



Dis/Articulating Ideological Norms in Jamaican HIV Reporting

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Abstract

The use of accurate terminology reflecting the reality of Jamaica's HIV situation is needed to dis/articulate existing social stigmas. This study explores whether Jamaican journalists predominantly use stereotypical language in HIV reporting. This quantitative case study used 14 predefined coding categories from PAHO's 2006 HIV-related Language Update - a Caribbean HIV-reporting media guide. This facilitated the use of content analysis to evaluate HIV-related stories before and after the publication of PAHO's HIV reporting guide in two time periods: January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2005, and January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008. Jamaican journalists predominantly used 10 socially and medically problematic HIV-related terms. Through the application of the framing and agenda-setting theories, this study notes that these terms diminish attention from HIV; are socially outdated strategies; and ostracize, stereotype, and disrespect people with HIV. By spotlighting news production, this study underscores that dis/articulating existing stereotypical HIV reporting norms and language use in the Jamaican press must involve future research into newsroom dynamics.

Keywords: *HIV, Caribbean journalism, ideology, Jamaica, media, language*

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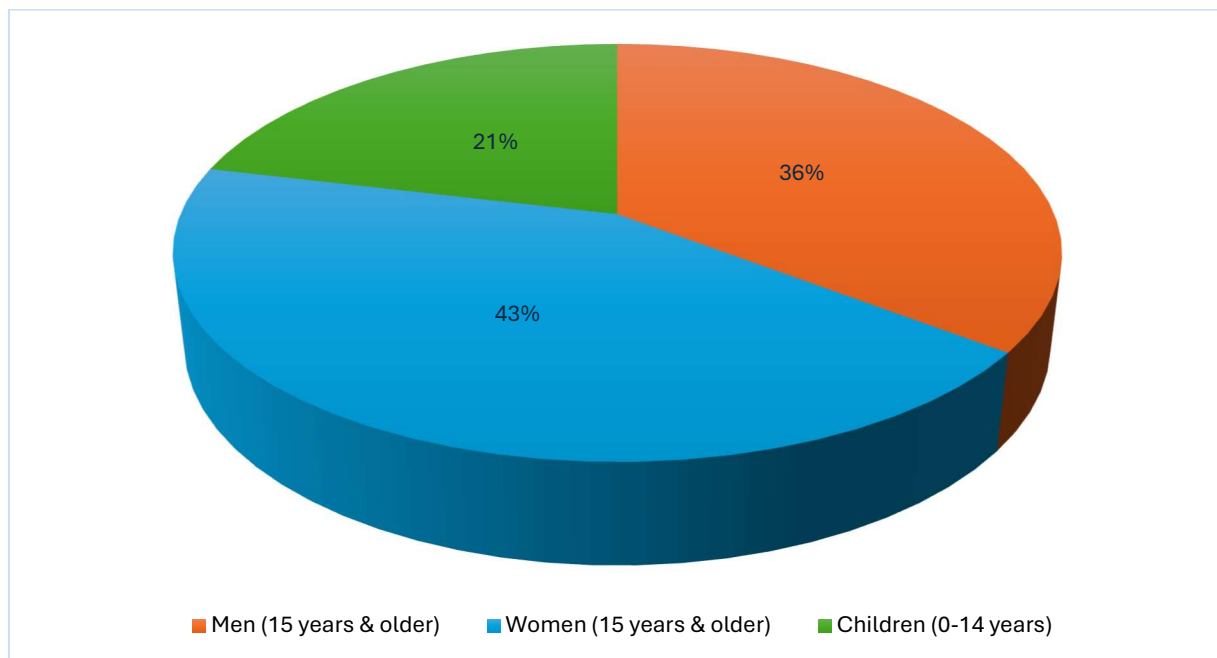
The recent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic wrought worldwide disruptions, impacting both medical and non-medical access to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) treatment and services (Forsythe 2021). These disruptions caused a decline in the number of individuals receiving HIV treatment and a significant reduction in HIV testing since 2019. The disruptions, in part, may be attributed to changing public perceptions of HIV (Forsythe 2021).

This study is founded on the premise that how society talks about HIV is an important facet of diagnosis and treatment (Hamer 2000). This work examines the world of HIV-related discourse in the Jamaican print media to highlight the need for language to unbiasedly reflect reality. As such, two main questions guided this work:

1. Do Jamaican journalists use stereotypical language in HIV reporting, and how does this influence public perception of HIV and related issues?
2. Has the Pan-American Health Organization's (PAHO) provision of HIV reporting training to Jamaican journalists improved their reporting standards by using preferred HIV terms?

The developing country of Jamaica is of historical prominence in HIV-related discussions as the first instance of Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in the Caribbean was formally documented in Jamaica 42 years ago, marking the onset of a profound public health concern (Barnes et al. 2008). Since 1982, HIV has demanded political, economic, and social attention in Jamaican society, as evident in the country's National HIV Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (Figueroa et al., 2020).

Even with a lack of updated HIV statistics, available figures for Jamaica are cause for concern. A 2023 report by The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that approximately 32,000 persons have HIV in Jamaica. This signals the need to continuously stress the importance of people voluntarily testing for HIV in the country. In 2022, UNAIDS stated that many persons with HIV, particularly children and men, are not on antiretroviral therapy (ART). While more women with HIV access drug treatment therapy for HIV on the island, this figure is still less than 50 percent. These figures have dire implications for HIV mortality and spread rates.

