

## Directions of Communication Practitioners towards the Concept of Social Responsibility in Medical Pages of Middle East Newspapers “Egypt Is Utilized as a Case Study Within the Context of This Research”

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### **Biography:**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the state of medical pages in Egyptian newspapers, focusing on the characteristics of communication practitioners, the adoption of modern journalistic techniques, and the role of editors in shaping these pages. It further investigates the audience’s needs and how well the content of these pages meets those needs. The research covers the period from 2015 to 2017, analyzing the content and handling trends of medical topics, and evaluating ethical digital media practices in Egypt and the Arab world, with a theoretical framework based on social responsibility in journalism. The study employed a survey distributed to communication practitioners specializing in medical writing, gathering data on their qualifications, challenges, and perspectives on the nature of medical journalism. The findings highlighted financial constraints as a key obstacle in producing high-quality content. The study concludes with recommendations for future research to address these issues.

The current research aims to study the communication agents and the results of the statistical analysis of the data collected from the communication agents’ questionnaire. This questionnaire was applied to communication agents in the newspapers included in the study sample (Al-Ahram, Al-Wafd, and Al-Shorouk), which are published both electronically and in print from 2015 to 2017, specifically targeting specialists in medical writing. The sample of communication agents consisted of 20 journalists distributed across the three newspapers as follows: **Al-Ahram:** 11 (55%), **Al-Wafd:** 6 (30%), and **Al-Shorouk:** 3 (15%), so the **Total:** 20 (100%)

### **Reasons for choosing the study sample from 2015 to 2017:**

Over the past years, since January 2014, the Ministry of Planning, Follow-Up, and Administrative Reform has led the preparation of the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, which aims to develop and formulate a vision for the new Egypt's development until 2030. This vision serves as a roadmap to maximize the utilization of available resources, enhance competitiveness, revive Egypt's historical role in regional leadership, and provide a decent life for citizens. The preparation of this strategy relied on a participatory approach with representatives from civil society organizations, the private sector, ministries, experts, and academics.

This strategy is divided into three dimensions (economic, social, and environmental). The social dimension includes (social justice, health, education and training, and culture). The vision in the field of health is that "all Egyptians enjoy a healthy, safe life through the implementation of an integrated health system characterized by accessibility, quality, and non-discrimination, capable of improving health indicators by achieving comprehensive health and preventive coverage, and early intervention for all citizens to ensure financial protection for the underprivileged, achieving satisfaction for citizens and workers in the health sector to ensure prosperity, well-being, happiness, and social and economic development; for Egypt to be a leader in health and preventive services and research regionally and continentally."

## **Introduction:**

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes health as a fundamental human right, stating that every person should enjoy the highest attainable standard of health, regardless of race, religion, or social status (Jafar, 1998). WHO defines health as a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease, emphasizing that health is shaped by social, economic, and political factors. While individual behaviors like smoking and poor nutrition contribute to disease, they often result from broader societal conditions (WHO, 2013). Thus, health education is crucial, particularly in developing countries, where poor health habits and a lack of awareness contribute to the spread of disease (Al-Jazaeri, 1993). Media, especially specialized journalism, plays a key role in promoting health awareness and educating the public with scientifically sound information. Medical journalism focuses on delivering health news, providing preventive advice, and fostering health education without promoting specific products (Ajwa, 2004). This growing interest in health awareness, both in developed and developing countries, highlights the need for further study, particularly regarding the differences between print and digital media in how health information is presented.

**First: Research Problem:** The study aims to uncover the state of medical pages in Egyptian newspapers and to identify the characteristics of those responsible for communication within these medical pages, as well as to understand the characteristics of the audience interacting with these medical pages in the newspapers under study. It seeks to determine the extent to which the materials presented in these pages align with their needs from 2015 to 2017, based on the content and issues raised in their pages and the trends in their treatment.

**Second: Research Questions:** Questions related to the role of those responsible for communication within the medical pages of the newspapers under study ("Al-Ahram," "Al-Wafd," and "Al-Shorouk") in the field study include:

1. What are the roles of those responsible for communication in the medical pages of the newspapers under study?
2. What are the traits and characteristics of the communicator?
3. How can we reveal the role of editors and those responsible for the pages?
4. How do communicators adopt modern methods of journalistic writing?
5. How can we identify the main positives and negatives of those responsible for communication within the medical pages?
6. What is the nature of the qualification and training received by the communicator?
7. What types of sources does the communicator rely on?

