THE ZAMBIAN NEWSPAPERS AND AIDS

Francis P. Kasoma,
Department of Mass Communication, University of Zambia,
Lusaka, Zambia

MEDIA BACKGROUND

It is important that we give the background of the newspapers which were the subject of the content analysis study. These are, the two government dailies the Times of Zambia and the Zambia Daily Mail and their Sunday editions, the Sunday Times of Zambia and the Sunday Mail. We will also give the background of The Post, a privately-owned daily.

The Times of Zambia is the country’s oldest newspaper having been founded in 1943 as a newspaper for white settlers who had come to settle in the then Northern Rhodesia, as Zambia was known during colonial rule (Kasoma, 1986). From its inception to the year of Zambia’s independence in 1964, the newspaper was known as Northern News. It became a daily in 1953 at a time when Northern Rhodesia became politically part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, a political structure that was vehemently opposed by the African nationalists. Because it was the organ of the white settlers, the Northern News was supported by the people who controlled the country’s industry and commerce, the whites, who preferred to place advertisements in the newspaper rather than in the African Mail. Because of bigger advertising space, the newspaper has always had a higher circulation than the Zambia Daily Mail. At independence, efforts were made to make the newspaper a national organ rather than one for the whites only. In 1978 the government nationalized the newspaper.

The Zambia Daily Mail started as the African Mail at the height of the nationalist struggle in 1960. It was started with capital from the editor of the Observer newspaper in London, David Astor. From its commencement, as indicated earlier, it supported the nationalist struggle for self-determination and independence. This editorial policy cost it advertising from the economically-well-to-do whites. But its circulation increased by leaps and bounds, to the extent that it was later renamed Central African Mail. It was renamed Zambia Mail at independence when Astor sold the newspaper to the Zambian government who within a few years made it a daily newspaper and named it, Zambia Daily Mail (Kasoma, 1986).

The Post was started by private Zambian businessmen in 1991 at the climax of the agitation by a sizeable section of the Zambian community for democratic governance which resulted in the re-introduction of a democratically elected government in the same year. Its ownership spread across the political divide since both United National Independence Party (UNIP) and Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) members owned shares in the newspaper. It soon established itself as an outspoken newspaper critical of the government in power, first the Kaunda and later the Chiluba governments. Unlike the other two dailies, The Post is not published on Sundays.

All three daily newspapers are essentially town newspapers which circulate almost exclusively in the main urban centres. They are very rarely found in the countryside where a little less than half of Zambia’s population lives.

The three newspapers were chosen as subjects for this study because they are the only daily newspapers in the country. Mixing them with other newspapers which appear less often would have compounded the basis for comparison in the study. It would also have made the study too wide and less focused.
EARLIER STUDIES

This is the third study this researcher has undertaken on the Zambian media and the coverage of HIV/AIDS.

The first study, “The Zambian press and the AIDS crisis”, (Kasoma, 1990/91) looked at the HIV/AIDS stories which the Times of Zambia and the Zambia Daily Mail published in 1986, when the Zambian government officially recognized the presence of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which leads to the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in the country, and 1989 when it was assumed, by this researcher, that HIV/AIDS had become well-known in the country.

The first study established that 60% of the news stories published in the two daily newspapers were foreign. The two newspapers also did not regard HIV/AIDS stories important enough to deserve page one treatment. Only 22% of the stories were used on page one, of which 8% were lead stories.

The two newspapers only published nine editorials between them during the two years, four in 1986 and five, all by The Times, in 1989. A total of 29 letters to the editor were published. The most commonly discussed subject-area by both newspapers was that of “AIDS tests/deaths/widespreadness” which surfaced in 50 (45%) articles in 1986 and 84 (47%) in 1989. Only 12% of the articles contained Mobilizing Information (MI), (Kasoma, 1990/91).

MI is described as any information that allows people to act on attitudes and desires they already have (Kasoma, 1990/91:50). As Kristiansen and Harding (1984:243) have stated, “the notion of MI is particularly relevant to studies of health reporting because the literature of fear communications are more likely to promote a given behaviour when specific details about actions which will counteract or prevent the health threat (i.e. how, when, where) are explicitly and precisely described.

The second study, a “Content analysis of AIDS stories in Zambian media”, (Kasoma, 1996), was much broader. It included not only The Times and the Mail but also the Post, National Mirror and radio and television programmes of the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC).

