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HIV /AIDS in 2010: a case study of four Australian publications

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HIV/AIDS in 2010: A case study of four Australian publications

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Lastly, being a volunteer for an elderly woman who unwittingly contracted HIV has shown me firsthand the detrimental effects of this virus, both mentally and physically. Knowing this woman has not only furthered my own understanding of HIV/AIDS, but also dispelled some of my own stereotypes about it. I have heard about the stigma she faces on a day-to-day basis and seen how the antiretroviral medication slows her mind and body. I have also shared moments with her where I have seen the fear, depression and the desire to give up. Being with her and sharing these moments has given me a drive to keep going with this project even when I have wanted to give up. In the six months we have known each other, a friendship has been formed that I will treasure for the rest of my life. I will sorely miss it when I leave Australia.

Abstract

This is the first research project on press coverage of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) in Australia for 11 years. The study contains a content analysis of four Australian publications between January 1st and March 31st, 2010. In addition, the health editors at *The Australian* and *The West Australian* were interviewed to establish what considerations are made when deciding to publish an article dealing with HIV/AIDS. The latest report from UNAIDS estimated that globally, over 33 million people were living with HIV, and two million people died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2008. HIV infection rates in Australia have also increased by 38 per cent in the last eleven years. In light of these numbers, the aim of this study is to investigate whether a section of the Australian press reports on HIV/AIDS. This will give an indication of whether a part of the Australian press is performing one of its central roles, which is to inform its readers. The results from this study suggest that the number of articles written about HIV/AIDS has decreased considerably since the last study by Lupton in 1999 was conducted, and that HIV/AIDS is an 'old story' that is hard to write about. The implication is that there might be fewer stories on HIV/AIDS in the Australian press in the future.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Ever since I started reading newspapers, I have been interested in how stories are written and how issues are covered by different newspapers. Although I did not have any pre-existing interest or extensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS before embarking on this research project, I quickly became interested in it after attending a few seminars that dealt with Australian press coverage of the disease during my undergraduate degree in journalism. The main message conveyed at these seminars was that sections of the Australian press has failed to adequately report on the issue over the past decade despite a growing number of people contracting HIV both globally and nationally (Cullen, personal communication, March 11, 2009). Towards the end of my degree, I decided to do some initial research to see what researchers had said about the issue. I discovered that there was a significant time gap in research on the topic, as the latest study had been conducted in the late 1990s. This prompted me to research what appeared to me like a forgotten or neglected issue.

1.2 Structure

The first chapter in this thesis looks at the motivation for conducting this research, outlines the research questions and examines the significance of this study. The second chapter reviews the relevant literature for this project, the significance of HIV/AIDS, the history of press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia, agenda-setting theory, the media's ability to communicate health messages, the theory of the 'issue-attention cycle', discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS and the responsibility of the press. The third chapter outlines the theoretical framework of this study, which is a combination of social constructionism and agenda-setting theory. The fourth chapter looks at the two methods used in this study; content analysis and interviews. In the fifth chapter the results from the content analysis and interviews are presented and discussed. The sixth chapter contains concluding remarks and a discussion of the findings.

1.3 Research Questions/Aim

HIV/AIDS represents a threat for Australians (NCHECR, 2009), and it is a substantial global problem (UNAIDS, 2009). Therefore, the aim of the study is to put the spotlight on how a part of the Australian press reports on HIV/AIDS. This will increase public awareness of whether the press is performing some of its key roles, two of which are “to report current events and interpret them to its readers ... [and] to inform, educate ... and enlighten its readers” (Mayer, 1964, p. 49). To answer the research questions in this study, I conducted a content analysis of press coverage of HIV/AIDS in four Australian publications and interviewed the two health editors at *The West Australian* and *The Australian*. The research questions for this study were:

1. How did *The Australian*, *The West Australian*, *The Guardian Express* and *Australian Women's Weekly* report on HIV/AIDS in light of a rise in infection rates?
2. How many articles mentioned ‘HIV’ or ‘AIDS’ and were published in these two four publications between January 1st and March 31st, 2010?
3. If the number is low, then what are the possible reasons for this?
4. Does the press have the ability to put the topic of HIV/AIDS back on the agenda?

1.4 Significance of this study

First, this study makes a contribution to the field of journalism by addressing an 11-year gap in research of press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia. Second, according to the latest¹ numbers from the World Health Organization, HIV/AIDS was the sixth most common cause of death worldwide in 2004 (WHO, 2008). Although these statistics are six years old, HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant global problem (see Table 1). In some countries, HIV/AIDS is a life or death issue, especially when medication is unavailable or unaffordable. In South Africa for example, approximately 5.7 million people are living with HIV – which means that the country is home to the largest HIV infected population in the world (UNAIDS, 2009, p. 27). The latest² statistics on the world epidemic of HIV/AIDS reveal a high number of affected people:

Table 1		
Description	Estimate	Range
People living with HIV/AIDS in 2008	33.4 million	31.1 – 35.8 million
Adults living with HIV/AIDS in 2008	31.3 million	29.2 – 33.7 million
Women living with HIV/AIDS in 2008	15.7 million	14.2 – 17.2 million
Children under 15 living with HIV/AIDS in 2008	2.1 million	1.2 – 2.9 million
People newly infected with HIV in 2008 (total)	2.7 million	2.4 – 3.0 million
Adults newly infected with HIV in 2008	2.3 million	2.0 – 2.5 million
Children under 15 newly infected with HIV in 2008	0.43 million	0.24 – 0.61 million
AIDS-related deaths in 2008 (total)	2.0 million	1.7 – 2.4 million
Adults dying from AIDS-related illness 2008	1.7 million	1.4 – 2.1 million
Children u/15 dying from AIDS-related illnesses in 2008	0.28 million	0.15 – 0.41 million

(UNAIDS, 2009, p. 6)

HIV/AIDS is not as widespread in Australia as in other countries. Of 2.7 million new HIV infections in 2008, 995 occurred in Australia (NCHECR, 2009, p. 35) whereas 24 people died from AIDS-related illnesses (NCHECR, 2009, p. 46). However, the annual number of new HIV infections in Australia has risen in the last eleven years. A report from the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research states that “the

¹ The 2008 report with the 2004 numbers provides the most recent numbers on global death causes.
² UNAIDS releases a report on the HIV/AIDS epidemic every second year. The 2008 numbers provided here are the most recent, whereas the 2009 numbers will be released in 2011.

annual number of new HIV diagnoses in Australia has plateaued over the past three years at around 1 000 cases following a steady increase from 718 cases in 1999” (NCHECR, 2009, p. 9). UNAIDS (2009) notes that countries close to Australia, such as Fiji, New Caledonia and in particular Papua New Guinea are recording a higher number of HIV infections every year (p. 75). Coghlan et al. (cited in UNAIDS, 2009, p. 75) found that “Papua New Guinea accounted for more than 99% of reported HIV diagnoses in the [Oceanic] region in 2007”. Herring et al. (2003) argue that the high incidence of HIV cases in neighbouring countries needs to be taken seriously by the Australian people:

Since the majority of HIV-1 infections in Australia occur in the homosexual-bisexual population, the predominant HIV-1 subtype is thought to be subtype B, especially as this subtype is predominant in North America, Europe, and neighbouring Papua New Guinea and New Zealand... However, HIV infection rates in other countries in the Asia-Pacific region (Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, India, and southern China, among others) continue to increase, and the incidence of non-B subtypes in these countries is high ... There are increasing numbers of people travelling abroad for pleasure, military deployment, and employment, and increasing numbers of individuals entering Australia from other countries via immigration or repatriation or as refugees. Therefore, the possibility of non-B subtypes entering Australia is substantial. (p. 4600)

Therefore, HIV/AIDS it is not restricted to the ‘usual’ groups affected by the epidemic, such as intravenous drug users and homosexual men (Grimwade, 1998, p. 73), but also travelling Australians and those working abroad. In this context, editors can have an impact on the public’s understanding of HIV/AIDS, as Lupton (1992) notes: “...the responses of the public to health threats can be strongly influenced by messages about health in the popular press” (p. 19).

The last study on press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia was conducted by public health researcher, Deborah Lupton, in 1999. The importance of addressing this gap lies in the assumption that newspapers have a role in contributing to increased public knowledge of HIV/AIDS. The press has the ability to put issues on the agenda, and thereby, influence the importance the public places on these issues (McCombs, 1972; Miller & Krosnick, 1997). If the topic is not covered in much detail, this might mean that people are not adequately informed about the rise in annual infection rates in

Australia, the risk associated with HIV in neighbouring countries and domestically, and the global ramifications of the problem.

2.0 Literature Review

This study is conducted from the social constructionist viewpoint that the news media can inform and potentially educate the public about HIV/AIDS. This is in part made possible by the news media's capability to decide which issues are present in the public domain. This is referred to as the news media's agenda-setting capability. A significant part of this literature review explores some of the themes in this field.

The structure of the literature review is as follows: The first section looks at the significance of HIV/AIDS worldwide and in Australia. The second section provides a detailed description of previous press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia. Then, in the third part, the attention shifts towards agenda-setting theory. The fourth part focuses on what different health communication theorists say about the strengths of the news media in communicating health issues to the public. The fifth part concentrates on Anthony Downs' theory of the 'issue-attention cycle' and the discrimination and stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS. These two themes might be factors that influence the coverage of the topic in the Australian press, and are therefore important factors for this research. The sixth section examines the responsibility of the press, which ties in with the last section where I look at how the topics presented in this literature review relate to the general role of the press in society.

Significance of HIV/AIDS

According to Carr (1992), HIV/AIDS is likely to have originated in central Africa:

An analysis of the genetic different strains of HIV suggests that they had a common ancestor somewhere between 50 and 100 years ago. Although the precise origins of HIV will never be known, the most widely accepted view ... is that the virus is endemic to a remote part of central Africa, possibly in the mountains of Zaire, and that it began to spread to other parts of Africa only after the area had been penetrated by Europeans in the twentieth century. (p. 11)

In the United States, cases of AIDS-like illnesses have been found in medical records as far back as 1969, although HIV infections surfaced in the mid-1970s before evolving into the official start of the AIDS epidemic on June 5, 1981 (Carr, 1992, p. 10). Today, HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant problem worldwide. UNAIDS (2009) estimates that by late 2008, 33.4 million people were living with HIV worldwide, whereas 2 million people died from AIDS (p. 6). HIV infection rates are not as high as they used

to be, as “in 2008, the estimated number of new HIV infections was approximately 30% lower than at the epidemic’s peak 12 years earlier” (UNAIDS, 2009, p. 7). However, this does not mean that the HIV/AIDS should be taken lightly:

Although important progress has been achieved in preventing new HIV infections and in lowering the annual number of AIDS-related deaths, the number of people living with HIV continues to increase. AIDS-related illnesses remain one of the leading causes of death globally, and are projected to continue as a significant global cause of premature mortality in the coming decades. (UNAIDS, 2009, p. 8)

In Australia, the number of people infected with HIV/AIDS remains comparatively low per capita when compared with more heavily infected countries such as South Africa. NCHECR (2009) states that a total of 28 330 HIV diagnoses and 10 348 AIDS diagnoses have been registered, and that 6765 people have died from AIDS in Australia since recording started in 1981 (p. 3). However, there was a 38 per cent increase in HIV infections since 1999 (NCHECR, 2009, p. 9). This suggests that HIV/AIDS still is a potential health threat that the Australian public needs to know more about to reduce risky behaviour.

Press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia

In Australia, the gay press started to publish stories on HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s, although it was not being referred to directly as 'HIV' or 'AIDS' at the time. This is revealed by the first news brief on the topic in Sydney's gay magazine *The Star* on July 3, 1981, where the headline reads: 'New pneumonia linked to gay lifestyle' (Lupton, 1994, p. 40). Although initial reports like this one focused on overseas cases, the focus would soon shift to the Australian situation. The first AIDS patient registered in Australia was an American man who was treated in 1982, whereas the first Australian was diagnosed with AIDS in March, 1983 (Lupton, 1994, p. 40). The gay press started publishing articles on HIV/AIDS more extensively from this point on as it was understood it was likely to have links with certain elements of the gay lifestyle, but it would still take a few years before the Australian mainstream press started to report on the disease (Lupton, 1994, p. 41). Up until the first Australian diagnosis in 1983, only 18 articles had been published on HIV/AIDS in the metropolitan newspapers, showing that the Australian press was fairly slow to report on it (Lupton, 1994, p. 41).

