

Guide to conducting media interviews

Part 1. Background

3. Contacting the media

Target audiences

Different media are aimed at various groups - from the general public to policy makers, medical specialists, or people with RMDs. These are referred to as **target audiences**.

Remember that policy makers and medical experts also read publications and watch broadcast programmes aimed at the general public.



Research and preparation

- **Realistic placement** analysis – it is often better to target a few appropriate journalists or broadcasters than to mass target
- Identify and offer **appropriate spokespeople**, who have received some training or briefing in advance
- Find out **how far in advance** of publication or broadcast journalists like to receive information
- Find out the **timing of planning meetings**, but avoid making calls on publication days!
- Decide your **key messages** in advance
- Have a clear **story to pitch**
- Have a **news hook** ready to interest the journalist
- Develop **memorable pitch words**, tailored written messaging and verbal communication
- Ensure **messaging is succinct**
- Have **photography/images or background video footage** available
- Have **relevant facts and figures** to hand to support your key messages
- Make sure you or a colleague will **be contactable to respond to journalists** once a news release has been distributed
- **Ensure everyone in your organisation knows** who your media spokespeople are so calls from journalists can be appropriately directed

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Developing a news release (also known as a media or press release)

When writing press releases or emails to journalists / broadcast researchers; the shorter the better. National journalists can receive at least 200 emails a day. Think about what will make them read your email over the other 199. Tell the 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when', 'why'.

- Decide your key messages in advance (up to three)
- Have a clear story to pitch and a news hook ready to interest the journalist
- Be as brief and to the point as possible
- Respond promptly and directly to calls and questions
- Make sure you or a colleague are contactable at all reasonable times during a media campaign



Being proactive / becoming a resource

Building relationships with target journalists means you will have their attention when you need it and feel more confident when they approach you with a story.

Contacting journalists or broadcast researchers directly helps to:

- Generate and maximise media coverage
- Build journalist relationships



Don't just contact journalists when you have a story to sell, keep up a dialogue with those you trust and are empathetic with your cause

- Alert journalists to issues that might become a story in the future so they can follow them from the beginning
- Call journalists you have a relationship with to 'sound out' a story, ask which aspects might be of interest to them and what additional information could make it more interesting
- Become the 'go to' resource for journalists seeking trusted information and comment