The study was carried out in 1993. Unlike the earlier research, this study found that most of the stories were local and not foreign. Rarely were the stories published on page one. The predominant type of story was the feature story. Not much emphasis was placed on advertisements in all the newspapers, but particularly the Mirror which did not carry any advertisements. There were only four editorials published during the whole year, two in the Times and two in the Mail. Very few letters to the editor were published by all the newspapers.

As in the earlier study, most of the stories were about “AIDS tests, widespreadness, sickness and deaths”. “Cause and prevention” came second and “cure and vaccine” third. None of the stories contained MI. Most of the stories were not new but had been published before.

The present study followed the 1993 study closely. It looked at the HIV/AIDS publicity in the Times, the Mail and the Post.

Originally, the intention was to include radio and television programmes of the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). But the researcher was told by ZNBC senior management that no tapes of either the radio or television programmes were kept since they were re-used for other programmes due to an acute and persistent shortage of funds to purchase new tapes. It would have been useful, particularly to look at television programmes since studies elsewhere indicate that television publicity of HIV/AIDS has some considerable impact in other parts of the world.

Apart from the two earlier studies by this author referred to above, there have not been any media content analysis studies on HIV/AIDS in Zambia. But there have been other surveys on the disease in the country. These include Mbozi’s study on the impact of billboards on HIV/AIDS on youths in Zambia (Mbozi, unpublished). The focus of this study was to determine how useful the anti-HIV/AIDS billboards had been to the youths of the country who were the target group. Mbozi’s conclusion was that billboards did not
have much impact partly because of the way they had been created (without pre-testing and no involvement of the youths) and partly because the messages they carried did not answer the needs of the youths on the issues. Other factors, such as the placement of the billboards and their subject matter, also negatively influenced their impact.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

The editions of the three newspapers were examined for 1997 and the first six months of 1998. This involved physically visiting the respective newspaper libraries and examining the cuttings as well as the full editions of the newspapers to ensure that reports were not left out.

As in the previous studies, a checklist containing 14 items was used. For each story a separate form of the checklist was completed. It is the data from these which were used for analysis.

**RESULTS**

**The Zambia Daily Mail**

A total of 110 articles were examined of which 73 (66%) were news stories, 35 (32%) were features, one editorial (.9%), and two letters to the editor (2%).

It is noteworthy that although *the Mail* published the highest number of articles of the three newspapers examined, it had only one editorial. The editorial was published on 2 December 1997 to mark the World AIDS Day which falls on December 1. It, ironically, called on Zambians not to wait until December 1 to make themselves active on preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. The fact that the newspaper published only one editorial strongly suggests that the editor did not think HIV/AIDS was a subject that warranted commenting on.

It is also surprising that *the Mail* published only two letters on HIV/AIDS for the 18 month period. The newspaper did not think the HIV/AIDS news stories were important enough to deserve being used as page one lead stories. Only four of the stories were used as page one leads. There were 106 articles, representing 96% of the total articles the newspaper published, used in the inside pages. Most of the stories 63 (57%) were not new. They contained material that had already been published by the newspaper. Only 49 (45%) contained new information.

Most of the articles 87 (74%) were local. There were 26 (23%) reports which were foreign. This is a suggestion that the focus of attention was on the local as opposed to the foreign HIV/AIDS scene.

Regarding the categorization of the articles according to what they treated, most of the stories were dealing with the combined topic of “cure and vaccine” which recorded 36 (33%). The next highest category was the area of “test, widespreadness, sickness, deaths” which received 28 (25%) stories; “cause or prevention” had 11 (10%). There was only one story which treated the topic of “origin of HIV/AIDS”. Stories which dealt with “other” topics were 45 (41%). The “other” topics were wide-ranging and included subjects like “home care of AIDS patients”, “counselling”, and “AIDS orphans”. The fact that a sizeable number of the stories treated “other” topics suggests that the range of matters raised in the coverage of HIV/AIDS had grown as people devoted more attention to the devastating effects of the pandemic.

No story contained any MI but all the stories were easily comprehensible.

Only five stories, representing 5% named a person as dying from AIDS suggesting that Zambians were still shy to associate people’s deaths with AIDS since it was regarded as a “shame disease” referred to only in euphemisms like “died after a long illness”.