Figure 1: Percentage of Persons with HIV On Antiretroviral Therapy in Jamaica, 2022

In a departure from past trends, in 2009, UNAIDS reported that both men and women were contracting HIV in equal numbers. This striking development is attributed, in part, to a noteworthy factor: the transmission of HIV from male partners to women who do not engage in sexual relationships with other men. UNAIDS has since underscored the need to investigate sexual relations within the Caribbean that do not conform to heterosexuality. The shift in transmission dynamics implies a change in the gendered impact of HIV, with serious implications for women, particularly those in the childbearing age bracket (Smith 2023).

Given this evolving landscape, the role of advocacy groups becomes paramount, assuming a crucial role in public education campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the changing patterns of HIV transmission. As a powerful communication platform, the media plays a pivotal role in shaping and disseminating national policy. Why is this so? The answer is simple: the media exudes influence on both the State and society (Tambini 2021). Journalists are conduits for information, simultaneously reporting on ground-level occurrences while contributing to the formulation of government policies by highlighting key issues. In this context, the media helps to construct and/or reinforce public discourse related to HIV.

PAHO has aided in not only breaking existing linguistic stereotypes and fallacies but also in establishing new norms rooted in fairness and accuracy. In 2006, PAHO published an HIV reporting guide that repositioned HIV in the public sphere by presenting to all categories of media workers acceptable HIV reporting terms. Unlike previous guidelines, PAHO's document

goes beyond mere instruction and delves into the rationale behind the usage or avoidance of specific terms, offering valuable insights to Caribbean journalists. The HIV reporting guide inadvertently deals with prevailing newsroom cultures. It treats the media as an active social and behavioral change agent, not a bystander.

The media is poised to play its role in dealing with HIV. Jamaica's leading daily newspaper company - The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited – participated in PAHO's HIV reporting training. This workshop focused on best practices using the guidelines specifically developed for Caribbean journalists (Smith 2023). By empowering media professionals with the knowledge to navigate the intricacies of HIV reporting through a Caribbean-centric lens, PAHO recognizes the fact that the media's culture – in this instance, expressed via HIV reporting terms – permeates all strata of society. Jamaican journalists are influential actors, shaping public opinion and contributing to the national dialogue on HIV-related issues. This multifaceted role positions the media as a hub in the intricate relationship between information dissemination, public perception, and governmental response concerning HIV-related issues.

These developments call for a re-evaluation of how the media depicts HIV-related issues and whether these depictions are presented in a manner aimed at reducing levels of stigma and discrimination in society. The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), arguably the most powerful organization in the region, states that journalists must consciously adopt and continuously evaluate their journalistic practices in the context of HIV reporting (CARICOM 2006). Given all this contextual information, the shocking reality exists that there is limited research on HIV reporting standards and practices in the Caribbean (Smith 2023).

This study continues the clarion call for research into HIV reporting in the developing world. In the broader framework, this research addresses a critical gap in understanding by focusing on the HIV-related terminology embedded in Jamaican media texts. These linguistic elements are integral components of journalistic practices that necessitate revision and formal examination. The media's choice of HIV reporting terms plays a crucial role in accurately portraying the reality of the HIV epidemic in Jamaica, thereby contributing to the reduction of stigma and discrimination, aligning with CARICOM's objectives (CARICOM 2006). This objective is further reinforced as part of the Jamaican government's mandate, and this paper aligns itself with the State's commitment by offering pertinent research on the media's role as an integral component of a comprehensive social response to HIV.

The paper undertakes a quantitative approach to measure the frequency of HIV-related lexical terms employed by journalists at *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner*. This analysis spans periods both before and after journalists from *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner*

received formal training using the guide entitled HIV-related Language: PAHO's 2006. Through this investigation, the study aims to demonstrate the nuances and forcefulness of newsroom culture that, in some instances, are resistant to change from external social forces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social institutions play key roles in the maintenance, production, de-construction, and reformation of a society's ideological norms. Stuart Hall (2021:180) reaffirmed the role of the media in this regard by stating that "the media's main sphere of operations is the production and transformation of ideologies." Hall (2021) understood that the media not only disseminates ideologically laden information through the process of producing news; it also constructs new ideologies or re-frames existing ones. It is important to note that language and ideology are not synonymous "but language broadly conceived, is by definition, the principal medium in which we find different ideological discourses elaborated" (Hall 2021:180). It follows that illness as discourse is a rich playground for ideological premises that affect our understanding and treatment of infirmity. Due to the historical treatment of HIV being socially regarded as an illness spread primarily through sexual contact between men in Jamaica (Hamer 2000), language related to HIV reporting reflects past attitudes that hinder effective HIV campaigns on the island.

