



Adolescents' and Parents' Perceptions of News Media and Youth Bullying: A Qualitative Study

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INTRODUCTION

- Parents and adolescents are often exposed to youth bullying stories, such as the cases of Megan Meier and Tyler Clementi, which are often dramatized and propagated through news media in print and online
- Little is known about adolescents' and parents' views on news media coverage of youth bullying experiences
- Exposure to these stories may impact how parents interact with their children regarding bullying experiences



PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to understand adolescents' and parents' perceptions of news articles related to youth bullying.

METHODS

This study received approval from the University of Wisconsin-Madison IRB.

Setting and Subjects

- Adolescent-parent dyads recruited at two primary care clinics in the Midwest
- Eligible participants:
 - Adolescents between ages 15 and 18 years old
 - Parent or guardian of an adolescent between ages of 15 to 18 years old
 - Able to read English
- After informed consent, adolescents and parents were separated into different rooms for their individual interviews

METHODS CONT.

Interview Procedure

- Interviews included reading example news media articles regarding youth bullying with follow-up questions about their perceptions of the articles

"What specific information seems helpful or not helpful to you?"

- Participants were also asked to share their views after being shown examples of feedback from other teens on the example articles

"If you compare the first and second article why do think there were differences in how people rated the article's helpfulness?"

Article Selection

Moreno, M. A., Gower, A. D., Brittain, H., & Vaillancourt, T. (2019). Applying Natural Language Processing to Evaluate News Media Coverage of Bullying and Cyberbullying. *Prevention Science*. doi:10.1007/s11121-019-01029-x

- Content analysis to identify bullying and cyberbullying news articles over last 5 years

- Delphi method to gain consensus on articles that represented fear-based versus public health-oriented reporting

- Two articles ranked highest on fear-based and public health-oriented reporting by the Delphi method were selected

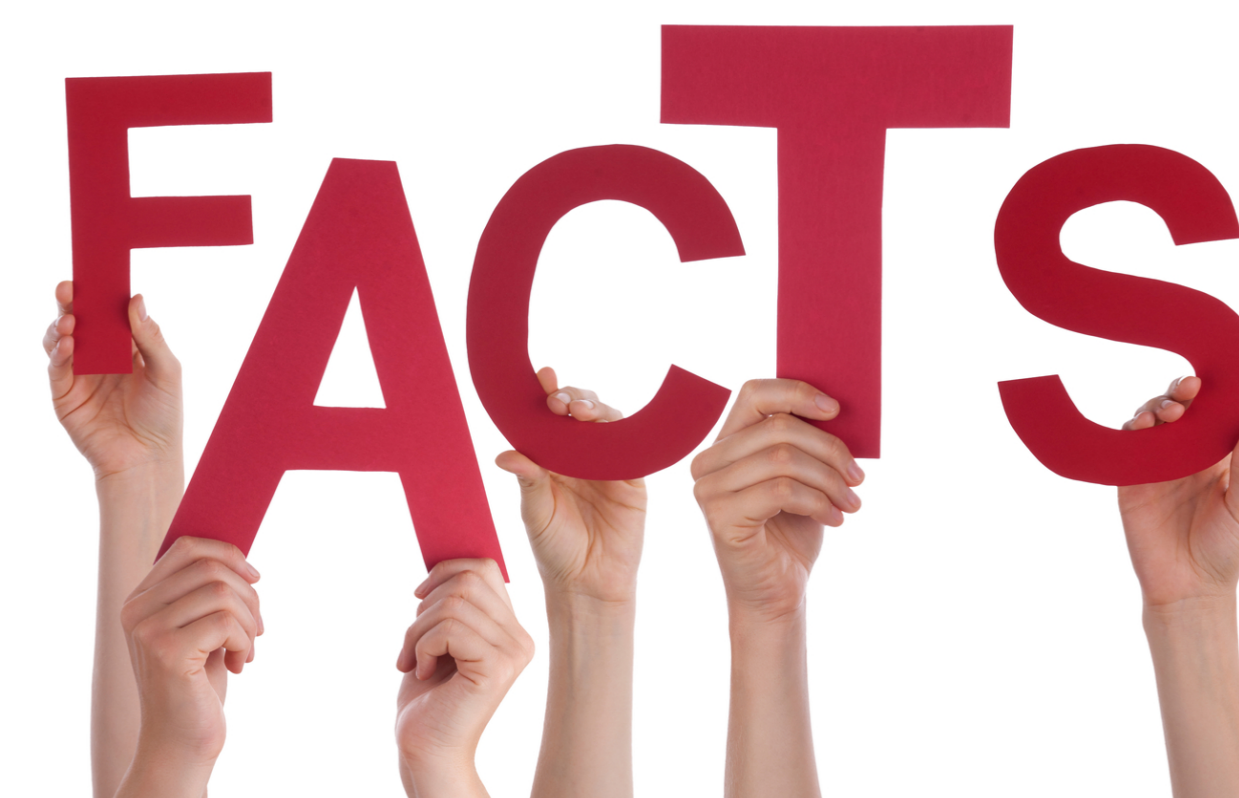
Analysis

- Qualitative thematic analysis utilizing the constant comparative approach was conducted by three coders

RESULTS

Themes

- Theme 1: **Prevention Information**
- Theme 2: **Facts/Statistics**
- Theme 3: **Single Story**



"This one is more positive, because it's actually giving you ideas to work with bullying and how to make it better." –Parent

"The article was just more helpful because it provided, like, actual information, about, like, what kinds of things are helpful, and like how helpful they actually are." –Adolescent

"This is more of research, factual, um, so that's to me why it would appear more helpful." –Parent

"The statistics really helped ground it in reality and give you a little bit of hope." –Adolescent

"I think the first article's talking about something that has already happened. And there's nothing to do about it now." –Parent

"It was just kind of a story about something that happened and it's not, like, information that can show you how to help the situation." –Adolescent

Avg. age = 49.20
(SD = 6.78)

Avg. age = 16.05
(SD = 1.00)

RESULTS CONT.

Participant Information

- 20 adolescent-parent dyads (n = 40)

Demographic Variable	Adolescent n (%)	Parent n (%)
Gender		
Male	11 (55)	4 (20)
Female	9 (45)	16 (80)
Race		
White	14 (70)	16 (80)
African American	3 (15)	2 (10)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1 (5)	0 (0)
Multi-racial	2 (10)	1 (5)
Hispanic/Latino	0 (0)	1 (5)

CONCLUSIONS

Main Findings

- Adolescents and parents perceived news media articles focused on bullying prevention and incorporating facts as valuable to them
- Participants also noted that emotional, single-story news media articles related to bullying were not helpful to them

Implications

- To maximize helpfulness of bullying news media to adolescents and parents, researchers could partner with journalists and other stakeholders to create guidelines around strategic reporting of these stories and bullying prevention efforts

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