In the first four years of press reportage on HIV/AIDS in Australia (1981 – 1985), French (cited in Lupton, 1992, p. 13) found that a total of 4888 articles that dealt with the topic were published. French (cited in Lupton, 1992, p. 12) identified three major narrative themes: the first was 'The Gay Plague' period, where the press emphasised that only homosexual men were at risk of getting the disease; the second was 'The Queensland Babies' period, where a large amount of the reporting was centred on three Queensland babies that contracted HIV via blood transfusions, and other 'innocent' victims being infected in this way, resulting in homophobia and subsequent vilification and shunning of homosexual men in the press; the third was 'This Wretched Disease' period, where reports mostly focused on another child (Eve van Graffhorst) who was infected via blood transfusion and the death of actor Rock Hudson, which meant the press continued to focus on and blame the spread of HIV/AIDS on homosexual men.

Between July 1986 and June 1988, 8976 articles on HIV/AIDS were published (Lupton, 1992, p. 14). The reason for this high number can be found by looking at the 1987 'Grim Reaper' campaign, a year when a total of 5660 articles were published across all the metropolitan Australian newspapers (Lupton, 1992, p. 14). A year earlier, in 1986, the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health (1988) cited in

Lupton (1994, p. 51) had initiated a survey to examine the Australian population's knowledge about HIV/AIDS, finding that "... few saw it as a personal threat ... [and that] the attitude that AIDS was somebody else's problem was highly prevalent". Informed by these findings, the government decided to launch the 'Grim Reaper' campaign with the intention to "... shock heterosexuals into the realization that everyone, not only homosexual men and intravenous drug users, was at risk of contracting HIV and dying of AIDS" (Lupton, 1992, p. 13). One of the most popular images of this campaign was a television advertisement where a grim reaper-character that symbolises the AIDS-disease, uses a large bowling ball to bowl down several people portrayed as bowling pins. In the opening part of the clip, the narrator states: "At first, only gays and IV drug users were getting killed by AIDS, but now we know every one of us could be devastated by it" ("Grim Reaper", 2009). Myhre and Flora (2000) found that "in terms of awareness, the campaign was highly effective, but later analysis found little change in knowledge and high anxiety expressed by the population sample" (p. 40). According to Lupton (1992), the coverage the campaign received was "...extraordinary when compared with the media coverage given to other health issues" (p. 14). In fact, it might have received too much coverage, as breast cancer, which affected a significantly higher number of people, received far less attention (Lupton, 1992, p. 14). After the campaign, coverage of HIV/AIDS started to decline rapidly and the press started to focus on advances in research and bizarre cases such as a HIV-positive British soccer referee being charged with bringing the game into disrepute, and an Australian academic who proposed that HIV positive people should be paid to not have sex (Lupton, 1992, pp. 17-18).

Between March and September 1990, 2795 articles mentioned 'AIDS' (Lupton, Chapman & Wong, 1993, p. 7). From their analysis, the authors found that seeing HIV/AIDS as something only affecting gay men, had lost its newsworthiness in the press. News reports were dominated by accounts of children living with HIV, and there was an emphasis on the notion that there were 'innocent' and 'guilty' victims of HIV infection (Lupton, Chapman & Wong, 1993, p. 15). As the coverage declined, the researchers speculated that "... the imperative for 'new' news to entertain the audience has had an effect upon the press' coverage of the epidemic" (Lupton, Chapman & Wong, 1993, p. 16). The researchers issued a warning in this regard, which might resonate with today's situation:

If the press does not see AIDS in Australia as an important and newsworthy issue, and does not support government sponsored campaigns, then the interest and support of the community may well flag. Apathy and complacency may overcome the concern of about AIDS first engendered by the shock tactics of the 'Grim Reaper' campaign, and continuing efforts to maintain high levels of awareness of the general public to AIDS may be thwarted. (Lupton, Chapman & Wong, 1993, p. 16)

Between January 1994 and December 1996, a total of 5798 articles were published (Lupton, 1999, p. 40). Lupton (1999) identified three archetypes of people living with HIV/AIDS in the press; the main archetype, the 'AIDS victim', was represented in reports as "... the gay man in despair and suffering guilt in his illness... people with HIV/AIDS, gay or otherwise, who had suffered discrimination, people who had contracted HIV from discarded syringes and elite sportsmen [with HIV/AIDS] (p. 43). The second archetype was the 'AIDS survivor', which encapsulated optimistic stories and countered the old archetype of the HIV/AIDS-infected gay man who was a "... gaunt, sad figure lying passively in a hospital bed or sitting listlessly in a wheelchair, awaiting inevitable death" (p. 44). The most important figure in this archetype was US basketball player Magic Johnson. The sportsman became a role model for people with HIV/AIDS and was admired for dealing courageously with his HIV infection (Lupton, 1999, p. 45). In general, "...the 'AIDS survivors' were portrayed as successfully fighting against despair and illness" (p. 46). The last archetype, the 'AIDS carrier', was portrayed through stories about "... 'promiscuous' heterosexual men and women, injecting drug users and health care workers ... [who] were represented in extremely negative terms, either because of their lack of self-control, their negligence, their vengefulness or their reluctance to let vulnerable others know of their seropositive status" (Lupton, 1999, p. 48).

In total, this analysis of the available studies on press coverage of HIV/AIDS reveals a steady decline in coverage from the period around the 'Grim Reaper' campaign in 1987 (see Table 2). A reason for this, Lupton (1994) suggests, was that the HIV/AIDS-story became increasingly hard to cover in the years that followed the campaign, something that might also apply to the situation today:

News about the AIDS risk to heterosexuals was no longer fresh and exciting, and it had become more and more difficult to find a different 'angle' on stories about AIDS, or to maintain the aura of panic about the threats posed by the disease. (p. 90)

There might be support for the declining trend in Bardhan’s (2001) study on HIV/AIDS coverage in five major transnational news-wire services (Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Reuters, Telegrafnoye Agenstvo Sovetskovo Soyuz, and Inter Press Service) over the six year period between 1991–1997. Considering that the Australian press receive a considerable amount of stories from at least three of the wire services, her finding that “overall, the volume of coverage declined at an increasing rate from 1991–1997” (p. 302) might reflect the decline in coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia. In the US press, Brodie, Hamel, Kates, Altman and Drew’s (2002) study found that the coverage of HIV/AIDS decreased steadily between 1987–2002 (p. 2). Such decreases suggest that the topic has disappeared from the agenda, a point that leads to the next section.

Table 2		
Analysis of press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia		
Time period	Trends in the Australian press	Number of articles
<i>December 1981 – December 1985</i>	December 1981 – October 1984: ‘The Gay Plague period’. November 1984 – June 1985: ‘The Queensland Babies’ period. July 1985 – December 1985: ‘This Wretched Disease’ period.	4888
<i>July 1986 – June 1988</i>	The 1987 Grim Reaper campaign accounted for 5660 articles. After 1987, focus on bizarre cases.	8976
<i>March 1990 – September 1990</i>	AIDS was no longer seen as just affecting gay men. Focus on children with HIV and division between ‘innocent’ and ‘guilty’ victims of HIV infection.	2795
<i>January 1994 – December 1996</i>	Three archetypes: The ‘AIDS victim’: The ‘AIDS survivor’. The ‘AIDS carrier’.	5798

Agenda-setting

Press coverage of HIV/AIDS declined rapidly in Australia during the late eighties, which makes it interesting to look at whether the press has the ability to make it reappear. In one of the first studies on agenda-setting, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw examined the mass media's impact on public perception of presidential candidates during the 1968 US presidential campaign. "They matched the rank order of issues according to their coverage by newspapers, television networks and news magazines with the rank order of those same issues among Chapel Hill, North Carolina voters..." (McCombs, Danielian & Wanta, 1995, pp. 282-283), finding that "the media appear to have exerted a considerable impact on voters' judgements of what they considered the major issues of the campaign..." (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 180). This finding led the authors to conclude that newspapers and broadcasters are able to determine which issues are dominant in the public domain by deciding how many broadcasts or articles they publish about a certain issue, something that also shapes how much attention and importance the *public* places on different issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 176). This study is significant because it still stimulates academic discussion (McCombs, Danielian & Wanta, 1995; McCombs & Estrada, 1997; Severin & Tankard, 2001), and because other studies that measure the mass media's impact on public perception have supported it (McCombs, 1997; Iyengar & Simon, 1997; Mutz & Soss, 1997; Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2002).

The agenda-setting theory has evolved ever since McCombs and Shaw's landmark study was conducted, with media 'framing' and 'priming' being two important developments. Iyengar (cited in Rogers, Hart & Dearing, 1997, p. 235) theorises that "*framing* is the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by the media to make them more important and thus to emphasize a particular cause of some phenomena". As an example, in the early years of HIV/AIDS in Australia, the press focused not on the issue of HIV/AIDS itself, but emphasised a sub-topic which was that gay men were at fault for the spread of HIV (Lupton, 1994, pp. 40-46). This resulted in gay sex being framed as the cause for the phenomena (HIV/AIDS). This trend was not exclusive to the Australian press. Watney (1997), in his book *Policing desire. Pornography, AIDS and the media*, points to a similar pattern in the UK press. Brodie et al. (2002) in their study on the media coverage of HIV/AIDS also found this to be the case in the US.

In terms of priming, Miller and Krosnick (1997) state that "...the issues the media choose to cover most end up being primed, meaning that they become the predominant bases for the public's evaluations..." (p. 260). In their study on the effects of television news coverage on the US public's evaluation of President George Bush during the Persian Gulf crisis, Iyengar and Simon (1997) found that media priming influenced the public's evaluation of him. Before the crisis, "...their feelings toward George Bush were coloured by economic considerations" (p. 256), but as the media shifted its focus away from the issue of economy to deal almost exclusively with the Gulf Crisis, "...evaluations of George Bush became more dependent upon foreign policy considerations" (p. 256).

Another aspect that has emerged in recent years is that there is a 'second level' of agenda-setting. Traditionally, studies have examined how media coverage of issues or objects *alone* affects public perception. However, each issue or object on an agenda "...has numerous attributes – those characteristics and properties that fill in and animate the picture of each object (McCombs & Estrada, 1997, p. 239). To illustrate, look at the issue of rape. The media might focus on different sub-issues of rape, such as the psychological distress facing victims, the health and welfare system's medical and economical follow-up of rape victims, the judicial system's response on acts of rape, child molestation or incest. Severin and Tankard (2001) propose that "agenda setting could take place at this sub-issue level ... [and] if this were happening, then those sub-issues that are receiving the greatest emphasis in the news media should also be the ones that the public indicates are most important" (p. 236).

In their study of the agenda-setting theory, Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan (2002) examined the impact of newspaper coverage on public opinion regarding the commercial development of a range of commercial retail stores in a large area in Ithaca, New York. They found the people who read the local paper at the time reflected the newspaper's views of certain aspects of the development, concluding: "By covering an issue prominently, we found, mass media can influence how salient these aspects are among audience members" (Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2002, p. 20). In a similar study, Mutz and Soss (1997) studied the difference in impact between two newspapers, in which one of them employed "...a purposeful agenda-setting strategy [that] sought to move public opinion on the issue of low-income housing by emphasizing this issue on its news pages and supporting this cause on its editorial pages" (p. 439). This was only

known by the researchers, who found that the agenda-setting paper had "... a significant influence of public perceptions of the views of others in the community" (Mutz and Soss, 1997, p. 449), meaning readers were influenced by the coverage in that they saw the issue as important to the community as a whole.

The points and examples provided above not only support the notion that the news media have a certain influence in society, but also that the media exert this influence in different ways. This is important because it means the Australian press could put HIV/AIDS back on the agenda for discussion.

Communicating health messages

The news media can play its part when conveying health information. Noar (2006) explains: "...targeted, well-executed health mass-media campaigns can have *small to moderate effects* [italics added]..." (p. 21). However:

Given the wide reach that mass media is capable of, a campaign with a *small-to-moderate* effect size that reaches thousands of people will have a greater impact on public health than would an individual or group-level intervention with a *large* effect size that only reaches a small number of people (p. 36).

