Content Analysis of Tobacco and Alcohol Related Newspaper Articles
Utility for Evaluating Interventions to Prevent Youth Smoking and Drinking in the Community

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Introduction

• Newspaper content is an important source of information for community members, opinion leaders, and policy makers in a community.
• Newspaper content also reflects the attitudes and values of a community.
• Agenda-Setting – The ability of the media to increase individual awareness of and the social importance attributed to a particular topic receiving attention.

Purpose

• As part of the Sarasota County Demonstration Project (SCDP), a content analysis of the major local newspaper in Sarasota was conducted to assess changes in:
  • Frequency;
  • Content;
  • Theme; and
  • Spatial Presentation

Sarasota County Demonstration Project

• Goal is to reduce tobacco and alcohol use among middle school youth in Sarasota County.
• Uses CBPM, a community-directed process for promoting social change by applying marketing strategies and community organizing principles.
• SCDP aims to increase community capacity in Sarasota as well as change social norms related to youth tobacco and alcohol use.

Phases of Community-Based Prevention Marketing/SCDP

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<th>CBPM Phases</th>
<th>SCDP Timeline</th>
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<td>Initial Planning</td>
<td>Fall 1998</td>
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<td>Formative Research</td>
<td>Summer 1999 – Spring 2000</td>
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<td>Strategy Development</td>
<td>Fall 2000 – Winter 2001</td>
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<td>Program Implementation</td>
<td>Kick-Off Campaign – Feb 2003</td>
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<td>Ongoing Tracking &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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Methodology

• Structured Observational Design
  – Selection criteria have been developed to capture articles on 1) substance use; 2) adolescent health; and 3) community capacity.
  – Newspapers are routinely reviewed by research staff.
  – Articles meeting criteria are coded for key themes using a standardized abstraction tool.
  – Data are analyzed to summarize trends over time.
Results Summary

- 2832 articles selected from Dec 1999 – Dec 2001
- Based on SCDP timeline, all articles are PREINTERVENTION
  - Represent initial planning, formative research, and strategy development phases of CBPM model.
- Results summarize the newspaper coverage of tobacco and alcohol articles in Sarasota County prior to program implementation.
- In-depth results are only presented for articles related to substance abuse and adolescent health.

Distribution of Articles by Primary Content – 12/99 – 12/01

N=2832

- Substance Use
- Adolescent Health
- Community Capacity

Distribution of Substance Use Articles by Secondary Topic

N=1642

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Drugs

Distribution of Substance Use Articles Over Time

- Tobacco: No significant differences in frequency over time.
- Alcohol: No significant differences in frequency over time.
- Drugs: No significant differences in frequency over time.

Distribution of Adolescent Health Articles by Secondary Topic

N=924

- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Physical Health
- Viol/MH
- Other Health
- Mental Health

Distribution of Adolescent Health Articles Over Time

- Viol/MH ***
- Physical Health **
- Other Health **
- Drugs *
- Alcohol *
- Tobacco *

*p<.05, **p<.0001, ***p<.001
Implications/Future Directions

- Content analysis of media coverage is a promising evaluation strategy for projects that:
  1. take place at the community level; and
  2. target health behaviors that require changes in social norms.

- Will continue to track tobacco and alcohol related coverage in the newspaper to assess changes in frequency, content, subject, theme and spatial presentation over the project period.

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