

Perceptions of news reports and press releases among scientists

News reports of science should contain sufficient information for people to understand the findings and their implications. Scientists and journalists have different views on whether this goal is achieved. The aim of the present survey is to ascertain the scientists' perception of press releases and news reports.

The study takes about 10 minutes to complete and consists of multiple choice and open-ended questions about your perceptions of news reports (your own and those of others). You may omit any questions you do not wish to complete. This survey is anonymous.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. To withdraw please close the survey window.

This study has received ethical approval from the School of Psychology Ethics Committee, Cardiff University. If you have any questions about this project then please contact the principal investigator Dr Chris Chambers (chambersc1@cardiff.ac.uk).

At the end of the study you will be provided with additional information and feedback about the purpose of the study.

Thank you very much for your help with this project.

If you are 18 or over, understand the statement above and freely consent to participate in this study then click on the "Next" button to begin the study.

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SECTION A

A1. Have you ever had a press release about your work issued by a journal or a university?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ Yes

If yes how many?

If No then please skip to SECTION C

If Yes: please rate your general level of involvement in the preparation of press releases:

- ☐ No involvement
- ☐ The press office or journal prepared it, but I approved it
- ☐ The press office or journal prepared a draft, and I edited it in important ways
- ☐ I wrote it myself
- ☐ None of the above

If none of the above, please describe why none apply

A2. Did you or the press office have the final say on wording of the press release?

- ☐ Me
- ☐ Press office or journal

SECTION B

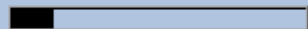
The following questions pertain to your most recent press release:

B1. Was the press release issued by your university or by a scientific journal?

- ☐ University
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ University and Journal
- ☐ Other

If other please state

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 14% complete

B2. To what extent did the recent press release accurately reflect the implications of your study?

- ☐ The implications of the study were exaggerated or distorted to the point of being misleading
- ☐ The implications were slightly overstated or distorted, but broadly accurate
- ☐ The implications of the study were stated accurately and were not exaggerated

B3. To what extent did the press release communicate the important caveats of the research?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Some caveats stated
- ☐ Most caveats stated

B4. If the implications of your research had been stated more cautiously, do you think the media would still have been interested in the research?

- ☐ Yes, it would have been the same media impact
- ☐ It would have generated less media interest or none
- ☐ Not applicable: the implications of my research in my most recent press release were completely accurate

B5. Please rate the general accuracy of news stories that arose from the press release.

- ☐ Highly inaccurate
- ☐ Some inaccuracies
- ☐ Generally accurate
- ☐ Entirely accurate

B6. Did you know, in advance, the exact date that the university/journal planned to publicise the press release?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

B7. Following the press release, to what extent did you make time in your diary to communicate with journalists?

- ☐ I avoided journalists
- ☐ Did not make time; they needed to accommodate my schedule
- ☐ Made a small amount of time
- ☐ Made sufficient time available
- ☐ I did not have advance warning of the press release

B8. Did you actively initiate contact with journalists from any particular organisation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please specify which media organisations you initiated contact with and why:

B9. Did you actively avoid contact with journalists from any particular organisation?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

If Yes, please specify which media organisations you avoided and why:

B10. Please tell us about any noteworthy experiences you have had with journalists (positive and/or negative)

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SECTION C

General views of science news

C1. For the following outlets, please rate your degree of satisfaction in the quality of science news reporting in your own area of scientific specialisation:

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
BBC	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daily Express	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daily Mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daily Star	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Daily Telegraph	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guardian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Press Association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Associated Press	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reuters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Sun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Times	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other					

**C2. When you read an inaccurate science-related news story, who do you generally feel is responsible?
(please tick as many as are applicable)**

- ☐ Scientist
- ☐ University press office (when relevant)
- ☐ Journal press office (when relevant)
- ☐ Newspaper editor/sub-editor
- ☐ All of the above

C3. If you had the power to implement one change to improve the quality of science news reporting, what would it be?

D1: About you

What is your age

What is your academic position?:

- ☐ PhD student
- ☐ Post-doctoral researcher
- ☐ Independent Research Fellow
- ☐ Lecturer (Assistant Professor)
- ☐ Senior Lecturer (Assistant Professor)
- ☐ Reader (Associate Professor)
- ☐ Professor

What is your country of residence?:

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Thank you for participating in this research

News reports of science should contain sufficient information for people to understand the findings and their implications. Scientists and journalists have different views on whether this goal is achieved.

The aim of the present survey was to ascertain scientists' perception of news reports. The questions you answered will let us know what scientists think of news reports and the factors that may explain why they are satisfied or dissatisfied with news reports.

We will post the results of the survey on InSciOut.com within the next six weeks.

If you are interested in research based about news reports then see the following:

Lisa M Schwartz, Steven Woloshin, Alice Andrews, Therese A Stukel. Influence of medical journal press releases on the quality of associated newspaper coverage: retrospective cohort study. *British Medical Journal* 2012;344:d8164 doi: 10.1136/bmj.d8164 (Published 27 January 2012) Page 1

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Dr Chris Chambers at chambersc1@cardiff.ac.uk

If you have any complaints or concerns about this research, please contact:

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