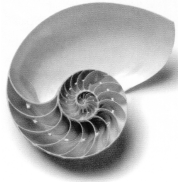


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MENTALITY

Media Analysis

March 1999 – May 2000



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MENTALITY
MEDIA ANALYSIS
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METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND

Mentality commissioned Echo Research to analyse media perceptions of mental health, in national and regional publications in the period from March 1999 to May 2000. The key aims of the study were to look at the way in which mental health problems were depicted in the regional media, the terms used to describe those with mental health problems and the general 'tone' adopted by the press in reporting and discussing what are often difficult and challenging issues. Articles were categorised according to the tone adopted in reporting mental health issues.

This follows a previous study conducted by Echo Research on behalf of the Health Education Authority, covering the period April to June 1999.

TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

Rating concerns praise or criticism, with each research item measured on a scale of 0 to 100 according to its content. Factors influencing the rating include placement (headline, first paragraph, etc) tone, messages, sources, fairness and the balance of each article. **Neutral** coverage is rated 50, and either presents a balanced picture or is just a passing mention. **Favourable** articles are rated from 51 towards 100. **Unfavourable** articles are rated from 49 towards zero. **Impressions** are the combined circulation figures of all articles in which comment appeared. **Bylines** represent the journalists whose names appeared alongside the articles.

CHARTS

The charts in this report include a 'rating' – a blue line on the chart. This is an indication of the favourability or unfavourability of the items in question. The bottom axis shows the volume of items and the different colours on the bars indicate the number of favourable (green), unfavourable articles (red) and neutral (yellow) articles.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

MESSAGES

In this report, articles have been assessed as 'favourable', 'unfavourable' or 'neutral' according to a set of criteria embodied in a series of 13 'positive' and 13 'negative messages'. As the report attempts to capture the way in which mental health services, for example Care in the Community, are portrayed in the media, as well as the way in which mental health problems themselves are depicted, an 'unfavourable' article may be one in which Care in the Community is criticised rather than one which portrays those with mental health problems in a negative manner.



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KEY INDICATORS

	OVERALL
Period of Coverage:	March 1999 to May 2000
Overall volume:	162
Overall rating:	50.9
Favourable articles (vol):	38
Unfavourable articles (vol):	37
Neutral articles (vol):	86
Leading media type:	Daily publications
Leading publication:	Darlington Northern Echo
Leading by-line:	Barry Nelson (Darlington Northern Echo)
Leading media reaction:	Social environment to blame
Leading cause of mental health:	Unknown
Leading types of treatment:	Community care
Leading diagnosis:	Depression*
Overall tone of articles:	Factual
Leading positive message:	Mental health problems are treatable
Leading negative message:	The health service does not support those with mental health problems

*Note: *of the specified diagnoses*



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REPRESENTATIVE PRESS COMMENTS

- *"He was fighting the medical system rather than getting the support he needed"* – father of Simon Richmond, who committed suicide while on remand (Darlington Northern Echo, 17/5/00)
- *"Brian was begging the hospital to help him. He was so depressed. He wanted somebody to help him as he didn't know what to do ... Maybe if the hospital had helped him he would still be here today"* – brother of Brian Curry, who committed suicide (The Evening Chronicle, 30/5/00)
- *"Contrary to what many people believe, anorexia is not about food and eating, it's a mental illness, and Clare was suffering"* (Darlington Northern Echo, 30/5/00)
- *"Villagers fear their unknown neighbours: A killer in their midst"* – headline in The Liverpool Post (20/7/99)
- *"New moves to lock up people who pose a serious threat to society must not be blocked in the name of civil liberties ... too many of the most dangerous people in Britain have attacked and murdered innocent victims after being allowed to remain at large ... patients who are considered untreatable are left to go about their entirely unpredictable business"* (Hartlepool Mail, 19/7/99)
- *"Net tightens on psychos: closing legal loophole will curb 'walking time-bombs'"* – headline in Hartlepool Mail (19/7/99)
- *"They are not nutters and they are not ill ... they are at the centre of their own universe and have no understanding of other people's feelings ... there is no good evidence that anything helps them"* – Dr Andy Clayton, Medical Director, South Derbyshire Mental Health Trust, commenting on people with severe personality disorders (Derby Evening Telegraph, 20/7/99)
- *"Depression is a more lethal disease than many cancers ... most sufferers can live normal or near normal lives"* – Dr Des Wetherly (Yorkshire Evening Post, 17/8/99)
- *"Any of us could suffer mental problems. It is sad that you can't get the message over to people than this can happen"* – Philip Marsh, Pastoral Homes (Surrey Mirror, 18/11/99)
- *"Horley is not the place for people with mental disorders"* – Paul Hooks, Residents Against Mental Home Proposal (Surrey Mirror, 18/11/99)
- *"There is rank discrimination here against people who have been defined as having mental ill-health"* – Earle Kessler, South and West Director of Mind (Evening Herald, Plymouth, 25/11/99)



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- *“A shattered leg mends and nobody thinks anything less of the person ... they are more reluctant to understand that broken minds can also heal”* (Evening Mail, Barrow-in-Furness, 20/11/99)

- *“She feels men are becoming more prone to mental illness, often in middle-age when they are unemployed or their marriages have broken down and they find themselves alone and unable to cope”* – Kevin Nash, referring to comments by Anita Paul, Deputy Sister at St Ann’s hospital (Bournemouth Daily Echo, 25/9/99)

- *“Mental illness severe enough to need professional assistance is as common as heart disease and three times as common as cancer”* – Kevin Nash (Bournemouth Daily Echo, 25/9/99)



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VOLUME

- | The volume of coverage was relatively small at 162 items. The majority of articles (137) were from regional publications from the north of England. Thirty-five items related to the Durham area, and referred to at least one of the health authorities and / or NHS Trusts in that region.

RATING, ATTITUDES AND TONE

- | Fifty-four per cent of the items researched were neutral in tone, with positive and negative articles accounting for a further 23 per cent each of the total. Unfavourable articles were mainly crime-related, while favourable items were either health features or items pertaining to local services.
- | Out of 162 items, there were only 18 examples of 'sensational' reporting; these were mainly headlines in crime-related articles.
- | Although few articles in the period researched prompted any of the 13 positive and negative messages, attitudes towards those with mental health problems were reasonably balanced.
- | There were few examples of outright hostility. Anger was directed at those public services which appeared to have failed individuals with mental health problems rather than the individuals themselves; 24 articles prompted the message that **'the health service does not support those with mental health problems'**.
- | The leading positive message was **'mental health problems are treatable'**. Few articles were overtly opposed to care in the community, although in some cases it was felt to be inappropriate.

DESCRIPTORS

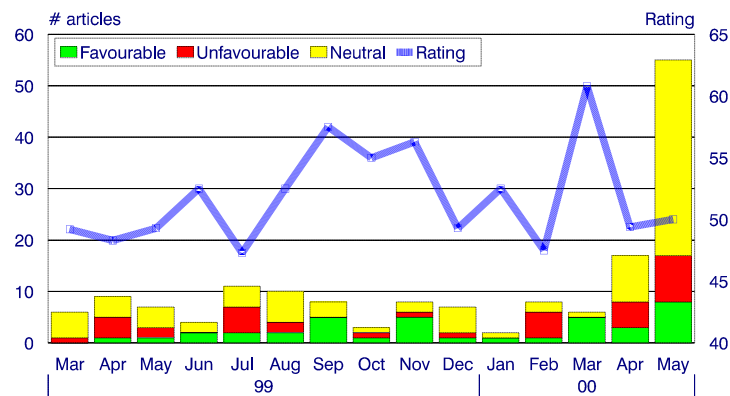
- | Very few pejorative or derogatory terms were used to describe those with mental health problems. The most frequently used terms were 'disturbed' and 'dangerous'. There were only two examples of each of the following: 'psycho', 'manic', 'loony' and 'nutter'.