Seven of the articles, representing 6% of the total number of articles the newspaper published, gave figures of people dying from AIDS. But the figures were misleading and contradictory. For example, three of the stories gave 21 million as the figure of adults who were infected with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Sahara Africa. But one of the stories gave the figure as 14 million. A few self-confessed people were named in a number of stories as being HIV positive.

Surprisingly, only three of the stories discussed, either wholly or partly, negative cultural
issues about HIV/AIDS. One treated beliefs about sleeping with a virgin as making HIV positive people become HIV negative. The second discussed the practice of succession rights for widows in which they are made to have sex with a relative of their deceased husband as responsible for spreading HIV infection. The third was about the practice in which certain men who are impotent make their wives have sex with another man so that he can bear them children.

**The Times of Zambia**

A total of 78 articles were published of which 47 (60%) were news stories, 25 (32%) features, two (3%) editorials and four (5%) letters to the editor. There was only one page one lead story.

Again it should be noted that the Times, like the Mail, published very few editorials on HIV/AIDS. The newspaper published only two editorials. Like its sister government paper, the Times did not think HIV/AIDS stories were important enough to deserve page one treatment. All the stories, except one, were used on the inside pages.

Unlike the Mail, however, most of the stories 47 (60%) were new while 31 (40%) had been reported before. It is remarkable that all the stories the newspaper published were local.

Regarding the categorization of the type of stories the newspaper published, most of them 29 (26%) dealt with topics of HIV/AIDS “tests, widespreadness, sickness and deaths”; “cure and vaccine” had 18 (23%); while “cause or prevention” had 11 (14%). There were no stories dealing with the “origin”. But 31 (40%) of the stories dealt with “other” topics.

There was not a single story which contained MI while all the stories were easily comprehensible. No one was named in any of the stories as having died from AIDS, although seven of the stories contained statistics of people who had died from AIDS. Apart from a couple of self-confessed people, there was no one named in the stories as having HIV/AIDS.

The newspaper published only two stories which touched on the subject of negative cultural issues. One was about a man who allegedly had sex with a dog to avoid being infected with HIV. The story said it was unAfrican to have sex with a dog. The other story said the use of condoms was against African cultural tradition.

**The Post**

Out of a total of 378 newspapers searched, the Post only published 19 stories about HIV/AIDS. Of these, 17 (89%) were news stories and one was a letter to the editor. The newspaper did not publish any editorial on the subject. Most of the stories, 11 (58%) treated new subjects while eight (42%) were on subjects already reported. The newspaper published only one foreign story, representing 5% of all the stories it published. The rest 18 (95%) were local stories.

Only two stories (11%) were published on page one. They were both used as leads. One was about a Dr. Ngosa, a Zambian, who was reported by the London Daily Mail as having been charged by the British Medical Council for not taking the HIV test soon after a woman claimed she had been infected with HIV by him. The other was about Zambian President Frederick Chiluba urging scientists to find an AIDS cure instead of manufacturing condoms.

Regarding the topics treated by the newspaper, the Post gave equal treatment to the two topics: “cause or prevention”, eight (42%) and “test, widespreadness, sickness and deaths”, eight (42%). The area of “cure and vaccine” had only two (11%) stories. There were no stories about origin of AIDS. Stories covering “other” were seven (37%). They included alleged misconduct by Dr. Ngosa and discrimination of HIV/AIDS people in society.

None of the stories contained MI but all stories were easy to understand. No one was named in any of the stories as having died from AIDS. But three stories (16%) gave some statistics about HIV/AIDS. One said 400,000 children in Zambia below 15 were infected with HIV in 1996. The other said 1,000,000 children were with HIV in 1997. The third one said in 1998 there were 30 million people with HIV/AIDS in the world while sub-Saharan Africa had 14 million cases and Zambia 100,000.
Two people were named in two stories (one in each) as having HIV. There were no stories which treated negative cultural issues.

**Comparing frequencies**

*The Mail*, as indicated earlier, published the highest number of HIV/AIDS stories, 110 in all. *The Post* had the least number of stories (19) while *the Times* came second with 78 stories.