8. What are the most important methods the communicator uses to develop their journalistic performance?

### **Third: Research Objectives:**

This study aims to explore the role of those responsible for communication in the medical pages of the Egyptian newspapers ("Al-Ahram," "Al-Wafd," and "Al-Shorouk") by:

- Identifying their roles and characteristics.
- Investigating the influence of editors and communicators.
- Assessing their adoption of modern journalistic writing techniques.

### **Fourth: Study Importance:**

This study focuses on medical pages in Egyptian newspapers, exploring their development, use of modern technologies, and the role of journalists in shaping public understanding of health topics. It offers valuable insights into the quality of medical journalism, the topics covered, and the impact of the communicators.

### **Fifth: Theoretical Framework:**

The study draws on the **Social Responsibility Theory**, which emphasizes journalism's role in serving society by adhering to professional values like accuracy, objectivity, and ethical responsibility. The theory stresses the importance of media fulfilling its obligations to the public while maintaining independence and freedom of expression.

The theory of social responsibility in journalism and media is defined as "a set of functions that journalism must commit to performing before society in various political, economic, social, and cultural fields, such that its treatments and materials provide professional values like accuracy, objectivity, balance, and comprehensiveness, provided that journalism has real freedom that makes it responsible before the law and society." Social responsibility in journalism also refers to "concern for the public good, attention to community needs, and working towards the community's happiness by ensuring that journalism reflects sound opinions, accuracy, fairness, and ethical considerations" (Al-Johari et al., 1992). From these definitions, it becomes clear that the concept of media social responsibility is based on a simple principle: journalism's commitment to recognized professional values such as accuracy, objectivity, integrity, and respect for community culture and beliefs, in addition to fulfilling functions related to meeting community needs.

### **Employing the Theory of Social Responsibility to Serve the Study's Purposes:**

This study examines the factors influencing journalism through the lens of social responsibility theory, which seeks a balance between individual rights and societal welfare, particularly regarding access to knowledge. Journalism under this theory is shaped by conflicts of interest, the nature of news sources, and ethical obligations. Journalists must adhere to professional standards, ethical codes, and laws while maintaining freedom of expression and ensuring that the public receives information without barriers. Media outlets must balance independence with societal obligations, with social responsibility reflected in how content is presented, its size and placement, and the sources used (Ajwa, 2004). A self-regulating system emphasizes journalists' responsibility

to society, guided by the public interest, and distinguishes social responsibility from systems that enforce direct censorship. Legal considerations, derived from ethics, also play a role in responsible journalism (Al-Jazaeri, 1993). In Egypt, journalistic responsibility has become limited due to a lack of support from leadership and weak professional regulation, resulting in a decline in ethical standards, especially in medical reporting (Al-Johari et al., 1992). This highlights the importance of accurate sourcing and credibility in medical journalism, as failure to properly attribute information diminishes the media's trustworthiness and the public's perception of its reliability.

### **Sixth: Literature Review:**

Previous research on scientific and health journalism has explored various aspects:

#### **Chelsea Veld's Study (2017) on Credibility in Evidence-Based Reporting**

Chelsea Veld's research addresses a critical issue in science communication: **credibility**. She focuses on how the media portrays scientific studies and the biases that can influence this representation. Veld highlights that, often, media outlets are drawn to scientific studies with sensational findings—such as "breakthroughs" or findings that conflict with established knowledge—because they attract attention and generate clicks. However, this can lead to the misrepresentation of scientific findings. These biased portrayals can skew public perception and undermine the public's trust in science. Veld advocates for a more careful and nuanced approach to communicating science, urging journalists to be aware of the biases inherent in scientific studies themselves and to present findings within the proper context to maintain credibility.

#### **Karon Wynn (2017) on Creative Writing in Scientific Communication**

Karon Wynn's research focuses on the role of **creative writing** in scientific communication. Wynn specifically examines how scientists like **David Eagleman**, a renowned neuroscientist, use narrative writing to make complex scientific ideas more accessible to a broader audience. Eagleman and others have employed storytelling techniques to break down intricate concepts in neuroscience, transforming technical jargon into relatable narratives that engage the public. Wynn emphasizes that this approach not only helps make science more digestible but also fosters a deeper emotional connection with the audience, which can lead to greater public interest in and support for scientific research. In this context, creative writing serves as a tool for **popularizing science** without sacrificing accuracy.

#### **Haidar Abdel Hafiz Muhammad (2016) on Scientific Reporting in Sudan**

In his study of **scientific reporting in Sudan**, Haidar Abdel Hafiz Muhammad examines the unique challenges faced by journalists in this context. One of his key findings is that there is a **lack of investigative journalism** and **specialized formats** for science and health reporting in Sudan, which diminishes the effectiveness of scientific communication. Muhammad argues that **institutional support** for science journalism is critical and suggests that **curriculum integration** in journalism schools could help improve the situation. By focusing on specialized training for journalists in science communication, the study calls for a more informed and professional approach to reporting on scientific issues in Sudan and similar contexts where resources and infrastructure for scientific reporting are limited.

