

TRENDS IN TREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED ARTICLES
AND USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES

by 4589

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Problem	
	Purpose	
CHAPTER II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	2
CHAPTER III.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS	4
CHAPTER IV.	RESEARCH PROCEDURES	6
	Sample	
	Measurement	
CHAPTER V.	RESEARCH FINDINGS	14
	Introduction	
	Major Findings	
	Other Findings	
	Comparison of Findings	
	Comparison With Previous Research	
CHAPTER VI.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	26
CHAPTER VII.	INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	28
	Interpretations	
	Implications for Further Research	
APPENDICES		33
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY		36

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Total Inches Studied With Percentage Comparisons . . .	15
2. Type of Coverage Given Relevant Articles	16
3. Total Inches and Per Cent in Relevant Categories . . .	17
4. Total Inches and Per Cent From News Sources	18
5. Total Inches and Per Cent From Information Sources ...	20
6. Total Inches and Per Cent in Treatment Personnel Category	21
7. Items and Inches: Total and Category I	24

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

Mental health-related topics are among those with which the daily newspaper deals. As a major information medium, it has served an informational and educational function in the past and can be expected to continue to do so in the future. However, research into the amount of coverage given mental health-related topics is presently lacking. Data on the type of coverage, source of news and source of information is also not available to lend an historic perspective in this topic area.

Researching daily newspaper treatment of these topics would serve a multiple purpose. By using an historic approach, detailed data could be acquired as a basis for looking at how well the newspaper has functioned as an informational and educational medium. Journalists and mental health-related agencies and persons could benefit by knowing historic trends and perhaps could receive some indication of what might be expected in the future. Knowing the trends in use of information sources would offer some indication of the accuracy of articles and of what sources journalists and readers accept as creditable.

Purpose

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the amount and type of coverage given to mental health-related articles in a daily newspaper and the news sources and information sources used in those articles. To determine trends in these factors, a twenty-year time span was selected to provide ample perspective for the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Content analyses have frequently been used to look at one important stage in the communications process--what is actually published. Categories in this study are similar to three of those used by Kipp.¹ In his study comparing coverage given one event by different media, he surveyed (1) length of items in column inches; (2) types of coverage: news story, news analysis, editorial, picture with outline; (3) source of news: wire service, staff, special correspondent, syndicate. His categories were adapted to this study since data in these areas was sought.

The mental health content analysis conducted in 1957 by Taylor² was limited in the range of "relevant" topics. He used a narrow definition of mental health, focusing on disorders and treatment. He found an average of .38 items (just over one-third of an item) and 8.5 column inches per issue of the 317 daily newspaper issues studied.

¹James E. Kipp, "Press Coverage of the Havana Conference," Journalism Quarterly, XLIV (Autumn, 1967), 543.

²Wilson L. Taylor, "Gauging the Mental Health Content of the Mass Media," Journalism Quarterly, XXXIV (Spring, 1957), 201.

Bogart concluded in 1968 that, in the last twenty years, "editorial lineage in newspapers has grown by two-thirds, largely because of the increased coverage of three kinds of special interests (e. g. business, health, fashion)."³ He reported that in the 1967 American Newspaper Publishers Association survey, stories related to health had the highest interest scores for any subject.⁴ Thus on the basis of Bogart's conclusion, number of items and column inches published in the mental health area could be expected to have increased over Taylor's figures, during the ten intervening years.

Another related study concerns the public image of psychiatric personnel, an important factor when determining information sources for articles. In 1963 Elison, et al.⁵ surveyed New York City adults. They reported that the public rated psychiatrists lower than physicians but higher than psychologists. Hospital nurses were on a par with teachers and pharmacists and somewhat higher than social workers, the lowest-rated professional group. Nearly half (47%) did not know or denied that a psychiatrist is a doctor of medicine. An equal proportion didn't know or denied that anyone but a psychiatrist can treat emotional or mental conditions. One in four (24%) wasn't sure that a psychiatrist and a psychologist are different.

³ Leo Bogart, "Changing News Interests and the News Media," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXII (Winter, 1968), 569.

⁴ Ibid., 564.

⁵ Jack Elison, Elena Padilla, and Marvin E. Perkins, Public Image of Mental Health Services (New York: Mental Health Materials Center, Inc., 1967), pp. 12-13.

Looking at historic developments which might have some bearing on treatment of mental health-related topics, Ridenour⁶ recalls that in 1948 the American Psychiatric Association established an inspection and rating system for mental hospitals. State governments began showing more concern for the mentally ill, as exemplified by the report of the Council of State Governments in 1949, which examined mental health programs of the 48 states. In the late 1940's "bandwagon" aspects of the mental health movement became apparent with the founding of "Mental Health Week" by the Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1949. In 1958 a poll indicated that, next to education, the American people were more willing to be taxed for the care of the mentally ill than for any other major public service. A significant trend in the 1960's has been the growth of community-based programs and facilities.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Since this research was exploratory, it focused on answering primary research questions and, in so doing, determining basic data and giving added perspective to the literature.