MAIN REPORT

1. TYPE OF COVERAGE

Monthly Trend

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

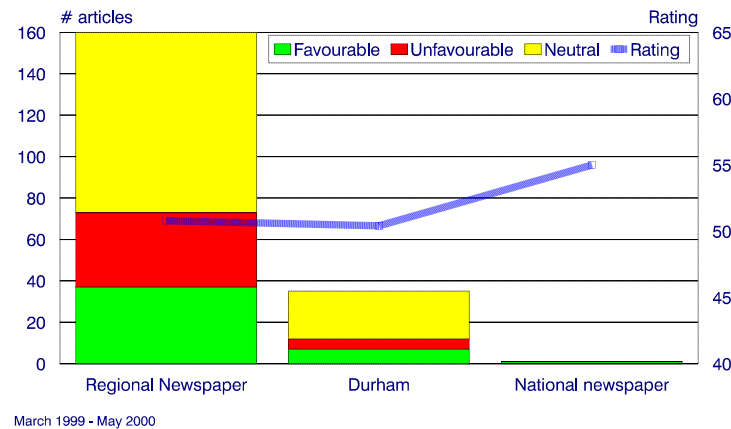
Chart 1

- There was little variation in the monthly volume of articles in 1999 and early 2000. However coverage surged dramatically in **May 2000**. This was partly a result of press interest in two campaigns; one by the National Association for Pre-menstrual Syndrome and another which resulted from the report on eating disorders produced by the British Medical Association (BMA).
- The most favourable monthly rating was generated by coverage in **March 2000**, none of which was negative. There were some very positive items relating to local services, for example, the Sunderland Community Support Worker Scheme (Evening Chronicle, 23/3/00). The scheme was described as having *“improved contact with people who are reluctant to use mental health services”* and led to a reduction in psychiatric hospital admissions. This item also mentioned a survey by the Mental Health Foundation of people with mental health problems who faced discrimination at work.
- In 1999, the highest monthly rating was for **September’s** coverage. There were no unfavourable items in September and the presence of one extremely positive article in the Bournemouth Daily Echo (25/9/99) helped to lift that month’s rating. This item focused on the valuable work of St Ann’s Hospital in Bournemouth and promoted a positive image of both those with mental health problems and those working in the health service. This article ended by suggesting that *“the next time you’re tempted to talk about it as a loony bin, think again. Because one day you might need help – and this is where you’ll get it”*.

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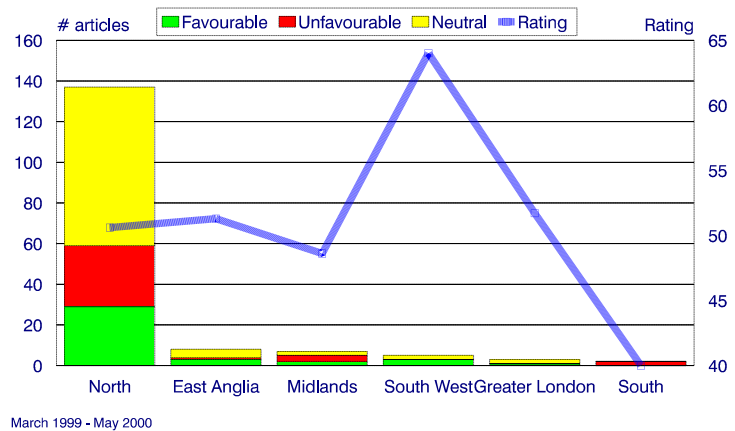
Media Type

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



Regional Breakdown

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



Charts 2 & 3

- In the first chart, the volume (total number) of items is shown by the height of the bars and numbers are shown on the left axis. Publications have been broken down into regional newspapers, the Durham press and national newspapers. The number of favourable, unfavourable and neutral articles is shown by the colours of the bars. The rating (an average figure denoting the overall favourability or unfavourability of a particular media type) is shown by the blue line. The figures for overall ratings are shown on the right-hand axis.
- The total volume of articles in the period researched was 162, 35 of which focused on Durham. Just over half of all items in the regional press were **neutral** (54 per cent). Only one item (which was favourable) appeared in a national newspaper – an article on the use of the drug Ritalin, printed in The Sun on 28 May 2000. Articles which referred to mental health issues in



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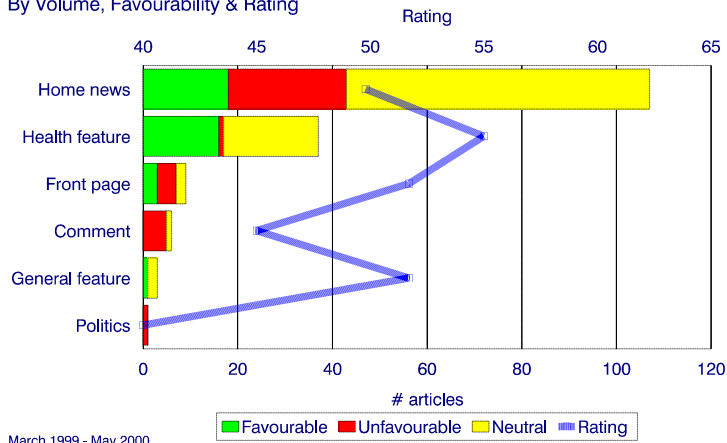
passing or which were purely factual accounts of local services or local funding generated neutral ratings.

- **Favourable** items were those that promoted a positive image of people with mental health problems. These were usually health features or items focusing on particular hospitals or care homes. An example of a typical headline included "*Mental illness: An ordinary disease*", The Yorkshire Evening Post (17/8/99). Twenty-three per cent of all items in regional newspapers were favourable and an equal proportion unfavourable.
- **Unfavourable** articles were mainly those relating to crime, such as "*Terminator deaths trigger staff boost*", the Coventry Evening Telegraph (17/2/00).

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Placement

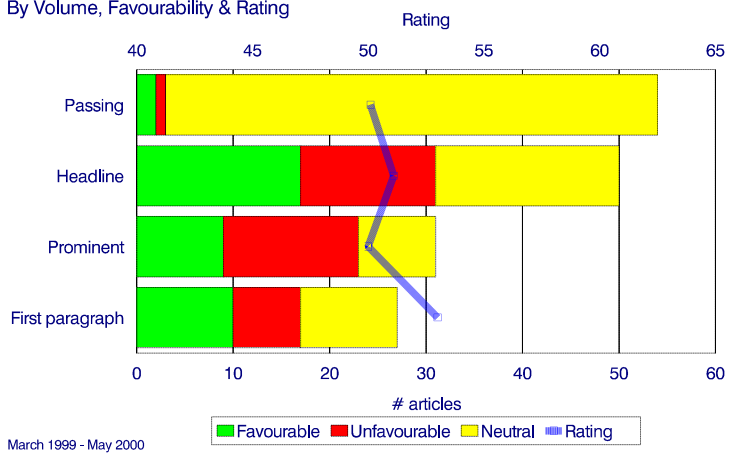
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

Prominence

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

Charts 4a & 4b

- The first chart depicts 'placement', showing where in a publication an item was placed, for example, in the health section, the letters column, the front page, etc, while the second chart depicts 'prominence', ie where in an article the reference to mental health was to be found – in the headline, the first paragraph, in a prominent position or only as a passing mention.



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- The majority of items (66 per cent) were **'home news'** articles, which related to local incidents such as the funding of hospitals, murders, suicides, abuse in care homes and misdiagnosis of physical illness. Of these, 60 per cent were neutral. Neutral items were those which either referred to mental health problems in passing or which were purely factual accounts of local services.
- There were more negative than positive home news items; 23 per cent were unfavourable and 17 per cent, favourable. Unfavourable articles tended to be those related to crime. A typical example was an item in the Lancashire Evening Post (5/8/99) which, under the headline *"Psychopath's kill threat"*, said that a *"freed psychopathic killer has admitted he could still pose a threat to the public"*. In contrast, an article in The Darlington Northern Echo (21/4/99) reported the opening of a new resource centre for those with mental health problems in the Darlington area to be run by charity Mental Health Matters. Commenting on the new centre, Councillor Bill Dixon said: *"This centre offers sufferers the resources to rebuild their self-esteem and self-confidence, which will help set them on the road to fulfilling their potential."*
- There were 37 **health features** (23 per cent of all articles) in the period researched. Only three per cent of these were negative. These items generated the highest overall rating of 55. The most positive was an article in the Yorkshire Evening Post (17/9/99) by Dr Des Wetherly, which pointed out that *"mental illnesses still carry with them an element of shame. Other people make them feel that they have brought it on themselves, and that, the illness not being physical, all they need to do is to 'pull themselves together"*.
- Of the nine **front page** items, four were unfavourable. The least favourable was an article in the Hartlepool Mail (19/7/99) which carried the headline *"Net tightens on psychos"*. The article's secondary headline was equally negative, stating: *"Closing legal loophole will curb 'walking time bombs'."*
- There were six **comment** items in total, five of which were editorials. All but one was unfavourable (one was neutral). However, the unfavourable items were rated negative for differing reasons. An editorial in the Hartlepool Mail (19/7/99) whose headline was *"Killers must be curbed"*, argued that *"Too many of the most dangerous people in Britain have attacked and murdered innocent victims after being allowed to remain at large"*. In direct contrast, the Lancashire Evening Telegraph (20/12/99) was rated as negative in the sense that it prompted a number of negative messages about the health service's ability to offer those with mental health problems the treatment they needed. *"When a man with manifest mental problems and who poses a danger to others has to be remanded in prison because there is no secure hospital accommodation available, it is not just unfortunate. For, when the shortage is so severe that it can be months before a place can be had, it amounts to a national scandal"*.

