Prime News

No other regional natural calamity in recent past figured in prime time news/front pages for over 60 days in regional/international media.

Why Prime News?

- Awesome scale
- Unprecedented nature
- No competing major events in world news/media environment
- International response
- Recurring Tremors

A Humbling Moment’
Structure of Presentation

• Coverage of health issues during normal times

• Coverage of health issues in the context of Tsunami

• Pointers for future
Coverage of Health Issues

- Health normally account for 0.6% of total coverage
- In Tsunami coverage it went up to 5+%
- Media searching for health stories

Based on year long monitoring of six national news channels in India during prime time (7-11 pm)

Source: CMS Media Lab
Health Issues and Media
(During normal time)

- Event based news
- Limited follow up coverage
- “Why” and what based coverage is far less as to ‘Who’ in most of the news item.
- More emphasis on life style issues (tension, stress, back pain & obesity)
- Coverage on lapses /break down of system.
- Very few items are from people or with a community perspective.

Note: Based on earlier CMS Media Lab study on coverage of health issues

World Health Organization
### News Pegs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% of News Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Tsunami Relief</td>
<td>- 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief /Rescue</td>
<td>- 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
<td>- 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>- 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsunami Forecasting</td>
<td>- 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific to children</td>
<td>- 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>- 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on 2168 news items in newspapers & TV (Dec. 26 – Feb 28)
# Health Pegs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>% of News Items on Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>- 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical relief/Aid</td>
<td>- 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicable diseases</td>
<td>- 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation/drinking water</td>
<td>- 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Health</td>
<td>- 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>- 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunization</td>
<td>- 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on 168 news items in newspapers & TV (Dec. 26-Feb 28)
Aspects of Health Pegs: Communicable Diseases

Sample Headlines

“Lack of medical support, epidemic threatening”
“Now, in ring of epidemic”
“Diarrhoea strikes”
“Malaria could kill over 100,000”
“Measles beginning to break out”
“Health Ministry warns of five types of epidemic in post Tsunami areas”

Nature of Coverage

• Alert
• Likely toll
• Surveillance
• Not much emphasis in media on preventive measures
• Little information specific to location/region
Aspects of Health Pegs: Medical Relief/Aid

Sample Headlines

“Germany to provide floating hospital”

“German-Australia Re-opens Zianal”

“Contract based doctors for Aceh”

“Aceh needs permanent doctors”

“Floating hospital on mission to Indonesia”

Nature of Coverage

• Emphasis on what is being supplied rather what is required?

• Coverage of donor’s

• Little coverage on how medical aid is being utilised?
Aspects of Health Pegs: Trauma

Sample Headlines

“Acehness may be facing mental illness”
“Coping with post-traumatic stress disorder in Aceh”
“Handling of survivors mental issues should bring happiness”
“Psychosocial support recommendation for Tsunami victims”
“Earthquake, Tsunami child victims recovering from Trauma”

Sample Headline: India

“Fisher woman on Trauma”
“Steps to tackle trauma of survivors”
“Trauma will take years to heal”

- Not many news items on how to cope with stress
- No information on whom to contact for counselling
Health in Media

No. of new items citing health issues

- Overall
- Indonesia
- India
- Maldives

Tsunami
Health
Conference

World Health Organization
Health - Week by Week

Week 1: (Dec 26-Jan 1): Epidemic Alert + Health condition + Post earth quake management

Week 2: (Jan–2-8): Epidemic Alert + Health condition + Medical Aid + Epidemic surveillance + Shortage of medical supplies

Week 3: (Jan 9-15): Epidemic alert + Medical Aid + Medical Relief + Medical Relief - Infrastructure + Trauma

Week 4: (Jan 16-22): Medical Aid- Infrastructure + Outbreak of diseases + Maternity health issues

Week 5: (Jan 23-29): Epidemic alert + Outbreak of diseases + Medical infrastructure + Trauma + Epidemic surveillance + Maternity health issues

Week 6+7: (Jan 30-Feb 12): Epidemic alert + Trauma + Medical Relief (Supplies, Personnel) + Review of health condition

Week 8+9: (Feb 13-28): Child nutrition + Health infrastructure
Health & WHO*

• Assessment of Health Situation

• Warning on out break of diseases
  • What diseases?
  • Precaution

• Medical Relief
  • Assessment of Medical Aid Requirement
  • How to go about?
  • Relief operations being undertaken

• How to deal with trauma/mental health issues

• Drumming up support

• Counter rumor, fear and apprehensions

“WHO recommends post earthquake management policy”

“WHO guidelines on handling remains”

“WHO Srilanka fish Not contaminated”

“WHO recommendation to Health Ministry to offer psycho social support to Aceh Tsunami victim”

*India-an exception
Sum-up

- Health issues appear within a week of Tsunami.
- Health – Buried in disaster story
- Coverage more on Trauma, medical relief and communicable diseases
- Limited focus on children, women and elderly
- Media relied on wire agencies for health stories
- More health stories were based on briefing to agencies like WHO, UNICEF, Govt. Dept. etc.
- Guidance information for affected people – not much noticed
- WHO communication-significantly used
Pointers for Future

- Authoritative source chances of more coverage
- Enabling authoritative sources on different health issues especially for television
- A single point health information source, rather than a control room that emanates mostly rescue/relief info
- Relief agencies persons – enabling them on health issues
Pointers for Future

• Alerting media on what an agency like WHO can offer to media

• Technical/experts – communication skills, field composite teams for media briefings

• Electronic media needs vary

• Columnists – needs vary, inventories / involve

• Media capacity - disaster management & health issues
Finally

Health is not just about disease and death, there is also human interest story

Thank you
Study Scope

- Media response
- Themes of coverage specific to health
- Time line of health coverage
- Sources