

# **ROLE OF MEDIA IN PUBLIC HEALTH REFORM AND ADVOCACY**

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# **Non-Communicable Diseases**

It is increasingly being recognised that non-communicable disorders (NCDs), such as cancers, diabetes, cardio vascular disorders, as well as mental disorders, are on the increase, in sub Saharan Africa.

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# **Non-Communicable Diseases**

In 2001, WHO estimated that deaths due to NCD were 59% of all deaths globally. Another measure, the Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) which measures those who do not die, but live with a disability, estimated that 46% of the total DALYs globally were due to NCDs .

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# **Non-Communicable Diseases**

In Uganda it is estimated that about 30% of the adult population have High Blood Pressure (HBP) and that 80% of these people do know that they have the problem.

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# **Non-Communicable Diseases**

In addition, 80% of smokers who report to Mulago National Referral hospital have HBP and 50% to 60% of Out Patient Department patients (OPD) at the same hospital come because of HBP complications.

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# **Non-Communicable Diseases**

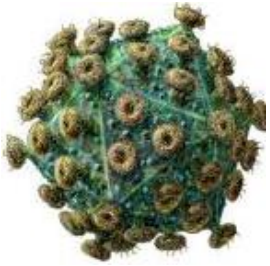
This worrying situation is attributed to mainly four factors namely: inappropriate diet; physical inactivity; tobacco use and; harmful use of alcohol.

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**Non-Communicable Diseases:**  
Everyone to eat healthy foods,  
reduce salt intake, avoid tobacco  
use and harmful use of alcohol,  
control body weight, and above  
all, regularly check your blood  
pressure.

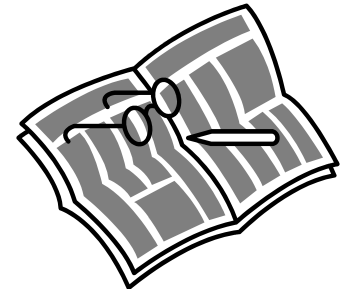
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# Communication: Why the media



- The mass media are important sources of information about health and health care
- This information can influence opinions and behaviour, including:
  - Willingness to present for care
  - Unrealistic expectations
  - Unnecessary alarm
  - false sense of security





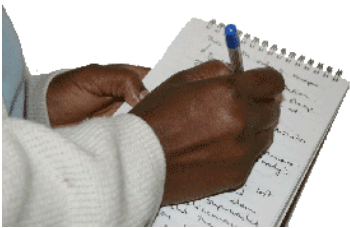


# NCDs and the Media



Media as a resource:

- Mobilisation
- Sensitisation
- Warnings
- Advocacy
- Information
- Education
- Advertisement



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The rising trend of NCDs has not been widely covered in the media in and outside Uganda

**Why the rising trend?**

Life styles, alcohol, tobacco consumption

**What should we do as the media?**

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# Let us tell a good story

- Quality of the story and making the story interesting to the audience is important
  - Quality of how it is told
    - Communicating the story well is also important
  - “Scientific quality”: Informing the audience (and not misinforming them) is also important
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# **Gaps in media coverage of NCDs**

It is a new story

No policy

Limited demand in accountability

The role of failures within the response has not been highlighted

Limited Knowledge on NCDs: No data

Media has not succeeded in narrowing the knowledge gap on NCDs

A few experts and interest groups

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# **What's behind the problem?**

- Promoting health is not an aim
  - Competition
  - Editors
  - Sources
  - Lack of training
  - Lack of time
  - Lack of space
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# Requirements for effective communication of NCDs