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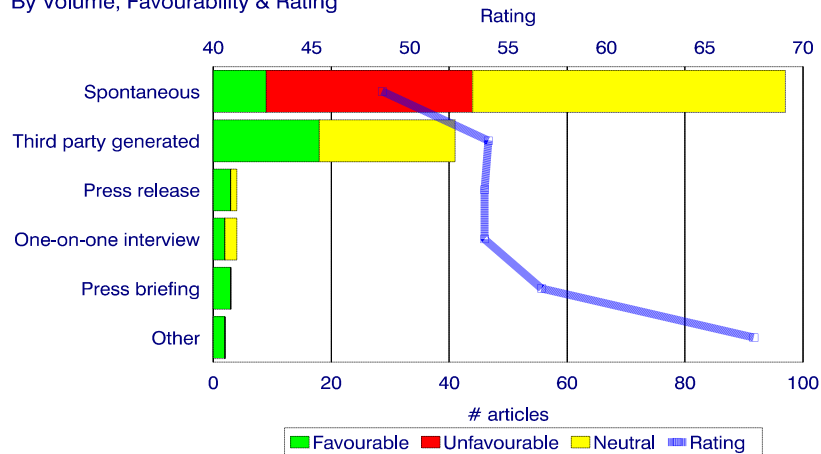
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- There were three **general features** in the period researched, two of which were neutral and one of which was favourable. The latter was an interesting piece in the Eastern Daily Press (1/7/99) about schizophrenic artist, Mary Tall, whose work had recently been rediscovered.
- The one overtly **political** item was an article in the Derby Evening Telegraph (20/7/99) by Kirsty Buchanan, which generated a negative rating of 40. This article related to government proposals to detain those with severe personality disorders. Although Dr Andy Clayton of the Southern Derbyshire Mental Health Trust said that *“There are thousands of people in Derbyshire who have mental illnesses that we can treat very well and often we can make them better”*, he added on a rather more negative note that *“people with severe personality disorders are at the end of the spectrum. There is no good evidence that anything helps them”*.
- There were 54 **passing references** in the period researched, of which 94 per cent were neutral. These were often references in items on physical illness or local health services which only mentioned mental health issues in passing.
- Mental health was mentioned in 50 **headlines**, of which 28 per cent were unfavourable and 34 per cent favourable. Unfavourable headlines related mainly to crime and examples included:
 - “Inquiry to look into care of killer”* (Northern Echo, 21/5/99)
 - “Villagers fear their unknown neighbours”* (Liverpool Daily Post, 20/7/99)
 - “Schizophrenic killed his mum”* (Southend Evening Echo, 10/2/00)
 - “Anger over knife killer”* (Yorkshire Evening Post, 19/2/00)
 - “Son killed ex-model with rock”* (Eastern Daily Press, 10/2/00)
- Favourable headlines included the following examples:
 - “Direct line for mental health help”* (The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal, 9/3/00)
 - “Bid to help the mentally ill ...”* (Hartlepool Mail, 10/5/00)
 - “Mental illness: An ordinary disease”* (Yorkshire Evening Post, 17/8/99)
 - “There is life after anorexia strikes”* (Northern Echo, 30/5/00)
 - “Mental health group to help environment”* (Sunderland Echo, 24/5/00)
- Neutral headlines often referred to local funding and local services, for example:
 - “Chief backs health changes”* (Northern Echo, 20/5/00)
 - “Massive health plan”* (Hartlepool Mail, 20/5/00)
 - “£1m plan to cut killer diseases”* (Sunderland Echo, 24/5)
- Where mental health was mentioned in the **first paragraph**, items were more likely to be favourable than if the reference was merely **prominent**. Of all items referring to mental health in the first paragraph, 37 per cent were favourable and 26 per cent unfavourable. Where the reference was prominent, 45 per cent of items were negative and 29 per cent positive. There was no discernible reason for this trend and frequently, ‘prominent’ references appeared in the second, if not the first paragraph.

Source of Coverage

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

Chart 5

- This chart shows how articles were generated. For example, articles could have been generated spontaneously in response to a particular incident; written as a result of ‘third party’ activity, for example, the publication of a report by a charity or professional body; generated as a result of a press release being issued or as a result of a press briefing, or one-to-one interview being given.
- The majority of items researched were generated **spontaneously**. There were 97 such articles, 55 per cent of which were neutral and 36 per cent unfavourable. Only nine per cent of these items were favourable. This was because spontaneous items were frequently crime reports.
- Forty-one items were **third party** generated. These were articles written in response to an initiative on the part of a particular charity, voluntary organisation, support group, government agency, etc. The number of articles generated by third party groups demonstrated the success of a number of mental health organisations in getting their message across successfully. Examples of organisations whose reports were well reported included Mind, the British Medical Association and the National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome.
- Several items looked at the problems caused by PMS, relating it to the character of Jackie Owen in Eastenders. The Darlington Northern Echo (23/5/00) described it as a “*serious medical condition*”, which could even result in suicide. Stephanie Allen, Executive Officer of the National Association For Premenstrual Syndrome was also quoted as saying “*A woman’s life can be torn apart by PMS – many lose partners and friends and careers can be left in tatters. We know there are thousands of women suffering in silence every month*”.



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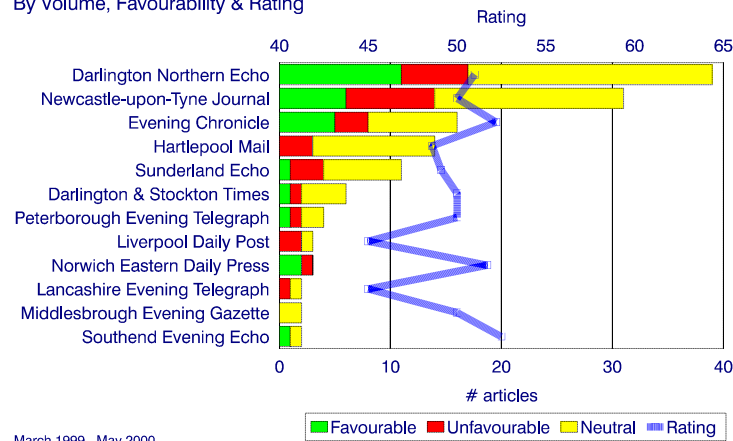
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- Several items were prompted by the publication of the report 'Eating Disorders, Body Image and The Media', by the British Medical Association (BMA). This claimed that the use of waif-like models was promoting eating disorders in young women. An item in The Darlington Northern Echo (31/5/00) entitled "*Real role models for real women*", quoted Dr Vivienne Nathanson of the BMA as saying that "*The images of slim models are a marked contrast to the body size and shape of most children and young women, who are becoming increasingly heavier*".
- Very few items were prompted by **press releases, briefings** or **interviews**, but no unfavourable items were generated by these methods. There were two items which fell into the '**other**' category; one was the previously mentioned feature by Dr Des Wetherly in the Yorkshire Evening Post (17/9/99) and the other the article about schizophrenic artist Mary Tall which appeared in the Eastern Daily Press (1/7/99).

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Leading Publications

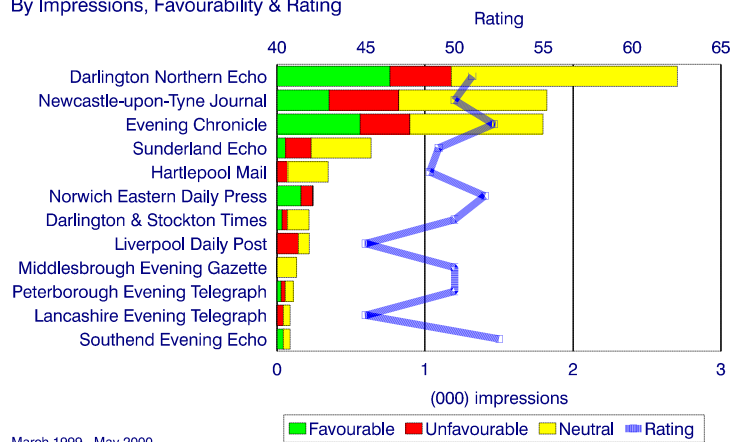
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



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Leading Publications

By Impressions, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

Charts 6a & 6b

- These two graphs show which publications generated the greatest amount of coverage, both in terms of numbers of articles (chart 6a) and in terms of impressions – the publications' circulation figures multiplied by the number of articles (chart 6b).
- The three leading publications, both by volume and by impressions were the **Darlington Northern Echo**, **The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal** and **The Evening Chronicle**. The majority of items in these publications were neutral.
- **The Darlington Northern Echo** contained more positive than negative articles and its reporting of local health issues seemed accurate and reliable. The paper appeared to have a good relationship with the local health authorities and trusts, and Sandy Taylor, Chief

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Executive of County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust, and Ken Jarrold, Chief Executive of the County Durham Health Authority, were frequently quoted. In a sympathetic article on 15 May 1999, the paper profiled the autobiography of John Caden, Chaplin at Winterton Hospital in Durham. The article looked at the problems faced by those patients who had been resident in the hospital, in some cases for 50 years or more, the reasons for their original admission, long forgotten. It highlighted the plight of those for whom institutionalisation had become a way of life and for whom care in the community was inappropriate.

