

I Read, I Heard, I Want to Know: Health Issues in the Headlines



Lydia N. Collins, MLIS

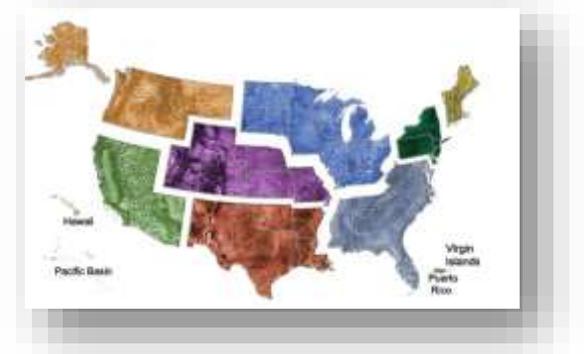
Consumer Health Coordinator

National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM)

- NN/LM, formerly Regional Medical Library Program
- Established in the Medical Library Assistance Act (1965)
- Mission
 - Provide health professionals and the general public with equal access to biomedical information
- Coordinated by the National Library of Medicine
- 8 Regional Offices
 - Support Network members to achieve NN/LM mission
 - 5-year contracts

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Agenda

Introduction to Health News Reporting & Journalism

Where Health News Stories Come From

The Influence of Celebrities on Health News

Resources for Health News

Everything
in Print Isn't
Always True

**9:00 - 10:00 I READ, I HEARD, I WANT TO KNOW:
Health Issues in the Headlines**

Lyndia Collins - MLIS, Consumer Health Coordinator, National Libraries of Medicine/Institutes of Health, Mid-Atlantic Region

Dark chocolate, red wine, vitamin C and cranberry juice – what do these have in common? All have been reported in the news as having health benefits. Often the first place your library users will hear about health issues is in the media. Attendees will learn about how health is reported in the news as well as how to evaluate the accuracy and validity of health and science stories in the headlines. By the end of the session, attendees will be better equipped to help their library users look more critically at health issues that are being reported in the news media.



Lyndia Collins

Sponsor: DLA-PLD

My name is **Lydia N.**

However, there's some partial truth...as you may find in some headlines when reviewing listening to health news

Health News Reporting & Journalism: What's the Scoop?



Types of News Agencies



Major Newswires

- The Associated Press (AP)
- Reuters
- United Press International
- Bloomberg



Large Media Agencies

- New York Times
- Washington Post
- ABC News
- CBS News
- NBC News

Types of News Agencies



Middle-sized Newspapers and Magazines

- USA Today
- Chicago Sun-Times
- New York Daily News



Small-town Newspapers or Medium-Sized TV Markets

- Cape Gazette (DE)
- Mifflinburg Telegraph (PA)
- Hancock News (MD)

Types of News Agencies



**Consumer Health and
Lifestyle Magazines**

- Men's Health
- O – The Oprah Magazine
- Cosmopolitan

Health News



[HHS.gov/healthcare](https://www.hhs.gov/healthcare)

**Bringing Health
Information Into the
Community (BHIC)**

**Shots-Health News
from NPR**

**Drugs & Health Blog
(NIDA)**

**Get healthy,
Delaware!
(Delaware Today)**



Where Health News Stories Come From

Where Stories for Health News Come From

Medical Media Sources

- Medical Conference Papers & Proceedings
- Medical Journals

Press releases from Research and Health Institutions

- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Challenges for Health News Journalists

Understanding clinical science, epidemiology and other specialties that are not commonly known or understood

Dealing with powerful vested interests

- **New treatments pitched as 'cures'**
- **Misleading use of statistics (absolute risk vs. relative risk)**
- **Researcher Bias**

Reliance on Scientist reporting or public relations agency press releases

Commercial pressure and deadlines



Star-Struck: The Influence of Celebrities on Health News



[URL](#) for CBS News Article

FASHION & STYLE

When Dieting Becomes a Role to Play

AUG. 2, 2011

Skin Deep

By TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER

SHE calls it wishful shrinking. Last May, Carrie Fisher showed off her 30-pound weight loss, a result of 18 weeks on the Jenny Craig diet, to People magazine — the most recent of the company’s series of celebrity spokespeople to reach a major milestone in weight loss.

