

# Communicating Cancer to the Public

## *Hope or Hyperbole?*

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Integrated Cancer Centre

## The problem with the media and cancer

## Media and cancer.....

**Misappropriation of the word...people described as 'cancer':**

Saddam Hussein

Bill Clinton

Euro Sceptics

Peter Mandelson

**Voice of authority, commerce *etc.***

**All vying for the same space**



**Use of certain terminology, e.g. war**



News coverage of health issues is seriously out of proportion with actual risks to health and fails to reflect mortality risks shown in health data, according to a study of health-related coverage in the media published today by the King's Fund.

# Media as a policy forum: from toxic to confrontational





# Constant, contradictory stories

## HRT DOUBLES RISK OF BREAST CANCER



DANGER: HRT tablets, left. Above: A woman has a breast scan for cancer

**(But don't panic ..doctors still back it)**

**WOMEN** taking HRT double the risk of getting breast cancer, according to an alarming survey out today.

But doctors warned women not to panic as the benefits of hormone replacement therapy outweigh the dangers in most cases.

In a study of one million women researchers found those taking the combined HRT pill for 10 years or more are 100 per cent more likely to get the disease than those who don't take it at all.

For every 1,000 women in the UK, 30 are expected to get breast cancer. For women who take the oestrogen-only form of HRT, the figure rises to 35. But with the combined tablet, the rate shoots up to 50 per 1,000 - double the average.

HRT could have been responsible for an extra 20,000 cases of breast cancer in the past 10 years, say the researchers.

Women taking HRT also stand a 30 per cent

**By LAWRENCE DAVISON**  
Health Correspondent

greater chance of dying from the disease. But the research also found that the drug does not raise the chances of getting breast cancer if it is only taken as a short-term measure to ease the symptoms of the menopause.

Dr Mary Amis, of the Cancer Research group on HRT, said: "If women are only taking HRT for a short time to relieve their symptoms then the benefits outweigh the risks. But the risks increase in one to two years."

HRT is prescribed to women mainly in their 50s to deal with the side effects of the menopause, such as hot flashes and night sweating.

It is estimated 50,000 women currently take the combined pill with a similar number on the oestrogen-only treatment. Experts said women

should limit the use of the drug in light of the Cancer Research study but should not be put off it completely.

Cancer Research's medical director John Toy said: "This is not an emergency but it would be sensible for a woman to take HRT for only as long as necessary to deal with her medical problems as advised by her doctor."

Report author Professor Valerie Beral added: "Comparing the risks to by no means simple."

Taking HRT is also thought to reduce a woman's chances of getting cancer of the uterus and the debilitating bone disease osteoporosis.

Following the survey of women between 50 and 64 over five years, Cancer Research called for a full risk assessment so that women can make an informed choice. It is the first time such a large study of the effects of the drug has been done.

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## Wine safeguard

Women who drink two or more glasses of red wine a day may reduce their risk of developing ovarian cancer by 85 per cent, according to a study published in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention*. The research was conducted by scientists at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

Women told not to panic as study shows risk is doubled

## HRT linked to breast cancer

**FROM PAGE ONE**

profession. The Committee on Safety of Medicines is instructing doctors not to prescribe HRT for longer than a year after this, each patient should be reassessed individually.

Women taking HRT for up to a year to tackle symptoms of the menopause would probably still find that the benefits outweigh the risks, the committee said. But those no longer should be told of the increased risk.

Around 1.5 million women take HRT but just over half that number on the combined oestrogen-progestin type.

The research, published in today's edition of the respected medical journal *The Lancet*, is the largest ever study of its kind of women aged 50-64.

The women were recruited through the NHS breast screening programme and had been on HRT or had used it in the past.

Between 1995 and 2001 there were 4,181 cases of invasive breast cancer and 627 deaths.

The study found the combined form of HRT caused four times as many breast cancers as the oestrogen-only type.

Current and recent use of HRT increased the risk of breast cancer and this occurred after only a couple of years but was greater the longer women were on it.