However, looking at the type of stories published in terms of whether they were news stories, features, editorials or letters to the editor (Table 1), *the Post*, comparatively, published more news stories (99%). *The Mail* came second at 66% and *the Times* third at 60%. This means that all the three newspapers concentrated on giving people news rather than background information which features usually contain. In fact, *the Post* did not publish any features at all while the HIV/AIDS hole of *the Mail* and *the Times* contained 32% features apiece. *The Post* did not carry any editorials while *the Mail* had one and *the Times* two. But *the Times* published more letters to the editor (5%) as against 1% for *the Post* and 2% for *the Mail*.

In terms of “local” versus “foreign” stories (Table 2), all the stories (100%) published by *the Times* were “local”. *The Post* had 95% while *the Mail* had 74%. This was a strong indication that the focus was on the “local” HIV/AIDS scene and not on what was happening outside Zambia.

Considering the categories of “new” and “not new” stories (Table 3), *the Times* published 60% “new” stories while the figures for *the Post* and *the Mail* were 58% and 47% respectively. Conversely, *the Mail*’s reportage consisted of mostly (57%) “not new” stories or repetitions of what had already been published.

Table 4 clearly suggests that the three newspapers did not think the origin of AIDS was worth wasting valuable space on. Only *the Mail* published one story on the subject. The most heavily publicised topic area was “test, widespreadness, sickness, deaths” which had 42% attention from *the Post*, 33% from *the Mail* and 23% from *the Times*. “Cause and prevention” had 42% from *the Post*, 14% from *the Times* and 10% from *the Mail*, while “cure, vaccine” had 33% from *the Mail*, 23% from *the Times* and 10% from *the Post*. In the category of the “other”, it is *the Mail* that led with 41% followed by *the Times* at 40% and *the Post* at 37%.

These statistics mean that the areas of “test, widespreadness, sickness, deaths” and “cure, vaccine” received the most attention from the three newspapers, strongly suggesting that the general public in Zambia, according to the decision of the editors, wanted to know how widespread HIV/AIDS was and what was being done to arrest its spread. The area of “cause and prevention” of HIV/AIDS got the least attention after “origin”. The interpretation is that editors knew that the cause and prevention of HIV/AIDS were common knowledge in Zambia and required very little publicity, if any.

**The HIV/AIDS stories newspapers tell**

In this section, we discuss the main details of the contents of the stories the newspapers published.

**Cure**

The three daily newspapers devoted a lot of space to cure for HIV/AIDS. Much of the space was given to the controversy surrounding the claim by Mulenga Lukwesa that the drug *Herbiron Tisaniferon*, which his MLN Laboratory had developed, could cure AIDS. The Medical Council of Zambia (MCZ) and government dismissed the claim and banned the use of the drug by doctors in the country until after it had been tested scientifically. But the test itself was reported not to have been conclusive because those who were carrying it out had, reportedly, run out of funds. An angry Lukwesa, who

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1 The frequencies do not add up to the original total figures or to 100% because some stories were counted more than once since they could deal with more than one category.
Table 1. Frequency of type of stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>Type of Story</th>
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<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News</td>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>73 (66%)</td>
<td>35 (32%)</td>
<td>1 (.9%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>110 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>47 (60%)</td>
<td>25 (32%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>78 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>18 (99%)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>19 (100%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Frequency of local and foreign stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>Type of Story</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>87 (74%)</td>
<td>26 (23%)</td>
<td>110 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>78 (100%)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>78 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>18 (95%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>19 (100%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Frequency of “new” and “not new” stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>Type of Story</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Not new</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>47 (43%)</td>
<td>63 (57%)</td>
<td>110 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>47 (60%)</td>
<td>31 (40%)</td>
<td>78 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>11 (58%)</td>
<td>8 (42%)</td>
<td>19 (100%)</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Frequency of categories of stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>Category of Story</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Cause and prevention</td>
<td>Test, sickness, widespreadness and deaths</td>
<td>Cure, vaccine</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>1(%)</td>
<td>11(10%)</td>
<td>28 (25%)</td>
<td>36 (33%)</td>
<td>45 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>11(14%)</td>
<td>29 (26%)</td>
<td>18 (23%)</td>
<td>31(40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8 (42%)</td>
<td>8 (42%)</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
claimed to have made K2.5 billion from sales of the drug, warned the government and the MCZ to keep off his drug. He had sympathisers in Members of Parliament who advised the government not to discourage people like Lukwesa who were claiming to discover drugs that could heal AIDS. Other supporters included the general public (letters to the editor) and the Traditional Herbalists and Healers Association which urged Zambians to stop fighting and instead find a cure for AIDS.