Makus (1990) views Hall's assertion as revolutionary. Makus (1990) argues that ideological constructs about pseudo-notions of freedom result in limited social reality. He states that these limitations are the true determinants of everyday public discourse and social practices. Indeed, Hall (1980) warns against embracing all ideologies, particularly dominant ideologies, transmitted through ideological state apparatus (ISAs) like the media. Hall (1980) instead advises that people should strongly criticize ideological concepts to destroy their social stronghold. When applied to this study, Hall's critical theory of ideology facilitates a thorough understanding of HIV reporting as a social practice enacted by journalists via a structured organization: the media.

Examples of limited or, in some cases, inaccurate social constructs of HIV-related ideology (Makus 1990) are evident in both government policy, news production, and media training. Jamaica's 2002 – 2006 National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS has been criticized for its limited outlook on the role of the media. This State document does not recognize journalists as agents of social and behavioral change (de Bruin 2006). Furthermore, the document focuses on using the media as an advertising tool and does not consider the fraught relationship between profit-making, driven by advertising, and ethics. De Bruin (2006) notes that the State's proposed use of the media to disseminate HIV-related information promoting healthy behavioral practices fails to consider the sweeping changes in journalism within Jamaica. For instance, *The*

Gleaner has changed from an editorial-driven national newspaper to an advertisement-driven daily publication. De Bruin (2006) explains that socially responsible reporting is accepted once it does not clash with the newspapers' money-making mandate.

Furthermore, studies of HIV reporting in Jamaica detail the need for growth in journalistic standards. White (2007) and Hamer (2000) both agree that the standard of HIV reporting in Jamaica needs improvement. White (2007) found evidence of sensationalism, geared to shock audiences into consciousness, specifying that this was primarily done through military language. Similarly, Hamer's (2000) research found sensationalism present in judgmental language used in HIV reporting. Terms such as victims and sufferers were characteristic of this reporting style. Hamer (2000), however, found that Jamaican journalists who had secondary-level education were aware of how HIV was transmitted but lacked knowledge about appropriate terms to use in HIV reporting. Although Hamer's (2000) study does not explicitly address the preferred terms contained in the HIV-related Language: PAHO 2006 Update, her research provides insight into how the language a journalist uses to publish HIV-related stories strongly relates to an important factor that cannot be sidelined: their level of education.

Apart from work conducted by Smith (2023), Barnes and Archibald (2017) conducted the most recent research on the topic. These scholars found evidence of language-based discrimination against people with HIV in published stories written by Jamaican citizen journalists in two daily newspapers: *The Gleaner* and *Observer*. The study notes that untrained citizen journalists perform the essential functions of "collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and other forms of information" (Barnes and Archibald, 2017: 306). Correspondingly, this study found a strong relationship between negative media coverage of people with HIV and AIDS and a decline in the number of people seeking treatment for the illness. Although Barnes and Archibald's (2017) study excluded trained journalists employed by *The Gleaner*, it helps us to understand the linkage between HIV reporting in newspapers and health-seeking behaviors on the island.

Barnes and Archibald's (2017) linkage between mass media messages and the increased likelihood of people getting tested or seeking treatment is supported by international research. Li et al.(2009) state that in China, people rely heavily on information from television, magazines, and newspapers to obtain HIV-related knowledge. These researchers supported the hypothesis that mass media information about the illness influences social attitudes and behavior. Once these prevailing negative attitudes are not confronted and dismantled, their sociocultural power obstructs members of the public from getting tested for HIV (Li et al. 2007).

Furthermore, these prejudices also make it difficult for people with HIV to discuss their status with their sexual partners and access healthcare (Li et al. 2007).

Like Jamaica, Cameroon also has a lack of research on mass media and HIV (Antabe, Sano, and Amoak 2024). The scholars' recent study shows that exposure to HIV-related content via internet television, radio, and newspaper sources at least once weekly is statistically linked with a marked increase in people getting tested. The findings of Antabe, Sano, and Amoak (2024) are consistent with the premise of the examination of HIV reporting in Jamaica. This is due to a positive correlation between one's exposure to media messages emphasizing safe sex and an increased likelihood of practicing HIV preventative measures.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As an ISA, Hall's (1980) and Makus's (1990) work point to the social function of the media spreading ideologically laden thoughts and opinions to the public. McCombs and Shaw (2018) explain that individuals have an innate desire to make sense of their social environment. In this regard, the press is an integral part of one's information-seeking behavior, helping people situate themselves within broader society. This phenomenon, called orientation (McCombs and Weaver 1972), is supported by studies conducted by these researchers along with Weaver (1977). These studies unequivocally categorize the media as a prominent institution that simultaneously disseminates information on social issues while establishing their order of prominence.

As such, the application of the agenda-setting theory enables an examination of the HIV-related ideological underpinnings contained within the pages of The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited. As an industry leader, *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* sets the public's agenda for HIV and its related topics within Jamaican society. The theory has undergone many transformations since its introduction by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and its resiliency is evident when applied to this research. The theoretical perspective notes that the media determines the public's thoughts through repeated coverage of issues. This set agenda by the news media is deliberate and consistent and points to the influential power of the print media. A society's prevailing attitudes and opinions are built upon what individuals perceive to be salient from press coverage. Long (1958) notes that of all media, newspapers set the territorial agenda "determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are, and what most people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with" (Long 1958: 260). News is birthed as various gatekeepers within the media, such as journalists and editors, either reject or accept topics deemed newsworthy (Smith 2023).