Although Noar (2006) mentions the 'mass-media' in general here, the press is a significant part of this as Fowler (1991) argues: "For the majority of people, reading the daily newspaper makes up their most substantial and significant consumption of printed discourse. For the majority, it is second only to television as a window to the world" (p. 121). It can be argued that newspapers might have lost some of this importance since 1991, but in describing the general power of the news media, McCombs and Estrada (1997) state: "... the media may not only tell us what to think about, they also may tell us how to think about it, and even what to do about it" (p. 247). Journalist Victor Cohn (1989) adds that journalists have a pivotal role when it comes to communicating health:

Whether we like or not, we journalists have become gatekeepers. In some measures, our choices of what will be reported, and how the data will be reported, set the national agenda vis-à-vis health risks. In a sense, we have become part of the regulatory machinery ... The very way we report a situation can affect the outcome. If we ignore a bad situation or write a "no danger" piece, the public may suffer. If we write "danger", the public may quake. (p. 42)

Corcoran (2008) counters this by claiming that the mass media cannot convey complex information, change behaviours without facilitating factors, teach people skills, or change strong attitudes and beliefs (p. 81). However, she argues the mass media *can* achieve wide coverage, impact on behaviours receptive to change, convey simple information, increase knowledge and put health on the public agenda (pp. 80-81). In terms of the media communicating messages about *HIV/AIDS*, McKee, Bertrand and Becker-Benton (2004) state: "The mass media have a powerful reach and have proven to be effective in breaking the silence around HIV/AIDS" (p. 53). The authors stress the importance of using this reach constructively:

... people need accurate and timely *information* about HIV and AIDS ... For most people, information is not enough and they require *motivation* through strategic communication ... If done well, such communication will foster individual attitudinal and behavior change, as well as social norm change... In the absence of a vaccine or a cure, behavior change represents one of the very few means of stemming the epidemic. (McKee, Bertrand & Becker-Benton, 2004, p. 44)

The above outlined points show that the news media have the ability to report on HIV/AIDS.

The issue-attention cycle and discrimination

A potential reason for the downward trend in reporting on HIV/AIDS can be found in Downs' (1972) theory of the 'issue-attention cycle', a cycle he states "... is rooted both in the nature of certain domestic problems and in the way *major communications media interact with the public* [italics added]" (p. 39). In his study on the US' media and public response to climate change, Downs (1972) argued:

American public attention rarely remains sharply focused upon any one domestic issue for very long – even if it involves a continuing problem of crucial importance to society. Instead, a systematic "issue-attention cycle" seems strongly to influence public attitudes and behaviour concerning most key domestic problems ... Every day, there is a fierce struggle for space in the highly limited universe of newsprint ... As soon as the media realize that their emphasis on a problem is threatening many people and boring even more, they will shift their attention to some "new" problem. (pp. 38-42)

In other words, public attention around problems will fade after a relatively short period of time regardless of their significance or seriousness: "Each of these problems suddenly leaps into prominence, remains there for a short time, and then – still largely unresolved – gradually fades from the center of public attention" (Downs, 1972, p. 38). This sounds familiar in terms of how HIV/AIDS suddenly and spectacularly came to the media's attention in Australia and then slowly disappeared from the news, as examined in the previous section.

Downs argues that a problem seems to pass through a five-stage cycle. In the pre-problem stage, some groups, usually experts are alarmed by a problem. In the second stage, often with the help of the media, there is an alarmed discovery as the public realises what the problem is. In the third stage, the public realises the cost of significant progress often comes in the form of a personal sacrifice. In the fourth stage, there is a gradual decline of public interest, often coupled with a decline in media coverage. In the final stage, or the post-problem stage, the problem disappears from the public radar and long-term solutions are created (Downs, 1972, pp. 39-41). In summary, problems that have passed through the cycle will no longer remain interesting or important to the public. However, Downs (1972) points out that problems will remain important to the public if they are reported on extensively by the media and vice versa (pp. 42-43).

Henry and Gordon (2001) tested the actual dynamics of the 'issue-attention cycle' over a five-month period and found that the public reacted less to media messages about the dangers of smog in Atlanta during the overall decline of interest in this topic compared with when the problem started to receive media coverage (p. 175). A larger-scale study found similar findings. On the issue of drink driving in the US between 1978 and 1995, Yanovitzky (2002) found that when the topic received extensive media coverage, policy makers responded rapidly to generate short-term solutions to the problem. Towards the end of the cycle, when the topic started to 'wear out', policy makers created long-term solutions without any sense of urgency (Yanovitzky, 2002, pp. 444-445). If one applies the 'issue-attention cycle' to the press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia, one can see similar tendencies and dynamics as in the two mentioned studies, something Cullen (2003) supports:

Downs 'issue-attention cycle' theory evidently corresponds closely to what happened with press coverage of HIV/AIDS in many western countries ... Since the HIV/AIDS reporting cycle has come full circle (and is unlikely to be repeated) only sensational stories such as new vaccine trials or wonder drugs hit the headlines. (p. 66)

Cullen (2003) further states that this means HIV/AIDS has not been represented accurately in the press:

It is evident that this pattern of reporting, the rise-peak-and-decline approach – although not a deliberately conscious decision on the part of newspaper editors and a pattern that is common with coverage of other long-term illnesses – has proved inadequate in reflecting the real situation in terms of infection rates and actual risk. (p. 67)

Another reason for why the topic seems to have passed through the cycle might be the discrimination and stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS. Some researchers (Malcolm et al., 1998; Parker, Aggleton, Attawell, Pulerwitz & Brown, 2002; Watney, 1997) argue that newsrooms participate in stigmatisation by refraining to report on HIV/AIDS. However, just reporting on it might not be enough: "Trivialising or oversimplification of the issue may ultimately prove counterproductive – not all news *is* good news" (Chapman & Lupton, 1994, p. 94). In addition, the manner in which journalists depict HIV/AIDS is also important. Parker et. al (2002) point out that

HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination "...interact with pre-existing fears about contagion and disease. Early AIDS-metaphors – as death, as horror, as punishment, as guilt, as shame, as otherness – have exacerbated these fears, reinforcing and legitimizing stigmatization and discrimination" (Parker et al., 2002 p. 1). Developing this point, Malcolm et al. (1998) assert: "The negative depiction of people with HIV/AIDS, bolstered through metaphors and language used to describe people with the virus, has reinforced fear, avoidance and the isolation of people with HIV" (p. 355). Pittam and Gallois (2000), however, propose to re-introduce tactics used in previous health campaigns to prevent stigma:

In Australia, HIV prevention programs can make good use of the gothic imagery of earlier campaigns, which remains very potent in the community. Until such imagery can be used ... the fear and loathing of people associated with HIV and AIDS stand little chance of being overcome. (p. 42)

One simple way of countering negative depictions of people living with HIV/AIDS and lessening stigmatisation and discrimination, which is important for newsrooms to consider, is to use alternate language in their reporting and avoid using "...words such as 'victim', 'innocent' or 'guilty' which imply moral judgement" (Cullen, 2003, p. 72).

The responsibility of the press

With the arguments outlined so far, the question of whether the press has a *responsibility* to report on HIV/AIDS is a reasonable question. Lupton and Chapman (1994) state that not only are newspapers a constant source of health information to the public (p. 28), they are also important in the following context:

Very few lay people read medical or public health journals, or policy statements, or attend scientific conferences. The news media are therefore vital in mediating between specialised forums for dissemination of medical and public health research, and policy to the wider public. (p. 25)

Influential media critic Henry Mayer (1964) argues that newspapers have six basic responsibilities:

1. to report current events and interpret them to its readers;
2. to comment on matters of public interest for the guidance of the public;
3. to inform, educate, entertain, and enlighten its readers;
4. to provide a forum for the expression and exchange of opinion;
5. to express its own opinion;
6. to publish news (serious or otherwise) of interest to its readers. (p. 49)

If the press does not report on HIV/AIDS, it can be argued that it fails to adhere to the first three points mentioned above, based on the arguments outlined in Chapter 1.4. This might lead to negative consequences, according to Valdiserri (2004): "...minimizing or discounting the threat of HIV/AIDS, for whatever reason, may be harmful to the health of individuals and communities and, as such, should be confronted in a proactive manner" (p. 437). Bardhan (2001) proposes that the following proactive approaches be used in this context: "The AIDS-HIV transnational-news narrative needs to be revised in all its complexity so that knowledge production is revitalized and the pandemic does not fade into an inert space of journalistic fatigue" (p. 305), and that the issue of prevention "...may be harder to cover than the more tangible stories about biomedical advances; however, it needs to be done in the spirit of public service" (p. 305).

In summary, the points outlined in this literature review show that the Australian press *can* report on HIV/AIDS. However, this research project aims to put the spotlight on whether a section of the Australian press *is doing it*, and if not, *why*.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Social constructionism and agenda setting

In their discussion of social constructionism, Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) state: “For social constructionism, reality – or at least selected parts thereof – is not something naturally given” (p. 23). Gergen (2003) makes a similar point: “From the constructionist position the process of understanding is not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in a relationship” (p. 15). As an example, the social constructionist understanding of gender roles would be that such roles have not been created by nature over time, but rather by the active, cooperative effort of humans. Similarly, although there can be little doubt that HIV is a virus created by nature, knowledge about it has been and still is created and shared amongst humans, often very differently across national and cultural borders. However, the news media, more specifically newspapers in this study’s context, are in a unique position to contribute to this knowledge construction because they interact with humans on a larger scale compared with the fragmented interactions between smaller groups of people. Therefore, this study is conducted from the viewpoint that newspapers, because of their unique position, can contribute to public construction of knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

The process of how this construction occurs in the news media is outlined by Gamson and Modigliani (cited in Stallings, 1990, p. 80), who argue that “by selecting events to report, by interviewing and quoting experts who interpret those events, and by assembling and distributing news products, news organisations create an important component of public discourse referred to as media discourse”. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) state that this “... media discourse can be conceived of as a set of interpretive packages that give meaning to an issue” (p. 3). In other words, media discourse is a part of knowledge construction. To highlight the importance of media discourse, one may examine how new knowledge is constructed. One of the central roles of the news media is to constantly provide new information for public consumption. In doing so, the news media is involved in the continuous construction of knowledge, as underlined by Schwandt’s (2003) point that “...we continually test and modify ... constructions in the light of new experience” (p. 305). In the context of this study, the Australian press can thus be actively involved in creating and potentially changing public constructions about HIV/AIDS.

As noted above, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argue that “media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning...” (p. 2). This means that if the press does not report on a given topic it is not a part of knowledge construction, meaning that other factors will be involved in the creation of knowledge. However, the press *can have* an active role in the construction of knowledge of HIV/AIDS through its agenda-setting capability, as explained in Chapter 2. If HIV/AIDS has disappeared from the agenda – and accordingly from the Australian public’s awareness, the agenda-setting theory suggests that the Australian press has the ability to put HIV/AIDS *back* on the agenda. As McCombs, Danielian and Wanta (1995) argue: “over time, many of the issues receiving major emphasis in the news become the major issues on the public agenda” (p. 282). However, it is important to consider both social constructionism and agenda-setting in the context of this study, as these two theoretical traditions influence each other. The reason is that if the press can influence the public’s construction of knowledge and place issues on the agenda, it means the Australian press can contribute to the public understanding of HIV/AIDS (social constructionism) and influence the importance the public places on it (agenda-setting).

4.0 Methodology

This study employs both a quantitative (content analysis) and qualitative (interviews) research methods. Content analysis is useful to examine how many articles were published on HIV/AIDS, and the format and context of these articles. However, this analysis does not reveal what considerations are involved when publishing stories on HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the editors of two major publications in this study, *The Australian* and *The West Australian*, were interviewed. These two methods are employed to give a detailed picture of how a section of the Australian press reported HIV/AIDS in 2010. Both methods are discussed in the following chapters.

4.1 Content analysis

Between January 1st and March 31st, 2010, four Australian publications were manually analysed to find all articles that mentioned the words 'HIV' or 'AIDS'. These were *The Australian*, *The West Australian*, *The Guardian Express* and *Australian Women's Weekly*. These four were selected because they have different editorial policies and provide a rich mix of articles (local, foreign, features), and because they were readily available to the author. The following is a brief analysis of each publication: *The Australian* does not have the largest readership in Australia. According to Roy Morgan Research (2010), it has a weekly readership of 483 000 and 861 000 on Saturdays, whereas tabloid newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* has a weekly readership of 992 000 and 860 000 on Saturdays. However, *The Australian* is the only national broadsheet; it has broad foreign coverage (News Limited, n.d.); and is favoured by opinion leaders (The Australian Press Council, 2006).