### **Jyoti Madasudanan (2016) on Visual Communication in Science**

Jyoti Madasudanan's research explores the growing importance of **visual communication** in the dissemination of scientific information. Madasudanan points out that well-designed visuals—such as **graphs, charts, and animations**—are increasingly valued for their ability to simplify complex data and make scientific concepts more understandable. These visual aids not only help clarify information but also engage audiences in a more intuitive way, which is especially important in **peer review** and public science communication. By enhancing the accessibility of scientific information through visuals, Madasudanan suggests that the scientific community can foster more informed public discussions and decision-making.

### **Asmaa Ahmed Ramadan Maawad (2015) on Journalists in Science and Technology Sections**

Asmaa Ahmed Ramadan Maawad's study delves into the **role of journalists** in science and technology sections of media outlets, focusing on their **job satisfaction**, the **selection of topics**, and how they engage with their audiences. Maawad's research suggests that while journalists in this field are generally enthusiastic about their work, they face challenges related to **lack of specialized knowledge** and the pressure to cover a wide range of topics with limited resources. The study also highlights how journalists' choices on what to report are influenced by factors such as **audience interests, media trends**, and the need for attention-grabbing headlines. Maawad further collects expert opinions on the state of science journalism, noting that **audience engagement** is crucial in building trust and ensuring that the public receives accurate and relevant scientific information.

### **Jeremy Farrar (2015) on Inaccurate Science Reporting**

Jeremy Farrar's study discusses a critical concern in the relationship between science and the media: **inaccurate science reporting**. Farrar identifies that many researchers feel frustrated with the way their work is portrayed in the media, often feeling that key nuances and limitations of their studies are overlooked or distorted. However, Farrar notes that few scientists speak out publicly about these issues, perhaps due to concerns over damaging their reputation or relationships with the media. The study explores how **media portrayals** of science can perpetuate **misunderstandings** and **misinformation**, with **sensationalism** often leading to distorted headlines that do not reflect the complexity or uncertainty of scientific research. Farrar calls for stronger partnerships between scientists and journalists to ensure more accurate reporting.

### **Dena Zeraatka et al. (2017) on Measuring Health Research Report Quality**

Dena Zeraatka and colleagues developed a **scale to assess the quality of health research reports in the media**. Their study sought to improve the standards of health journalism by introducing a reliable and valid tool for evaluating how well media outlets report on medical research. This scale evaluates multiple aspects of health reporting, including **accuracy, clarity, and comprehensiveness**. Zeraatka's research emphasizes the importance of **high-quality medical journalism**, particularly in an era where misinformation about health can spread quickly. By measuring the quality of health reports, the study aims to encourage better standards in health media and ensure that the public receives information they can trust.

### **Nermine El-Saber (2015) on 19th-Century Medical Newspapers and Women's Health in Egypt**

Nermine El-Saber's research examines **19th-century medical newspapers** in Egypt and how they portrayed **women's health**, particularly concerning **infertility**. The study finds that these newspapers were a battleground for **cultural and ideological** debates. Some publications reflected **Western** views that were discriminatory towards women, while others pushed back against these ideas and defended women's health rights. El-Saber highlights how these publications navigated the tension between traditional local beliefs and **Western medical norms**, offering a fascinating look at how health journalism can shape public opinion and cultural attitudes over time.

### **Adeb Khodour (2015) on Health Journalism in Arab Countries**

Adeb Khodour's research investigates the rise of **specialized health media** in the Arab world and its role in addressing **specific socio-cultural needs**. The study points out that, while there is an increasing demand for health journalism in the region, many health media outlets fail to respond adequately to the **local context** and the **specific health challenges** faced by Arab populations. The study calls for better **training programs** and more **culturally appropriate content** to address these gaps. Khodour emphasizes that health communication in the Arab world should be tailored to local customs and language to ensure it resonates with audiences.

### **Hassan Qasim (2013) on Women's Health TV Programs**

Hassan Qasim's study explores the impact of **women's health TV programs** on public health behaviors. The research found that these programs had high **viewership** and contributed to **positive behavioral changes** among viewers. Specifically, 60% of respondents reported relying on these TV programs as a primary source of health information, and a significant portion of them adopted **healthier lifestyles** as a result. Qasim's study underscores the potential of **media programs** as powerful tools for influencing public health behaviors, particularly in areas where other forms of health communication may be less effective.