Gatekeepers within the newspaper industry are powerful because:

While the conventions of how a newspaper operates, and the compelling force of some events limit the complete freedom of a paper to select what events and what people its public will attend to, it has considerable leeway. (Long 1958: 260)

The territorial agenda is quite relevant to *The Daily Gleaner* and *The Sunday Gleaner*, with 51.4 and 77.3 percent readership, respectively (Smith 2023). Based on the agenda-setting theory, it is possible to state that the company's presentation of HIV-related news plays a substantial role in shaping public opinion of HIV, thereby influencing formal policy. For example, if the media should force attention to instances of stigma and discrimination experienced by people with HIV, members of the public will inadvertently begin to respond to media stimuli by giving eminence to the issue.

There is a strong correlation between the media's agenda, the public's agenda, and the State's policy agenda. The policy agenda accounts for the list of issues that government officials are paying attention to and is greatly influenced by what average citizens perceive to be important. The powerful agenda-setting function of the media plays a crucial role here by influencing collectivist thought on social matters through issue salience (McCombs and Shaw 1972). This is the first level of agenda setting, giving the public what topics are important. The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited gives relevance to HIV as a social issue by publishing articles on the topic.

Consequently, the media must frame issues in line with public perceptions of reality (Moqasa & Salawu 2013). Journalists are, therefore, actively constructing meaning by selectively using some frames while discarding others (Entman 1993). In so doing, they advance conceptual definitions, causal linkages with topics, and moral reflections of social phenomena in accordance with frames of meaning. Goffman (1974) says that the media goes beyond setting the public's agenda of important issues, positing that the mass media influences one's deepest thoughts and public discussions. This function of the media is often referred to as second-level agenda-setting. This advanced level dictates how people think about issues (Kiptinness & Kiwanuka-Tondo 2019).

There is an undeniable synergy between content and frames worthy of analysis without separation. This study analyses PAHO's HIV-related terminology as frames produced by social practices. News production is laden with ideological dogmas that lead to a better understanding of the media's role as an influential ISA (Hall 1980; 2021). Goffman (1974) supports the concept of social frames, and this study examines HIV reporting within this paradigm. When *The Daily*

and *The Sunday Gleaner* publish stories on HIV, their readers will automatically begin to think about the topic. Based on how the journalist frames HIV, readers will go further to form opinions and value judgments on a range of issues related to the illness, from people with HIV to national strategies in response to HIV. This study furthers the framing theory by illustrating the power of a communicating text by examining its frames, leading to an assessment of the representation of HIV in the newspapers' pages.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses quantitative content analysis, which counts the number of times newspapers have used an HIV reporting code in the period under study. Quantitative content analysis in newspapers is historically linked to facts that are, arguably, irrefutable (Krippendorff 1989). He adds that quantitative newspaper analysis bridges the gap that traditionally ignores the need for empirical investigation of journalistic phenomena. Conversely, Krippendorff (1989) explains that qualitative content analysis focuses on a detailed and critical reading of the published article. He notes that one's subjective interpretation of the newspaper article plays a key role in ascribing meaning.

Moreover, this study adopts a case study design with a singular focus: The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited. Health researchers widely embrace the case study approach because the design enables the capacity to dissect and analyze various layers of singular yet interconnected health-related phenomena (Yin 1999). Furthermore, the case study design finds considerable application in the realm of communication research (Jaques 2009), serving as a valuable tool for bridging communication theory with tangible, real-life experiences. Additionally, the deliberate selection of a single case – The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited - was motivated by its unique status as the sole verified newspaper company that underwent training from PAHO in HIV reporting (Smith 2023).

Language gives life to our everyday experiences and the study's design serves as a functional and purposive approach to probing the intricacies of HIV reporting by trained journalists. Focusing on a singular case facilitates a concentrated exploration of the phenomenon within the unique context of The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited, providing an opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the transformative impact of PAHO's training on the dynamics of HIV reporting within this specific media organization.

The guidelines governing HIV reporting for Caribbean journalists, known as the HIV-related PAHO 2006 Update, were officially published in August 2006. To establish a comparative framework, the study designated the two-year periods immediately preceding and following the document's publication—specifically, January 01, 2004 to December 31, 2005, and January 01,

2007 to December 31, 2008—for analysis, focusing on articles related to HIV published by *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner*.

Implementing innovative journalism practices, particularly the adoption of PAHO's preferred HIV reporting terms over terminologies that have existed for several years, poses considerable challenges within traditional media contexts. The diffusion of such innovations challenges the culture of news in traditional media. It hinges on various factors, encompassing the cultural dynamics of the newsroom, institutional logic among staff, and the attitudes and behaviors of other societal actors, who may or may not be well-versed in journalistic norms and values (Belair-Gagnon and Steinke 2020). While existing literature lacks a specified timeframe for the dissemination of new ideas related to HIV reporting, insights from former *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* journalist and editor Mr. Leighton Williams affirm that the staff became acquainted with PAHO's document after it was published in August 2006.