The Times and the Mail also supported Lukwesa. In two editorials (one for each), the newspapers called on the government not to discourage traditional healers and other people who claimed to have found a cure for AIDS. But the government was adamant. It closed the controversy by ruling that Herbiron Tisaniferon could only be used as a traditional medicine.

The newspapers gave extensive coverage to traditional healers and others claiming to have found medicine that could heal AIDS. They included a retired nurse from Kitwe who claimed that her Jaroobs Herbal Formula healed AIDS-related diseases. Another woman in Kapiri Mposhi also claimed to have medicine to heal AIDS. A woman medical doctor who was reported to be operating from a Kabwe hotel claimed that she had an injection that cured AIDS. But none of these claims were reported to have been authenticated by medical experts.

The newspapers also reported progress being made to find a genuine AIDS cure and vaccine against HIV. Some of the medicines named included Virodene, a drug developed in South Africa which, like Herbiron Tisaniferon, had split the South African authorities with the government being in support of it and the Medicines Control Council (MCC) being against it. Another drug named in the stories was Azidothymide (AZT) which one of the stories warned could be dangerous if not administered properly. The medicine was said to be available in Zimbabwe.

Several stories announced the launching in the United States of America of tests on humans of an HIV vaccine. One story said Zambians were excited about the commencement of the trials of the new vaccine.

Sustiva was reported to be found useful as a drug for AIDS patients. The Tropical Diseases Research Centre in Ndola was reported to have appealed to Zambians to come forward and help test the Chinese drug called Fesol. The French drug, Pasteur Merieux, was also reported to go on trial in Uganda.

The cost of treating AIDS patients was a subject of a number of stories. One story quoted the Central Board of Health as saying the AIDS treatment bill would reach $21 million in the year 2005. Another, again quoting the Central Board of Health, simply said treating AIDS patients had become too costly.

The building and opening of an HIV/AIDS private hospital in Chilanga, near Lusaka, also received considerable space. The hospital, the only one in Zambia, was built by a Dutch woman, Pola van der Donck, in memory of her brother who had died of AIDS. It was being managed by the Catholic Church. But the punch story was the one which said scientists were still a long way off to find an AIDS cure.

Widespreadness and prevention

Zambian newspapers, contrary to expectations, hardly publicized negative cultural practices that lead to increase in HIV infections, in spite of the fact that Zambians knew this was a big problem in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Only one story in the Mail specifically referred to traditional practices as contributing to the spread of HIV infection. Instead of publicizing the common cultural practice in which widows are made to have sex with a relative of the deceased husband, usually a brother, the newspapers (particularly the Times) publicized a story in which they said widows whose husbands had died of AIDS were becoming sexually reckless. A curious story was reported by the Mail in which the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) was reported as calling on Zambians to maintain traditional and cultural values (presumably positive ones) to fight HIV/AIDS.
A number of stories reported on seminars for truck drivers who were widely believed to be spreading HIV because of the number of girlfriends they had along their routes. Some stories reported that the incidence of HIV infection among girls was higher due to factors such as prostitution, “sugar daddies”, a name given to promiscuous men, and the rising incidences of incest. Generally, the stories said the HIV infection of women was higher than that of men and was increasing at an alarming rate.

Zambia was reported to be ranked fourth in the HIV/AIDS infection in Africa while Malawi and Zimbabwe were said to be AIDS trouble spots where five young people, aged between 10 and 24 years were reported to be infected with HIV every minute, according to the Washington Line, a USA Embassy publication in Lusaka. The most popular form of prevention against HIV infection, judging by the number of stories published on it, was the condom which was embroiled in endless controversies. For example, some newspaper reports alleged that condoms were not safe to prevent HIV infection because they had holes. But the Central Board of Health was quick to put out a statement in which it emphatically said there were no holes in condoms. Some stories said condoms were more effective to preventing HIV infection than they were given credit for.

A number of government officials, including Vice President Godfrey Muyanda and President Chiluba, were often quoted as discouraging the use of condoms and preaching abstinence as the only sure prevention against HIV/AIDS. They were supported by the churches. Femidom, the female condom, also received some publicity and similar condemnation, from the same people and organizations criticizing the use of condoms.