Those women stopped taking it, however, the risk fell and after five years was equal to women who had never taken HRT.

In post-menopausal women aged 50 who have not taken HRT there will be about 30 breast cancer cases per 1,000.

The study found there should be an extra five cases among women who took oestrogen-only HRT for 10 years from the age of

**I couldn't face life without it**

**MOTHER** of two Barbara Stone took HRT for six years to tackle extreme symptoms after starting the menopause at 45.

She suffered heavy, irregular bleeding, cold sweats and hot flashes.

Mrs Stone, 65, said: "I'd go very red and perspiration would pour from my pores."

The night sweats were dreadful. It was like being in a pool of water. I felt as if spiders were running down my body but it was just perspiration."

The symptoms affected her work training HSCB.

HRT helped but, as she came off it in 1997 after six years, Mrs Stone found she had breast cancer.

She says that without HRT she "would have a second life" but says women who take it should be reassured each year.

Another aunt, Betty Rippling, 55, was told to avoid HRT after her sister died of breast cancer. Mrs Rippling, of Green, Essex, now has the disease too but still feels she was right and to take the risk.

with her medical problems as new cases occur more slowly.

"A woman on HRT for a long time is inevitably at a large study and research."

Scientists at the Cancer Care, in daily contact with breast cancer and are aware of the

Alarming conclusion of the world's biggest smoking and drinking study

## One glass of wine a day 'raises breast cancer risk'

**By Jenny Hope**  
Medical Correspondent

**DRINKING** a single glass of wine a day increases a woman's risk of getting breast cancer by six per cent, according to the findings.

They show that every year three-and-a-half million women in the UK are at risk from the disease.

A large cancer research study, which took 10 years to complete, was published yesterday, showing that women drinking more than one glass of wine a day are at a 10 per cent higher risk of the disease.

But levels of drinking for women have already increased in some cases of breast cancer in recent years - and the risk could go higher if the trend continues.

Women who drink more than one glass of wine a day are at a 10 per cent higher risk of the disease.

The research, which came at a time when the world is facing a new wave of obesity, could lead to a rethink on the advice to drink less.

The Department of Health, which is currently reviewing the advice, said: "The research tells us there is a definite link between alcohol and breast cancer and the evidence supports the advice to drink less."

The research also found that drinking had contributed to rising numbers of breast cancer cases, although other factors such as the trend for women to have children at a later age, and the use of hormone replacement therapy, also play a role.

But women are drinking more now than they used to and if this pattern continues it could lead to a rise in the number of breast cancer cases.

**The guidelines**

HEALTH Department guidelines suggest women can have between three and four glasses of wine a day and men two and three without a significant health risk.

A study to find a link between alcohol and breast cancer was part of a 10-year study of 100,000 women, which looked at the risk of breast cancer, heart disease and stroke.

