on almost all issues pertaining to health followed by notable coverage on health issues in Independent Newspapers.

Volumes & tonality per media type



Journalists, including SABC reporting on health issues



In summary

Media reporting on health issues during the period covered in this newsletter was closely aligned to the programme objectives of the Department.

The Way Forward:

Talking to media: Certain media and journalists drive coverage of Government priorities, these in turn feed into a number of newspapers. Media engagement should focus on these journalists to ensure they help to drive discussions towards the Government's messages.

There is however still room to explore using other media, particularly the weeklies, to drive messages on health.

Information drive: There needs to be an intensification of a drive to highlight key healthcare initiatives and programmes in the country.