Government ministers and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) repeatedly expressed worry about the serious effects on Zambia’s economy of the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic. The ZCTU was reported to have been alarmed at the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection at work places and urged its member unions to help fight the epidemic.

**HIV TESTS**

Some considerable publicity was given to the issue of HIV tests. In some stories, a chain shop manager in Lusaka was reported to be carrying out “silent HIV tests” among his employees. The manager admitted that he was subjecting workers to the HIV test. In another story, a man who was HIV positive was reported to have hung himself.

Some stories reported that fear of undergoing HIV tests was common among Zambians. Prostitutes were among those who were afraid of knowing whether they were HIV positive or not. One story said they were shunning joining Tsintha, an organisation to reform prostitutes, because it required them to undergo an HIV test. A few stories said HIV tests were necessary if the spread of HIV/AIDS had to be controlled. One story, however, quoted a Japanese doctor in Lusaka as saying the HIV test using anti-bodies was unreliable because it did not reveal infections which were four weeks or less old.

**CHILDREN AND ORPHANS**

A considerable number of newspaper reports said many children were infected with HIV. No specific numbers were suggested but the problem was said to be very serious. To emphasize the seriousness of the problem, the theme “children living with AIDS” was chosen for the World AIDS Day on 1 December 1997.

Publicity about the so-called AIDS orphans was carried out by the Times and the Mail. The Post did not publish a single story. Many of the stories kept repeating the fact that life was getting tougher for the orphans many of whom had to eke out a living from the streets. Government promised assistance for families looking after AIDS orphans. One story predicted that the number of AIDS orphans in Zambia would swell to 600,000 by the year 2000. There were, generally, no specific figures given for the number of AIDS orphans in Zambia during the period covered by this study. Reference was merely made to thousands of AIDS orphans.
Wide publicity was given to the treatment accorded to HIV/AIDS people. Some of the stories quoted people who were HIV-positive as saying that they were being discriminated against by society, including at work places. This, certainly, contributed to the reticence of HIV-positive people to come out in the open, which a couple of stories complained against. There were only a few Zambians such as Winston Zulu, David Chipanta and Clement Mufuzi who had come out in the open and were regularly quoted by the press as being spokespersons of HIV positive people. Some stories accused those who had come out in the open as having been paid a lot of money for doing so.

Positive living by HIV people was a common subject in many stories. Positive living organizations were reported to be mushrooming throughout the country, particularly in Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces. To promote this, the Commonwealth Youth Programme, based at the University of Zambia in Lusaka, was reported to be organizing workshops and seminars for the so-called “AIDS ambassadors” – people who were HIV positive who were sent around the country to tell their colleagues that being HIV positive was not the end of the world and also warn society about the dangers of contracting HIV.

To support the promotion of positive living, a number of counselling centres were reported to have been started in the country, particularly in major urban centres. These counselling centres were partly to take care of AIDS patients. The most reported HIV/AIDS counselling centre by far was Kara Counselling Centre in Lusaka. Some publicity was also given to the need for home-care for AIDS patients. Development Aid from People to People was reported in one story to have trained 200 HIV/AIDS patient handlers and counsellors at a workshop in Ndola.

A number of banks were reported to have donated funds to HIV/AIDS organizations such as Kara. According to press reports, the country had a number of HIV/AIDS organizations. They included the Catholic Church Home Care (based on the Copperbelt), Network of Zambian People Living with HIV/AIDS, Society for Women Against AIDS in Zambia, Alangizi Women Association of Zambia and the Zambia National AIDS Network.

**DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

A number of issues stand out in the findings of this study. These are the stress on publishing local stories, the lack of MI in the stories published, the few editorials published, and the stress on publishing news stories rather than features.

**Local stories**

In my first study, it was established that Zambian newspapers had a preponderance of foreign stories on HIV/AIDS. The explanation given then was that HIV/AIDS was a new disease in Zambia and editors wanted to show that HIV/AIDS was “out there” and not a problem in the country. Moreover, most of the information on HIV/AIDS made available to the editors was from outside the country, mainly the North. By the time of the current study, the situation in Zambia had changed so much that Zambia is said to have become the fourth HIV/AIDS country in Africa and one of the highest in the world. HIV/AIDS was now a real threat to the country and deserved a lot of publicity.