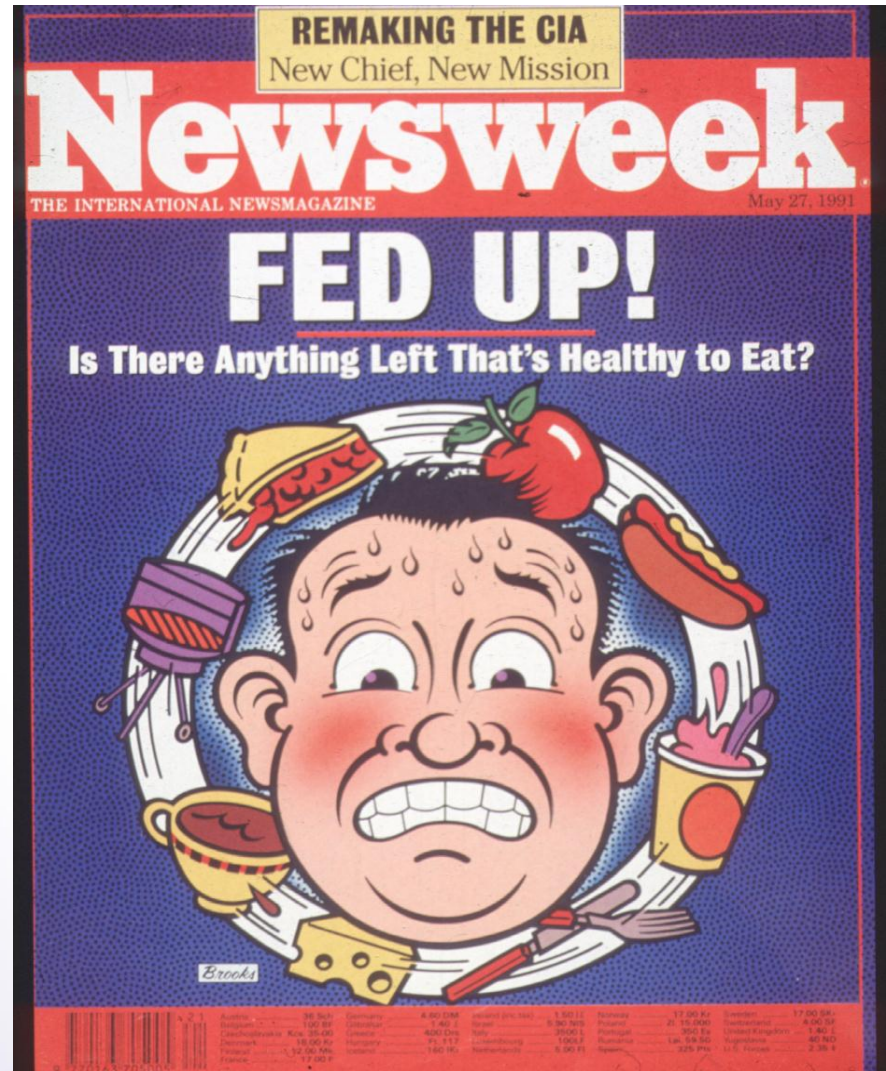
Recent research suggests occasional drinking is less risky than regular drinking, but the new study found that women who drink more than one glass a day are at a 10 per cent higher risk of the disease.

The research also found that drinking had contributed to rising numbers of breast cancer cases, although other factors such as the trend for women to have children at a later age, and the use of hormone replacement therapy, also play a role.

But women are drinking more now than they used to and if this pattern continues it could lead to a rise in the number of breast cancer cases.

**Risky pleasure** Scientists have directly linked alcohol to breast cancer

Backlash....



