

Why aren't journalists more interested in AMR?

Mia Malan



BHEKISISA

CENTRE FOR HEALTH JOURNALISM

What does the news media report on?

Research | [Open Access](#) | [Published: 23 October 2021](#)

Drivers of global media attention and representations for antimicrobial resistance risk: an analysis of online English and Chinese news media data, 2015–2018

[Qiuyan Liao](#) , [Jiehu Yuan](#), [Meihong Dong](#), [Pauline Paterson](#) & [Wendy Wing Tak Lam](#)

[Antimicrobial Resistance & Infection Control](#) **10**, Article number: 152 (2021) | [Cite this article](#)

1446 Accesses | 2 Citations | 2 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

Background

How antimicrobial resistance (AMR) risk is communicated in news media can shape public understanding and the engagement of different sectors with AMR. This study examined online news media attention for AMR risk and analyzed how AMR risk was communicated using a global sample of English and Chinese news articles.

1. 20,000 articles from English-speaking countries, including SA, 8 articles = content analysis
2. SA:
 - **Driven by events:**
 - Release of official reports (risks, infections)
 - Discoveries (solutions, new strains)
 - Outbreaks
 - **Rarely driven by:**
 - General antimicrobial misuse/overuse

How does the news media frame AMR?



ABOUT US ▾ MULTIMEDIA ▾ EVENTS ▾ RESOURCES ▾ ARTICLE ▾ SPECIAL REPORTS BHEKISISA TV OUR NEWSLETTER FAQs 🔍

Home ▾ Article ▾ Superbugs could cost you an arm or a leg: Why hospitals need...

Article News and analysis

Superbugs could cost you an arm or a leg: Why hospitals need more money to fight drug resistance

By Zano Kunene and Linda Pretorius - July 22, 2022



Germis are outsmarting medicine faster than what South Africa's overburdened facilities can keep up with. (James Datway, Bhekisisa)

Newsletter

Enter your e-mail to get our weekly newsletter

Subscribe

We tell a good story with the science to back it. Support great journalism today.

DONATE

Archives

Select Month ▾

- **‘Superbug’** frame
- **‘Doomsday frame’** (antibiotic apocalypse, post-antibiotic era)
- **‘Catastrophic frame’** (crisis)
- **‘Military frame’** (battle, war)
- Human behaviours of inappropriate AMU rarely emphasised; health sector = blamed

Why don't we see more AMR stories not attached to events?

FOR SUBSCRIBERS 29 Apr

Antibiotic resistance causing more babies to die of neonatal sepsis, global study reveals

news24 Compiled by Zakiyah Ebrahim

SHARE   



The magical moment a four-year-old boy walks for the first time since losing both legs to sepsis (RAW)

This heartwarming footage shows the moment an inspirational four-year-old boy walks for the first time since losing both his legs to sepsis. Little William Reckless was diagnosed with the illness in January and spent three months in intensive...



- Difficult to understand without a science background (TB stories = not well read)
- Mainstream media houses = fewer health desks
- News media = bad at communicating risk
- AMR = perceived as slow-moving pandemic

Who is responsible to fix the reporting?

“The news media’s role as a partner in fighting a pandemic goes beyond ‘putting facts on the table, it’s about creating a consistent narrative that enables people to understand why things are happening the way they are.”

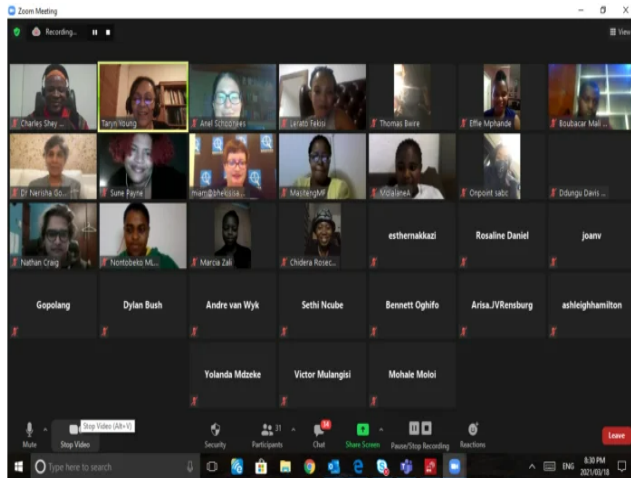
Fixers:

- Media houses
- Researchers
- Policymakers
- Advocacy organisations

What can research/advocacy organisations do to increase AMR coverage?

The jobs that could save us – an introduction to COVID vaccines for journos

By Bhekisisa Team · April 9, 2021



Participants during the Vaccine Science 101 course co-hosted by Bhekisisa and the Centre for Evidence-based Health Care at Stellenbosch University.

Newsletter

Enter your e-mail to get our weekly news!

Subscribe

We tell a good story w science to back it. Sup great journalism today

DONATE

Archives

- Target specialist journalists: Bhekisisa, Spotlight, Health-e, GroundUp, Media Hack
- Partner with health journalism organisations for trainings/webinars
- Publish your own stuff:
 - Op-eds: Bhekisisa has a day-long course
 - Twitter threads, TikTok, YouTube videos
 - Own website stories

What should you do with press releases?

- Write it in a way that it can be copied and pasted:
 - That's exactly what under resourced news media organisations will do (copy and paste parts of a press release for a short story)
 - Get a proper comms person
 - DEjargon (capacity, public-centric civil society, patient-centred approach)
 - Don't assume people know things, so explain EVERYTHING (virus/bacteria; common cold/influenza; incidence/prevalence)

What does writing without jargon look like?

WHO (bad)

- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) **occurs** when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and **no longer respond** to medicines making infections harder to treat and **increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness** and death.

(**bold = jargon**)

CDC (good)

- Antimicrobial resistance happens when germs like bacteria and fungi develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them. That means the germs are not killed and continue to grow. Resistant infections can be difficult, and sometimes impossible, to treat.