### **Seventh: Research Hypotheses, the research aims to test the following hypotheses:**

The research aims to test a series of hypotheses concerning factors that may influence the reading rate of medical pages and individuals' health knowledge. Firstly, it posits that there is a statistically significant relationship between the reading rate of the medical page and **gender** (Hypothesis One). Secondly, it examines the potential influence of **age** on reading rate (Hypothesis Two). The study also hypothesizes that **social status** plays a significant role in determining how often individuals engage with medical content (Hypothesis Three). Similarly, the relationship between **income** and the frequency of reading the medical page is explored (Hypothesis Four). The research further considers the impact of **education** on reading behavior (Hypothesis Five) and how **occupation** might influence the frequency of reading medical pages (Hypothesis Six). Additionally, the study investigates whether there is a correlational relationship between an individual's exposure to **health issues** and their **acquisition of health knowledge** (Hypothesis Seven). Lastly, it hypothesizes that there is a positive correlational relationship between the respondents' **knowledge of the study topics** and their **attitudes** towards these topics (Hypothesis Eight).

## **Eighth: Methodological Framework of the Study:**

**Type of Study:** This study belongs to descriptive studies that aim to describe, monitor, analyze, and interpret the phenomenon and the nature of the relationship between its components. The researcher seeks to move beyond mere description and analysis to the stage of interpretation, contextualizing the results within social and media conditions. (Qassem, 2013)

1. **Methodology of the Study:** This study employs a comparative approach by analyzing the sample newspapers (Al-Ahram, Al-Wafd, and Al-Shorouk) in both their digital and print formats. It examines various aspects of communication actors, focusing on the topics outlined in the study’s objectives and research questions.
2. **Study Tools:** The population consists of journalists working on medical pages in Egyptian newspapers.
3. **Sample of the Study:** Communication Actor Study Tool (**Interviews**).

## **Ninth: Research Results**

In this section, the researcher presents the overall results of the communication actor study, alongside the statistical analysis results of the data collected from the communication actor questionnaire applied to communication actors in the sample newspapers.

### **First: Personal Data of the Communication Practitioners**

The researcher aimed to understand the capabilities and qualifications of the communication practitioners. She distributed a communication practitioners' questionnaire to all specialists in medical writing within the analytical study sample, despite some not responding and the researcher waiting for a long time. Initially, she sought to uncover the demographic characteristics of the study sample of communication practitioners, focusing on gender, age, educational qualifications, scientific specialization, and nature of employment. The results are as follows:

**The researcher found that the data indicated an unequal distribution between males and females in the study sample of communication practitioners in medical newspapers, with the percentage of females being 65% and males 35%.**

The researcher aimed to identify the academic qualifications of the communication practitioners in the three sample newspapers, asking them to specify their educational level according to the defined categories. The data showed that most communication practitioners in medical newspapers held university degrees (80%) and postgraduate degrees (20%), highlighting the high educational level of the practitioners in the study sample.

Regarding marital status, the results indicated that the highest percentage was among married individuals (60%), followed by single and divorced individuals, each at 15%, while widowed individuals constituted 10%.

**Second: General Results of the Study of Communication Practitioners:**

**1-Employment Nature with the Newspaper:**

Table 1 below illustrates that the study found that 60% of communication practitioners in the medical sections of the three newspapers were employed, 30% were contracted, and 10% worked freelance.

**Table 1: Employment Nature and Role in the Newspaper**

Category	Details	Percentage
<b>Employment Nature</b>	Employed	60%
	Contracted	30%
	Freelance	10%
<b>Role in the Newspaper</b>	Writers	45%
	Editors	35%
	Correspondents	20%

Source: Author

**2-Role in the Newspaper:**

Table 2 below illustrates that among the respondents, 45% were writers, 35% editors, and 20% correspondents.

**Table 2: Role in the Newspaper**

Role	Percentage
<b>Writers</b>	45%
<b>Editors</b>	35%
<b>Correspondents</b>	20%

Source: Author

**3- Duration of Employment:**

Table 3 below illustrates that the majority (55%) had over four years of experience in medical writing, followed by 25% with 3–4 years, and 20% with 1–2 years.

**Table 3: Duration of Employment in Medical Writing**

Duration	Percentage
<b>Over 4 years</b>	55%
<b>3–4 years</b>	25%
<b>1–2 years</b>	20%

**Source:** Author

**4-Gaining Experience in Medical Writing:**

Table 4 below illustrates that most practitioners gained experience through extensive medical writing (40%) or personal interest and self-study (30%). Only 20% had formal education in the field, while a few cited exposures to advanced healthcare systems as beneficial.