It’s understandable that diet companies would want to incorporate celebrities in their marketing plans. Consumers believe they “know” famous people — especially forthcoming ones like Valerie Bertinelli (Jenny Craig), Jennifer Hudson (Weight Watchers) and Marie Osmond (Nutrisystem) — and can be inspired by them.

But employing celebrities can be a double-edged sword. When a company advertises a successful but anonymous dieter — say, Melissa K. from Fairfield, Conn., who lost 50 pounds* (*results not typical) — its target audience never learns how Melissa ultimately fared. Did she keep the weight off? Did she gain the 50 pounds back, as well as 50 more? Only she and her acquaintances will ever know.

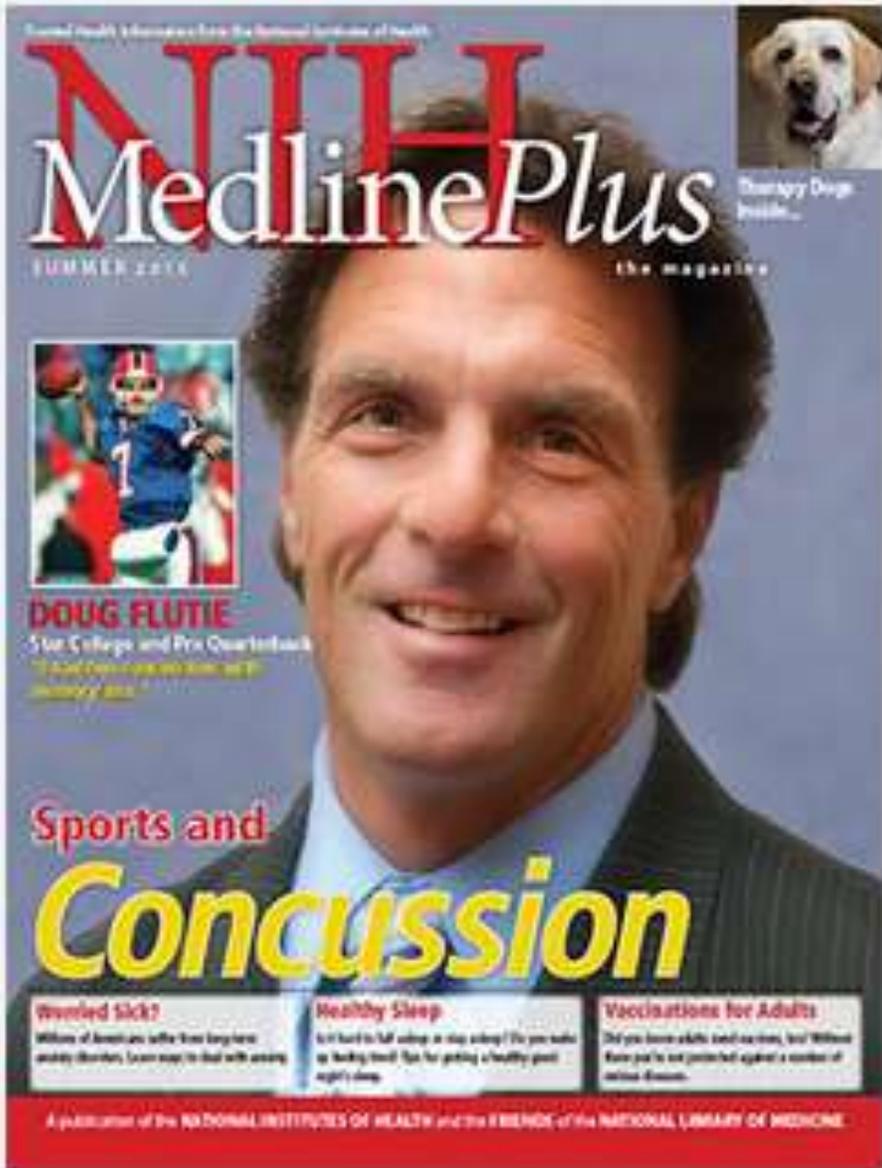
Famous people, however, play out their weight struggles under glaring lights. It’s hard to forget commercials of the actress and former Jenny Craig spokeswoman Kirstie Alley lustily drooling over the program’s sanctioned fettuccine, or of her triumphant disrobing on “Oprah” to reveal her new bikini body in pantyhose.