As this study was conducted in Western Australia, the author wanted to include a newspaper from the State. *The West Australian* is the only state newspaper in Western Australia and has a readership of 553 000 on weekdays and 826 000 on Saturdays (Roy Morgan Research, 2010). It also has a strong local focus and provides a different set of data than *The Australian*. *The Guardian Express* is a part of the Community Newspaper Group and is a weekly publication that targets the inner city area of Perth. It is available to a population of 67 000 people (Community Newspaper Group, n.d) and was selected to see if HIV/AIDS is being reported locally. *Australian Women's Weekly* is the biggest selling magazine in Australia, with a readership of 2.185 million (Roy Morgan Research, 2010), 78.6 per cent of whom are women (ACP Magazines, n.d.). It is the

only magazine included in this study and was selected mainly to see if HIV/AIDS was written about in a popular, mainstream publication.

In describing the importance of content analysis in media research, Kolmer (2008) argues that it "... has become an important method of journalism research as a principal tool for analysing the products of journalistic activity ..." (p. 117). Sarantakos (2005) explains content analysis as "... a documentary method that aims at a quantitative and/or qualitative analysis of the content of texts, pictures, films and other forms of verbal, visual or written communication" (p. 299). As this study records the frequency of articles that deal with or mention HIV/AIDS, it fits in with the category of quantitative content analysis. According to Berger (1998), one of the advantages of this method is that it is unobtrusive, meaning it is "...a way of avoiding the problem of researcher influence of individuals" (p. 26). In this respect, Weber (1990) adds:

... content analysis usually yields unobtrusive measures in which neither the sender nor the receiver of the message is aware that it is being analysed. Hence, there is little danger that the act of measurement itself will act as a force for change that confounds the data. (p. 10)

In addition, Berger (1998) states that content analysis provides clear cut numbers (p. 27), which is one of the most important aspects of this study in relation to the counting and collection of printed material.

Content analysis has been used in earlier studies on the press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia (Lupton, 1992, 1998, 1999; Lupton, Chapman & Wong, 1993), and is therefore regarded as useful for this study. This decision is based on Lupton's (1992) argument that:

... documenting which issues have been singled out for attention ... can be a useful way of examining whether the interest of media in certain social issues changes over time, or in other words, what issues the media consider are 'newsworthy' or important for public discussion... (p. 11)

Subsequently, using content analysis in this study gives an indication of how frequently and widely HIV/AIDS is covered in a section of the Australian press. As noted above, the four publications were analysed manually. Although this was highly time-consuming, there are clear benefits with this approach according to Kolmer (2008):

In many cases, content studies rely on media databases, such as Lexis-Nexis or Factiva, for their material. This is evidently not practical for continuous media monitoring, because these sources are not reproducing the media content in its entirety and structure, but even for a special topic analysis the use of databases is rather dangerous. Data retrieval and thus the quality of the material depend on the quality of the search string, the composition of which can suffer from gaps due to imperfect knowledge of the media content ... Furthermore, database content can be proven to be incomplete and incongruent to the content published. (p. 123)

Lastly, as the press tends to report more on an issue when there are events related to that issue (Traquina, 2004), the collection of printed material started approximately one month after the World AIDS Day on December 1, 2009. This ensured that the three month period served as a representative sample period in which the press reported on HIV/AIDS without an 'artificial' spike in the amount of reporting after the World AIDS Day on December 1.

4.2 Interviews

The quantitative content analysis gives an indication of how widely HIV/AIDS is covered in a section of the Australian press, but it does not suggest anything about the *reasoning* behind publishing stories on HIV/AIDS or not. Doing so requires a different approach. In this case, that approach is qualitative interviews. “The term ‘qualitative interviewing’ is usually intended to refer to in-depth, semi-structured forms of interviewing” (Mason, 1996, p. 38). This method “... is useful when the researcher has a particular topic he or she wants to focus on and gain information about from individuals” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 121). For this study, I identified the two health editors at *The Australian* (Adam Cresswell) and *The West Australian* (Cathy O’Leary) as the most suitable individuals. There are two reasons for this. First, the editors work in publications that publish health stories on a higher frequency than the other publications in this study. Second, as editors, they can strongly influence the selection of news stories (Conley, 1997) and it was better to interview them rather than a larger group of journalists. In addition, having a sample group of this size is sufficient according to Weiss (1994): “because each respondent is expected to provide a great deal of information, the qualitative interview study is likely to rely on a sample very much smaller than the samples interviewed by a reasonably ambitious survey study” (p. 3).

The author interviewed Adam Cresswell over telephone as he resides in another state. For a project of this size, it was too costly to travel across Australia to conduct the interview, so it had to be organised in this way. The interview with Cathy O’Leary was intended to be face-to-face, but because of her hectic schedule this could not be arranged. Compared to face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews are not ideal for the collection of material, but as Weiss (1994) states: “...telephone interviews are the next best thing” (p. 59).

Both editors were asked the same set of questions in semi-structured interviews that lasted for approximately 45 minutes. These types of interviews are characterised by:

A relatively informal style, for example with the appearance of a conversation or discussion rather than a formal question and answer format ... [and] the assumption that data are generated via the interaction, because either the interviewee(s), or the interaction itself, are the data sources. (Mason, 1996, p. 38)

Because both were semi-structured interviews, the course of the conversations meant that other questions were asked in some instances (see Appendix 8.1). The majority of questions were open-ended, which enabled the interviewees to respond in their own words and "...express their attitudes and feelings" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 135). In addition, "the hope of those who elect the fixed-question-open-response approach is that it will systematize the collection of qualitative material and facilitate the quantitative treatment of the material" (Weiss, 1994, p. 12). In this respect, the interviews did provide the author with an explanation for the amount of articles published in the study period (see Chapter 5.3).

The author implemented Kvale's (1996) suggestion to use a mix of follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct and indirect questions and structuring questions (pp. 133-134) to get as detailed and diverse answers as possible. Silence was also maintained on several occasions during the interviews, for this reason: "By allowing pauses in the conversation the subjects have ample time to associate and reflect and then break the silence themselves with significant information" (Kvale, 1996, pp. 134-135). The author was also aware of deMarrais' (2004) warning to not ask long and complicated questions, vague questions, leading questions or failing to recognise verbal cues and markers from the interviewees, as doing so, could create barriers to achieving a successful interview (p. 67). Finally, one of the main reasons to conduct interviews was that "qualitative studies have provided descriptions of phenomena that could have been learned about in no other way..." (Weiss, 1994, p. 12).

4.3 Limitations of this study

One question that is appropriate to ask about this study is this: "How representative is the material one studies relative to all the material that could be studied?" (Berger, 1998, p. 27). The size of this study prevents analysis of more newspapers. In addition, analysing four publications does not show how the Australian press in general reports on HIV/AIDS; it rather provides a snapshot of how *a part* of the press reports on the topic. Ideally, all the metropolitan newspapers and news magazines in Australia would have been included in this project, but such an extensive analysis is more appropriate for a PhD thesis.

Further, the time scale of this research project hindered a longer study-period of the four publications. Three months is not a long time and might not give an accurate picture of how extensively HIV/AIDS is reported on in the Australian press. However, to make the most of these three months, a content analysis was undertaken to give some indication of how HIV/AIDS was covered. This not only revealed how frequently articles appeared, but also the context of the articles, and in which format they appeared in. The analysis also allowed me to differentiate between articles that incidentally and partly incidentally mentioned HIV/AIDS, and articles that were about HIV/AIDS. This had not been done in previous studies of press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia.

Hard copies of the articles were analysed, but I also tried to analyse the publications' online editions in the same period to see whether there were any differences between the articles published in hardcopy and the electronic editions. However, over half of the articles located in the database Factiva were taken off the respective websites during my analysis. I used other databases and did several manual searches on the actual websites of the publications without retrieving the previously located articles. Therefore, I abandoned this part of the analysis.

Finally, the interviews only provided the thoughts and opinions of two Australian health editors. These two interviews cannot provide a guide to an editorial policy of HIV/AIDS-reporting in Australia.

Table 4 Total analysis				
Categorisation of articles mentioning ‘HIV’ or ‘AIDS’ recorded between 01.01.2010 – 31.03.2010				
Publication	Incidental mentions	Partly incidental mentions	About HIV/AIDS	Total
<i>The West Australian</i>	8	2		10
<i>The Australian</i>	26	4	6	36
<i>The Guardian Express</i>				
<i>Women’s Weekly</i>	2			2
TOTAL	36	6	6	48

Table 5 Monthly summary of article hits		
January	February	March
16	17	15

The majority of the articles were published in *The West Australian* and *The Australian* (see Table 3). In total, 36 articles were published in *The Australian*, 10 in *The West Australian*, two in *Women’s Weekly* and none in *The Guardian Express*. The reason for the latter result could be that this newspaper is a weekly publication with an area-specific local focus. February was the month with the highest recorded number of articles, with a total of 17 (see Table 5). The six articles that were about HIV/AIDS were all published in *The Australian*. Five of these were regular news stories found in the main pages of the newspaper, whereas one was a feature article in *The Weekend Australian Magazine*. Three of these articles were published in February, two in January and one in March. The content of these articles suggests that *The Australian* reported on events related to HIV/AIDS rather than on the issue itself. Of all the articles that were about HIV/AIDS, three had a local focus and three a foreign focus. In general, however, more articles had a foreign focus rather than a local one (see Table 3). This might be because more people are affected by HIV/AIDS overseas compared to Australia. Not one of the 48 articles mentioned rising HIV-infection rates in Australia.

Rather than look at specific paragraphs from articles in this chapter of the thesis, headlines will be used as examples in the following section to illustrate the findings described in Table 4. As mentioned briefly above, the term ‘incidental mentions’ refers

to articles that have no relevance in terms of dealing with HIV or AIDS. The words are typically mentioned in articles that deal with quite different situations or issues. (See detailed overview of articles in Appendix 8.2). ‘Track down this detective drama for a summer treat’ (*The West Australian*, January 11, 2010); ‘Climate chief’s book is hot topic’ (*The Australian*, February 9, 2010), and ‘Criminal escaped rebate radar’ (*The Australian*, February 18, 2010), are not headlines that tell the reader that the articles will cover HIV/AIDS. ‘Partly incidental mentions’ refer to articles that typically deal with sexual health, which means they are in the same subject area that one would normally find stories on HIV/AIDS. Headlines such as ‘Alarm at soaring sex disease figures’ (*The West Australian*, January 13, 2010), and ‘Migrants with HIV, cancer allowed to settle’ (*The Australian*, January 18, 2010), illustrate this point. HIV/AIDS is not the main component in any of these stories but a *part* of them. The articles that have been labelled ‘about HIV/AIDS’ deal almost exclusively with this topic and carry headlines such as ‘UN blasts HIV tests on asylum seekers’ (*The Australian*, January 29, 2010), ‘Total testing could beat AIDS’ (*The Australian*, February 23, 2010) and ‘PNG refused further AIDS drugs’ (*The Australian*, February 24, 2010). Most likely, a reader could look at any of these headlines and know the articles would deal specifically with this topic.

5.2 Discussion of content analysis

Because this study did not analyse all newspapers and magazines in Australia, it is difficult to compare the number of articles with that of previous studies to establish whether there has been an upward or downward trend in the amount of reporting. However, the findings of this study suggest that it has decreased (see Table 6).