**Lack of mobilizing information**

The lack of MI in HIV/AIDS stories published by Zambian daily newspapers is remarkable. It partly means that those who file the stories that are published are not concerned with follow-up action by giving people information such as addresses, telephone numbers etc. which people can use to act on the information. This is particularly important since the stress on the HIV/AIDS publicity by the newspapers is not on giving knowledge such as how HIV is contracted and how it can be prevented, but on giving practical information such as where to get HIV tests, where to go for counselling and where HIV/AIDS organizations are and how they can be contacted. This information was simply not provided in the HIV/AIDS stories the three newspapers published.
Accordingly, this researcher recommends that a series of seminars/workshops be held for senior reporters of the three newspapers to teach them how to include MI in newspaper stories.

Few editorials
Editorials serve as agenda-setters. Through them, newspapers may not be able to tell their readers what to think but they certainly do tell them what to think about. By publishing a negligible number of editorials on HIV/AIDS, the Zambian daily newspapers were sending a clear message, as already pointed out, that HIV/AIDS was not worth editorializing on. If in the earlier two studies a preponderance of editorials on HIV/AIDS was found, it would have been concluded during the current study that editors had become tired of writing on the issue, pandemic as it may be. But the finding of the earlier studies was the same; there were hardly any editorials published on HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended that a series of seminars or round-table discussions be organized for the top two editors of each of the three newspapers to discuss why they shun away from writing editorials on HIV/AIDS.

Preponderance of news stories
The fact that the most popular story was the news story is an indication that the newspapers were more interested in giving people current information and hard facts about HIV/AIDS rather than backgrounders. Since reportage in Zambia is mainly based on speeches made by officials, most of the news stories were reporting speeches made by mainly government officials. There was hardly any in-depth well-researched news item. It is recommended that a series of seminars/courses be organized for senior reporters in the country to teach them how to report effectively on HIV/AIDS.

Sensitizing media people
The biggest problem is that journalists and other media people in Zambia are not attuned to what it means to use the mass media to combat HIV/AIDS or its effects. They do not seem to appreciate the role of the media regarding what they can do and not do in combating the pandemic. Many people think it is merely a question of publishing articles or broadcasting material that warns people against the danger of contracting HIV/AIDS and telling them how the disease can be contracted.

Journalists in Zambia ought to include in their reportage the counselling aspect of the HIV/AIDS sufferers. They need to provide MI to HIV/AIDS patients about where they can obtain counselling help. For this to be effective, the mass media channels in the country need to set up HELPLINES by displaying telephone numbers where people with HIV/AIDS can call toll-free to seek advice. Zambia has a number of HIV/AIDS centres which can give such advice but the people, particularly the HIV/AIDS sufferers, hardly know about their existence or how they can get in touch with them. It would be very useful if media houses got in touch with these centres with a view to requesting them to regularly publicize their activities and how HIV/AIDS sufferers can benefit from these services.

The media also need to establish regular features and broadcast productions to keep in constant focus the HIV/AIDS predicament in the country. These could take the form of regular columns in the daily and weekly newspapers discussing topical issues on the subject as well as providing up-to-date information about developments of the disease. The once-in-a-while articles published in newspapers and productions on the national radio and television station are simply not enough. If HIV/AIDS is the pandemic it is supposed to be, then it ought to be treated as such by the media, making the people constantly aware of its existence.

To further promote the HIV/AIDS awareness, the mass media in Zambia could also be involved in the promotion of jingles and attention-catching gimmicks, all directed at keeping Zambians constantly aware of the presence of the devastating disease in their midst. For this, the press could make use of self-con-
fessed HIV carriers who could be made to participate in publicity-seeking stunts which would bring the reality of HIV to the Zambian population. Such stunts would also help in bringing the ever-increasing HIV-positive community in Zambia to being less discriminated against by society.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study make more sense if they are read in conjunction with the two earlier studies. The three studies have clearly established a pattern on how the media in Zambia have reported on HIV/AIDS.

This particular study has confirmed that there are certain things that ought to be done for the publicity on HIV/AIDS to be more effective than it has been. But this will only come about if the recommendations made in this report are implemented.

HIV/AIDS is a pandemic that has the potential to devastate the population of Zambia. It is, therefore, a topic that should interest journalists and editors in all respects.

REFERENCES