It’s equally hard to forget photos of Ms. Alley, after regaining the lost weight and then some, again on “Oprah”: this time more conservatively dressed and contrite. Or, more recently, falling with an audible thud during a lift on “Dancing With the

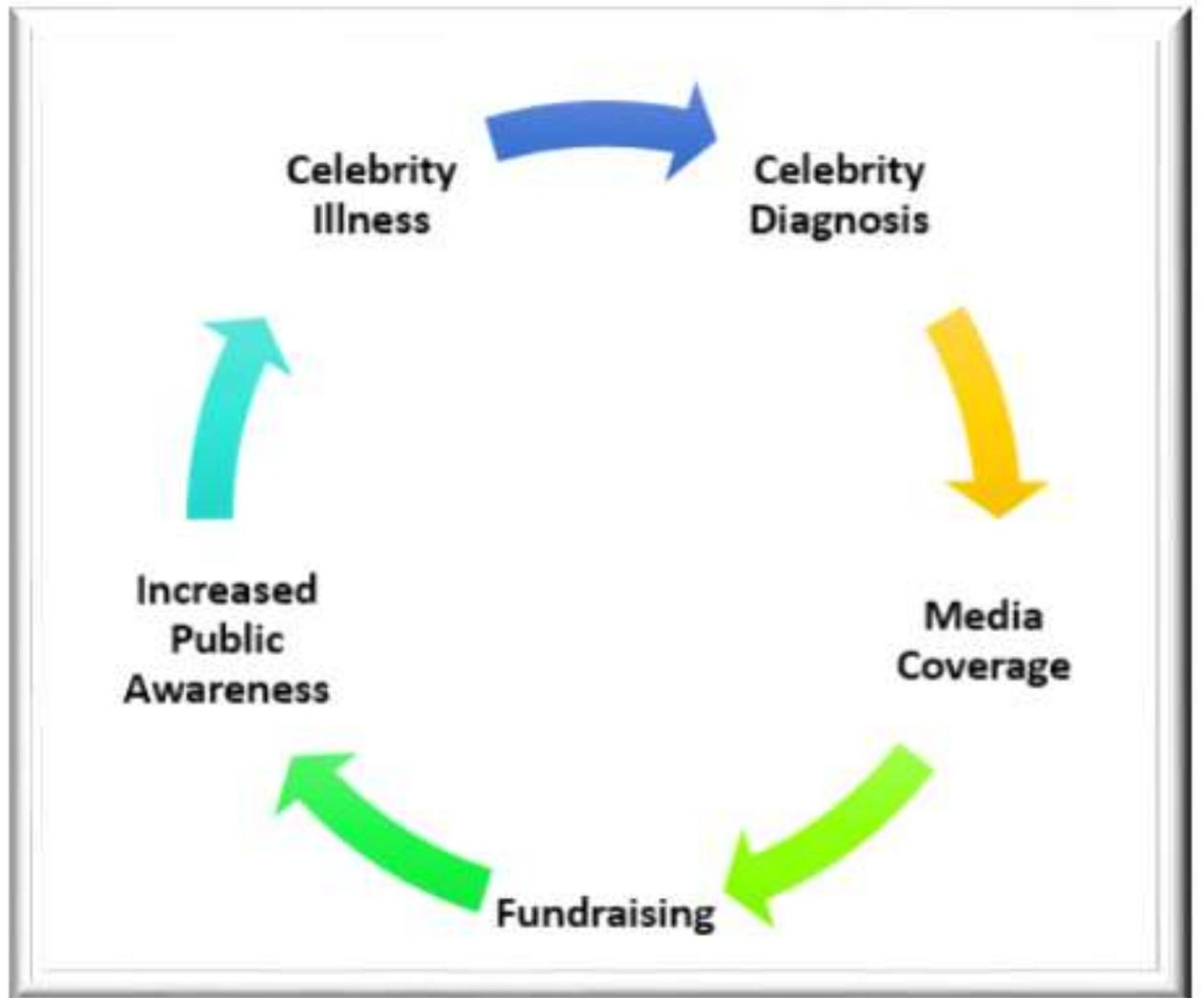


[URL](#) for NY Times Article

Images from NY Times Article



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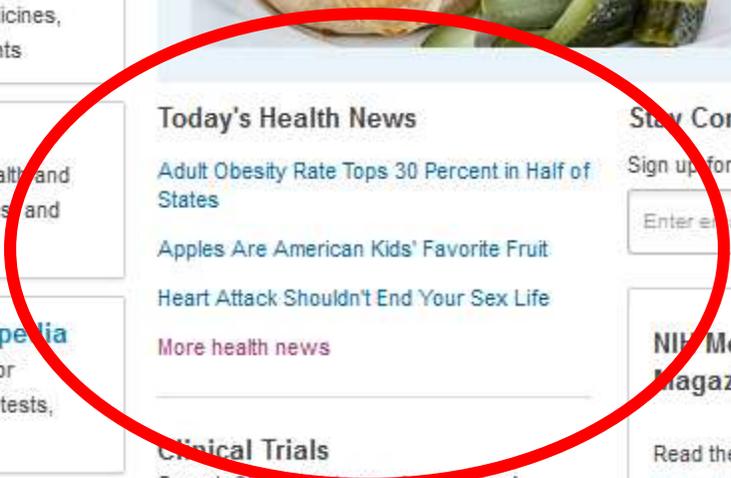
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Articles and images for diseases, symptoms, tests, treatments

Medical Dictionary from Merriam-Webster

Foodborne illness is in the news.
Learn what you need to know.

1 2 3 4 ▶



Today's Health News

- Adult Obesity Rate Tops 30 Percent in Half of States
- Apples Are American Kids' Favorite Fruit
- Heart Attack Shouldn't End Your Sex Life

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Latest Health News



Health news from HealthDay, plus recent press announcements from major medical organizations.

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Get the latest health news by email

Tuesday, September 22

[Kids and Fruit Consumption](#)  (HealthDay)

Related MedlinePlus Topics: [Child Nutrition](#), [Children's Health](#), [Teen Health](#)

