

Public Response to Media Reporting on Suicide

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Abstract. Inadequate media coverage of suicide can have a negative impact on the media user, while responsible coverage of suicide can have a preventative effect on the user. This is particularly important at a time when new media (e.g., online media websites) are coming into focus as they offer greater involvement of the media user in the media article about suicide. In this way, new media transfer some of their role in preventing suicidal behaviour to new media users. Online media articles provide the opportunity to comment and thus interact with the administrators of the website, the author of the article, and other users. By analysing the comments posted under media articles about suicide, we can gain insight into perceptions and attitudes about suicide in society. Moreover, users also contribute significantly to the type of reporting on suicide and the opinions expressed on the topic in additional comments. The results of several studies confirm that there is a relationship between the type of coverage of a media article on suicide, the number of user comments, and their content. A comparison of comments under media articles on suicide published in different countries also provides information about the public's interest in addressing the issue: in some countries, comments reflect interest and engagement with the topic, while in other countries, comments show disinterest and disengagement with suicide prevention among the public. Considering that the style of media coverage of suicide is related to how users address the issue in their comments, caution is needed when writing a media article about suicide and clear procedures and rules are needed for commenting on such articles.