- **The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal** carried more negative than positive articles, although an item in the paper entitled “*Sex change breast operation on NHS*” (30/5/00) was, given the subject matter, relatively restrained. This item related to a row which had “*erupted yesterday after it was revealed a father of two had been given breast implants on the NHS to complete a sex swap operation*”. This was the sort of item which might well have been wholly unsympathetic, but which quoted Eugene Milne, Newcastle & North Tyneside Health Authority Consultant in Public Health Medicine, as saying “*There is a strong local view that sex change operations should be banned on the National Health Service but failure to act can lead to serious mental illness or even suicide. It could be a life-saving intervention*”. However, the article also quoted local MP, Stephen Hepburn, as saying “*The NHS have got it completely wrong*”.
- **The Evening Chronicle** carried more favourable than unfavourable items. The front-page headline in the paper on 30 May 2000 above an article concerning a young man’s suicide was: “*This man begged doctors for help. They refused. Hours later he killed himself.*” The article, which was sympathetic in tone, included claims by Mr Curry’s brother Michael that “*Brian was begging the hospital to help him. He was so depressed. He wanted somebody to help him as he didn’t know what to do*”. He added that “*Maybe if the hospital had helped him he would still be here today*”.
- The two publications which generated the least favourable overall ratings were the **Liverpool Daily Post** and the **Lancashire Evening Telegraph**. There were no positive articles in these newspapers. However, the two items in the **Lancashire Evening Telegraph** were unfavourable only in the sense that they prompted negative messages about the health service’s inability to cope with those with mental health problems. The items in question, a court report by Amanda Killelea (20/12/99) and an accompanying editorial, related to the case of Barry Dunne who had been remanded in custody in prison owing to a suitable hospital place being unavailable.
- Items in **The Liverpool Daily Post** were unfavourable, except for one neutral article. This latter item (20/7/99) related to Ashworth hospital and quoted the then Secretary of State for Health, Rt. Hon Frank Dobson MP, in whose view “*The overwhelming majority of people with personality disorders live well-ordered lives and pose no risk to the public*”. An article in the paper on 20 July 1999 used the headline: “*Villagers fear their unknown neighbours: A killer in*



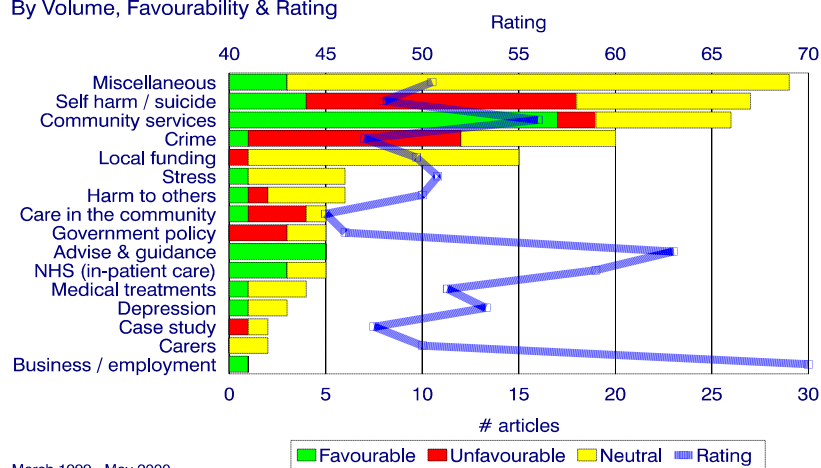
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their midst" above what was primarily a factual account of a magistrates order restricting the movements of "a man said to be a danger to the public".

2. QUALITY OF COVERAGE

Article Focus

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

Chart 7

- This chart depicts the subject matter of the items researched and shows the numbers of items in each category which were favourable, unfavourable or neutral. The numbers of articles can be read from the left axis and are shown by the bars.
- The leading article focus category was **miscellaneous**. Miscellaneous items included those relating to physical illness which referred to mental health issues in passing; items about health service staff, which made fleeting reference to the fact that they worked in the mental health sector; and an assortment of items, including one which, rather surprisingly, suggested in passing that *“rising rates of mental illness and depression may be linked to the fact people are not eating enough sardines, kippers and other fish”* (Newcastle-upon-Journal, 24/5/00).
- **Self harm and suicide** was the focus of 27 items, just over half of which were negative. These articles were unfavourable, however, only in the sense that they reflected the inadequacies of health service provision. For example, the Newcastle-upon-Tyne journal (16/5/00) described the case of Simon Richmond, found hanged in his cell at Durham prison, as having sunk *“into depression”* during his 14 months on remand. The article said he had *“a history of mental problems”*. The item also referred to the fact that local MP, Gerry Steinberg, had asked for him to be moved to a psychiatric hospital. Rampton hospital had refused to take him as they did not consider him to be in *“immediate danger”*. This article was one of a number, which prompted the message that the health service could not offer those with mental health problems the level of care which they required.

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- **Community services** were the focus of 26 items, the majority (65 per cent) of which were favourable. Most of these items were brief and factual in tone. For example, an article in The Darlington Northern Echo (25/9/99) covered the opening of the Derwentside Child and Family Centre and said that it was designed to help those with *“emotional and behavioural difficulties”*. The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (6/7/99) quoted Sandy Taylor, Chief Executive of the County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust as saying: *“We need to change the experiences of the people who use mental health services”* and in the same article, Ken Jarrold, Chief Executive of the County Durham Health Authority was quoted as saying *“People with mental health problems have a range of needs which require the support of many different organisations”*.
- **Crime** was the focus of 20 items in the period researched, only one of which was favourable. These articles generated an overall rating of 47. *“Inquiry to look into care of killer”* was a typical headline, in this case in The Darlington Northern Echo (21/5/99) which referred to the independent enquiry established to look at the care given to a women *“who killed her violent lover and later walked free from court”*. A rather sensational headline was also employed by the Eastern Daily Press (10/2/00) in its item about *“paranoid schizophrenic who thought mother was the devil”*.
- **Local funding** was the focus of 15 articles, 14 of which were neutral and one unfavourable. The sole negative item related to the financial difficulties forcing the closure of a home catering for elderly people with mental health problems (Darlington & Stockton Times, 19/3/99) which suggested that the closure *“would probably have a traumatic effect on them”*.
- **Stress** was featured in six items, five of which were neutral and one of which was favourable. The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (11/5/00) referred to the case of a nurse, Shirley Ball, given an eight month prison sentence for breaking the thigh bone of a 10-day-old boy in the special baby care unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow, Essex. The article reported the view of Judge Gareth Hawkesworth that *“accumulated stress and tiredness”* had been the cause of what was essentially an *“out of character piece of recklessness”*.
- **Harm to others** featured in a total of six items, which were all crime-related. An article entitled *“Doctors missing clues to dangerous patients”* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal, 21/4/00) reported the findings of a study by Dr Steven Milne, published in the British Medical Journal, which purported to show that a *“quarter of mentally ill patients harbour violent thoughts towards others”*. However, Professor Alan Young of Newcastle’s Royal Victoria Infirmary pointed out that violence towards others by those with mental health problems was a rarity and Dr Jenny Shaw, a forensic psychiatrist, suggested that it was not always easy to predict violent behaviour. A spokesman for Tees and North East Yorkshire Health Authority was quoted as saying that while the authority would review its procedures in the light of the report, *“it is important to remember what the report states in its opening paragraph – most mentally ill people are not violent and most violence is carried out by mentally well people”*.