1. Over a twenty-year period, what have been the amount and type of coverage given to mental health-related articles and the news and information sources used in these articles?

⁶Nina Ridenour, Mental Health in the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1961), p. 21, 77, 115, 137.

2. What trends does this data indicate in treatment of mental health-related topics?

3. What implications does this data have in light of other related data in the literature?

The following definitions were used throughout the study:

1. Mental health-related topics: those topics which correspond to the relevant categories designated in this study.

2. News sources: sources of articles, designated in this study as staff, Associated Press wire service, newspaper wire service, other newspaper and syndicate.

3. Information sources: sources of information used for articles, such as psychologist, hospital official and court proceedings.

4. Brief news: an article which offers only the basic facts--the usual who, what, when, where, why and how.

5. Interpretive news: an article which offers more detail, background and interpretation than a brief news article; emphasis is on extent of detail.

6. Newspaper wire service: the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post service used by the focal newspaper.

7. Other newspaper: news source other than a newspaper wire service; article reprints, articles condensed from books.

8. Syndicate: news source which provides articles, features or columns designated as coming from a central source other than wire services, such as Science Service, United Features and Bell Syndicate.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Sample

The sample consisted of 276 randomly selected issues of the Rochester (Minnesota) Post-Bulletin. The years 1969, 1959 and 1949 were used to show trends in the research areas. The year 1969 was selected to determine the most recent treatment of articles and use of information sources throughout the entire year. Ten-year intervals were considered adequate to indicate changes and consistencies in the research areas.

Issues were selected at random, using a table of random numbers.⁷ Two random samples were first selected, starting from different points in the tables. The first sample was finally used in the survey since it provided a more equitable distribution of issues among the three years: 91 in 1969, 85 in 1959 and 102 in 1949.

To determine sample size, three factors had to be known: per cent of occurrence of relevant articles during the research years, acceptable per cent of error for this study and total population for the three research years.

⁷M. G. Kendall and B. B. Smith, "Tables of Random Sampling Numbers," in Tables for Statisticians, ed. by Herbert Arkin and Raymond R. Colton (2nd ed.; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962), p. 158.

The per cent of occurrence of relevant articles was estimated on the basis of a preliminary survey of three weeks' issues of the focal newspaper, using 1969 issues since they were the only ones available to the researcher at the time. Ideally, issues from all three research years would have been used for this preliminary survey. The survey indicated that relevant articles appeared in about 90 per cent of the issues. Assuming that earlier years would not have as many articles, an 80 per cent occurrence was finally estimated.

Per cent of error was then placed at ± 5 per cent or less in 95 out of 100 samples, considered adequate for the purposes of this study. The total population was 937 issues for the three research years, six issues per week. The simplified figure of 1,000 was used in final computations. Given all three factors, the final sample size was determined to be 278.⁸

Shortly after the start of research, the estimated per cent of occurrence was found to be closer to 50. Even though this percentage, one of the three primary factors in determining sample size, was altered, the sample size was still adequate at the 95 per cent confidence level.⁹

The focal newspaper studied met the following pre-determined criteria:

1. It was a daily newspaper which circulated to a cross-section of readers and did not appeal to only one special group.
2. It was the readers' major source of printed information, both nationally and locally--the only daily newspaper in the city.

⁸H. P. Hill, J. L. Roth, and Herbert Arkin, "Sampling in Auditing," in Tables for Statisticians, ed. by Herbert Arkin and Raymond R. Colton (2nd ed.; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962), p. 145.

⁹Ibid.

3. It had available to it a variety of news sources and information sources.

4. Issues for 1969, 1959 and 1949 were readily accessible to the researcher.

With an approximate subscription list of 34,000, the Post-Bulletin circulates to a majority of city and area residents and is the city's only daily newspaper. It utilizes staff, Associated Press wire service, Los Angeles Times-Washington Post wire service, other newspapers and syndicates as news sources. A medically-oriented science writer joined the newspaper staff in 1960. With the Mayo Clinic and medical school, the Rochester State Hospital and a junior college available in the city--plus the metropolitan center of Minneapolis-St. Paul nearby, a variety of information sources is available. Research issues of the newspaper were at the public library and county historical society. A pre-test of 1969 issues published over a three-week span indicated that the newspaper published articles relevant to the study.

Measurement

To assure reliability and validity without the use of multiple-coders, the categories for relevant articles had to be well-defined. The criteria for analysis were determined in three ways. First, information found in the survey of literature provided the basis for the standard content analysis categories: column inches, type of coverage and source of news. Second, a study of issues of the newspaper available to the researcher defined in detail the sources of news used by the newspaper and some of the categories of mental health-related articles.