Monday, September 21

[Adult Obesity Rate Tops 30 Percent in Half of States](#) (HealthDay)

Highest rates found in the South and Midwest: report

Related MedlinePlus Topic: [Obesity](#)

[Apples Are American Kids' Favorite Fruit](#) (HealthDay)

But children should broaden their palate, researcher says

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[Back Pain Patients Seek Pain Relief First, Mobility Second](#) (HealthDay)

Nearly 80 percent of patients chose easing discomfort over greater movement, research shows

Related MedlinePlus Topics: [Pain](#), [Spinal Stenosis](#)

[Beet Juice Boosts Muscle Power in Heart Patients](#) (HealthDay)

Today's Health News Video:
Kids and Fruit Consumption
Tuesday, September 22
[Transcript](#)

Health News is from HealthDay plus recent press announcements from major medical organizations.

Locate current and past health news topics by date/topic.

[URL](#) for MedlinePlus Health News

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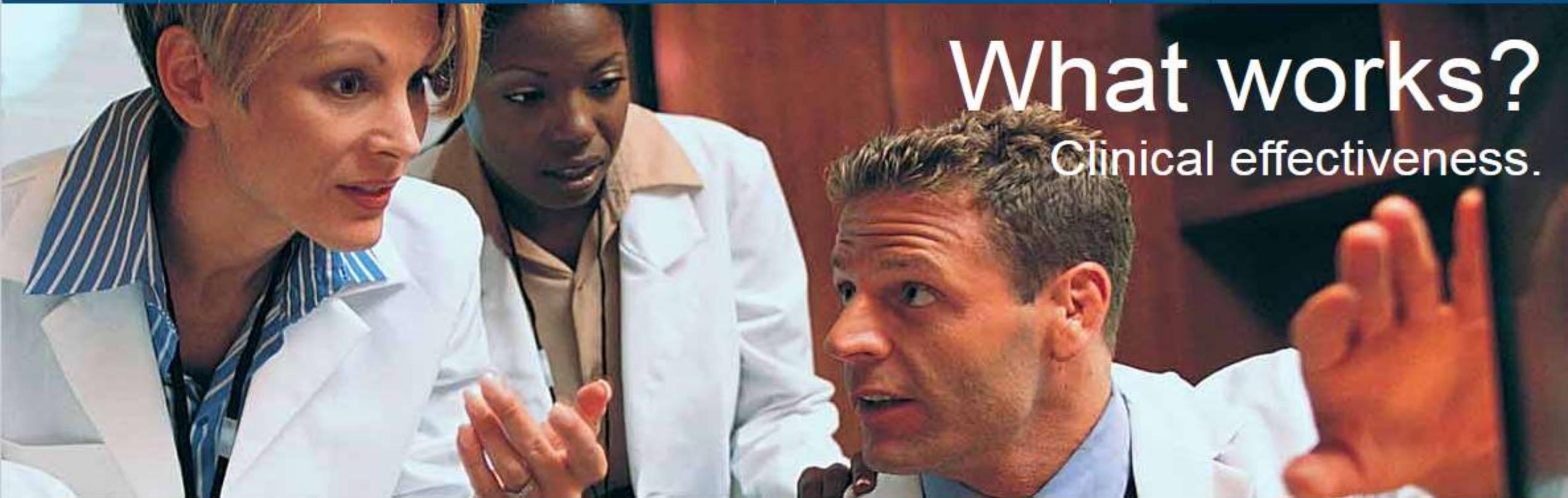
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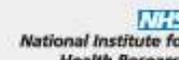
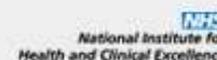
The Cochrane Collaboration