## What do the media actually follow and how is that influenced?

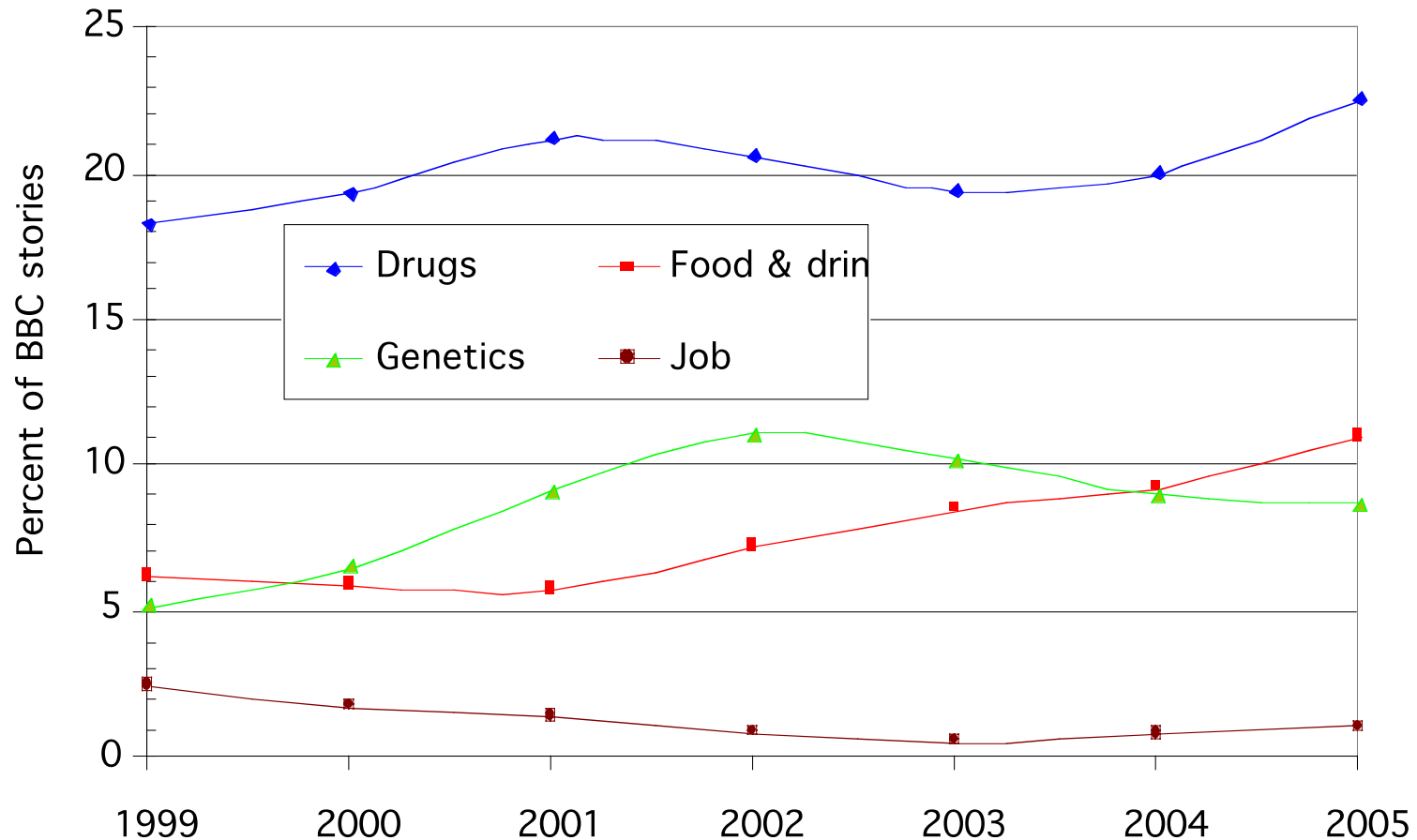