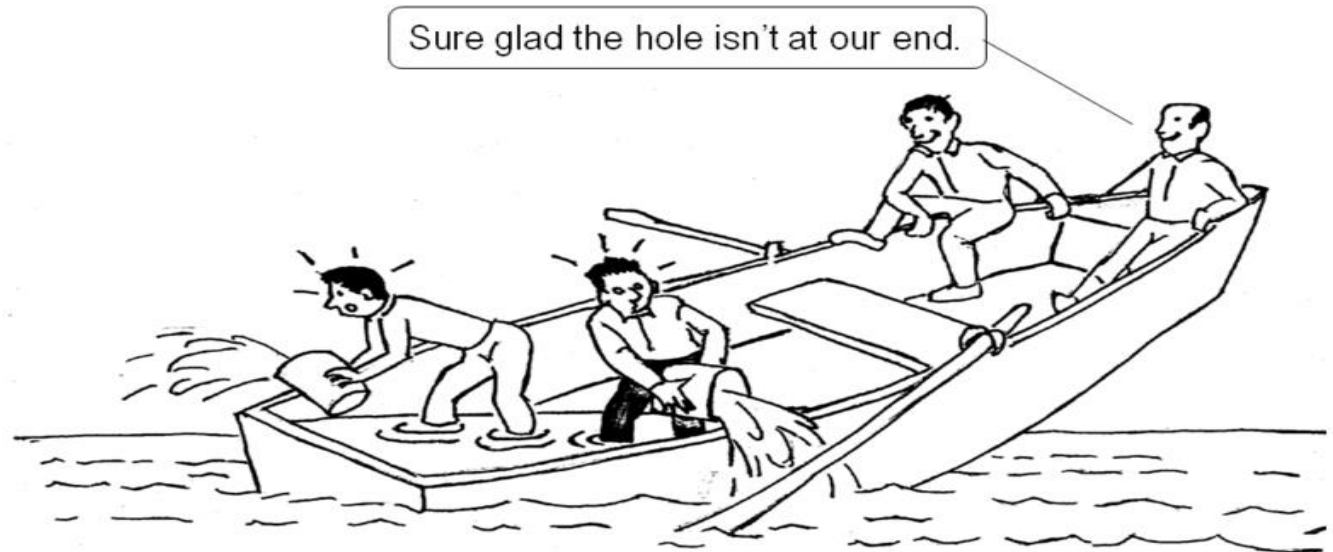
- Objective
  - Zeal/passion/interest
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Tools
  - Social responsibility
  - Evaluation
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# Training needs

- Change of attitude

## Partner at war not mere observer or reporter

- Motivation to venture into the science
- Nose for important story



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# Knowledge

- **Science:** terminology, data, concepts
  - Need to break it down/sometimes local words
- **Research findings**
  - Need interpretation and explaining

## TRAINING NEEDS

- How to identify reliable sources of information
    - experts, relevant researchers, medical journals, internet, experience, reports, press releases, opinion leaders
    - You are not the expert; you are a medium of information
  - How to identify vested interests:
    - sources, internet, publications, apologetics
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**Advocacy:** Its a set of actions undertaken by a group of committed individuals or organizations to introduce, change or obtain support for specific policies, programmes, legislation, issues or causes  
It also aims to introduce or change a policy, programme, or legislation, or the position of influential individuals or organizations on a specific issue.

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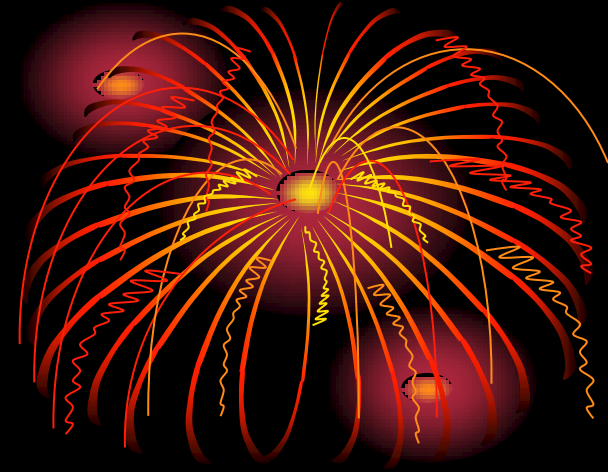
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# • **The Media and Advocacy**

- Follow committed individuals who are working on advocacy activities
  - Identify partners
  - Find out what is happening in the setting for the advocacy activities
  - Provide a strong rationale for the need to increase attention to NCDs
  - Increase awareness
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- Write or broadcast stories that can influence the budget allocation process for NCDs
  - Encourage changes in the way services are organized, regulated or directed
  - Push for more attention to NCDs
  - Try to write articles that will make NCDs a priority, create policy reform
  - Try to draw the attention of policy makers
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**Thank you**



**Are you not a  
wonderful audience?**