National Heart, Lung,
and Blood Institute



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Behind the Headlines



Fact or fiction? Your guide to the science behind health stories in the news

Featured UK headline analysis

Could Testing Grip Strength Predict Heart Disease Risk?

15 May 2015



"Poor grip can signal chances of major illness or premature death," the Mail Online reports. An international study has provided evidence that assessing grip strength could help identify people who were at higher risk of cardiovascular incidents such as a heart attack. The study

authors wanted to see whether muscle strength, measured by grip, can predict the chances of getting a range of illnesses, and of dying, in high-, medium- and low-income countries. To find out, they tested 142,861 people across 17 countries and tracked what happened to them over the course of four years....[more](#)

In the US

Grip Strength May Predict Heart Attacks and Strokes

The New York Times

Grip strength may be a good predictor of the risk for cardiovascular disease....[more](#)

Related Info

Want to know more about resistance or strength training?

PubMed Health

Check out evidence on the effects of resistance training for different groups of people....[more](#)

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- [How to read health news](#)
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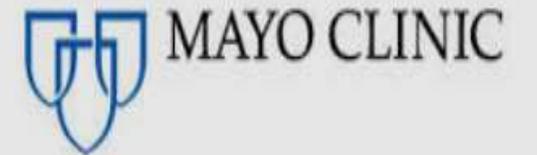
What do "breakthrough" & "promising" mean to people?

A look at how the FDA uses these terms



BMJ overstates the evidence once again

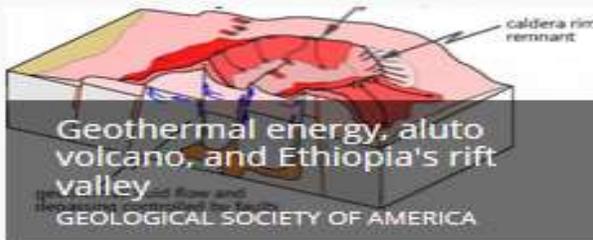
This time on a study about antidepressants and violent crime



Another troubling partnership deal

Between a health care entity & a news organization

TRENDING SCIENCE NEWS



High-pitched sounds cause seizures in old cats
SAGE PUBLICATIONS

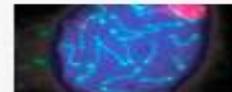
How to short circuit hunger
BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER

Bumblebee genomes create a buzz in the field of pollination
SWISS INSTITUTE OF BIOINFORMATICS



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Discovery of a protein capable of regulating DNA repair during sperm formation
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Resources for Understanding Health News

How to read health news

By Dr Alicia White

From "Behind the Headlines", provided by NHS Choices (from England's National Health Service).

If you've just read a health-related headline that has caused you to spit out your morning coffee ("Coffee causes cancer" usually does the trick), it's always best to follow the Blitz slogan: "Keep Calm and Carry On". On reading further, you'll often find the headline has left out something important, such as, "Injecting five rats with really highly concentrated coffee solution caused some changes in cells that might lead to tumours eventually. (Study funded by The Association of Tea Marketing)".