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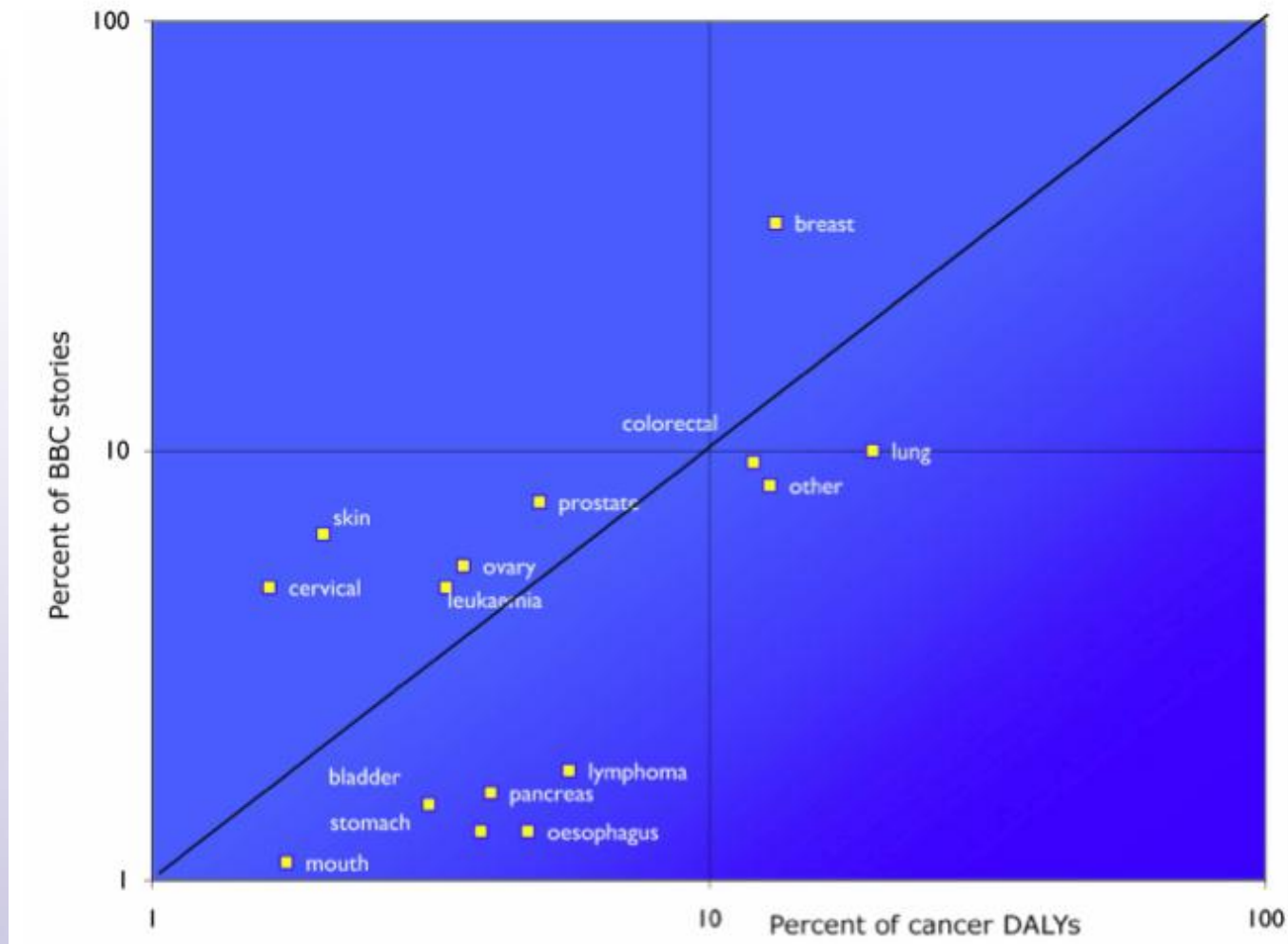