**Table 4: Experience and Training in Medical Writing**

Category	Details	Percentage
<b>Duration of Employment</b>	Over 4 years	55%
	3–4 years	25%
	1–2 years	20%
<b>Gaining Experience in Medical Writing</b>	Extensive medical writing	40%
	Personal interest/self-study	30%
	Formal education in medical writing	20%
	Exposure to advanced healthcare systems	Few reported
<b>Training Course Benefits</b>	Significant benefits	70%
	Moderately useful	15%
	Limited value	10%
	No benefit	5%

**Source:** Author

**5-Training Course Benefits:**

Table 1 below illustrates that 70% of practitioners reported significant benefits from specialized courses in medical writing, 15% found them moderately useful, 10% found them of limited value, and 5% found no benefit.

**Table 5: Training Course Benefits in Medical Writing**

Benefit Level	Percentage
<b>Significant Benefits</b>	70%
<b>Moderately Useful</b>	15%
<b>Limited Value</b>	10%
<b>No Benefit</b>	5%

**Source:** Author

### 6-Sources of Medical Information:

Table 6 below illustrates that the most relied-upon sources were specialized medical books (55%), pages in newspapers (60%), and specialized journals (50%). Internet and Arabic satellite channels had moderate reliance (50–55%), while radio was the least relied upon (60%).

**Table 6: Sources of Medical Information**

Source Type	Reliance Percentage
Specialized Medical Books	55%
Pages in Newspapers	60%
Specialized Journals	50%
Internet	50%–55%
Arabic Satellite Channels	50%–55%
Radio	60%

Source: Author

### 7-Reasons for Focus on Medical Topics:

Table 7 below illustrates that the practitioners highlighted the importance of public health (30%), following healthy habits (20%), raising awareness (15%), and keeping up with medical developments (15%) as key reasons for focusing on medical topics.

**Table 7: Reasons for Focus on Medical Topics**

Reason	Percentage
Public Health	30%
Following Healthy Habits	20%
Raising Awareness	15%
Keeping Up with Medical Developments	15%

Source: Author

### 8-Topics to Focus On:

Table 8 below illustrates that the most important topics to focus on include new medical discoveries and how to find reliable medical information (50% each), and medical negligence in Egypt (55%). Other relevant topics include medical legislation, government hospitals, and disease treatments.

**Table 8: Topics to Focus On**

Topic	Percentage
New Medical Discoveries	50%
How to Find Reliable Medical Information	50%
Medical Negligence in Egypt	55%

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Medical Legislation</b>	Relevant
<b>Government Hospitals</b>	Relevant
<b>Disease Treatments</b>	Relevant

**Source:** Author

### **9-Challenges in Medical Journalism:**

Table 9 below illustrates that the main challenges faced were limited financial resources (93.33%), weak technological capabilities (87.67%), and insufficient information sources (72.22%). Communication with superiors was also noted as a challenge. Despite these difficulties, practitioners did not find their work routine or lacking in novelty.

**Table 9: Challenges in Medical Journalism**

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Limited Financial Resources</b>	93.33%
<b>Weak Technological Capabilities</b>	87.67%
<b>Insufficient Information Sources</b>	72.22%
<b>Communication with Superiors</b>	Noted as a challenge
<b>Work Routine/Lack of Novelty</b>	Not perceived as an issue

**Source:** Author

### **Tenth: Summary of Findings:**

The study indicates that communication professionals' qualifications significantly influence the quality of medical writing. While medical content is generally accurate, issues in structure and presentation remain, often due to an overemphasis on one aspect, which can mislead the audience.

#### **The study concluded with the following:**

The researcher aimed to identify the capabilities and qualifications of communication agents. The researcher distributed the communication agents' questionnaire to all communication agents specializing in medical writing within the analytical study sample. The results were as follows:

#### **1. Qualifications and Demographics**

**University Degrees:** Most communication agents in medical newspapers (80%) hold university degrees, with only 20% possessing higher qualifications. This suggests that most practitioners have solid academic foundations, though there is a noticeable proportion that has pursued advanced education, which could potentially enhance their medical writing expertise. The presence of those with higher qualifications indicates a need for more specialized training or education in medical writing.

**Marital Status:** The marital status breakdown (60% married, 15% single, 15% divorced, 10% widowed) suggests that a significant number of communication agents may have family responsibilities, potentially influencing their availability and workload flexibility. For instance, married individuals may face a different set of challenges in balancing professional and personal life compared to their unmarried counterparts.

## 2. Employment Contracts

**Job Stability:** The study found that 60% of the communication agents were employed in permanent positions, suggesting a relatively stable workforce in medical journalism within the newspapers studied. However, 30% of the agents were on contracted terms, and 10% were freelancers or temporary hires, which points to some level of job insecurity in the field. This could impact the consistency and quality of content produced on medical pages, as freelance or contracted workers may not have the same long-term investment in the publication's goals and standards.