A total of 122 published stories about HIV were accessed for Period 1 (January 01, 2004 to December 31, 2005), and eighty-six (86) published articles were obtained for Period 2 (January 01, 2007 to December 31, 2008). These figures represent the entire corpus of HIV-related articles published for the timeframe under review. Examining the entire corpus was a deliberate undertaking to gain a comprehensive understanding of ideological representations of the illness in this single case study.

The subsequent data analysis, manually conducted without electronic software, involved the creation of a coding sheet (see Appendix B) for coders to indicate, through a dichotomous “Yes” or “No” response, the presence of terms from the HIV-related Language PAHO 2006 Update in the headline and first paragraph of each article. Socioculturally, the inverted pyramid reporting style is a fixture of Caribbean journalism, and journalists of *The Gleaner* and *The Sunday Gleaner* subscribe to this approach (Smith 2023). This reporting style prioritizes the most significant news at the top, with subsequent details such as background information or figures presented later (Heravi 2022). Each instance of a coded HIV reporting term's use was counted. This count considered its presence in the headline which contains salient information to capture readers' attention. The tally also considered its repetition in the first paragraph, summarizing crucial story details while giving readers additional contextual information on the topic. The inverted pyramid style forces journalists to place the crux of the story in the headlines and first paragraph which accounts for this study's unit of analysis.

Two trained coders worked independently without consultation to establish categories using *a priori* coding. All *a priori* codes aligned with the categories from PAHO's 2006 Update. Quantification occurred at the nominal or categorical level, indicating the frequency of each

term's occurrence within the headline and first paragraph of the news story. The choice of the nominal level was based on a higher likelihood of achieving inter-coder reliability (Krippendorff 2004).

Upon completing the coding process for all published material from *The Gleaner* and *The Sunday Gleaner*, I collected and critically examined all coding sheets. There was notably no variation between the two coders, with all responses indicating uniform categorization of terms as either present or absent. This means the study achieved one hundred percent inter-coder reliability.

FINDINGS

Between January 01, 2004 and December 31, 2005 (Period 1), we identified a total of 122 stories containing content related to HIV. Newsroom culture in *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* pins HIV with AIDS as the code HIV/AIDS was prominently featured, appearing 68 times. This finding underscores the term's prevalence and significance in the construction of HIV as an illness in public discourse. Another notable term was *people living with AIDS (PLWA)*, which occurred 16 times, reflecting a specific focus on the individuals affected by the condition.

The code *military language* appeared 13 times and encompasses concepts associated with the armed forces (e.g., *fight, battle, war, target, combat*). This hostile language choice in HIV reporting adds a layer of metaphorical intensity to the narrative, pitting the public against people with HIV in a figurative fight. Additionally, the code *HIV positive*, a crucial aspect of conveying a person's health status, was found 12 times, signifying a recurring theme where an individual's status moves from socioeconomic connotations to medical.

Less frequently recorded codes included *infected people*, which appeared six times, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the health implications discussed in the articles. Judgmental language, flagged by PAHO as casting blame or dehumanizing individuals, was observed twice, reflecting the careful consideration required by media in communicating about HIV without perpetuating stigma. This category encompasses terms such as *sufferers, victims, and those people*.

Furthermore, codes such as *promiscuous* and *AIDS orphan* were recorded once each, highlighting specific aspects related to behavior and the societal impact of HIV. These less frequently employed codes contribute to the diversity of language used in HIV reporting, offering a comprehensive portrayal of the multifaceted dimensions associated with the epidemic.

In Period 2, January 01, 2007 to December 31, 2008, 86 stories were identified and coded according to the coding categories developed using PAHO's 2006 HIV reporting guide. The code *HIV/AIDS* appeared 44 times, *HIV positive* was used 12 times, while the code *people*

living with AIDS appeared 10 times. Other codes of military language appeared eight times, and *infected people* appeared twice. The code *commercial sex worker* and *sexually transmitted diseases* both appeared only once.

Table 1 (below) details each coding category and their nominal occurrence of the abovementioned findings across the two time periods. These 10 coding categories are terms that PAHO says should never be used by Caribbean journalists in HIV reporting. A quantitative representation of the percentage change for Period 1 (before journalists were trained in HIV reporting) and Period 2 (after PAHO formally trained the Daily and Sunday Gleaner journalists in using acceptable HIV reporting terms) are presented in the last column. This percentile representation helps to empirically demonstrate the effect of training on newsroom culture regarding HIV reporting standards and practices in the print media.

Table 1: Coding Categories: Frequency & Percentage Change

CODING CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE		% CHANGE <i>Period 1 vs Period 2</i>
	<i>Period 1: January 01, 2004 - December 31, 2005</i>	<i>Period 2: January 01, 2007 - December 31, 2008</i>	
HIV/AIDS	68	44	-35.3
PLWA	16	10	-37.5
Military Terms	13	8	-38.5
HIV Positive	12	12	0
Infected People	6	2	-66.7
Judgmental Language	2	0	-100.0
Promiscuous	1	0	-100.0
AIDS Orphan	1	0	-100.0
Commercial Sex Worker	0	1	+100.0
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	0	1	+100.0

DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this study offer valuable, tangible insights with practical benefits into the prevalent use of ideologically laden language used by journalists from *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* during Period 1 and Period 2 when reporting on HIV-related issues. This study aims to demonstrate that these quantifiable HIV reporting morphemes carry inherent meanings beyond their contextualized syntactic usage within headlines or sentences. Subsequently, this discussion delves into PAHO's semantic underpinnings of 10 HIV-related codes deemed inappropriate for journalistic use.