Third, other categories of articles were determined by the researcher's knowledge of mental health-related subjects, leaving open the possibility for change should actual research findings so dictate.

Categories for information sources were not pre-determined; final research results indicated the nine categories in this area. Issues available for the pre-test were not adequate to predict with any certainty the information source categories.

Articles were determined to be relevant if they fit into any of the eight mental health-related categories. Only slight revisions were made in these categories as research progressed.

I. Mental illness: articles about programs concerned with acute neuroses and psychoses; references to treatment facilities, staff and patients; health services.

II. Mental retardation: prevention; treatment programs; treatment facilities, staff and patients.

III. Special education includes the range of exception from gifted to deficient; articles related to emotional and social aspects.

IV. Juvenile delinquency and crime includes articles emphasizing emotional and social aspects.

V. Drugs includes articles emphasizing emotional and social aspects.

VI. Alcohol includes articles emphasizing emotional and social aspects.

VII. Aging included articles emphasizing emotional and social aspects.

VIII. Human relations included parent-child, marital, sibling, employer-employee, and other types of person-to-person relations placed in an emotional or social context.

Breaking down relevant articles into categories was intended to give a clearer picture of just what types of topics were covered during the research years. Emphasis of the articles was the determining factor. For example, an article discussing the social impact of increased juvenile delinquency was classified in category IV. However, an article discussing the parents' relationship to children and resulting delinquency was classified in category VIII.

Relevant articles were measured in column inches, excluding headline and byline space, including only the inches of information offered. This stipulation was applied to give concentrated data about mental health-related information since headlines and bylines are not actually part of the information presented.

When one article contained information on several topics, only the space containing relevant information was measured and studied. An article containing information in more than one relevant area was divided and each part measured and studied separately, if one area was clearly separated from another. If no such distinction was evident, the article was studied on the basis of emphasis.

The operational definitions of brief news and interpretive news were taken literally. Generally, articles below six inches in length were brief news and above six inches interpretive news. However, a six-inch article briefly presenting many facts was classified as brief news; another article of similar length presenting few facts but more detail was classified as interpretive news.

All relevant editorials, except one, cited at least one information source, in addition to the editorial opinion of the writer. The all-opinion editorial was included, however, even though one major purpose of the study was to determine trends in use of information sources. The original research design specified a practice of over- rather than under-inclusion, assuming that some relevant information was presented to the reader.

Cutlines and pictures appearing with relevant articles were not included in measurement or study. Since cutlines usually summarized or repeated information in accompanying articles, they did not offer readers additional information. Pictures with articles were excluded because they tended to illustrate or merely graphically expand on information in the articles, rather than offer more information.

Pictures and cutlines appearing without articles were included since they made up the entirety of information presented. Column inches for this category were measured separately from article column inches yet were added to the total inches of coverage in final tabulations. For example, a two-column by three-inch picture and cutline was measured as six column inches of information.

Personal and medical advice columns were excluded. Although these columns provided information in mental health-related areas, they tended to express only the opinions of the columnists, seldom citing authoritative sources.

This exclusion is somewhat in conflict with the aforementioned decision to include an editorial based solely on the writer's opinion. However, the weight of editorial page comment over regular syndicated features was a final determining factor.

The researcher determined that, in the view of the reader, editorial columns have more intrinsic authority than feature columns. Although the validity of this assumption can be questioned, only one such decision had to be made and its significance is considered minimal.

Staff-written articles had a local byline or no byline or dateline to indicate that they may have come from other than staff sources. Associated Press articles had a dateline and AP designation. Newspaper wire articles had either a Los Angeles Times or Washington Post identification. The other newspapers category was expanded somewhat from the original definition. Articles having another newspaper's byline, besides the Times and Post, were included, as were three articles condensed from a book. Syndicated articles were those so designated, plus two from Science Service. Perhaps six articles had a dateline only, indicating an indefinite source. These few articles were included in the AP category to distinguish them from staff-written. They might have been rewrites from other newspapers, from the AP or datelined staff articles. As in a previous decision on a similar technical point, the significance is considered minimal.

Information sources were recorded as they occurred in relevant articles. When research was complete, sources were divided into nine categories: (1) treatment personnel; (2) government; (3) judicial; (4) organizations; (5) psychiatric hospitals; (6) private persons; (7) academia; (8) schools; (9) miscellaneous.

In several instances the information sources were implied. For example, organization was determined as the information source for an article announcing that a film on juvenile delinquency

would be shown at a PTA meeting. An attempt was made to distinguish strictly government agencies from others. Private persons were defined as persons involved in the news but not used as sources because they had a particular authoritative title. For example, Mr. Smith speaking as a parent of a retarded child was classified as a private person. Mr. Smith speaking as a probation officer in a drug abuse article was classified in the judicial category. A similar role distinction was made involving treatment personnel and hospital officials. A person with both distinctions was categorized according to his role as an information source for an article.