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- **Care in the community** generated mainly unfavourable items. One of these, an article in the Surrey Mirror (18/11/99) – which generated the lowest rating of all items at 35 – sported the headline *“Joy as mental home proposal is turned down”*. This reported the views of Paul Hooks, Chairman of local pressure group, RAMP (Residents Against Mental Home Proposal) who asserted that *“Horley is not the place for people with mental disorders”*. This item amply demonstrated the fear which ‘mental illness’ continues to engender in local communities. Philip Marsh, Director of Pastoral Homes, which had applied for planning permission to build a care home in Horley was quoted as saying that *“Any of us could suffer mental problems. It is sad that you can’t get this message over to people”*.
- However, the article also underlined the importance of communication and consultation with local residents. Liberal Democrat Councillor, Elizabeth Pinn said *“We need to send a message to applicants to communicate with local residents”* and Conservative Councillor William Gibbs suggested that Pastoral Homes could have made more effort to talk to residents, adding *“We don’t even know if they have ever run a mental home before”*. However, on a positive note, Labour Councillor, Robin Spencer cautioned: *“We should be very careful of nimbyism.”*
- **Government policy** was the focus of five items which dealt with proposals to detain those with severe personality disorders. Three of these items were unfavourable and two neutral. A comprehensive article in the Derby Evening Telegraph (20/7/99) considered both the options set out in the Government’s consultation document. The article quoted Dr Andy Clayton of Southern Derbyshire Mental Health Trust, who made the distinction between those with mental health problems who could be treated and those with severe personality disorders, who, in his view could not be helped: *“there is no good evidence that anything helps them.”*
- **Advise and guidance** featured in only five items, all of which were positive. An article in The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (9/3/00) focused on the advice available to those with *“depression, stress and bereavement”* through NHS Direct. Morpeth GP, John Myers, was quoted as saying: *“Helping patients to take some control over their illness can be a big step towards recovery.”*
- **NHS in-patient care** was the focus of five articles, none of which were unfavourable. The most positive item was a feature on St Ann’s hospital in Bournemouth which appeared in the (Bournemouth Daily Echo, 25/9/99). Consultant Psychiatrist, Dr Laurence Mynors-Wallis explained that the hospital admitted patients who could not be supported by the community because they could be a risk to themselves or others. One patient, Sue, quoted in the article, said: *“I’m glad I’m here. Like many of the other patients I’ve spoken to I realise I just needed some breathing space, some strength to go back out and carry on.”*



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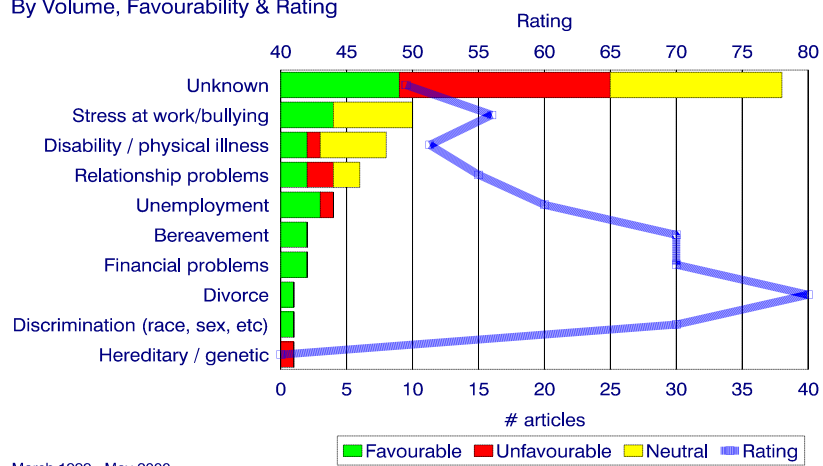
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March 1999 to May 2000

- **Medical treatments** featured in four articles. In an item in the Oxford Mail (27/8/99) the mother of a man with schizophrenia expressed concern that her son had *“been allowed to drift around the country in a chronically ill state”*. She pointed out that *“If a patient is treated properly when first diagnosed, you can do a lot more with them”*. Controversial drug, Ritalin, featured in one item in The Sun (28/5/00) which presented both sides of the debate. Susan, the mother of Stephen who was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) said that after only two weeks of taking Ritalin, his behaviour had improved, whereas Professor Steve Baldwin of Teeside University argued that no child should be given the drug.
- **Depression** was the focus of only three articles, one of which was positive and two neutral. An item in the Barnsley Star (23/11/99) by Kate Lahive related to efforts being made to ensure better psychological after-care for heart attack patients. The article stated that 10 to 15 per cent of all such patients become clinically depressed, which, according to the article, *“makes them five to ten times more likely to have another heart attack”*. Two items, one in the Hartlepool Mail (28/4/00) and one in the Sunderland Echo (28/4/00), concerned the misdiagnosis of a man with terminal brain tumours, told by doctors he was suffering from anxiety and depression.
- **Case studies** and **carers** were the focus of two items each. Both **case studies** related to patients who had been ‘failed’ by both health and social services. The Yorkshire Evening Press (12/1/99) featured the case of a *“dangerous and sexually disturbed patient”* whom care home owner Rose Cusick did not want to release into the community because she feared he would not be able to cope. She commented that *“Tom clearly needs psychiatric help with his sexual problems but, as the psychiatrists can pick and choose who they treat, it seems that no-one really wants to be responsible”*.
- Both items on **carers** were neutral. On 16 May 2000 The Darlington Northern Echo featured Barnardo’s ‘Shared Care Project’, which uses ‘befrienders’ to help give carers a break and to integrate children into the community. This was a positive item which focused on the benefits of the scheme to parents, their children and the ‘befrienders’. Helen, whose son Mark was autistic, described the benefits of his weekly meetings with befrienders Richard and Susan: *“The most important thing about it is that it’s good for Mark. It’s respite for me, but I know he’s happy and looked after.”* Although this was a very sympathetic and favourable article, there was little emphasis on mental health problems. An article in The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (22/5/00) looked at the inadequacies of the vaccine damage payment scheme and featured the case of Gregg Draper, cared for by his mother Sheila. This sympathetic article looked at the practical and emotional difficulties faced by someone caring full-time for a child with a severe disability. *“When you are a carer like I am, 24 hours a day, you cannot be ill yourself”*, Sheila Draper was quoted as saying.
- Although **business / employment** featured in only one item, this article in the Evening Herald (25/11/99) was extremely positive, generating a rating of 70. This was a report of a one-day conference in Plymouth held to discuss the problems of discrimination at work.

Causes of Mental Health

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

Chart 8

- This chart shows the 'causes' of mental health problems as identified by the media; they are not definitive, scientifically proven 'causes'.
- Of the 73 items highlighting a particular mental health problem, 38 suggested that the cause of the problem was **unknown**. These were mainly articles relating to crimes committed by those with mental health problems. Although these items routinely referred to their subjects as 'schizophrenic', 'manic depressive', 'psychotic', or 'dangerous severe personality disordered', they did not suggest what the root causes of these problems might be.
- **Stress at work** and **bullying** were identified as causes of mental health problems in 10 items, none of which were unfavourable. A brief item in The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (19/5/00) referred to research carried out by Bristol University which suggested that five million workers suffered high levels of stress because they "were not supported by their managers". The same publication (26/5/00) referred to the results of a survey of more than 200 hospital consultants who said that having constantly to put their career before their family was becoming an increasing feature of hospital culture.
- **Bullying** was cited as a cause of mental health problems in two items. One, in The Sunderland Echo (18/5/00), featured Nicola Ratcliffe, who had been bullied at school because of her appearance and who had recently had surgery for a deformity of the jaw. The Evening Chronicle (23/3/00) in an excellent item on the Sunderland Community Support Worker Scheme, quoted Tony who had "suffered from depression for years" and who asserted that "a lot of my problems stemmed from being bullied at school but I had no one to talk to or confide in".



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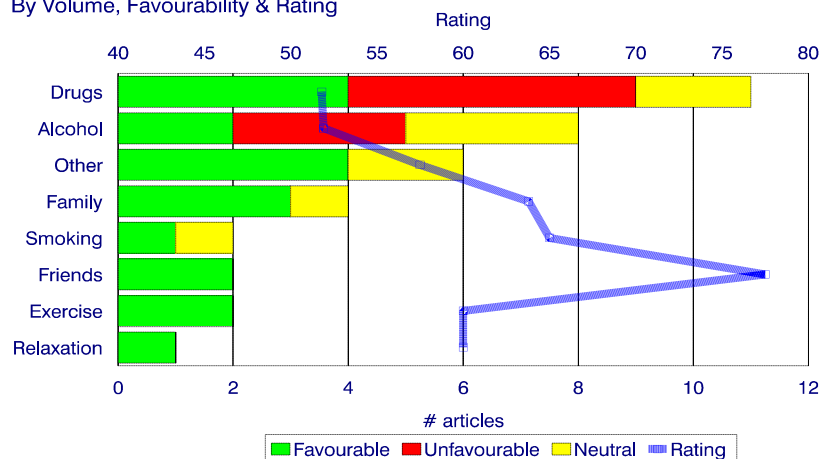
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- **Disability and physical illness** was cited as a cause of mental health problems in eight items. In a major feature in The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (24/4/00) Val Milnes told of how a skiing accident had led to her becoming paralysed. While the majority of the article focused on her successful battle to come to terms with the physical effects of disability and her return to work, the item did refer to how suicidal she had initially felt after the accident.
- **Relationship problems** were cited as a major cause of mental health problems in only six items. An item in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (15/3/00) focused on the pressures facing the farming community and highlighted “*relationship difficulties*” as one of the causes of mental health problems. This article also pointed to **unemployment** as a major cause of depression in rural areas. **Bereavement, financial problems, divorce, discrimination and hereditary factors** were barely mentioned in any of the items researched.