The most important rule to remember is: don't automatically believe the headline. It is there to draw you into buying the paper and reading the story. Would you read an article called, "Coffee pretty unlikely to cause cancer, but you never know"? Probably not.

To avoid spraying your newspaper with coffee in the future, you need to analyse the article to see what it says about the research it is reporting on. Bazian (the company I work for) has appraised hundreds of articles for Behind The Headlines on NHS Choices, and we've developed the following questions to help you figure out which articles you're going to believe and which you're not.

Does the article support its claims with scientific research?

Your first concern should be the research behind the news article. If an article touts a treatment or some aspect of your lifestyle that is supposed to prevent or cause a disease, but doesn't give any information about the scientific research behind it, then treat it with a lot of caution. The same applies to research that has yet to be published.

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-  [What Makes Teens Start Using and Keep Using Health Information Web Sites? A Mixed-Methods Study](#)
-  [adolescent and health literacy \(1256\)](#) PubMed
-  [Informing the public health.](#) PubMed
-  [Community needs assessment to reach out to an underserved population.](#) PubMed

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[URL](#) for How to Read Health News (PubMed Health)

Questions to Help You Evaluate News Reports and Health Information

Was the study in animals or people?

Does the study include people like
you?

How big was the
study?

Where was the
research done?

Who paid for the
research

Who is reporting
the results?

[URL](#) for MedlinePlus: Understanding Medical Research



Understanding Health News

Complementary Health Approaches In the News

News stories about complementary approaches to health are often on television, the Internet, and in magazines and newspapers.



Previous



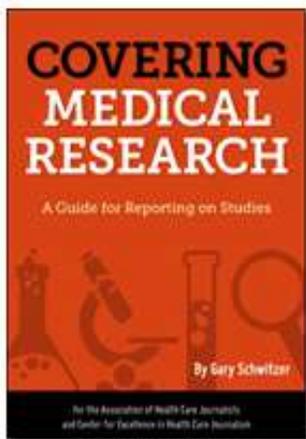
Next

In fact, the media is one of our main sources of information when we make decisions about complementary health approaches. While many news reports are reliable, some are missing important information, and some are confusing, conflicting, or misleading.



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Tips for Understanding Studies



Our best tip is that you get a copy of "[Covering Medical Research: A Guide for Reporting on Studies](#)," a guide written by HealthNewsReview.org publisher Gary Schwitzer and published by the Association of Health Care Journalists. (Available free to AHCJ members. Non-members may request access from AHCJ by sending an email to info@healthjournalism.org.)

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In last week's double-chin drug stories, @nytimes much better than @washingtonpost. healthnewsreview.org/review/times-s... vs. healthnewsreview.org/review/post-co...