Table 6		
Analysis of press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia		
Time period	Trends in the Australian press	Number of articles
<i>December 1981 – December 1985</i>	December 1981 – October 1984: ‘The Gay Plague period’. November 1984 – June 1985: ‘The Queensland Babies’ period. July 1985 – December 1985: ‘This Wretched Disease’ period.	4888
<i>July 1986 – June 1988</i>	The 1987 Grim Reaper campaign accounted for 5660 articles. After 1987, focus on bizarre cases.	8976
<i>March 1990 – September 1990</i>	AIDS was no longer seen as just affecting gay men. Focus on children with HIV and division between ‘innocent’ and ‘guilty’ victims of HIV infection.	2795
<i>January 1994 – December 1996</i>	Three archetypes: The ‘AIDS victim’: The ‘AIDS survivor’. The ‘AIDS carrier’.	5798
<i>January 2010 – March 2010 (present study)</i>	No common themes in the analysed articles. Articles on HIV/AIDS are event-driven, there is no reporting on the issue of HIV/AIDS itself (<i>However, only four publications were analysed</i>)	48

Due to the lack of recent studies on press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia, Lupton’s study from 1999 is the latest comparable study. In the period between January 1994 and December 1996, she found 5798 articles that mentioned the words ‘HIV’ or AIDS’ in all metropolitan newspapers (Lupton, 1999, p. 40), which meant a monthly average of

161 articles were published. Timed by three and on average, 483 articles appeared in every three-month period from 1994–1996, whereas this study found a total of 48 articles in one three-month period in 2010. Out of these 48 articles, 36 had little or no connection with HIV/AIDS. This means that it would be more beneficial to compare this number with Lupton’s findings. However, because Lupton did not categorise the articles in terms of their relevance to HIV/AIDS, 48 is the closest comparable number. Therefore, although this study only examines four publications, this comparison suggests that the amount of reporting on HIV/AIDS in Australia has decreased considerably, and that the topic might have lost its newsworthiness. This is supported by the two interviewed health editors (A. Cresswell, personal communication, March 26, 2010 & C. O’Leary, personal communication, March 30, 2010), who said that HIV/AIDS is an old story that has been covered sufficiently in the past; that it is difficult to keep current; that it only affects a small amount of people and that the people who are not affected by it would not be interested in reading about it. These findings will be discussed in Chapter 5.3.

A possible explanation for the decline in reporting can be found in Downs’ theory of the ‘issue-attention cycle’, which was explained in Chapter 2. The five stages in this theory match with the trends in the historic reporting on HIV/AIDS in Australia. As discussed earlier, the amount of articles published on HIV/AIDS peaked in 1987, or in the second stage of the ‘issue-attention cycle’, which is when the “...public suddenly becomes both aware of and alarmed about the evils of a particular problem” (Downs, 1972, p. 39). As the amount of reporting on HIV/AIDS decreased considerably in the years that followed, it continued to pass through the next stage of the cycle. The findings in this study suggest that HIV/AIDS is now in the final stage, having “...moved into a prolonged limbo – a twilight realm of lesser attention or spasmodic recurrences of interest” (Downs, 1972, p. 40). It might have been in this stage for a number of years, but due to the lack of research on Australian press coverage of HIV/AIDS in the last decade, it is difficult to be definite.

5.3 Journalistic views on HIV/AIDS as a story

As seen in the previous chapter, a total of 48 articles mentioning ‘HIV’ or ‘AIDS’ appeared in the four publications during the study period. Six of these were about HIV/AIDS. However, this number does not indicate what considerations are made when deciding to publish a story on HIV/AIDS – or in fact, if any considerations are made at all. To shed light on this, health editor Adam Cresswell at the *The Australian* and Cathy O’Leary at *The West Australian* were interviewed. This section presents their key points and arguments.

The first point that both journalists agreed upon is that reporting on HIV/AIDS is a case of having ‘been there, done that’ and that is an ‘old story’. For instance, A. Cresswell (personal communication, March 26, 2010), notes that:

I think you’ve got to bear in mind that in all the time that I’ve been here and some considerable time before I got here, HIV was for the general public – although I’m not trying to belittle it as a health problem by any means, it’s one of the world’s most pressing health problems – but for the purposes of a general readership, HIV is a kind of ‘old story’ ... there is not often an awful lot of new to say that would warrant bringing it to the attention of a general readership.

C. O’Leary (personal communication, March 30, 2010), agrees: “...it is sometimes difficult to be reporting on something that’s seen to be the sort of ‘same old’ story...”. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, the press has several basic responsibilities. One of these is to entertain (Mayer, 1964), yet it is hard to entertain with HIV/AIDS if it is seen as an ‘old story’. This implies that the topic of HIV/AIDS might face an uncertain future in the Australian press. As it no longer has any real entertainment value, a potential implication is that HIV/AIDS becomes an even more peripheral topic than this study has found it to be, which might lead it to disappear from the agenda and lose its importance over time.

The second argument made by both journalists is that stories on HIV/AIDS need new and fresh angles for the disease to be more newsworthy. O’Leary (2010) argues that:

...the number one issue for a story appearing in a publication like *The West* or any other publication is purely based on what would be seen as the news value and the news content of that story compared to other stories around on that same day. It’s

done in a fairly black and white manner. There has to be something new in terms of treatment, diagnosis or prevention ... We can do a story on [HIV/AIDS] if there is something that gives us an angle for the story ... I think something like a vaccine would be of interest.

In a similar vein, Cresswell (2010) points out that:

A news story by definition has to offer something new ... so far it [HIV/AIDS] has not returned to the newsworthiness of the eighties when it was a frightening and incurable new disease that seemed to be spreading like wild fire... At the moment, there is little prospect of it returning to front pages.

The latter statement focuses on newsworthiness and Cresswell (2010) argues that a topic is newsworthy if it affects a significant part of a readership, and if it is new and relevant. Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) expand on this point:

...the more intense the deviance and social significance of events, individuals, or ideas – each of the two dimensions alone and in combination – the greater the prominence. That is, stories concerning these phenomena are more likely to be given more and better placement in the newspapers...”. (p. 83)

Subsequently, one could perhaps expect that a HIV-vaccine (as O’Leary suggests) would be newsworthy enough to appear on the front page because of the significance of such an event. However, the main point raised by the editors is that HIV/AIDS needs to offer something out of the ordinary for them to write a story about it. This could mean that a new discovery in medical research on HIV/AIDS would risk not getting a mention in the news, a point Cresswell (2010) supports: “Something like that [small step in research] is so far away from being relevant [for our readership] that it would struggle to get into the paper”. In addition, O’Leary (2010) adds that stories on HIV/AIDS also should have a local focus: “Sometimes the *Lancet* or something will publish data on HIV and unless there is some sort of Australasian connection, that sort of story might not necessarily get a huge run in the main news pages.” Both editors could take note of Mayer’s (1964) argument about the quantification of importance. He states that some events, “...such as the threat of an atomic war, or the claim about a connection between smoking and lung-cancer to some extent selects itself as news...” (Mayer, 1964, p. 89), on the basis that such events affect a large amount of people. In

summary, the editors do not consider HIV/AIDS newsworthy because it affects an insignificant number of readers.

The third point was that because their readers were not affected by HIV/AIDS, other and more prevalent health issues should be covered instead. Cresswell (2010) explains:

Most of our readers, very few of them would have would have HIV and very few of them would be at risk of getting HIV ... I would think that a new treatment for high cholesterol, which for the sake of the argument halved death rates from high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart attacks, would stand a good chance of a run in our paper because our readership is heavy on middle-aged or late middle-aged men.

O'Leary (2010) makes a similar point:

It's easier for me to get a story on cancer, something like breast cancer or prostate cancer in the paper than it is to get a story in on HIV or AIDS. That's almost like a given. And sometimes the rule of thumb is, and this might seem a bit unfair, but sometimes it is case of 'what are the issues that affect most people'... it is the bigger health issues like cancer, heart disease or diabetes are the ones that are the most common in media reporting.

Finally, Cresswell (2010) states: "You're dealing with a topic that's intensely interesting for quite a small minority of people, and is of much less and more negligible interest to almost everybody else." O'Leary (2010) notes that: "The wider community, the heterosexual and the non needle-sharing community, it [HIV/AIDS] is not really an issue for them." It could be argued that both editors make assumptions about readers and what the audience wants, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.2.

6.0 Conclusion and discussion

6.1 Conclusion

First, a brief summary of answers to the four research questions posed in Chapter 1.3 is outlined below.

How did The Australian, The West Australian, The Guardian Express and Australian Women's Weekly report on HIV/AIDS in light of a rise in infection rates?

The content analysis revealed that all the articles revolved mostly around bizarre and surprising events, but no stories were written about the rising HIV infection rates which have been recorded in the last few years.

How many articles mentioning HIV/AIDS were published in these four publications between January 1st and March 31st, 2010? A total of 48 articles were published, of which 36 mentioned it incidentally, six partly incidentally and six were about HIV/AIDS specifically.

If the number is low, then what are the possible reasons for this? Both health editors argue that something out of the ordinary has to happen for them to write a story about it. They base this on the arguments that it is an 'old' story that has lost its newsworthiness and that only a small, specific group of people are affected by it.

Does the press have the ability to put the topic of HIV/AIDS back on the agenda? As argued in the literature review, the press has the ability to put it back on the agenda, but the interviews reveal that at least a section of the press are not convinced of HIV/AIDS' importance to their readers.

This study not only fills an 11-year gap in research on the press coverage of HIV/AIDS in Australia, it could also provide a benchmark for future studies in the field. A suggestion for later studies is to compare the coverage of HIV/AIDS with that of other health issues to establish which health issues receive more coverage in the Australian press. As the health editors in this study argued, HIV/AIDS is not covered broadly because only a small group of people are affected by it. Does this mean that a problem such as diabetes or heart disease receives broader coverage? In other words, is there a correlation between the amount of people suffering from a specific disease and the amount of articles written about it?

In summary, this study argues that the topic of HIV/AIDS has passed through Downs' 'issue-attention cycle' and currently is in the last stage where it does not attract

much interest from newsmakers. HIV/AIDS is not really reported, it is rather covered when specific events occur. This is consistent with Traquina's (2004) finding in his study on the press coverage of HIV/AIDS in the United States, Portugal, Spain and Brazil: "The comparative analysis of the news coverage of AIDS by five newspapers ... has confirmed what have been identified as three points of consensus in the study of news, namely that news is 'event-oriented' and not 'issue-oriented' ... (p. 112). I have pointed out that stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS might influence reporting. Although it is difficult to establish this from the findings of this study, the interviews with the two health journalists provides some support for this.

6.2 Discussion

It is important that the Australian press considers keeping HIV/AIDS on the agenda, despite the small number of Australians affected by it. First, travelling Australians and Australians working overseas in nearby countries such as PNG are still at a high risk of contracting HIV (Herring et al., 2003, p. 4600). Second, there has been a steady rise of HIV infection rates in this country in the last ten years (NCHECR, 2009, p. 9). With these developments, Mayer (1964) points out that the press should inform and educate its readers as well as report current events (p. 49). In addition, the press – because of its reach – can have a significant role in keeping HIV/AIDS on the agenda by continuing to report on it, which in turn influences the public construction of knowledge about HIV/AIDS. However, it appears that the disease is unlikely to be covered. First, the two health editors (Cresswell and O’Leary) do not believe HIV/AIDS has any real entertainment value. Lawe-Davies and Le Brocque (2006), in their discussion of the Australian press, argue that such assumptions reflect that newsmakers might be out of touch with their readers:

Overall, it is somewhat puzzling that no correlation exists between people’s assessments of newsworthiness (journalists, public relations practitioners, and audience groups) and newspaper prominence ... Thus, newspapers seem to be out of step not only with their readers, but with their constituent workers – public relations professionals and journalists ... (p. 117)

Mayer (1964), on the other hand, makes the point that health editors may be right to make assumptions about their readership’s interests as one of the responsibilities of the press is “to publish news that is of interest to its readers” (p. 49).

Second, the health editors argue that HIV/AIDS does not affect enough people in Australia for it to be covered. However, using the quantification of importance-principle and claiming that the sheer number of people affected by a disease dictates interest creates a potential problem. Hypothetically, if research comes out about new medication that can reduce the side-effects of current HIV-medication, this might be seen as unimportant for editors because they assume their readers are not affected by it and will therefore not be interested in knowing about it. If this means that a news story about this is not published, the editors might be breaching a responsibility which is to “report current events and interpret them to its readers ...” (Mayer, 1964, p. 49).

Third, both health editors think HIV/AIDS only affects a minority group, such as gay men and intravenous drug users. A possible problem with making such an assumption is that it might impact on an editor's ability to objectively decide between a story on HIV/AIDS and another health issue. New HIV infections between 2004 – 2008 reveal that a total of 64 per cent were recorded amongst men who have sex with men, whereas only three per cent were due to injecting drug use (NCHECR, 2009, p. 11). In fact, 21 per cent of new infections were caused by heterosexual intercourse NCHECR, 2009, p. 11).

