

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2009

Department:Journalism

Degree:MA

Title:COMPARISONS BETWEEN COVERAGE OF HEART DISEASE: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF MAINSTREAM AND BLACK NEWSPAPERS, 2004

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of all Americans, and Blacks have a higher mortality rate of the disease than other races. Nevertheless, there tends to be less frequency of heart disease coverage than coverage of other diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS in Black newspapers.

This study compared the content of heart disease-related news stories in Black and mainstream newspapers to examine how each type of newspaper covered the disease. The method was a content analysis of two Black and two mainstream newspapers, selected from two states, Mississippi and Tennessee, in the Appalachian region of the U.S., which is the area of the country with the highest mortality rate for heart disease. The study compared the frequency of heart disease articles in each type of newspaper, reference to heart disease as it affects women, and the inclusion of mobilization information. The findings showed that mainstream newspapers provided more coverage of heart disease. Also, in both types of newspapers, there was more gender-specific coverage of heart disease as it pertains to women than as it pertains to men. In addition, Black newspapers provided more mobilization information in their coverage. These findings provide insights into the coverage of heart disease in Black vs. mainstream newspapers and add to an area of study that has been under-covered.