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Figuring Out Health News

KidsHealth > Teens > Staying Safe > Safety Basics > Figuring Out Health News

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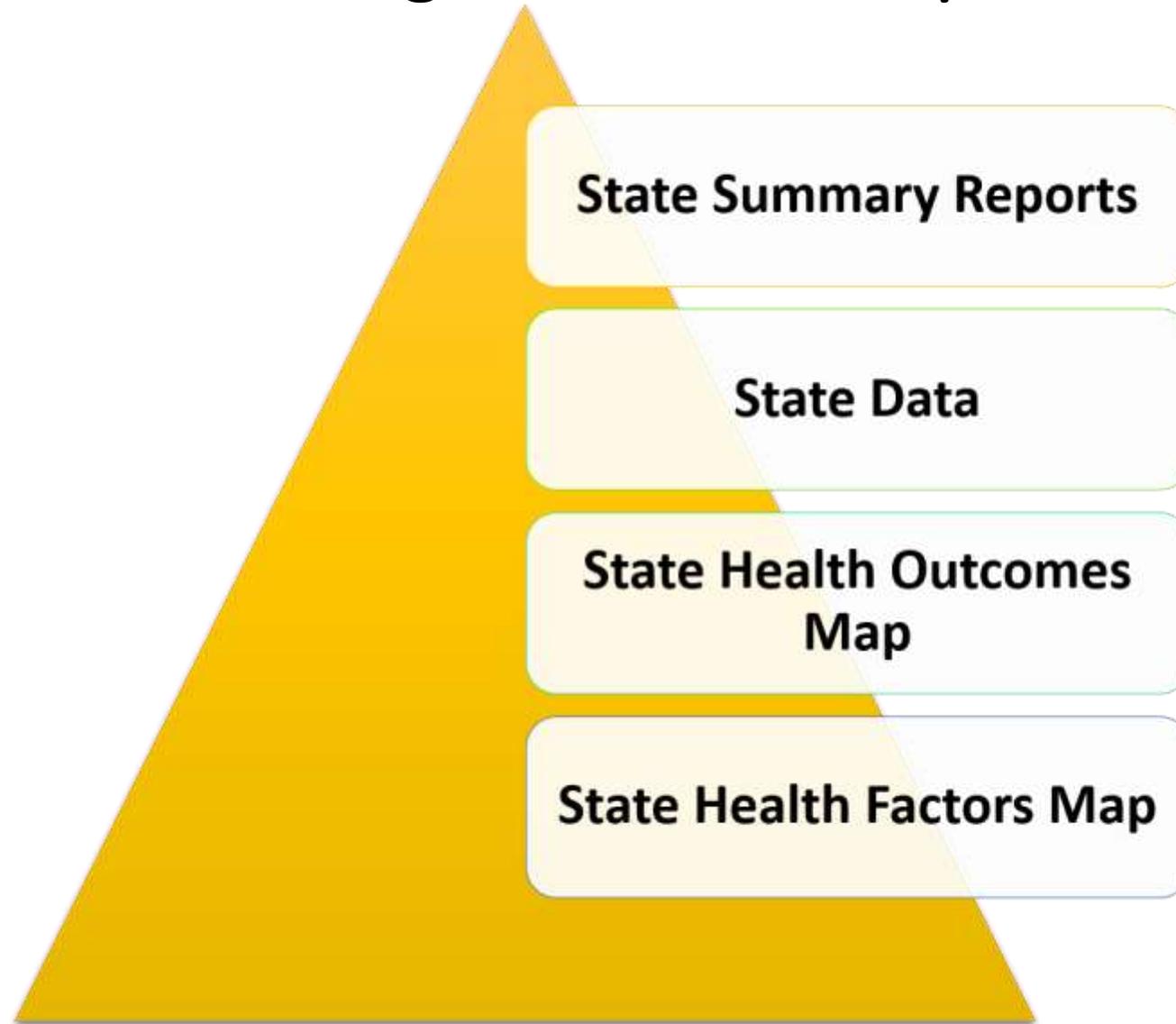
Jordan was gathering information for a research project on teens and suicide. She came across a news article about how some antidepressants increase the chances of suicidal thinking and behavior in kids and teens. Jordan was confused. How could a medicine that was supposed to help kids with depression actually make them feel worse? She was also worried because her sister was taking an antidepressant. After Jordan did some of her own research and looked into the issue further, though, she discovered things that set her mind at ease.

Lee este artículo en Español 



Community Demographics and Health News Program Ideas

County Health Rankings – How Heathy Is Your Community?



[URL](#) for County Health Rankings

DELAWARE 2015 ▾

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Sussex (SU)