Ways of coping with Mental Health

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



March 1999 - May 2000

Chart 9

- **Drugs** were cited as a means of coping with mental health problems in a total of 11 items. A number of these also suggested that drug abuse might have precipitated mental ill health. An article in The Eastern Daily Press (10/2/00) on Jonathan Neale, a young schizophrenic man who had killed his mother, suggested that *“As a teenager, he had abused alcohol and drugs – including cannabis, LSD and heroin – and had started to show signs of mental illness in 1995”*.
- **Alcohol**, both as a means of coping with mental health problems and as a possible cause, was referred to in eight items. An article in The Evening Chronicle (22/5/00) on Castington prison, quoted offender David Rudd who admitted that *“I was boozed up when I did the robbery ... it was my first offence, I was a mess. I didn’t care what happened to me. I had a serious drugs problem and I was abusing my body with drink”*.
- A very positive item in The Evening Chronicle (23/3/00) featured the work of the Sunderland Community Support Worker Scheme. The article referred to Wendy, a 28-year-old whose excessive drinking had led to her being admitted to hospital, who had been *“persuaded that a new scheme for people with severe mental health problems could get her out of the downward spiral of despair”*. This item also referred to **other** ways of coping with mental health problems, employed by the Sunderland Community Support Worker Scheme to help people regain confidence. For example, the scheme assigned each patient a ‘special friend’ who would simply help them with day-to-day tasks which, as a result of their mental health problems, had become difficult or impossible. Sue Ramprogus, divisional manager for mental health services, claimed the scheme had cut admissions to psychiatric hospitals by 30 per cent.
- An item in The Darlington Northern Echo (20/5/00) referred to the Vice Chancellor of Durham University and former Chief Medical Officer, Sir Kenneth Calman’s speech to a conference on



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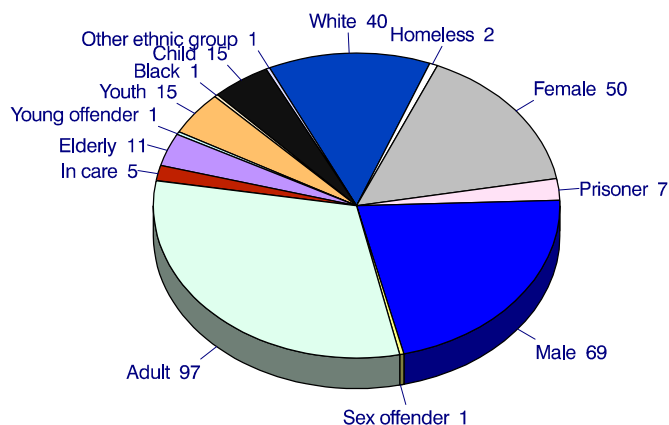
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mental health issues in north Durham, and said that he had *“welcomed moves to look beyond the traditional approach to mental health, including using the arts as a therapeutic tool”*.

- **Family** was cited as a means of coping with mental health problems in four items. In an extremely positive article on a new report, ‘What Works for Troubled Children’, published by Barnardos and Wiltshire County Council, the Wiltshire Times (15/10/99) suggested that frontline social services staff could be instrumental in helping children and families overcome *“difficult life circumstances”*.
- **Smoking** was mentioned in only two items, one of which, in the Darlington Northern Echo (26/5/00), referred to smoking as a *“behavioural problem”* and suggested meditation as a possible remedy.
- Two articles which referred to the positive role played by **friends** in helping those with mental health problems generated the highest rating of 77.5; a result of the fact that one of the items concerned was the previously mentioned article on St Ann’s Hospital in the Bournemouth Daily Echo (25/9/99). This suggested that *“Most people can turn to family or friends when they become depressed or anxious. They try to find ways of dealing with problems themselves or with the help of someone close to them”*.
- Two items suggested **exercise** as a means of coping with mental health problems. An item in the Barnsley Star (23/11/99) quoted Professor David Shapiro, whose work with heart attack patients at the Hallamshire Hospital suggested that depression made the lifestyle changes needed after a heart attack more difficult and that the challenge was to ensure that patients wanted to accept changes such as taking more exercise. **Relaxation** was referred to in only one article, a report of World Mental Health Day in the Manchester Evening News (1/9/99) which said that *“children will be beating the blues and taking time out to relax as part of World Mental Health Day”*.

Type of Person

By Volume



March 1999 - May 2000

Chart 10

- The type of person referred to most frequently in the items researched was 'adult', 'male' and 'white'. There were 97 articles in which the person with a mental health problem was an **adult** and 69 items in which the subject of the article was **male**. In 50 items the subject or subjects with mental health problems were **female**.
- The majority of items relating to crime, in particular murder, related to white, male, adults. This was also true of articles relating to suicide. Two items on the suicide of Sharon Skelton (The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal, 13/4/00 and The Evening Chronicle, 14/4/00) were the exception. Unsurprisingly, items on PMS related specifically to women as did articles on eating disorders.
- A number of articles highlighted the increasing recognition that mental health problems affect men as much as women. In an item on the work of Ulverston Mind, Coordinator, Carol Burden said *"When we began it was depressed middle-aged ladies who we saw, now it's manic young men"* (North Western Evening Mail, 01/11/99).
- None of the articles researched focused on **unemployed, lesbian or gay** people and only one article specifically identified its main subject as **black**. One item specifically referred to a member of another ethnic group, one to a **young offender** and one to a **sex offender**. **Homeless** people were cited in only two articles and those **in care** only appeared in five items. **Prisoners** were mentioned in seven items, all but one of which related to people with mental health problems who had been remanded in custody, in prison, simply because there was nowhere else for them to go.



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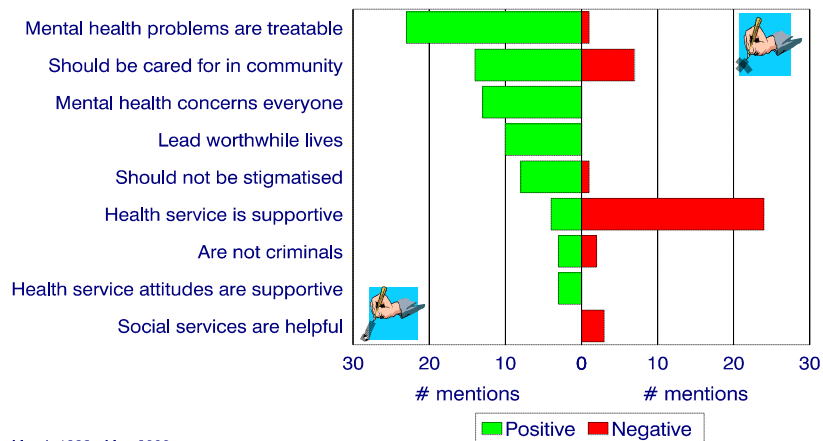
March 1999 to May 2000

- **Elderly** people featured in 11 items. An item in the Hartlepool Mail (5/5/00) suggested that *"Few elderly people want to be admitted to hospital or nursing homes as a result of their mental health problems"*. It went on to report that the creation of a new 'rapid response' team would enable *"out-of-hours support to senile dementia sufferers and their carers"*.
- **Children and young people** were the focus of 15 items each. Items about young people were often those about suicides. An article in the Sunderland Echo (20/4) with the headline *"Call to stem number of young male suicides"* referred to parliamentary group, the Men's Health Forum, which in a report, stated that *"Most young men at risk of suicide are very unlikely to visit their GP"*.

3. PERCEPTIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Leading Positive / Negative Messages

By Volume



March 1999 - May 2000

Chart 11

- This chart shows the leading positive and negative messages by volume. The positive messages are shown on the left of the chart and the corresponding negative messages on the right.
- Given the generally neutral tone of many of the articles researched, it was not surprising that few articles prompted any of the 13 positive or 13 negative messages. However, it was encouraging that the leading positive message was that **mental health problems are treatable**, which appeared in 23 items. This message was implicit in a number of items, for example, Kevin Nash, writing in The Bournemouth Daily Echo (25/9/99) simply referred to St Ann's hospital as a place where "ill people go to get better". An article in The Darlington Northern Echo (30/5/00) used the headline "There is life after anorexia strikes" to make the point that "it is possible to recover and move forward".
- The positive message that **those with mental health problems should be cared for in the community** appeared in 14 items. An article by Dr Des Wetherly in the Yorkshire Evening Post (17/9/99) made the point that "Most mental illnesses can be kept under good control, and most people with them can be cared for at home or in protected houses in the community". In some articles, particularly those describing the success of particular local initiatives, this message was implicit rather than explicit.



