

ECDC European Antibiotics Awareness Day 2010

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

- This media analysis report proves the effectiveness of PR in supporting public health initiatives.
- It demonstrates how media measurement and evaluation can serve as a planning tool for public relations.
- It is a perfect example for how the right metrics can help you finetune your public campaign program.

Best Use of Communication Management: Not-for-Profit

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Budget: €5,000 and under

OBJECTIVE/BRIEF

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria have become an everyday occurrence and a threat to public health across Europe. By creating the European Antibiotics Awareness Day (EAAD), an annual public health initiative, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is trying to raise awareness about this issue. The main objective of this initiative in November 2010 was to support efforts at a national level to reduce unnecessary antibiotic use in hospitals through the development and dissemination of educational materials promoting prudent antibiotic use.

After the first EAAD in 2008, the communication department of ECDC decided that it was time to measure the success of this initiative in the same way they had been measuring their overall PR performance. So for EAAD 2010, ECDC asked Kantar Media to carry out media evaluation on this event, which was the first for this annual campaign and would provide a benchmark for the future. The task given by ECDC involved the determination of key metrics with regard to the measurement of the overall objective of the EAAD and the provision of a concise report clearly displaying and evaluating ECDC's PR performance for this event. The study itself would be based on a Europe-wide media monitoring of print and online publications.

STRATEGY

Our overall strategy for this analysis report was to employ a measurement system that was both rigorous and of practical value with regard to ECDC's overall objective. Therefore, we needed to determine key metrics, which would indicate the performance in terms of distributing educational materials and messages on prudent antibiotic use via the media. In order to start off on the right foot, it was necessary to conduct external research by gathering not only all relevant coverage but also all PR material, such as press releases, to learn as much about the event as possible and thereby define the right metrics for this study.

EXECUTION/IMPLEMENTATION

We set up a comprehensive media monitoring through our own in-house production team together with the help of our monitoring partners all over Europe. As for online coverage we relied on Kantar Media's own search software for online media monitoring to gather all relevant articles. All content was scanned and uploaded to our client data-base, where each article was then coded by trained analysts according to the agreed metrics. In total, 476 articles from 41 different countries were analyzed.

After thorough research we decided on the following key metrics: key message penetration, delivery of slogans, visibility of spokespeople, target groups

addressed by the media, amount of country-specific information and the volume of coverage per country. (Please see supporting material)

To collect all 30 key messages ECDC wanted to communicate during the health initiative, we conducted up-front research on all EAAD-related press material.

Before we started the evaluation process, a briefing session was set up with all analysts involved. Further guidance was provided in form of a coding manual and regular feedback sessions throughout the entire analysis period. The results were continuously checked to ensure coding reliability. The coding manual was shared and discussed with our client beforehand and the accumulating evaluation results were available to ECDC via our online data-base at all times.

Results for the appearance of key messages within the coverage on the EAAD were very good: About 80% of all articles reporting on this event contained at least one key message. Overall, all but one of the key messages were carried in the press, which was a great success for ECDC's initiative. ECDC had aimed for key message penetration of 70% with at least 25 of the 30 messages being picked up by the media.

ECDC also included the use of slogans in their press material such as "Antibiotics – handle with care". But in contrast to message delivery, slogans featured less often in the coverage.

Although slogans can be effective in catching the attention of readers, the main purpose of this health initiative was to educate and to raise awareness about the seriousness of antibiotic resistance, which increased the importance of getting the right informative messages across. ECDC clearly succeeded in doing so. (Please see also figure 1 on page 1 of the supporting material.)

For such an international campaign, tailored local messages and information were particularly important for certain countries to ensure local resonance. Our analysis showed that 39% of all coverage on the EAAD was complemented by country-specific information, with the majority of it being published in Great Britain and the Czech Republic – countries with a relatively low antibiotic resistance rate. According to data from the European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (EARS-Net) there is a gradient North-South with low rates in Northern Europe and high rates in Southern Europe. Countries with lower resistance rates have generally lower use of antibiotics, whereas countries with higher antibiotic resistance rates use more antibiotics. As a result of this study

we recommended that ECDC should in future try to include more country specific information in those countries with higher antibiotic resistance rates such as France or Spain. (Please see also figure 3 on page 2 of the supporting material)

The PR efforts for Antibiotic Awareness Day 2010 were aimed at three audience groups: general practitioners, patients and (doctors in) hospitals, with the latter being the most important one for the campaign. Our research revealed that the main target group "hospitals" was reached by 22% of the entire coverage. This result corresponds to our analysis of the types and genres of publications which reported on the EAAD: The overall coverage of this initiative appeared in general interest media such as daily newspapers. Quite naturally, articles published in mainstream media primarily address the general public, which would correlate with the target group of "patients". By increasing the output in medical trade publications, coverage would focus more on hospitals with doctors as the major recipients. (Please see also figure 2 on page 2 of the supporting material)

All results of this research were compiled in a report using info-graphics with explanatory comments, complete with a management summary and an appendix, explaining the research basis and method of evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS

Kantar Media's research on behalf of ECDC led to the following key insights:

- The key message penetration was by far more successful than the delivery of slogans and exceeded ECDC's expectations (objective exceeded by 10%).
- 39% of all coverage was complemented by country specific information, which supported ECDC's efforts at a national level.
- The target group "hospitals" was reached with 22% of the entire coverage. This result could be improved by a stronger presence in medical trade publications.

Not only did this evaluation report enable ECDC to help demonstrate the effectiveness of their PR efforts for this event, it also offered insight into developing communications recommendations for future initiatives. This is the first evaluation report on this annual event. The results of this analysis will serve as a benchmark for future European Antibiotic Awareness Days and other similar media campaigns by ECDC. The organization has already commissioned Kantar Media to compile a follow-up report for this year's Antibiotic Awareness Day, which will include a performance comparison with the results of the previous year.