## 3. Nature of Work

**Role Distribution:** The division of labor across the medical pages in newspapers was relatively consistent, with 45% of the communication agents being writers, 35% editors, and 20% correspondents. This distribution highlights the central role of writers and editors in producing content, while correspondents contribute less frequently. The balance between writing and editing tasks suggests that editorial oversight is likely significant in shaping the quality and accuracy of medical content, while writers are primarily responsible for generating the material.

## 4. Experience Levels

**Professional Experience:** The study found that 55% of the communication agents had worked in the field for four years or more, which indicates a high level of experience among the practitioners. This extensive experience is vital for medical writing, as it ensures a strong understanding of complex medical topics and the nuances of effective communication. With 25% having worked for three to four years, and 20% for one to two years, this reveals a diverse range of experience levels, which could influence the quality of medical reporting.

## 5. Acquisition of Experience

**Sources of Expertise:** The majority (40%) of communication agents gained their experience through long-term work in medical writing, which suggests that hands-on, practical experience is the most common way these professionals build their expertise. However, only 20% acquired their experience through formal study or specialization, which points to a potential gap in formal educational pathways for medical journalism. The remaining 30% cited personal interest and self-driven efforts to enhance their expertise, demonstrating a strong motivation to improve their knowledge independently.

## 6. Training Courses

**Impact of Training:** A significant 70% of communication agents reported substantial benefits from specialized training courses in medical writing, which emphasizes the importance of continued professional development in the field. This suggests that such training is effective in improving their skills, which is crucial in a field that requires accuracy and clarity in communicating complex medical information. However, 15% reported only moderate benefits, and 5% indicated no benefit, highlighting that training programs could potentially be more tailored or varied to address specific needs of the practitioners.

## 7. Sources of Medical Information

**Reliance on Credible Sources:** The communication agents indicated a strong reliance on specialized medical books, journals, and news agencies when gathering information for medical writing. This finding underlines the importance of using authoritative and credible sources to maintain the accuracy and trustworthiness of the information presented to the public. However, it also suggests that there may be room for improvement in how these agents access the most up-to-date or innovative sources in a rapidly evolving field.

## 8. Interest in Medical Topics

**Priority Issues:** The study revealed that communication agents felt that public health (30%), adherence to healthy habits (20%), and the lack of health culture (15%) were key reasons for focusing on medical topics in the media. This highlights the broader public health objectives of medical journalism, where the aim is not just to inform but to influence behaviors and improve societal health literacy. The agents also emphasized the importance of staying updated on new medical developments (15%), which is essential in providing timely and relevant information to the public.

## 9. Focus Areas for Future Medical Reporting

**Medical Discoveries and Negligence:** A key area of focus for communication agents was the introduction of important new medical discoveries (50%) and issues related to medical negligence in Egypt (55%). These findings suggest that there is a strong interest in covering both cutting-edge advancements and public health concerns that directly affect individuals, such as medical errors. These topics reflect an ongoing need to balance scientific progress with public accountability.

## 10. Challenges in Medical Journalism

**Financial Constraints:** The study revealed that limited financial resources were a major barrier for communication agents, hindering their ability to produce high-quality content. With 60% of the respondents indicating that financial constraints were the primary challenge, this finding suggests that medical journalism is often underfunded, which could impact the depth and scope of coverage. This financial limitation may affect everything from access to resources and training to the ability to conduct in-depth investigations or offer comprehensive coverage on health issues.

*These findings paint a picture of a highly educated and relatively experienced group of communication agents working in the field of medical journalism, but they also highlight some key challenges, particularly financial limitations, and gaps in formal training. By addressing these challenges, such as through increased investment in medical journalism and the expansion of specialized training programs, the quality of medical reporting could be significantly improved, benefiting both practitioners and the public they serve.*

### **Eleventh: Discussion of Research Results:**

The results of this study provide important insights into the qualifications, capabilities, and challenges faced by communication agents specializing in medical writing within newspapers. These findings contribute to our understanding of how communication agents are positioned within the context of medical journalism and offer a foundation for exploring ways to improve their professional development and support.

#### **Qualifications and Demographics**

The study revealed that most communication agents in medical newspapers hold university degrees (80%), with 20% having higher university qualifications. This reflects a strong academic foundation in the sample, suggesting that communication agents in the medical field are generally well-educated. However, it is notable that a significant portion (20%) of these agents have advanced qualifications, which could potentially contribute to a deeper understanding of the medical subjects they write about. This finding is consistent with the increasing need for specialized expertise in health communication, where nuanced understanding of medical terminology and concepts is vital for accuracy and clarity in reporting.