One could argue that it is fair to consider HIV/AIDS an old story that needs new angles and a local focus for it to be reported. By contrasting this treatment to another health issue such as the H1N1 influenza virus (swine influenza), it can be argued it is being treated unfairly. When swine influenza was new and fresh, most newspapers around the world cleared their front pages to respond to it. In retrospect, several newspapers sensationalised the issue and created fear about the disease. While journalists should be critical of new findings or discoveries, all health issues should ideally be scrutinised equally, and not have prerequisites such as 'new angles' or 'local focus' attached that make it harder for them to appear in the news. Such prerequisites might minimise or discount the threat of HIV/AIDS, which "...may be harmful to the health of individuals and communities" (Valdiserri, 2004, p. 437). Mayer's (1964) list of newspaper responsibilities require journalists to inform, educate and enlighten readers – not just to entertain them.

Finally, "although AIDS is no longer a new syndrome, global solidarity in the AIDS response will remain a necessity" (UNAIDS, 2009, p. 8). I think the press can show *its* solidarity by publishing stories more frequently, which in turn can further Australians' knowledge of HIV/AIDS, and help the topic stay on the agenda, thereby retaining its importance for the Australian public.

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Appendix 8.1

Transcription of interview with health editor at *The Australian*, Adam Cresswell, March 26, 2010:

Have you personally come across anyone living with HIV/AIDS?

Yes.

Any specific experience?

Well, professional experience. I'm a health writer, so...

What is your understanding of HIV/AIDS?

Well, that's a large question. Where do you want me to start? HIV is a virus that came out of Africa in the 40s or 50s or maybe even earlier in the century. It causes progressive destruction of the immune system's capabilities. Untreated for an average of about ten years causes collapse of the body's ability to fight off infection. But that can be more or less postponed ... for decades with access to anti retroviral drugs.

Is there any specific editorial policy [in *The Australian*] in regards to reporting on HIV/AIDS?

No, certainly not that I'm aware of. I don't think would be. I think different journalists and different editors would have different ideas about what constitutes a story, and that would happen in any newsroom. One journalist would think "hey, that's a great story" whereas someone else might just think it's not so good either because it's not so exciting or because they might have some specific information that the other person doesn't know which reduces the newsworthiness of the story. And that happens across any subject, any topic in every newsroom.

So, if you knew nothing about HIV, then a story that might surface through the court system where someone was entering as their defence that "no, my client should not be found guilty of infecting someone else with HIV because we're going to turn to the court evidence that HIV doesn't cause AIDS and doesn't exist." I mean, if you know absolutely nothing about HIV, you might think that's a great story. But I think anyone who does know much about it knows that while those theories are out there, they regard it as loony fringe.

Do you think *The Australian* has covered the topic adequately in terms of how prevalent it is and how prevalent it has been?

Well, I've been here for just over five years. I can't speak, really, for before that time. I think you've got to bear in mind that in all the time that I've been here and some considerable time before I got here, HIV was for the general public – although I'm not trying to belittle it as a health problem by any means, it's one of the world's most pressing health problems – but for the purposes of a general readership, HIV is a kind of 'old story'. It exploded in the late eighties and early nineties before the infection rates came down from the peak ... there's been a little bit of an upswing since, which we have been covering. It hasn't gotten (*indistinct word*) coverage and that's because there's not often an awful lot of new to say that would warrant bringing it to the attention of a general readership. Clearly, it's a pressing concern to the specific communities most affected by this infection and disease. HIV is not like measles or whooping cough which is not pinned down to specific areas of the population... There's the gay press in Sydney and Melbourne which occasionally run, sort of supplements about HIV and I think there's an HIV-specific publication and organisations which put out publications. But they have very targeted readerships, so what's relevant for them rarely has the same relevance for the general public.

That's a good point, because when you look at the numbers, Australia has one of the smallest HIV and AIDS infected populations in the world. So I guess it's hard to warrant a story on the domestic situation these days apart from the foreign situation. But coming back to something you mentioned earlier about how it might be seen as an 'old' story, is the problem that it's hard to find new angles on it?

Yes. I think a news story by definition has to offer something new. In the time that I've been here we have done news stories [about HIV] ... I think about three or four years the thrust of a story was that HIV infection rates were climbing again and that this was of concern. It had to do with gay men being thought to become complacent in the era of more effective medications. So, it can be a story, but so far it has not returned to the newsworthiness of the eighties when it was a frightening and incurable new disease that seemed to be spreading like wild fire.

I was not in Australia, but my memory of the coverage in Britain at that time was that much of it was rather sensational and inappropriate. In hindsight that's become clearer in time because we know so much more about the disease now. At the moment, there is little prospect of it returning to front pages. In many ways, you wouldn't want it to because what happened back then in terms of reporting was not helpful, certainly not helpful for the unfortunate who had the illness.

Following on from that, is there perhaps a bit of stigma in the readership? Maybe people don't want to read about HIV or AIDS because it has this veil of the past attached to it.

Well, I've got no evidence of giving an opinion either way on it. My gut feeling would be ... I'm sure there are sections of the population that have all sorts of nutty views, as

there always are, but my feeling is that there's much less stigma than it used to be. Maybe that's just reflecting what I think. I used to go to a lot of conferences and that sort of thing does not register with me. I don't think there's as much stigma as it used to be. When so little was known about HIV and how it was spread, people worried if they shook hands with someone with HIV they might get it ... I think a much better understanding of how it is spread has reduced most of those fears.

Going back to a bit to what we talked about earlier, I just want to ask you what you think is required for a story about HIV or AIDS to appear in the news. What makes you choose it over other health issues?

I think it's the same basic test of newsworthiness that would apply to any news story, which would be; is it relevant to a specific readership of that publication, which in our case is the general public, which would quite a different test for the readership of the *Sydney Star Observer* or an HIV-specific magazine put out by the AIDS Council of New South Wales. So, is it relevant to the readership, is it new or 'newish', that's not a test that would apply so much if you're thinking about doing a feature, but we're talking about news stories at the moment. Newsworthiness is a very subjective thing. It's not like a cookery book where you put the ingredients together, press start and out pops a news story. If it were like that, then you wouldn't get disagreements in newsrooms about whether something is a story or whether something is a good story. This happens every day and all day between journalists at every level. That's why we have news conferences with a dozen senior editors who spend the whole time chewing over the merits of every story and which should go on the front page. Different people have different views. I think, is it new, is it relevant, how many people in our readership are affected by this. People don't always need to be affected for it to be newsworthy; it can be of wider interest. How important it is can be another element of that test, I suppose.

So for example, I can't remember when but I think sometime last year we reported on what appeared to be at the time positive results for a vaccine trial in Thailand, the US Army was involved. It was actually a minimal protective effect, I can't remember the details off the top of my head. It was newsworthy and I think it was on page three or even page one, but it was because it was the first time any vaccine had been shown to have any protective effect against HIV. The fact of that raised the possibility that a vaccine that worked properly might be possible in the future. All the evidence to date had been that every single vaccine had fallen flat on its face and just not worked. However mild the results of that trial were, they did uncover this sound of hope in this area, which is what made it important. Most of our readers, very few of them would have would have HIV and very few of them would be at risk of getting HIV, but it's of wider importance. The same thing would happen if anyone announced today that they have proved a HIV vaccine to work, it would get front page in the paper because of its global importance.

Now, I don't have any comparative numbers in terms of looking at other diseases such as cancer, diabetes or anything to compare it with HIV/AIDS and how it's been covered. But part of this research is looking at a time period which is from January to the end of March and analysing how your newspaper, The Australian, the West Australian ... In that time I've found three articles which deal exclusively with HIV or AIDS. Is that representative of the rest of the year or how it's covered usually? So say once a month, you get an article popping up saying something about it?

I wouldn't be able to comment on that.

(Discussion of where articles appeared)

There certainly was a rush of court case type stories where men with HIV were on trial for allegedly infecting a number of other people, negligently or deliberately. That might have accounted for some in the past. I don't think it comes regularly, it's really driven by things turning up on the news agenda either because a court case surfaces or maybe a health authority or NCHEMR puts out new guidelines, or there's new research in Australia or overseas that's important enough to warrant reporting. It really can't be predicted. The other thing is that it might be an announcement of research, but if it's not immediately obvious that it deserves to go on page one or page three, if it's more about scientists who have discovered a new receptor on an immune cell that clarifies some previously unknown point about how the whole thing works and opens up possibilities of future drug development, something like that. There are an awful lot of incremental steps in research on all sorts of diseases that come through all the time. They've discovered something that basically is of little or no immediate benefit, but they give us a target that might in due course lead to a new drug or something. Something like that is so far away from being relevant that it would struggle to get into the paper. But if it was a bit stronger for any reason ... There's a whole sort of (*indistinct word*) of stories that might be worth covering on one day, but another day because there's so much else in the news that just has to be covered, it just gets squeezed out. So it's not always a reflection of the strength of the story. A lot of stories, not just on medicine or HIV but just in general, every day reporters write stories that the 5pm news desk say they want and 8pm don't get into the paper. It's because every news desk is trying to jam in more material than can actually be covered physically in the number of pages that they've got to play with. That's just the juggling acts that newspapers in any format, time limited or space limited go through every day.

Would you say that the topic has been covered enough?

I think possibly not, but we need to strike a balance between what people are prepared to read... Do I think there's a yawning gulf of ignorance about HIV? I don't think that there actually is. You could say that rising infection in risk groups indicate a need out there for information. Whether the people who are being affected are readers of *The*

Australian, I'm not sure. All comes into the daily (*indistinct word*) about what's relevant for your readership. For example, I would think that a new treatment for high cholesterol, which for the sake of the argument halved death rates from high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart attacks, would stand a good chance of a run in our paper because our readership is heavy on middle-aged or late middle-aged men. A story about the problems that affect middle-aged or late middle-aged men would be very relevant for our readership. A different newspaper with a young metropolitan male audience might take a different view.

Has the topic has been covered enough? I don't know if it's been under covered, certainly in our paper. I used to edit the weekly health section, which is a bit buried in the paper. I'm not really aware that in the days after I ran a feature about HIV or those sorts of issues, I'm not really aware of anyone either among the readership or the staff, editorially, rushing up to me and saying "wow, that's fantastic, can we have more like that?". If you get that sort of feedback, obviously you bear that in mind and try to respond to it. If it's not covered an awful lot in a paper such as ours it's probably due to a judgement. I don't think it's a wildly off-key judgement that HIV at this stage is not such a big deal for middle aged men and women in the general population.

Yes, it doesn't affect as many as high cholesterol or diabetes...

I think with infection rates going up there probably is a need for better information. But running a few stories in a daily newspaper is not going to communicate with the group we're talking about.

(Peder describes some of the articles he's found)

I think that's the problem that journalists and media organisations face, you're dealing with a topic that's intensely interesting for quite a small minority of people and is of much less and more negligible interest to almost everybody else. This sets up a dynamic where you've got a small number of people saying "you're ignoring us, cover us because it's really important", and whenever you write something about it, because of the number of people involved, most people just flip the page because they see, slightly wrongly, that it doesn't affect their lives at all. So, it is a problem.

Appendix 8.1 (continued)

Transcription of interview with health editor at *The West Australian*, Cathy O'Leary, March 30, 2010:

First of all, what is your understanding of HIV/AIDS?

It's clearly been an issue for many years now, and I suppose a lot of the reporting locally was probably at the height of concerns about HIV and AIDS in the Western countries. To some extent, the reporting has tended to now be concentrated on the developing countries and overseas, but periodically, we still do stories on it. Particularly sometimes when there has been issues raised about the increases in cases being notified here and occasionally we do see cases coming up.

The nature of HIV-transmission predominantly through shared needle use across both homosexual and the heterosexual community (indistinct) before it actually develops into AIDS.

Have you personally come across anyone living with HIV or AIDS?

