Media Representations of Violence against Women and their Children

*project in partnership with Our Watch*

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Media representations of violence against women and their children

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The National Media Engagement (NME) Project is engaging media to increase quality reporting of violence against women and their children and building awareness of the impacts of gender stereotyping and inequality.

MORE ON MEDIA

Our Watch Awards

Our Watch Awards for exemplary reporting to end violence against women was launched in 2015.

MORE ON OUR WATCH AWARDS
State of knowledge review

Study method and data

Overview of results

Recommendations for action
“Objective news coverage and dissemination of information may become one of the most powerful tools in reducing the pervasive problem of violence against women” (Carll, 2003)*
Media representations of violence against women and their children: State of knowledge paper

Tuesday, 24th November 2015

This paper provides an overview of the best available contemporary evidence on the way news and information media portray violence against women.

Read more...
Aim: an overview of the best available contemporary evidence

• *Studies of representation*: understanding the nature of the content and discourse in the news

• *Studies of audience reception*: understanding how audiences interpret news

• *Studies of news production*: understanding the practices of gathering information
• 48 primary studies; half published in last five years

• 16 different countries; most from US (19); six were based on Australian media

• majority of studies concerned traditional media; newer forms of digital and social media were rarer

• uniform in methodological approach

• large variations in study design

• small number of studies (5) explored change over time
• not reporting the **social context** in which male perpetrated violence against women occurs

• **sensationalising** stories through language or by disproportionately focusing on stories that fit key news values

• perpetuating **myths** and misrepresentations

• directly and indirectly **shifting blame** from male perpetrators of violence and assigning responsibility for violence to women

• relying on **law enforcement** as the expert “voices”
• what is the extent and nature of reporting of violence against women and their children in the Australian media?

• monitored media in three states in Australia 2015
  • newspapers
  • radio
  • television
  • online news outlets

• search strategies designed to capture broadest range of media coverage

• two key components: **one quantitative (content analysis)** and one qualitative (discourse analysis)
Media monitoring service, *iSentia*, searched and retrieved relevant media items

- New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland
- February 22 to June 22, 2015 for newspapers, radio and television
  - all capital city newspapers, including *The Australian*
  - selection of regional, rural and suburban newspapers
  - all free-to-air and pay-for-view television and radio networks (news and current affairs only)
- March 22 to May 22, 2015 for online (seven online news sites)
- to account for syndication, only first reports were retrieved
results - overview

Total sample 4516 media items

41% radio broadcasts

21% newspaper articles

30% online news

8% television broadcasts
media outlets by volume
monthly patterns by volume

- Online
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Television

- 22 Feb-22 Mar
- 23 Mar-22 Apr
- 23 Apr-22 May
- 23 May-22 Jun
content analysis

• random sample of 10% of items was selected for in-depth content analysis

• Stratified by media type (print, broadcast, online)

• 444 items including
  • 93 newspaper articles
  • 221 broadcast items (radio and television)
  • 130 online news items

• selected media clips were then coded according to coding frame developed for the project
A young woman has been murdered at the family home she shared with her partner. Her partner is being hunted by police. A neighbour found the body in the woman’s car.

A man has been charged over a serious domestic violence incident in Narara. Police have arrived in a home yesterday and allegedly found the man on the front step, while a woman and children were cowering inside.

A 27yo man, who is charged with raping a 25yo woman in Rockhampton on Saturday morning, is expected to front court today. Detective Senior Sergeant Scott Moon says the incident happened near Renee st under the Fitzroy Street bridge.

A pregnant woman, her 7yo son and a 52yo man have been murdered west of Toowoomba in Biddeston. Police are investigating. They say the deaths of the mother and her son are suspicious, though the man's isn't. Police believe it may be a murder suicide.
Funding needed to keep women safe

Domestic violence is not just a problem where men use physical force to control, bully or punish partners and former partners; emotional and financial bullying and harassment are also rife. "Mother of four stabbed to death in her home, daughter badly injured", April 1. The damage to the children's emotional well-being and mental health lasts long after, and into, the next generation.

"There is something rotten in our cultural values, whoever one's religion or politics. Greatly increased funding is essential to protect women and children from harm. There is also a need to fund widespread social change programs for men."

Many do not realise they are using their children as weapons, or that they are denying their own responsibility, because anything and everything is always "her fault".