In terms of marital status, most communication agents were married (60%), followed by single and divorced individuals. This demographic data can offer additional context for understanding the work-life balance challenges that may affect these professionals, particularly as the demands of medical writing can be time-consuming and intensive.

#### **Employment Status and Experience**

The study's results regarding employment contracts indicated that most communication agents were employed on permanent contracts (60%), with a smaller proportion being contracted (30%) or freelance (10%). The predominance of permanent contracts suggests that medical journalism in the newspapers sampled may have a relatively stable workforce, which can be beneficial in fostering long-term expertise and continuity in the work produced. This also implies that these communication agents likely benefit from consistent access to resources, support, and professional development opportunities within their newspapers.

Moreover, the results concerning the duration of work showed that most communication agents had significant experience, with over half having worked for four years or more. This high level of experience suggests that these agents are well-established in their field, which is vital for producing accurate and reliable content, especially when dealing with complex medical topics.

## **Experience and Training**

One of the key findings of the study was the importance of experience in shaping the capabilities of communication agents. The majority reported acquiring their medical writing experience through long-term work in the field (40%), while a smaller proportion relied on personal interest and ongoing self-education (30%). This suggests that hands-on experience plays a central role in developing competence in medical writing. The limited number of communication agents who had formal education or specialization in medical writing (20%) highlights a potential gap in formal training in the field, which could be addressed through specialized programs or courses in medical journalism.

The findings regarding the benefits of training courses also underscored the significance of continued professional development. A substantial proportion (70%) of communication agents reported significant benefits from specialized medical writing courses, confirming the value of such training in enhancing their professional skills. This aligns with previous research by Samar Ezzeldin Jalal Mohamed (2011), which emphasized the importance of professional ethics and continuous learning in medical journalism.

## **Information Sources and Newspaper Priorities**

Regarding the sources of medical information, communication agents in the study sample indicated heavy reliance on specialized medical books, journals, and news agencies. This suggests that they recognize the importance of credible and reliable sources when disseminating medical information to the public. However, there may be opportunities to further improve access to specialized resources and training on how to evaluate the reliability of these sources.

The study also revealed that communication agents believe public health to be one of the most important community needs, highlighting a clear recognition of the critical role that health communication plays in informing the public. The emphasis on new medical discoveries, health habits, and medical negligence demonstrates the importance of focusing on current and relevant topics that directly impact the audience's understanding of health and well-being.

## **Challenges in Medical Journalism**

Finally, the study identified several challenges faced by communication agents, with limited financial resources being the most prominent issue. This constraint impacts the quality of the content produced, as agents are often unable to present the best possible output due to lack of resources. This limitation, as well as the pressures to balance the demands of medical journalism with available funding, suggests that more investment in medical journalism is needed to ensure the continued production of high-quality content.

*Overall, the findings highlight the strengths and challenges in medical journalism within the studied newspapers. The high levels of experience, education, and training among communication agents reflect a workforce capable of producing high-quality medical content. However, challenges such as limited financial resources and the need for more formalized education in medical writing underscore areas for improvement. Addressing these challenges by investing in further training and resources for communication agents could significantly enhance the quality of medical journalism and the public's access to accurate, timely, and relevant health information.*

## **Finally: Research Recommendations and Future Research**

### **Research Recommendations/Scope for Future Research and Practical Implications:**

#### **1. Health Awareness Campaigns in Medical Pages:**

- **Future Research:** Investigate the effectiveness of various health awareness campaigns across different medical pages, evaluating how the framing, tone, and format of the content affect public engagement and understanding. Research could focus on the demographic variation in audience response and interaction, especially across age, geographic, and socio-economic lines.
- **Practical Implications:** Strengthening medical pages' role in public health communication can significantly enhance public health literacy. By targeting campaigns based on audience segmentation (age, socio-economic status, literacy level), these pages could become critical tools in health promotion, reducing misinformation and fostering healthier behaviors. This could be achieved by collaborating with medical professionals and communication specialists.

#### **2. Training Programs for Communication Professionals:**

- **Future Research:** Studies could focus on the gap between medical information and public understanding, exploring how communication professionals in medical journalism can adapt their skills to cater to a more diverse audience. Research might investigate the effectiveness of culturally and linguistically tailored health messaging and its impact on reducing health disparities.
- **Practical Implications:** By offering continuous training for medical journalists. There would be an improvement in the accuracy, clarity, and reliability of health information. This would empower communities with the tools to make informed health decisions, potentially reducing the knowledge gap related to health issues. Ensuring accessibility to information can lead to more inclusive healthcare education.