Yeah, especially in the early days with the infection, probably not so much these days, but I used to deal with the WA AIDS Council and there's certainly one guy; Mark Reeves who I used to deal with. He made it fairly clear he was HIV positive and so I used to periodically deal with different people who had HIV and did stories on people who had as well. As I said, probably more, going back perhaps, ten years ago. At the height of the concern, we were running stories about people living with HIV, stories on treatment – whereas probably now we wouldn't necessarily run a story on someone with HIV per se. I think those sort of stories were done more a few years back. But it still comes up every now and again.

We've touched on it a little bit, but is there an editorial policy in regards to reporting on HIV and AIDS in *The West Australian*?

No, not really. I suppose the reality is so, but sometimes I will see stories to do with concerns about HIV rates in developing countries, some of the African countries. That sort of story is hard to write locally, it's the story that might run in our 'World' section, but in terms of the impact on local communities I think it's still that perception that it's not really a big problem here, that it's more of a problem for developing countries. It's always that fine line of trying to – this is not necessarily my position, I don't decide what goes in the paper, I write stories – but sometimes I think there's limited interest in aspects of HIV that do not directly affect Australia. Sometimes the *Lancet* or something will publish data on HIV and unless there is some sort of Australasian connection, that sort of story might not necessarily get a huge run in the main news pages.

So, say for example, if research came through in the Lancet saying that “we’ve found a vaccine for HIV”, a big story-like that would warrant a mention in the news pages?

I think something like a vaccine would be of interest. I think one issue, though, because there has been talk of say a vaccine, a treatment or a cure for so long, again it’s trying to tease out something that is really ‘here and now’ because people probably think they’ve heard stories about a possible vaccine or a possible cure over many years, so again it’s sometimes difficult to be reporting on something that’s seen to be the sort of ‘same old’ story. If there’s any involvement in local research, I know there’s a researcher at Murdoch University, Simon Mallau, who’s done a bit of work in HIV. That sort of story is good because it’s someone locally looking at it, so it gives a bit of a local angle to the story. This again makes it easier for me to try to sell that story to the chief of staff or the editor.

So the local aspect...

(interrupts) If there’s a local connection, yeah, and local application. I wouldn’t say it’s a case of ‘out of sight, out of mind’, but stories [on HIV] that might appear to only have real relevance for developing countries, it’s probably difficult for them to get some appeal here. But a vaccine is fairly universal, that’s probably one of those sorts of stories. If there was a story today saying “we have found a vaccine”, that obviously would be a big story.

Do you think *The West Australian* has covered the topic adequately?

There is a lot of tension in terms of competing interest to get stories in the paper and I think like lots of other things that just one area competes with everyone else (uncompleted sentence, difficult point to understand). I think because the issue has been around for many years it’s not a news story as such. It can be difficult to find something new to report on it, which is always something you’re trying to do. You’re always trying to find a new news angle, and if the news angle isn’t there it’s difficult. Unless it’s in the features section of the newspaper, I mean we sometimes would address issues like that almost like a ‘where are we now’ sort of piece, depicting the numbers. There’s still some room for more news-feature type stories. And as I said, those are done are from more of a historical point of view, you know it’s been 20 years since we’ve heard about it or ‘where are we now’ and in terms of numbers and things like that. But yeah, it is sometimes difficult to sell, if you like, the HIV story if there is nothing that jumps out as really new. And even in the research, people like to think that when you’re talking about a vaccine that it is really close, not “we hope to have a vaccine in five years time.”

If you have that sort of story and you have to decide between that one and cancer research for example, which is on the same stage, which story would get a run?

It's easier for me to get a story on cancer, something like breast cancer or prostate cancer in the paper than it is to get a story in on HIV or AIDS. That's almost like a given. And sometimes the rule of thumb is, and this might seem a bit unfair, but sometimes it is case of 'what are the issues that affect most people', so what are most people affected by. So, given that one in two men and one in three women will develop cancer in their lifetime, it's only natural that cancer reporting is considered a key part of the newspaper. It's a general rule that people tend to be a bit selfish in that they want to read stories about what is going to affect them and their families. Just because of sheer numbers, raw numbers on people with HIV or AIDS in WA, you're just talking about a small group of people. I would sort of say it is like talking about people with a rare syndrome, it might get a run in the newspaper but it's the bigger health issues like cancer, heart disease or diabetes are the ones that are the most common in media reporting.

Yes, you have to think about your readership...

(interrupts) As I said, that's just the reality of media. But for the people in the smaller groups, this might seem a bit harsh. But it's just the reality that I think most media organisations operate on.

If you have a story then about HIV or AIDS, do you think that there still is a bit of stigma attached to it among editors and journalists?

I think there still is, I don't know if it's a stigma, but I think that it's still a perception that it is an infection only amongst IV drug users and the homosexual community. I think that's still prevalent out there despite all the campaigns and all the education, I think people still try to box it away into "these are the groups that are affected", although occasionally a heterosexual person may develop it. But it really is those groups. And, I think a minority of people would therefore think, because it's only really those groups affected, this idea that "it's sort of their fault." You know, IV drug users they use and share needles, so... Unfortunately there probably is still that small minority of people who also have homophobic views, who would also say that "it's a lifestyle choice that those people have made and that's the risk that goes a long with it." I do think that is in a minority group, but I think there is a larger misconception that it only affects those groups, it's not an issue of blame or anything, it's just only affects those groups. The wider community, the heterosexual and the non needle-sharing community, it's not really an issue for them.

Do you think this goes for the people out there and the people in the newsroom?

I think so, in my newsroom we have a fairly large number of gay people working here. If you had an issue with that you wouldn't work in this organisation, so that in itself is not an issue. It's sort of a chicken and the egg, which comes first? Does the community

reflect the views put forward by the media or do the media reflect the views of the community? There are still some of those misconceptions in the community and in the media, and I suppose it's debatable which feeds off the other. Often the media like to think that they reflect the views of the community, they're responding to the views of the community. It's also a perception that the community's views are swayed by how the media portray issues. I think it's a bit of both.

There's long standing forms of discrimination across the board and I think it still impacts a little bit on HIV and AIDS. But I know in terms of my newsroom I don't think that's a big issue, and the coverage of stories just comes down to those things I've said; really from just a news point of view it's looked at fairly black and white in that respect. I think that people in the media that are sort of 'rednecks' and have an issue either way, I think they're a dying breed. I think they were around a lot more twenty years ago, I just don't think they'd last in the media now. Even if you have your own beliefs in one area you have to be reasonably fair-minded.

As you've said, it's a fairly black and white thing from the news editor's point of view, but...

(interrupts) There are those other issues, but the number one issue for a story appearing in a publication like the *West* or any other publication, is purely on what would be seen as the news value and the news content of that story compared to other stories around on that same day. It's done in a fairly black and white manner, without any of those other issues coming in to it.

I think we've touched on it a bit already, but what would actually then warrant a story ... what would it be, we talked about a vaccine but if you were to publish a story about HIV or AIDS over any other story, what would you require from it? Again, we talk about a vaccine but there could be things other than a vaccine that are considered new in terms of treatment, transmission or there could be other research findings other than a vaccine. There has to be something new in terms of treatment, diagnosis or prevention. I suppose the other thing then that we would probably report on and was something not so long ago, that there was a concern in WA that doctors were seeing a bit of a resurgence in HIV just in terms of the cases picking up. I think I did a story about six months ago along those lines. In other words, if the number of cases were continuing to decline, that wouldn't be seen as a story. But if there's any suggestion that the numbers are picking up, then that's the news angle on the story. What I'm saying is; there has to be a news angle. It doesn't have to be a vaccine, there has to be something rather than just regurgitating what's been said before. That sort of stuff will struggle to get a run.

You rely on the agencies that deal in the area, like the AIDS Council or Health Consumers Council or the researchers in that area. I don't have time to be actively out there looking for what's new in that area that I can shed light on. You're relying on the

experts and some of the news agencies to be across it, and if there is something new, to approach me and say “listen, I’ve got this idea for a story.” Time is an issue as well, maybe there are stories out there but I’m probably not going to know it unless someone tells me. I rely on the people who work in the area to be across it and to directly contact media organisations and provide that information.

Finally, we’re basically touched on everything I wanted to ask, but in general as a health editor, would other health topics receive more attention than HIV or AIDS normally, say throughout a year for example?

Yes, and sometimes things like HIV or AIDS... We might only run stories sometimes that have to do with AIDS Awareness Day or a particular event. Sometimes that can trigger a story because it almost gives you a reason to look and see what is happening to figures in the area and speak with some experts, which you wouldn’t perhaps do otherwise. With HIV and AIDS, like many other health issues, I’m often contacted by people who will say there’s an awareness week and ask whether we could do a story. What I always say to them is that we can do a story if there is something that gives us an angle for the story. It [HIV/AIDS] is probably a difficult area to attract media interest, but it’s not impossible. I think it’s a matter of finding out, particularly if there’s a local connection, local research or local people. All newspapers like localised stories. Even if I’m doing something on another subject, say a particular type of cancer, I try to speak to local researchers or find someone locally who has it. That’s always really important for us.

Appendix 8.2

Descriptions of articles

January

01.01.2010 **Women's Weekly, January issue – Fallen Angel** – Feature about Farrah Fawcett and her husband Ryan O'Neal. When talking about their son Redmond, who had a drug problem, O'Neal says they are both thankful he did not get HIV when he was using drugs. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

02.01.2010 -

03.01.2010 -

04.01.2010 -

05.01.2010 -

06.01.2010 **The Australian, p. 8 – US repeals its ban on HIV arrivals** – Article about how the US has lifted a ban on visitors with HIV. **ABOUT HIV/AIDS.**

The West Australian (Health + Medicine), p. 8 – Meet Gladys: She feeds 240 children every evening – Feature about an African woman who helps out by feeding homeless children in her home. It is mentioned that many of these children are AIDS orphans. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

07.01.2010 -

08.01.2010 -

09.01.2010 **The Weekend Australian (The Australian), p. 9 in the health section – Pulse Adam Taor, Bad week for ...** - Brief about how a study has found that medical students are at risk of contracting potentially fatal diseases such as HIV and hepatitis. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

10.01.2010 -

11.01.2010 **The West Australian (Today liftout), p. 5 – Track down this detective drama for a summer treat** – Article about how good a new television show is, The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency. The novels which the series is based on has been written by Alexander McCall Smith, who is criticised for not tackling the spread of AIDS in Botswana. This is mentioned at the bottom of the article. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

12.01.2010 -

13.01.2010 **The West Australian**, p. 6 – Alarm at soaring sex disease figures – Article about how chlamydia has started to infect an increasing number of Australians. The higher infection rates are blamed on a lack of awareness, something that was achieved in terms of HIV/AIDS with the ‘Grim Reaper’ campaign. **PARTLY INCIDENTAL MENTION**

14.01.2010 -

15.01.2010 -

16.01.2010 **The Weekend Australian (The Australian)**, p. 17 – Disease looms as next killer – Article about 17.01.2010 an infectious diarrhoea could be the next problem for quake-stricken Haiti. In the middle of the article it is mentioned that Haiti has the highest rate of HIV in the western hemisphere. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**
The Weekend Australian (The Australian), p. 7 – Don’t blame the preachers for anti-gay bill – AIDS is mentioned towards the end of the article, but does not have anything to do with the subject matter. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

18.01.2010 **The Australian**, p. 15 – Part line wavers on China’s gay culture – Article about how gay events have been cancelled by the Chinese authorities. HIV/AIDS is mentioned towards the end of the article when talking about how the epidemic is affecting a growing number of people in China. **PARTLY INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

The West Australian, p. 20 – Stricken Haiti needs long term help to recover – Editorial about how Haiti needs help from foreign countries to recover. This is the context: “The country was already battling a growing food crisis and accompanying malnutrition, the region’s highest rates of HIV/AIDS ... **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

The West Australian, p. 20 – We must maintain the rage against smoking – Article about the dangers of smoking. It is claimed that smoking accounts for more Australian deaths than road deaths, alcohol, illicit drugs, suicide, murder, diabetes, drowning and HIV/AIDS. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

19.01.2010 -

20.01.2010 -

21.01.2010 -

22.01.2010 -

23.01.2010 **The Weekend Australian Magazine (The Australian)**, p. 15 – Grin and bear 24.01.2010 it – About how it is not so easy thinking positively when one is having breast cancer. In the middle of the article, the writer points out that breast cancer is said to be a bigger disease than AIDS, cystic fibrosis, spinal injury, heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. It is also mentioned in this context: “And as with the AIDS movement, the words “patient” and “victim” ... has been ruled un-PC.” **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