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- The message that **mental health concerns everyone** was prompted by 13 articles. An article in the Southend Evening Echo (28/7/99) concerning World Mental Health Day applauded the way in which a newspaper produced by Southend Youth Service took *“a serious and light-hearted look at the way mental health affects all our lives”*.
- The only negative message to appear in any significant numbers was the message that **the health service does not support those with mental health problems**. This was prompted by a number of articles relating to crime and suicide. The case of Andrew Jackson, who had made repeated attempts to kill himself, was a typical example. The Peterborough Evening Telegraph (27/8/99) said that Mr Jackson had been charged with an obscure offence, that of obstructing a carriage, simply to ensure that he could be remanded in custody. This was the only way of protecting him. Chairman of the bench, John Gillis, was quoted as saying: *“Rather than seeking to punish you, we are seeking to help you, to stop you injuring yourself and others. It is unfortunate that in the opinion of a psychiatrist, you cannot be treated. It may not be the most appropriate place for you, but we are limited in what we can do.”* There were several other examples of people with mental health problems, particularly those defined as having ‘severe personality disorders’ being remanded in custody, in prison, simply because there was no alternative.
- Only seven few items relating to crimes committed by those thought to have severe personality disorders prompted the negative message that **mental health problems should not be cared for in the community**. An item by Paul Harris in the Oxford Mail (27/8/99) Lynne Slowey, whose son James had been ‘rescued’ by an Oxford night shelter after a hospital decided not to admit him, said that her son was *“not capable of looking after himself because he is mentally ill...[and]...he should have been sectioned”*. However, the conflicting interests with which health professionals have to deal were amply demonstrated when Warneford Hospital’s acting chief executive, Pamela Groves, said of James: *“He does have freedoms and rights as an individual.”*

Image Descriptors v. Regional Breakdown

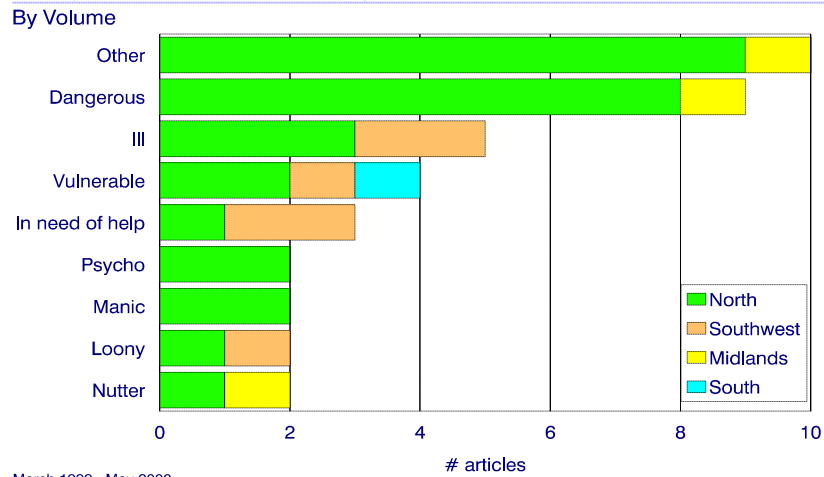
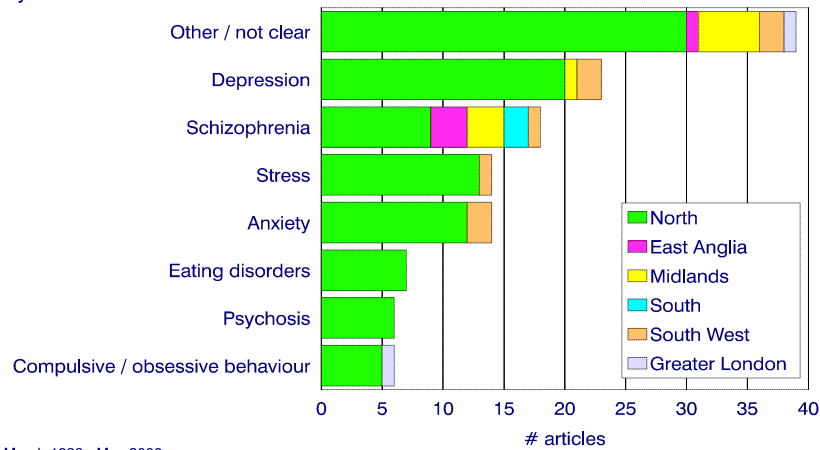


Chart 12

- This chart shows the terms used by the media to describe those with mental health problems. It was encouraging that few pejorative terms were used during the period covered by the study. The most frequently used term was **disturbed** (which appears under 'other'). For example the Hartlepool Mail (8/5/00) referred to a "*disturbed*" boy, removed from care home run by DISC (Developing Initiative for Support in the Community). **Dangerous** appeared in nine items, all of which related to crimes.
- The term 'ill' was used as part of the descriptor, 'mentally ill' in a total of five items, three of which were in northern publications. The term was not used in a derogatory sense. "*New support centre to help mentally ill*", was the headline in The Darlington Northern Echo (21/4/99) accompanying an article about a new resource centre in Darlington.
- **Vulnerable** was used in a total of four items. The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (13/4/99) referred to a schizophrenic man as being "*a particularly vulnerable patient, who had tried to commit suicide on at least three previous occasions*".
- The terms **psycho**, **manic**, **loony** and **nutter** were all used in only two items each. The Hartlepool Mail (19/7/99) used the term 'psycho' in its headline - "*Net tightens on psychos*" - above an item concerning severe personality disorder. The Yorkshire Evening Post (17/8/99) used the terms **psycho**, **loony** and **nutter**, purely as examples of the sort of terminology MIND had been campaigning to eradicate. The article also used the term **manic** as part of the descriptor, manic depression.

Diagnosis & Types of Treatment by Regional Breakdown

By Volume



March 1999 - May 2000

Chart 13

- This chart shows the diagnosis of mental health problems by region. In fact, there were no discernible regional trends in the articles researched and no one diagnosis predominated in any particular region.
- **Other / not clear** was the leading diagnosis, featuring in 39 items. Several of these looked at the problems caused by PMS, relating it to the character of Jackie Owen in Eastenders. The Darlington Northern Echo (23/5/00) described it as a “*serious medical condition*”, which could even result in suicide. The article also linked PMS to “*severe depression, irritability, chronic fatigue, nervous tension and headaches*”. The article quoted actress Race Davies, who plays Jackie Owen as saying “*The EastEnders story tackles the issues that are involved and what it feels like to be out of control, isolated, and lacking in both self-esteem and self-confidence*”.
- **Depression** was mentioned in 23 items. These were passing references. In only three items was depression the main focus of the article. In most cases depression was referred to in passing as one of a number of factors involved in mental health problems. The Yorkshire Evening Post (17/8/99) pointed out that “*Depression is a more lethal disease than many cancers*”. In some cases, depression was actually a misdiagnosis and in one extreme example, a patient suffering from a brain tumour was told he was just **anxious, depressed** and suffering from stress. According to the Hartlepool Mail (28/4/00) he was told “*to get up and go back to work*”. Not only was this a tragic example of the misdiagnosis of a physical illness, it also reinforced the equation of depression with malingering; suggesting that depression and anxiety are merely trivial complaints not deserving of serious attention by the medical profession.



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- **Schizophrenia** was mentioned in 18 items, the majority of which were crime-related. Despite their lurid headlines, some articles resisted the temptation to apportion blame. Although the headline in the Eastern Daily Press (10/2/00): *“Detention at secure unit for paranoid schizophrenic who thought mother was the devil,”* suggested the article might be wholly unsympathetic, this proved not to be the case. The former headteacher of the young man in question, said he was pleased that *“he will receive all the help he needs”* and his grandfather made the point that *“Jonathan can’t help being schizophrenic”*.
- **Stress** was mentioned in 14 articles. A brief item in The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (19/5/00) referred to research carried out by Bristol University which suggested that five million workers suffered high levels of stress because they *“were not supported by their managers”*. The Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal (26/5/00) referred to the previously mentioned results of a survey of more than 200 hospital consultants who said that having to constantly put career before family was becoming an increasing feature of hospital culture.
- **Eating disorders** and the role played by the media featured in seven items, all of which presumed the problem was one which only affected women and specifically younger women. However, the items were all sympathetic and not all laid the blame entirely at the door of the media and in particular women’s magazines. An item in The Darlington Northern Echo (30/5/00) focused on ‘survivor’ Clare Lindsay, who had just written a book offering advice for those with eating disorders. This was an interesting item which suggested that, in this particular case, problems began, not in adolescence as a result of media pressure, but in childhood as a result of peer pressure and the behaviour of other children at school. Claire Lindsay, the article said, remembered, *“being frightened by the cruelty ... of the other girls and developed a paranoia that she was being talked about behind her back”*. The article went on to say that *“she decided that the way to avoid being disliked was to lose weight”*.
- **Psychosis and compulsive / obsessive behaviour** were mentioned in only five items each. Psychosis was mentioned only in passing, as one of a number of different mental health problems. It was usually referred to as one of a trio of ‘mental illnesses’, the other two being schizophrenia and manic depression. Although compulsive and obsessive behaviour were implied in some items on alcohol and drug abuse, no articles dealt explicitly with either and there were none which looked in any depth at obsessive compulsive disorders.

