

Press Coverage of Traditional Medical Practice in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This study examined the extent to which Nigerian national dailies cover traditional medicine practice in Nigeria. Content analysis was used for the study. The data were derived from a sample of 416 issues of four purposively selected Nigerian newspapers: *Daily Trust*, *New Nigerian*, *The Guardian*, and *The Punch*, from a population of 2,920 issues covering the period between 2005 and 2006. Analysis was done using frequency and percentage scores and presented in tabular form. The results showed that newspaper coverage of traditional medicine issues compared with that of orthodox medicine fall far short of expectation. Though coverage was dismal in the print media, their portrayal was generally positive but rarely illustrated with relevant graphics to enhance interest and understanding. The conclusion is that knowledge deficit among journalists regarding traditional medicine issues may be responsible for the poor coverage (particularly in terms of frequency) of traditional medicine issues in Nigerian newspapers. This study therefore recommended among others that Nigerian newspapers should consider traditional medicine issues weighty enough for frequent, consistent, prominent coverage to reflect the importance the populace, government, and the international community attach to them. Very importantly, journalism training in institutions and the industry should include health journalism and particularly modern and traditional medical reporting to address knowledge deficits among journalists in Nigeria.