# Reality check – the media follows fashion

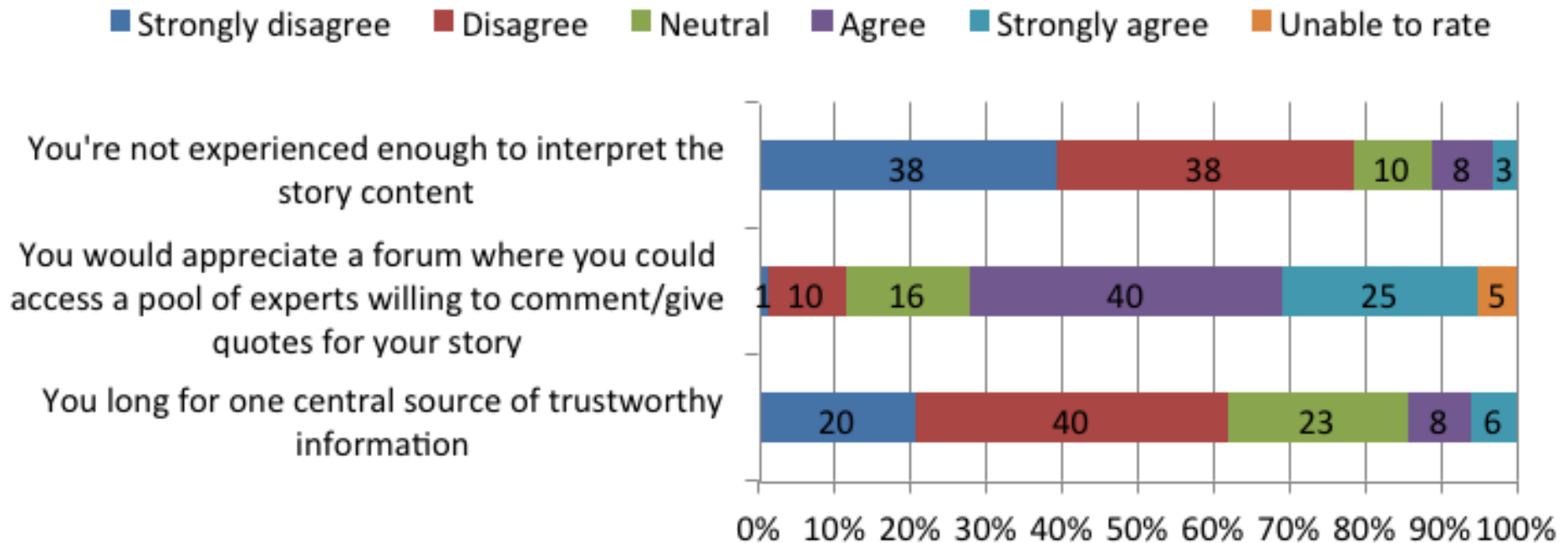




# Is the media balanced in terms of type of cancer?



# What are reporters really looking for? And do they think that they know 'best'?



## The 'new' media space

# Changing of the guard: can social media make cancer reporting more 'honest'?



## Timing of report

< 24 h of launch C4

> 24 h after launch B2

## Country of Origin

No statistical difference between countries (n=17)

## Type of media

E-version of print media D3

E-newspaper only B2

Blog C2

## Title of article (strapline)

< 24 h of launch D4

> 24 h after launch B3

## Body of article

< 24 h of launch C3

> 24 h after launch B1/2 [A: why is this figure not exact?]

The letters A–E refer to balance of reports (A=very balanced, E=completely unbalanced). The numbers 1–5 represent accuracy of reports (1=very accurate, 5=completely inaccurate).

**Table: Balance and accuracy of media reports after launch of *The Lancet Oncology* Commission on delivering affordable cancer care in high-income countries**



# The age of social media is upon us.....

| Dissemination<br>↓<br>Engagement | Tools                           | Resources  |          |      |      |          |      |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------|------|------|----------|------|
|                                  |                                 | Time/Staff |          |      | Cost |          |      |
|                                  |                                 | Low        | Moderate | High | Low  | Moderate | High |
|                                  | Buttons/Badges                  | ✓          |          |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | Content Syndication             |            | ✓        |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | RSS Feeds                       | ✓          |          |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | Image Sharing                   | ✓          |          |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | Podcast Posting                 | ✓          |          |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | Online Video Sharing            | ✓          |          |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | Widgets <sup>1, 2</sup>         | ✓          |          |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | eCards <sup>3</sup>             | ✓          |          |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | Micro-blogs                     |            | ✓        |      | ✓    |          |      |
|                                  | Podcast Creation                |            | ✓        |      |      | ✓        |      |
|                                  | Online Video Production         |            | ✓        |      |      | ✓        |      |
|                                  | Blogs                           |            | ✓        |      |      | ✓        |      |
|                                  | Mobile Technologies/<br>Texting |            | ✓        |      |      |          | ✓    |
|                                  | Virtual Worlds                  |            | ✓        |      |      |          | ✓    |
|                                  | Social Networks                 |            |          | ✓    | ✓    |          |      |