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Tone v. Regional Breakdown

Proportional, By Volume

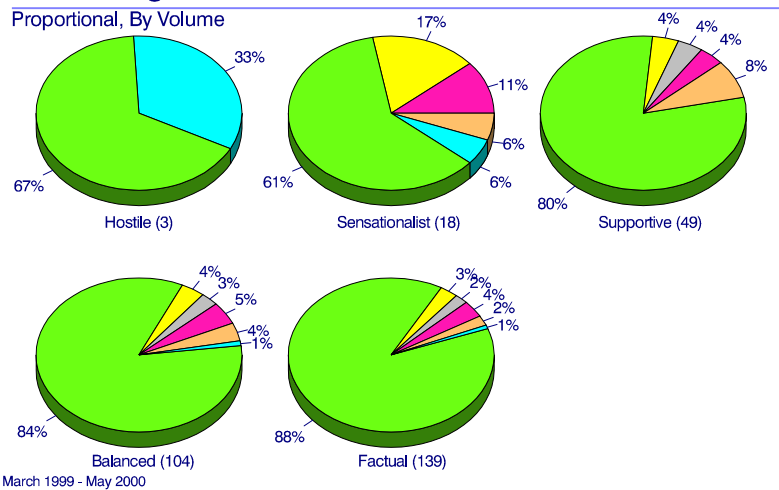


Chart 14a



Tone v. Regional Breakdown

Proportional, By Volume

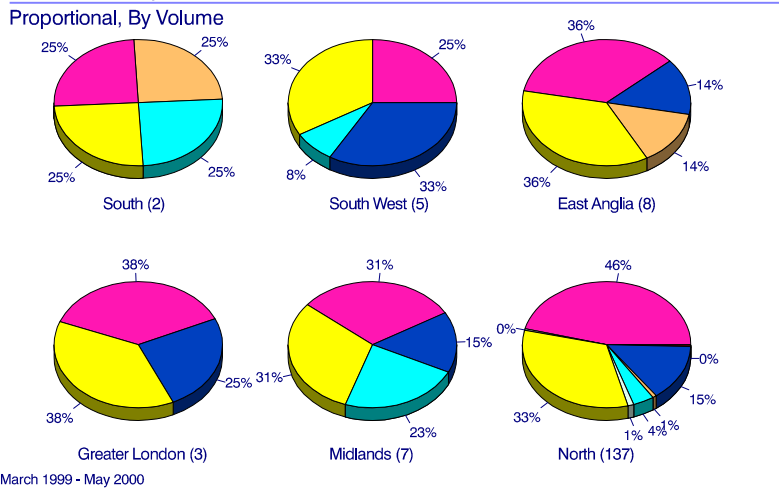
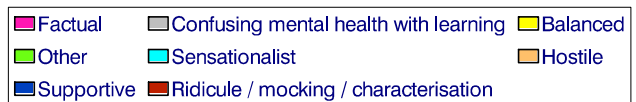


Chart 14b



- These charts show the different 'tones' adopted by the media in their portrayal of mental health problems. These categories were not mutually exclusive and there were a number of occasions when an item was both 'factual' and 'supportive' or 'hostile' and 'sensationalist'. The first chart shows how tone was broken down by region and the second shows the regions broken down by tone. There was not discernible regional pattern to the tone adopted in the



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articles researched; items in the Midlands, for example, were not noticeably more hostile or supportive or balanced than articles in the North or South West.

- There was little open **hostility** to those with mental health problems and the three examples of hostility were the understandable reactions of victims, clearly made in the immediate aftermath of a particular incident, not the comments of journalists. For example, in an item on the detention at Rampton of Richard Fielding, found guilty of an arson attack which resulted in the deaths of eight people, The Darlington Northern Echo (17/5/00) quoted Kellie Himpfen, the mother of three of the children killed in the incident, as saying *"It just goes to show you can get away with murder"*. However, no attempt was made by the newspaper to draw a parallel with other cases or to imply that all those with mental health problems were dangerous or criminal.
- There were no examples of inaccurate reporting or of any confusion between mental health and **autism** and only one item confused **mental health** with **learning difficulties** (Yorkshire Evening Press, 12/1/99). This article referred to *"A dangerous and sexually disturbed patient"* but later referred to the individual in question as *"mentally handicapped"*.
- Only one item adopted a slightly **mocking** tone; this was an article in the Darlington Northern Echo (30/5/00) entitled *"£3,500 NHS op to give sex change man a cleavage"*. *"A row erupted yesterday after it was revealed a rugby-playing father-of-two has been given breast implants on the NHS to complete a sex swap operation"*, claimed the article.
- 49 items were **supportive** in tone and demonstrated an understanding of the problems faced by those with mental health problems. An article on the residents of Winterton Hospital near Sedgfield, said that *"the original reason for their admission has been forgotten ... most could have led normal lives with the drugs and care mentally ill people receive today"*. In his article in the Yorkshire Evening Post (17/8/99) Dr Des Wetherly made the point that *"Most mental illnesses can be kept under good control and most people with them can be cared for at home"*.
- The majority of items in the study were both **factual** and **balanced** and there were few examples of **sensationalism**. Eighteen items adopted a sensational tone; these were articles about crimes committed by those with mental health problems. *"Mental health care probe over 'sex-game' killing"* was typical of the sensational headlines employed by some newspapers (Western Gazette, 26/8/99). Sensational language sometimes found its way into editorials as well as news items. *"New moves to lock up people who pose a serious threat to society must not be blocked in the name of civil liberties"*, said the Hartlepool Mail (19/7/99). On some occasions, sensational headlines were deployed in an attempt to highlight the inadequacies of health care. In an article about the shortage of secure hospital accommodation, entitled *"Government must end this scandal"*, the Lancashire Evening Telegraph (20/12/99) said that in its view, *"when the shortage is so severe that it can be months before a place can be had, it amounts to a national scandal"*.



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1. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

- | Although there were few examples of overtly hostile reporting during the period researched, there were also few examples of the positive promotion of mental health issues, and only two items really presented a positive image of the lives of those with mental health problems.
- | There were no discernible regional differences in terms of the tone and style adopted by the publications included in the study.
- | The health service was seen as failing patients and the public alike and several articles expressed concern that individuals with mental health problems were sometimes remanded in custody, in prison, simply because suitable hospital facilities were unavailable.
- | Although several items expressed the view that individuals with mental health problems were able to lead normal lives in the community, 'care in the community' as a policy, generated more negative than positive comments. The policy is still perceived as having failed those it was supposed to help and frequently causes concern among residents, who often bitterly resent the presence of care homes in their local communities.
- | Mental health issues are still infrequently discussed in the media, except when related to crime, particularly murder. Schizophrenia is still confined to the ghetto of crime reporting and there were few instances of the illness being debated other than in the context of either murder or suicide. There were few positive images of the large number of people with schizophrenia, who, with proper medical intervention, are able to lead fulfilling lives in the community.
- | The distinction between 'mental illness' and 'severe personality disorder' is now more widely understood and most articles demonstrated an understanding of the differences between treatable mental health problems and intractable personality disorders. While most items supported government proposals compulsorily to detain those with severe personality disorders, a number pointed to the possible infringement of civil liberties involved in restraining those who had not committed any offence.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

- While most journalists have clearly responded to the concerns of organisations such as Mind about the use of derogatory and offensive language and have curbed the use of terms such as 'psycho' and 'nutter', there were still some examples of sensational and hostile reporting. The way in which the terms 'disturbed' and 'dangerous' were routinely applied, in particular to people with schizophrenia, perpetuated the image of those with mental health problems as dangerous criminals. Only one article made the point that the majority of crimes are committed not by the 'mentally ill' but by the "*mentally well*" (Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal, 21/4/00). More work needs to be done to ensure that any reporting of crimes committed by those with mental health problems does not give the impression that those problems inevitably result in, and are the sole cause of, criminal activity.

- ! More also needs to be done to promote a positive image of the lives of those with mental health problems. There were few items which suggested that mental health and well-being are issues that concern everyone or that those with mental health problems lead productive, useful and 'normal' lives in the community.

The full Bylines and Media Reports are appended to this document outlining the aggregate favourability of each title / journalist, and chronology / sources and areas of interest of each by-lined item. Further information on these and other matters in the report is available from Echo Research Ltd.

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