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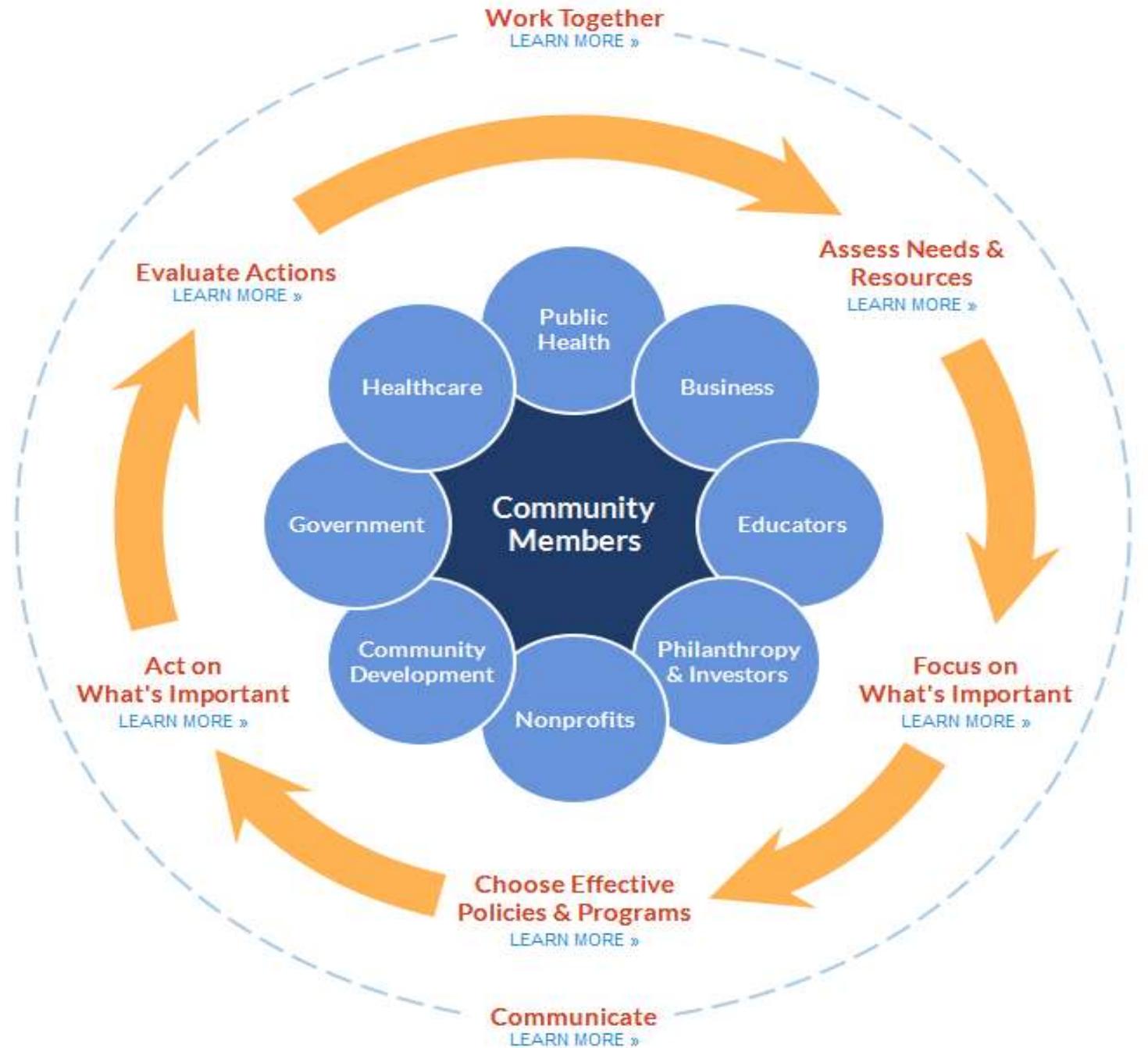
Areas to Explore ON OFF

Rank ▾	County
1	Sussex (SU)
2	New Castle (NE)
3	Kent (KE)

	Sussex County	Trend	Error Margin	Top U.S. Performers*	Delaware	Rank (of 3)
Health Outcomes						1
Length of Life						1
Premature death	7,150		6,698-7,601	5,200	7,359	
Quality of Life						2
Poor or fair health	15%		14-16%	10%	12%	
Poor physical health days	3.5		3.3-3.7	2.5	3.3	
Poor mental health days	3.4		3.1-3.6	2.3	3.3	
Low birthweight	7.9%		7.5-8.3%	5.9%	8.8%	

[URL](#) for DE County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

County Rankings- Action Center



[URL](#) for Action Center

Possible Program Topics





Questions

Home Evaluating Health News Celebrities and Health News Program Ideas Course Materials

Home Print Page Search: This Guide Search

NN/LM MAR Guide for Health Issues in the Headlines: Learning to Read Between the Lines



This resource guide serves to provide access to content for the NN/LM MAR course
Health Issues in the Headlines: Learning to Read Between the lines

NN/LM MAR Consumer Health Coordinator



Lydia Collins

Contact Info
NN/LM MAR
Health Sciences Library System
University of Pittsburgh
200 Scaife Hall

Locate materials to support your future program (Updated Regularly)

- Health News Sources
- Evaluating Health News Information
- Health Program Ideas
- Articles of Interest

[URL](#) for Resource Guide



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Thank You

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