Jan Allerton Huntleys Cove
include help seeking information

• only 19 media clips in total (4%) included information for women (or men) on where to seek help

• no uniformity about services/information

• no difference between media type
702 ABC Sydney, 25th February 2015

Caller John says that his friends had an experience where one person in their friend group committed domestic violence and would not accept that they had done it. John says that the police took no action so the friend group took action to ensure that the woman and children in the relationship were safe. Hollands says that she does not want to encourage vigilantism. Glover says that MensLine Australia is a good place for men to seek help from. Hollands says that 1800RESPECT is the general number for domestic violence.
Leslie Allen's body was found in the boot of a car in Auburn and (insert) her wedding day and Assistant Commissioner Mark Murdoch.

Boris' son accused of girlfriend assault

Body found
The saddest wedding day
She was due to walk down the aisle today. Instead, Stephanie Scott's family and friends are gathering in Leeton as police confirmed late on Friday they had found a body.

Court told pregnant victim bashed until she choked

SMILING FACE OF ALLEGED KILLER

FALLING STOCKS. Jia Songmei fought herself into the water.
avoid making women part of the problem

- 15% of reports referenced the behaviour of women – implying a mutuality or at least partial responsibility
  - drinking and/or using drugs
  - flirting
  - gone home with the perpetrator
  - out at night or alone
  - had been arguing
  - stayed with an abusive partner
A woman, who has been sexually assaulted, is being treated in the Townsville Hospital.

Police say the victim has cuts and bruises and is now being tested.
is fair news report on gender-based violence a court report?

Man who head-butted partner freed from prison

BREE FULLER

AN ABUSIVE husband who threatened to “kick in” his children before the Oak

The pair argued about their relationship as they sat in their SUV with their

Jason Fittler knew assaulting the mother of his children was wrong, but the 31-year-old said he became “frustrated” with her on the afternoon of November 24 when he claimed she called him “an idiot”.

It was a cutting remark for Fittler, a dyslexic, who had been made redundant from his job as a pipe re-liner.

later regretted his actions, telling a psychologist he was sorry for the outburst.

“I shouldn’t have hit her, she’s a female and you don’t hit girls ... it was a dog act.”

Fittler pleaded guilty to common assault and was jailed for six months on January 22, despite it being his first criminal offence.

During a sentence sever-
BASHER HOTLINE

Domestic violence register to protect women who fear partners' past

EXCLUSIVE

Alicia Wood

DOMESTIC violence offenders will be put on a tailored register and women will have the power to check if a man was on it in their lifetime on the fly. The NSW police force is the first state in Australia to get a domestic violence register, after Premier Mike Baird and minister for women Pru Goward promised that, if elected, they would set up the register to protect women against violent partners. It comes after 23 women were killed in NSW last year by violent partners, and there were more than 25,000 domestic assault reports to police.

In January, Sydney hairdresser Lelia Ali became the first woman to allegedly fall victim to a partner in NSW in the first month of 2016. Her 25-year-old former partner, Alireza Soltani, was arrested after his wife was stabbed to death in a car park.

The register is modelled on "Clare's law" in the UK – set up after Clare Wood, 36, was killed by her violent ex-boyfriend, even after she repeatedly reported him to police if you women are the "right to ask" authorities if they have concerns their partner has a violent history and had been

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Abusive partners could be listed on proposed NSW domestic violence register

By state political reporter Liz Foschia

Updated 6 Mar 2015, 11:52am

New South Wales could become the first state in Australia to set up a domestic violence disclosure scheme under a Coalition proposal.

Premier Mike Baird has told an International Women’s Day breakfast in Sydney that he wants to set up a register that would record the names of offenders with a violent past.
Rapist says his life was destroyed by conviction after alleyway assault

Nick Balston

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Judge says Luke Lazarus did not care ‘one way or another’ whether woman was consenting to sex.

He pulled her stockings down, ignored a second request by her to leave and then demanded she stand in a way that he could force himself on her. Scared, she complied.

Luke Lazarus, the son of Kings Cross night club owner Andrew Lazarus, leaving court on Thursday. He faces at least three years in jail. Photograph: Jane Dempster/AAP

The son of a Sydney nightclub owner who raped a woman in a Kings Cross alleyway and then bragged about taking her virginity has been jailed for at least three years.

Luke Lazarus, 23, said he once had “the world at his feet” and could have been a CEO.

But on Friday he was told he would be jailed for sexually assaulting an 18-year-old woman at the back of his father’s Kings Cross club Soho in May 2013.

Lazarus sat in the dock and stared after the sentence was handed down. His parents, including his father, Andrew Lazarus, were in court.
Change the story:
A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence

Presenter: Dr Emma Partridge
Our Watch

Facilitator: Moo Baulch
Domestic Violence New South Wales