This discussion also underscores the paper's theoretical foundation using the framing and agenda-setting theories. The application of the framing theory aids in understanding that HIV Jamaican journalists use confining and often stereotypical media frames to influence public perception of the illness (Entman 1993). These frames involve obscuring HIV with other illnesses, representing HIV as a figurative enemy, stereotyping, disrespecting persons with HIV, and using dated language that serves no meaningful persons to readers. The use of these frames allows the media to set a traditionally stereotypical agenda concerning HIV, playing on existing social concepts in Jamaican society (McCombs & Shaw 1972).

The study highlights a conspicuous reporting trend that should not be overlooked. The code *HIV/AIDS* dominates both periods with 68 occurrences in the first period and 44 in the second period. Intriguingly, PAHO (2006) discourages the usage of this code, emphasizing that advancements in drug therapy have led to fewer individuals with HIV progressing to clinical indicators of AIDS. The semantic connotations associated with AIDS (i.e., stigma and mortality) contrast with the neutral socially connotative reference to HIV as a virus. Advocating for precision, PAHO (2006) suggests prioritizing using the acronym HIV over HIV/AIDS to foster a more accurate representation of the epidemic phase, enabling stakeholders to emphasize preventive measures and early diagnosis.

Persistently using the code *HIV/AIDS* is identified as detrimental to the efficacy of HIV campaigns, as it obscures the relevance of information on HIV by intertwining it with AIDS (Barnes et al. 2008). As part of the newspaper's role in setting the territorial agenda (Long 1958), pairing the two illnesses together adversely affects national efforts to increase the number of people getting tested and people with HIV accessing drug treatment. The call for clarity in distinguishing between HIV and AIDS underscores the need for responsible journalism in conveying accurate and unbiased information. Such clarity can only positively impact *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner's* gate-keeping function in setting the public, policy, and State agendas (McCombs & Shaw 1972).

Another noteworthy observation is the recurrent use of military language in both periods, including terms such as struggle, fight, battle, war, and combat. PAHO (2006) cautions against such terminology, linking it to erroneous perspectives on the current phase of the HIV epidemic. Sontag (1978) stressed the historical connection between military language and the stigmatization of the ill, suggesting that these terms may hinder open discussion and equal treatment for individuals with HIV. These military frames are commonly used by journalists in HIV reporting, especially within the headlines of HIV-related stories in Jamaica, because of their propensity to capture readers' attention using the inverted pyramid writing format (Smith 2023). Their efficacy, however, is questionable because people often assume antagonistic positions against people with HIV. The figurative struggle, fight, battle, war, and combat language counterproductively targets people with HIV instead of targeting the illness.

The code HIV positive emerges frequently in both periods, with 12 instances each. PAHO's (2006) objection to this language stems from its spotlighting effect on individuals with HIV, potentially portraying them as carriers prone to spreading the virus. This type of language does not break existing stereotypical norms; it supports information contained in a report by USAID (2022) that persons with HIV are not treated with tolerance and respect in Jamaica. The report notes the opposite, pointing to elevated levels of stigma and discrimination against this population. The media, in this regard, is simply reproducing the ideology that people with HIV are to be shunned because their bodies are defiled at the cellular level. According to Myhre and Flora (2000), it is imperative to acknowledge that the selection of specific lexical choices exerts a profound influence on audiences' psychological perceptions and corresponding responses. The stigmatizing implications of this terminology must be strongly condemned, and the importance of linguistic alternatives such as persons with HIV or people with HIV should be elevated to maintain micro- and macro-level focus on the virus rather than individuals.

A notable shift is observed in the diminishing usage of the code *people living with AIDS (PLWA)*, which declined from 16 occurrences in the first period to 10 in the second. PAHO (2006) suggests that the use of PLWA, once considered best practice, has become outdated and inaccurate, potentially fostering doubt about the ability to live with the illness. This term is steeped in Jamaica's traditional past when drug treatment therapy was not readily accessible, and the mortality rate was high (PAHO 2006). Today, however, the situation is different. While it is true that many persons with HIV are not on ART (UNAIDS 2023), the fact remains that the Jamaican government provides easy access to these drug therapies via treatment facilities (Jamaica Ministry of Health 2005). There is, therefore, a need for a more suitable language alternative, and this paper suggests that PAHO's (2006) recommendation of using the term

people with AIDS be the standard best HIV reporting practice to align with current understanding and trends.

While the code *commercial sex worker* appears only once in period 2, PAHO (2006) cautions against its usage due to inherent disrespectful undertones. These undertones exude from Jamaica's intense stigmatization of people, especially women, who are involved in transactional sex (Free Documentary 2021). To break through this existing sociocultural ideology, Hall (2021) asserts that one way to challenge these stigmas is to arrange linguistic elements differently to dismantle their existing socially constructed meanings. As such, PAHO (2006) offers the term sex worker as a viable neutral alternative. *Sex worker* is recommended as a more respectful alternative to avoid offensive language and promote inclusivity in HIV reporting. Bernstein (2015) provides a powerful justification for using politically correct language for persons in the sex industry. He notes that if language reinforces the stigma faced by marginalized groups, then social equality for all will remain elusive.