25.01.2010 -

26.01.2010 *The Australian*, p. 13 (Cut and paste section) – *Between Haiti, extreme weather and the Underwater Bomber, capitalism has a lot to answer for, writes Bob Ellis on the ABC's website* – AIDS is mentioned in this context: “When will we get our priorities right, and learn how useless the free market is in dealing with tsunamis, earthquakes, Aboriginal health, African AIDS ...” **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

27.01.2010 -

28.01.2010 *The Australian*, p. 1 & 3 – *Migrants with HIV, cancer allowed to settle* – Article about how the Australian Immigration Department loosens its stringent health rules to allow chronically ill people with diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS or people with intellectual impairment into the country, which ‘alleviates the skills shortage’. **PARTLY INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

29.01.2010 *The Australian*, p. 3 – *UN blasts HIV tests on asylum seekers* – Article about the UN, which criticises Australia for screening its asylum seekers for HIV. **ABOUT HIV/AIDS.**

30.01.2010 *West Weekend Magazine (The West Australian)*, p. 20 – *Passage to India* – Feature about an author who travels to India. He mentions he got inspiration for his book when he met a woman who had HIV. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

31.01.2010 –

Total January:

Incidental mentions: 10 (6 in *The Australian*, 4 in *The West Australian*, 1 in *Women's Weekly*)

Partly incidental mentions: 3 (2 in *The Australian*, 1 in *The West Australian*)

About HIV/AIDS: 2 (Both in *The Australian*)

Total: 16

February

01.02.2010 **The Australian** p. 12 – *Girl brings Zuma's tally to 'at least 20'* – Article about South African president Jacob Zuma, who fathers another child (has at least 20 children to the present date). In a bi-sentence late in the article it is mentioned that Zuma, in 2006, had to apologise for having unprotected sex in a nation battling AIDS. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

02.02.2010

03.02.2010 -

04.02.2010 - **The Australian** p. 8 – *New hope in fight against malaria* - Article about researchers who find a key molecule (protein) used by the malaria parasite to sustain itself. In the second last paragraph it is mentioned that this type of protein has been used as a target for drugs against other diseases, such as HIV/AIDS. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

05.02.2010 -

06.02.2010 **The Weekend Australian (The Australian)**, p. 27 – *AIDS claim 'deceptive'* – 07.02.2010 Brief about a Melbourne businessman who was found to have engaged in misleading and deceptive conduct. The businessman claimed to have developed a vaccine against AIDS, SARS and the common cold, which proved to be false. **ABOUT HIV/AIDS.**

The Weekend Australian (The Australian), p. 13 – *Pulse Adam Taor, Good week for...* - Brief about Australian research that has found circumcision could prevent sexually transmitted infections, urinary tract infections and penile cancer. It is also mentioned that it could prevent HIV/AIDS in men in sub-Saharan Africa. **PARTLY INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

08.02.2010 **The Australian**, p. 11 – *Zuma forced to apologise over baby* – An article about Jacob Zuma, who apologises for having his newest child (mentioned on February 1), after accusations that he contradicted the South African's message on safe sex. Later in the article, it is also mentioned that in 2007, he admitted having sex without a condom when he was head of the national AIDS council. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

09.02.2010 **The Australian**, p. 9 – *Climate chief's book is hot topic* – Article about Rajendra Pachauri (Indian head of the UN climate change panel) who has published a raunchy novel and accepted help from BP to promote the book. The book was released by the head of Reliance Industries, an oil and gas conglomerate. This company received

environmental awards for its work on HIV/AIDS in 2007 from Pachauri's Energy and Resources Institute. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

10.02.2010 -

11.02.2010 -

12.02.2010 -

13.02.2010 -

14.02.2010 -

15.02.2010 -

16.02.2010 -

17.02.2010 **The West Australian**, p. 3 (Today liftout) – Gaga snaps – Brief about Lady Gaga who made herself available to speak to the media about her involvement in an AIDS campaign. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

The Australian, p. 9 – TV presenter admits killing – Brief about Ray Gosling, a veteran TV and radio presenter who admitted to assist to the suicide of a former lover with AIDS. **PARTLY INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

18.02.2010 **The Australian**, p. 8 – Uganda's brutal gay genocide plan – Article about Uganda, where it has been proposed that it should be legal to execute gay men, in particular those who are HIV-positive. The article focuses on the Christian aspect, i.e. the tension between gays and the church. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

The Australian, p. 1 & 6 – Criminal escaped rebate radar – Article about a violent man who took advantage of the home insulation scheme. His criminal history is portrayed, it is also mentioned that the judge in the case has recommended that the man should get appropriate treatment and medication for his HIV virus while he is in prison. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

The West Australian, p. 32 – British TV host admits mercy killing of lover – Article about Ray Gosling, the TV-presenter who assisted his former lover in taking his own life. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

19.02.2010 -

20.02.2010 **The Weekend Australian Magazine (The Australian)**, p. 16 & 20 – Bad seed 21.02.2010 Feature about Hepatitis-C. HIV is mentioned as being a much smaller epidemic than HIV in Australia. Later on it is said that is a hyper-awareness of AIDS, and that HCV needs a campaign along the lines of the 'Grim Reaper' campaign to make people aware of the virus. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

22.02.2010 **The Australian**, p. 14 – Army of well-paid advisers keep pacific door – Article about the salaries being too high for Australian advisers working with aid, because they do not do a good enough job. HIV/AIDS is mentioned later in the article. It is said that HIV/AIDS is responsible for lower population growth in PNG. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

23.02.2010 **The Australian**, p. 9 – Total testing could beat AIDS – Here, it is claimed that the AIDS epidemic could be contained within the next five years if people who are found to HIV-positive are treated immediately with anti-retroviral drugs. **ABOUT HIV/AIDS.**

24.02.2010 **The Australian**, p. 11 – PNG refused further AIDS drugs – The article is about The Global Fund, which has rejected to help fund the drug-treatment of 7000 AIDS-sufferers in PNG. **ABOUT HIV/AIDS.**

25.02.2010 **The Australian**, p. 9 – Next step for Haiti 'as cruel as first' – Article about people who need to do their surgeries again after the January 12 earthquake in Haiti. Doctor Jean Pape, who is founder of Gheskio, a HIV/AIDS hospital next to the clinic, is quoted in the article. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

26.02.2010 -

27.02.2010 **The Weekend Australian Magazine (The Australian)**, p. 8 – Feedback –

28.02.2010 Letter to the editor, where the reader comments on the article “The great greenhouse plot”, written by journalist Phillip Adams. The reader also commends him on how he previously calmed the AIDS hysteria with his articles. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

Total February:

Incidental mentions: 12 (11 in *The Australian*, 1 in *The West Australian*)

Partly incidental mentions: 2 (Both in *The Australian*)

About HIV/AIDS: 3 (All in *The Australian*)

Total: 17

March

01.03.2010 **The West Australian**, p. 3 (Today liftout) – *Gabby laughs off gaffe as she picks up award for rock solid performance* – Brief about an incident at an award ceremony, where the director of the film *Precious* makes this comment: “No one in Hollywood told me they wanted to see a movie about a 350lb black girl who had HIV”. The article is there because this remark was seen as insulting to *Precious* star Gabourey Sidibe. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

Women’s Weekly, March issue - **Inspire: Health** - *Ask the doctor* – Short question and answer sequence where a reader asks a doctor if infections might be transferred through biting. The doctor answers that blood-borne infections such as hepatitis B and HIV might be transferred this way. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

02.03.2010 -

03.03.2010 **The Australian Literary Review (The Australian)**, p. 7– *Beyond the eye of the beholder* – Article in the philosophy section named “Beyond the eye of the beholder”, which is about a book. AIDS is mentioned this way: “... a religion can reduce AIDS-preventing condoms to a sin against human fertility.” In other words, mentioned in a bi-sentence. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

The West Australian (Health + Medicine), p. 6 – *A lot of talk over a little piece of skin* – Feature about circumcision and how it can reduce the risk for urinary tract infections, penile cancer and a range of sexually transmitted diseases, including syphilis, AIDS, herpes and human papillomavirus (HPV). **PARTLY INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

04.03.2010 -

05.03.2010 -

06.03.2010 **The Weekend Australian Review (The Australian)**, p. 24– *Revolution’s*

07.03.2010 *children* – Book review. A photographer, who later died from an AIDS-related illness, told the author of this book to write the story about the two of them. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

08.03.2010 -

09.03.2010 -

10.03.2010 -

11.03.2010 -

12.03.2010 -

13.03.2010 **The Weekend Australian (Inquirer liftout) (The Australian), p. 5 – Women’s rights coexist** 14.03.2010 **with wrongs** – Article about feminism and women’s rights. HIV and AIDS is mentioned in a bi-sentence, when talking about mass rapes in Africa that have led to unwanted pregnancies and infection with HIV/AIDS.

INCIDENTAL MENTION.

The Weekend Australian Magazine (The Australian), p. 31– The can do girls – Article about Thai sex workers in Thailand. HIV/AIDS is mentioned three times throughout the article, but is not the main message in the article. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

The Australian (Travel and indulgence liftout), p. 3 – There’s a new queen in town – Article about an exhibition in Ballarat showing images of the band Queen. AIDS is mentioned two times, once when talking about how Freddie Mercury died and how the Victorian AIDS Council gets percentages from ticket sales. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

15.03.2010 -

16.03.2010 -

17.03.2010 **The West Australian, p. 3 (Today liftout) – Kath debuts in London** – Brief about a show that is based on the true story ‘Holding the Man’. A little background is provided in that the main character Caleo ended a relationship with an HIV infected high school AFL captain who died in 1992. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**
The Australian, p. 12 – Bloody protest in Bangkok – Article about a protest in Bangkok where the protestors used blood to protest against the government. HIV/AIDS is mentioned in the context of the Red Cross, which says that the participants in the protest are at risk of infection if they reuse the needles with which they extract the blood. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

18.03.2010 **The Australian, p. 9 – Quake leaves Haitian women as prey for racists** – Article about the quake in Haiti, where HIV/AIDS is mentioned when talking about the high incidence rates in the country. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

19.03.2010 -

20.03.2010 **The Weekend Australian Magazine (The Australian), p. 30– Sharleen’s**
21.03. 2010 **message** – Recap of a story that was published in this magazine twenty years about a Sydney prostitute who had AIDS. The article focuses on HIV/AIDS in the past and present. **ABOUT HIV/AIDS.**

22.03.2010 -

23.03.2010 -

24.03.2010 -

25.03.2010 -

26.03.2010 -

27.03.2010 **The Weekend Australian Magazine (The Australian), p. 4 – Letters** –
28.03.2010 Feedback from a reader who commends the women working in the Thai sex-trade because of their independence and courage of working in a region and a profession where they are at risk of HIV/AIDS, rape and other STIs. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

29.03.2010 -

30.03.2010 **The Australian, p. 3 – Man wins most of gay lovers estate** – Short article about Robert Burton, who won most of his gay lover's estate after he challenged the deceased man's will 15 years after his death. It is mentioned that Burton's lover died from an AIDS-related illness. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

31.03.2010 **The West Australian (Health + Medicine), p. 6– Risky work for sexual healers** – Article about the challenges facing people working in sexual health, particularly the difficulty of establishing trust between clients. HIV/AIDS is mentioned in the context of the Grim Reaper campaign and the fear this campaign created. **INCIDENTAL MENTION.**

Total March:

Incidental mentions: 12 (9 in *The Australian*, 3 in *The West Australian*, 1 in *Women's Weekly*)

Partly incidental mentions: 1 (In *The West Australian*)

About HIV/AIDS: 1 (In *The Australian*)

TOTAL: 14

TOTAL ANALYSIS:

Total sum of articles mentioning or dealing with HIV/AIDS in the three month period between January 1st and March 31st:

INCIDENTAL MENTIONS: 36 (26 in *The Australian*, 8 in *The West Australian*, 2 in *Women's Weekly*)

PARTLY INCIDENTAL MENTIONS: 6 (4 in *The Australian*, 2 in *The West Australian*)

ABOUT HIV/AIDS: 6 (All in *The Australian*)

TOTAL HITS: 48