# The future....is all about speed, less friction and globalisation.....



## Widgets



## Content Syndication

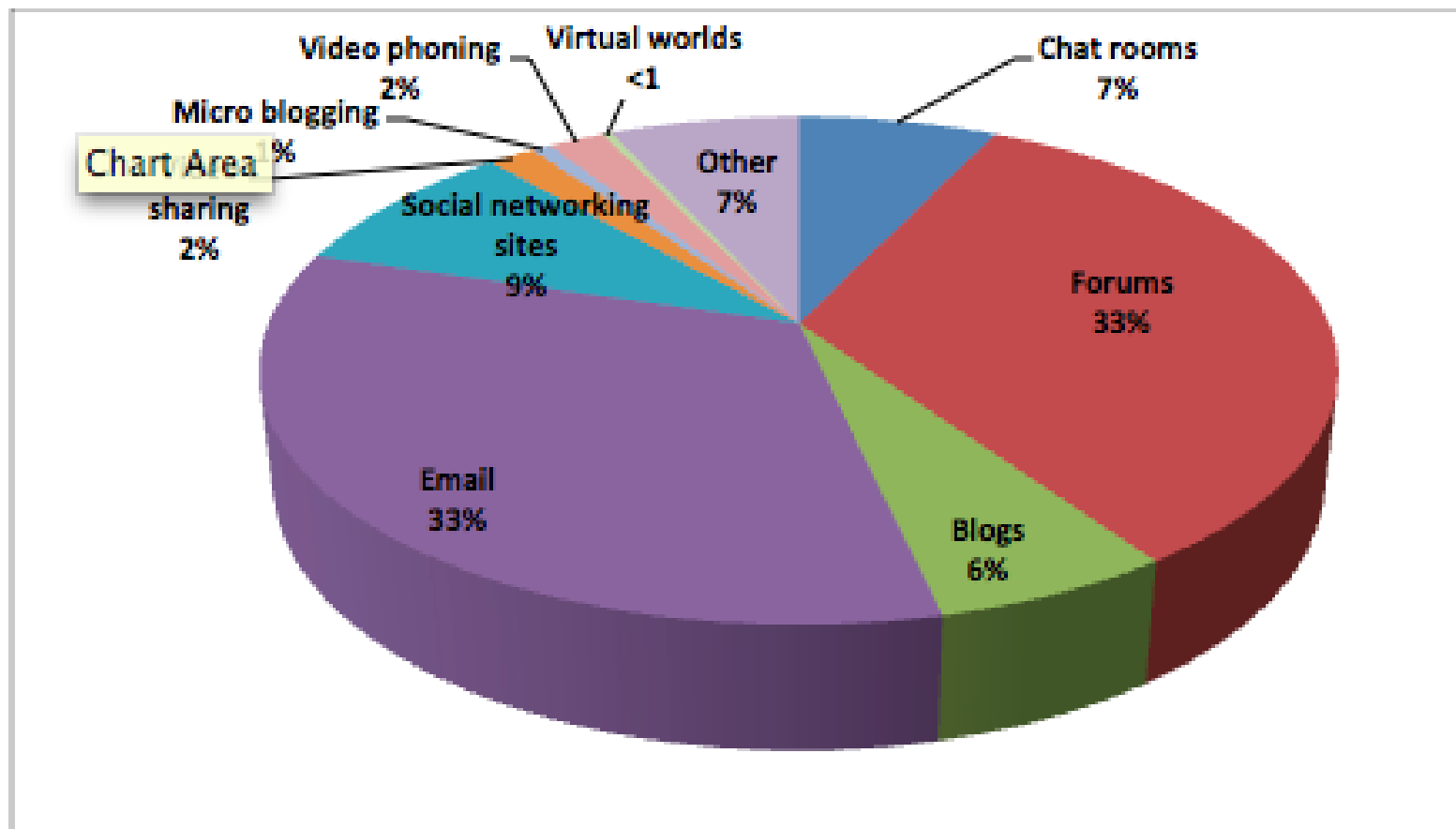


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**How are the public / patients interfacing with the media?**