The code *infected people* is noted in both periods, evidencing the use of value-laden HIV reporting terms that ostracize persons with HIV in the Jamaican press (PAHO 2006). The most humane and kind way to respect ill people, their families, and friends is to firmly reject the exclusion of ill people from everyday society through polarizing language (Sontag, 1978). PAHO (2006) underscores the importance of value-neutral language, such as people with HIV, to positively influence societal perceptions and attitudes.

Judgmental language is identified in two instances during period 1, reflecting outdated and discriminatory attitudes toward people with HIV. Such language characterizes people with HIV as sufferers and/or victims who are beleaguered by the virus. This highlights a departure from ethical considerations in the code of practice that all Jamaican journalists subscribe to and should, at least in theory, execute in the production of news (Press Association of Jamaica 2011:3). Consequently, the journalistic guideline emphasizes the need for fair and unbiased reporting as journalists are discouraged from sidelining any individual or group. This paper recommends omitting judgmental terms in favor of language that respects all individuals.

The code *promiscuous* appears once in period 1, indicating prevailing social inaccuracies perpetuated by The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited before journalists received formal training in HIV reporting. PAHO (2006) cautions against using this term, as it does not accurately reflect HIV transmission and may contribute to negative perceptions based on socially construed attitudes. These attitudes are steeped in the notion that people contract HIV through wanton sexual abandonment with multiple partners. Jamaican media researchers emphasize the need for appropriate sociocultural language in HIV reporting (Barnes et al.

2008). PAHO's (2006) substitutes go a step further by providing practical solutions, such as a person with more than one sexual partner or non-monogamous, to facilitate open conversations about sex, sexuality, and HIV without perpetuating stereotypes.

The final codes for discussion are *AIDS orphan* and *sexually transmitted diseases*. These codes each appear once in published HIV stories during Periods 1 and 2, respectively. Language is a psychological tool (Myhre & Flora 2000), and due to the negative connotations of both codes, their use positions HIV within a stereotypical media frame. Jamaican journalists deliberately undertake this framing as they selectively ignore other options to connect with the existing public perception of HIV (Entman 1993). Jamaican journalists should be discouraged from using the code AIDS orphan as it may stigmatize children who have HIV or have lost parents to AIDS-related medical complications (PAHO 2006). Alternatives such as children affected by HIV or orphan(s) neutralize the topic without adversely impacting younger people. This is one way to ensure that Jamaican journalists are sensitive to their audience (Barnes et al. 2008). Similarly, the term *sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)* is criticized for its misleading connotations because the term disease is associated with symptoms that may be noticed by others. Naturally, this is not the case with HIV, and the term sexually transmitted infection is a more apt sociocultural, linguistic response to the reality of the illness (PAHO 2006).

In short, this discussion underscores the fact that challenging and subsequently transforming the discursive narrative on HIV is a collective process. Current conceptualizations about HIV and people with HIV are only confronted by "speaking through" (Hall 2021: 181) the linguistic elements that circulate in society.

Responsibility and accuracy are tenets that all journalists reporting on HIV should actively uphold. By adhering to PAHO's (2006) recommendations and employing appropriate terminology, journalists in Jamaica may positively contribute to increased public understanding of HIV and its related topics, reduce stigma, and support effective HIV prevention and control efforts on the island. This paper presents a disarticulation or re-examination of the ideological linguistic elements in society that are necessary to reposition HIV in Jamaica. It is clear that Jamaican newsroom culture, evidenced by *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner's* published HIV-related stories, contains ideologies that blend into taken-for-granted, biased assumptions that are assimilated into the readers' common-sense consciousness.

CONCLUSION

Receiving comprehensive training from a reputable international organization on the best practices of HIV reporting did not deter journalists at Jamaica's number one newspaper company from using inappropriate language. This phenomenon signals the need for

researchers to take a closer look at newsroom operations. Training journalists is not influential enough to dismantle social systems of inequality rooted in a language structure. These metaphorical linguistic roots are reminders of an oppressive past overshadowing mindful movements for a progressive and egalitarian future. “These “traces” as Gramsci called them, and historical connexions – the terrain of past articulations – are peculiarly resistant to change and transformation” (Hall 2021: 182). This study is an eye-opening probe into dislodging the position occupied by linguistic ideologies that do not serve the Jamaican public in HIV-related discourse.