#### **3. Periodic Journalistic Campaigns for Health Awareness:**

- **Future Research:** Investigating the longitudinal effects of periodic health campaigns, such as their influence on knowledge retention, behavior change, and public health outcomes, could provide useful insights. Also, exploring how different groups (e.g., rural vs. urban populations, different age groups) react to targeted campaigns could help refine these efforts.
- **Practical Implications:** Periodic campaigns, when effectively tailored to specific demographics, could enhance public understanding of critical health issues (such as vaccination, maternal health, etc.). The results could inform policymakers on where interventions are most needed, driving more effective health policies.

#### **4. Developing a Modern Health Database in Egypt:**

- **Future Research:** The creation of a centralized health database could be explored in terms of how it could influence policymaking, public health interventions, and resource

allocation. Research could focus on analyzing the effectiveness of such a database in tracking health trends, highlighting deficiencies, and shaping government priorities.

- **Practical Implications:** A well-maintained health database would be instrumental for journalists, researchers, and policymakers in addressing gaps in healthcare services and understanding the population's needs. It could also serve as a tool to increase transparency and accountability within the health system, potentially leading to more targeted healthcare initiatives.

#### **5. Increasing Financial Allocations for Medical Pages in Newspapers:**

- **Future Research:** Analyzing how increased funding affects the quality and quantity of medical content in newspapers could offer valuable insights into the relationship between media resources and content quality. A longitudinal study could compare health pages in newspapers with varying levels of financial investment to assess their impact on public health knowledge.
- **Practical Implications:** Ensuring that medical pages are well-funded and equipped to cover health issues will enable newspapers to produce in-depth, high-quality content. Financial support could also allow for partnerships with healthcare organizations to create more relevant, accurate, and timely health coverage.

#### **6. Reassessing Journalism Legislation:**

- **Future Research:** Comparative studies examining the impact of different countries' media laws on the reporting of health issues could help identify effective policies that promote accurate and ethical medical journalism. In Egypt, specific research could explore how current legislation impacts journalists' access to health data and its implications for public trust in media.
- **Practical Implications:** Reforming the legislation to protect journalists' rights while ensuring the responsible dissemination of health information can foster trust between the media, public health officials, and citizens. These reforms could address the barriers to accessing crucial health-related information, particularly for marginalized communities.

#### **7. Activating the Role of the Supreme Council for Journalism:**

- **Future Research:** Research could focus on evaluating the current ethical standards in Egyptian journalism, particularly in health reporting, and how well the Supreme Council for Journalism is enforcing these standards. Studies might examine case studies of ethical violations and their consequences, helping to propose more effective solutions.
- **Practical Implications:** Strengthening ethical guidelines and accountability mechanisms can help ensure that health information disseminated through newspapers is credible, trustworthy, and in line with professional standards. It also enhances public confidence in the media and its role in delivering vital health information.

#### **8. Cooperation Between Press Institutions and the Ministry of Health:**

- **Future Research:** Future studies could investigate the outcomes of collaborative initiatives between the press and health institutions in terms of improving public health

knowledge. Research could investigate the frequency and effectiveness of these seminars and their ability to change journalists' perceptions and reporting practices.

- **Practical Implications:** Fostering collaboration between health authorities and media institutions is key to ensuring accurate and timely dissemination of health information. This partnership could result in better-informed citizens, improved public health outcomes, and a more proactive media that contributes to a healthier society.

### Future Research Directions:

#### 1. Public Attitudes Toward Medical News in Egyptian Newspapers:

- This area of research could explore the factors that influence public trust in health reporting. Does the framing of health news impact its perceived credibility? Are certain medical topics more susceptible to misinterpretation or sensationalism? Future research might also investigate audience feedback mechanisms, which could inform how medical stories are presented.

#### 2. Challenges Faced by Journalists in Medical Reporting:

- Research could delve into the difficulties faced by journalists in obtaining accurate, timely, and complete health information. For instance, how do time constraints, access to experts, and lack of resources influence their ability to report accurately? This would highlight gaps in training, resources, or infrastructure that could be addressed to improve journalism in the health sector.

### Practical Implications:

- Enhancing research and training for health journalists could directly influence public health outcomes by ensuring that citizens are receiving the right information at the right time.
- As healthcare evolves, so must the communication strategies. Health literacy can be significantly improved when medical journalists are well-equipped to meet the information needs of diverse populations.
- Creating synergies between the press, medical professionals, and policymakers could lead to more cohesive strategies for tackling health issues, ultimately benefiting the public through more effective health communication and interventions.

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