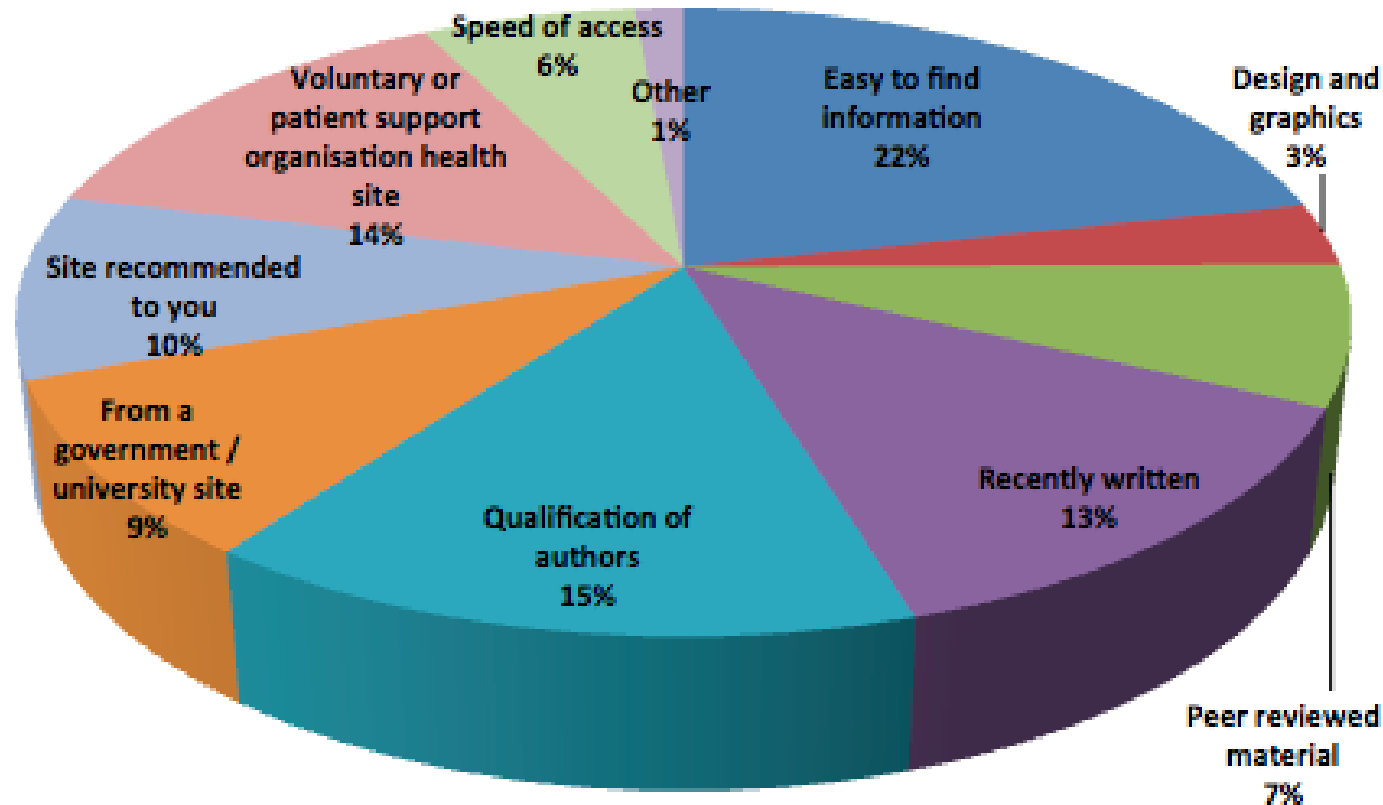
# When you ask patients and public what media they use?





...and how they decide whether web-site is 'worthy'...

What factors influence your decision to look at or use a particular



## Relevance to OECl

You are a long, long way behind current media technology

The majority have sub-optimal management of their public relations

Few understand their constituency in terms of what media they access / use

Cancer community is still too 'reactive' in Europe

**Need for an e-engagement strategy for OECl and beyond**