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APPENDICES*Appendix A*

HIV-Related Language PAHO 2006 Update

Avoid	Prefer	Reason
People living with HIV/AIDS	People with HIV or person with HIV	“People ‘living’ with HIV” was used to emphasize that HIV is an infection that can be managed. While the phrase may have advanced that goal, it is now unnecessary since more people are aware of that fact.
PLWHA (and its variations)	People with HIV or person with HIV	Although widely used, even by people with HIV, acronyms are labels, and labels contribute to stigma. As a rule of thumb, avoid using acronyms for people.
HIV-positive, infected people, seropositive	People with HIV or person with HIV	Those are stigmatizing terms that focus on an individual as a carrier of the infection.
AIDS Orphan	Orphans, children affected by HIV, children orphaned by HIV or children with HIV (use the most appropriate)	This term may stigmatize the child and may also be misinterpreted to mean that the child has HIV. The child may not have HIV but may have lost one or both parents to HIV.
Military terms (fight, combat, war, target), particularly in documents for public use.	Response to HIV or HIV care and prevention	Military metaphors give people an inaccurate understanding of the epidemic. When possible, try to use vocabulary from public health. “Response to HIV,” and “HIV care and prevention” are among the alternatives.
Sexually transmitted diseases (STD)	Sexually transmitted infections (STI)	Disease is usually associated with clinical manifestations. Many STI may have no evident symptoms, especially among women. The term “sexually transmitted infections” and its acronym, STI, are broader and more encompassing than “sexually transmitted diseases” or “STD.”

Avoid	Prefer	Reason
Promiscuous	Person with more than one sexual partner or no monogamous	This is a value judgment that should be avoided. It does not accurately reflect the social context of transmission. People who are called "promiscuous" are unlikely to listen to or empathize with the message.
Commercial sex worker	Sex worker	"Commercial" has negative connotations because it implies that the human being can be a sellable good or merchandise. Sex worker is perceived as less judgmental.
Judgmental, accusatory or dehumanizing language to refer to people with HIV (victims, sufferers, murderers, criminals, those people, serial killers, etc.).	When writing about people with HIV, use respectful, nonjudgmental language.	The use of judgmental or accusatory language generates stigma. HIV is only a health condition, and people with HIV have the same virtues and defects as other people.
Source: PAHO (2006). <i>HIV-related Language: PAHO 2006 Update</i>		

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. 1 "HIV" instead of "HIV/AIDS" or "AIDS." This is recommended for the following reasons:
 - a) As treatment becomes increasingly available, fewer people develop clinical manifestations of AIDS; thus, the term becomes less useful. In countries that provide treatment, the news media now refer mostly to HIV.
 - b) There is no universal meaning for "AIDS." The definition varies from country to country and has changed many times since the beginning of the epidemic. "HIV," on the other hand, is a precise term. It is the name of a virus.
 - c) "HIV" is more relevant to measure the epidemic and the response to it.
 - d) Using "HIV" helps to focus on prevention and early diagnosis.
 - e) "HIV" can be used in all contexts, including mother-to-child transmission.

- f) People avoid messages that contain the word “AIDS” because it is associated with stigma and fatalism.
- g) “HIV” is what people live with. “AIDS” is what people with HIV usually die from.
- h) The existence of two words makes it more complicated, rather than easier, to explain how HIV is transmitted and the different stages of the infection.

Recommendation: Prefer “HIV” to “HIV/AIDS” or “AIDS.” Use “AIDS” only when it is necessary to refer to the “advanced stage of the HIV infection.”

2. “People with HIV” instead of “People living with HIV,” “PLWHA” (and variations), “HIV positive,” “infected people,” and “seropositive” - The use of “people living with HIV” was promoted as a linguistic way of countering the perception that people who are infected with HIV would die immediately. While this language may have contributed to this purpose, it now sends a confusing message. More people are aware of the fact that people can live with HIV, and the use of the word “living” may cast doubts on this perception rather than reinforcing it. The use of the acronym PLWHA (Person Living with HIV/AIDS) and its variations attempted to focus the attention on people rather than on the infection. These terms were better than “AIDS victims,” “AIDS sufferers,” or “AIDS patients.” The downside of acronyms, particularly when used to refer to people, is that they are labels, and labels can contribute to stigmatizing those who are labeled. In an effort to reduce stigma against people with HIV and to normalize the epidemic, it is advisable not to use acronyms for them. Several NGOs now advocate for this change. They argue that reducing people with HIV to letters robs them of their dignity. The terms “HIV positive,” “infected people,” and “seropositive” should also be avoided, as they suggest that people, not the virus, are the infecting agent.
3. Recommendation: Replace all acronyms and the expression “people living with HIV” with “people with HIV” (or “person with HIV”). Use this term in the same way one would use “people with flu” or “people with dengue” to describe people affected by these diseases.

*Appendix B*Coding sheet
CODING INSTRUCTIONS

Coder initials: _____

Date of coding: _____

Story number: _____

Purpose: To describe the type of language used by the Gleaner Company Ltd in reporting HIV-related issues.**Unit of analysis:** Story headlines and the accompanying first paragraph comprise the unit of analysis.**Categories:** The unit of analysis could be assigned to more than one of the following categories.

CODING CATEGORIES	YES	NO
People living with AIDS (PLWA)		
HIV positive		
Infected People		
Seropositive		
Men who have sex with men (MSM)		
Catch HIV		
Aids Orphan		
Military terms (fight, combat, war, target)		
Intravenous Drug user		
Sexually transmitted Diseases		
Promiscuous		
Commercial sex worker		
Judgmental Language (victims, sufferers, murderers, criminals, those people, serial killers)		
HIV/AIDS		

Instructions: Please read the numbered story headline and first paragraph and identify whether the following coding categories are present by ticking **YES** or **NO** where appropriate.