The category, unlabelled doctor, applied when a designation of doctor was used with no clarification as to what particular kind of doctor the person might be. The academia category was used for research and professionals, such as sociologists and nutritionists, not necessarily related to universities, but used as authoritative sources.

Each information source used in an article was included. In the final tabulation of inches in each information category, articles were divided if more than one category was represented. For example, a ten-inch article utilizing a government official and a treatment person was divided to give each category five inches in the final measure. Although this division might not have been exactly accurate in each instance, the estimate was considered accurate enough for the purposes of this study.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The following research findings are based on the research design previously outlined. The design was found to be adequate to answer the research questions.

Major Findings

First, the number of relevant column inches increased over the years studied. As Table 1 indicates, total inches showed an upward trend: from 195.00 in 1949, to 705.43 in 1959, to 812.42 in 1969. However, in relation to the total news inches studied, research found a percentage increase from 1949 to 1959 but a percentage decrease from 1959 to 1969. Even though the inches of relevant articles increased from 1959 to 1969, they did not increase in proportion to the increased size of the newspaper. The per cent of occurrence showed a similar trend, up in 1959 but down again in 1969. The average per cent of occurrence for the research years was 44.36.

Second, the percentage trend in brief news and editorials showed a similar upturn in 1959 with a decrease in 1969, as indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 1
TOTAL INCHES STUDIED WITH PERCENTAGE COMPARISONS

	1949	1959	1969
AVG. PAGES PER ISSUE ^a . . .	18.0	28.0	40.0
TOTAL COLUMNS PER ISSUE ^a . .	144.0	224.0	320.0
TOTAL NEWS COLUMNS ^a PER ISSUE	58.0	90.0	128.0
TOTAL NEWS INCHES PER ISSUE, INCLUDING HEADLINES	1218.0	1890.0	2688.0
PER CENT OF TOTAL SPACE FOR NEWS	40.2	40.1	40.0
TOTAL ISSUES STUDIED . . .	102.0	91.0	85.0
TOTAL NEWS INCHES STUDIED	124236.0	171990.0	228480.0
TOTAL RELEVANT ITEMS . . .	32.0	82.0	62.0
TOTAL RELEVANT INCHES . . .	194.99	705.43	812.42
PER CENT TOTAL NEWS ^b INCHES RELEVANT, EXCLUDING HEADLINES156	.410	.355
PER CENT OCCURENCE OF RELEVANT ARTICLES	29.4	57.6	46.1

^aFrom Robert Withers, publisher, Rochester Post-Bulletin.

^bAlthough headlines were included in the total inches of news studied, they were excluded from the total relevant inches. Therefore, the per cent of total news inches considered relevant is necessarily applicable only as a comparison from one research year to the next.

TABLE 2
TYPE OF COVERAGE GIVEN RELEVANT ARTICLES

	1949	1959	1969
<u>INCHES</u>			
BRIEF NEWS	68.75	113.47	51.75
INTERPRETIVE NEWS	126.24	521.96	603.68
EDITORIALS	0	59.00	40.99
PICTURES/CUTLINES	0	11.00	116.00
TOTAL	194.99	705.43	812.42
<u>PER CENT OF TOTAL</u>			
BRIEF NEWS	35.3%	16.1%	6.4%
INTERPRETIVE NEWS	64.7	74.0	74.3
EDITORIALS	0	8.3	5.0
PICTURES/CUTLINES	0	1.6	14.3
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A percentage increase in interpretive news was noted throughout the research years but with minimal increase from 1959 to 1969. The most significant inch and percentage increase was noted in pictures with cutlines only, from 1959 to 1969.

Table 3 presents the total inches per year in each subject category and the per cent of the total for each year in each category.

In 1949 most articles were concerned in some way with mental illness and treatment facilities. During this year, only four of the eight categories were touched upon in articles.

In 1959 mental illness still had the highest per cent of coverage but was considerably below the previous research year. Juvenile delinquency and crime and human relations were also major areas covered. In this year all eight categories were represented.

TABLE 3

TOTAL INCHES AND PER CENT IN RELEVANT CATEGORIES

	1949	1959	1969
<u>INCHES</u>			
MENTAL ILLNESS	155.49	258.72	241.20
MENTAL RETARDATION . . .	0	7.50	110.00
SPECIAL EDUCATION . . .	0	44.00	0
DELINQUENCY; CRIME . . .	11.00	186.72	53.50
DRUGS	0	19.00	193.72
ALCOHOL	4.00	19.75	46.50
AGING	0	13.00	23.50
HUMAN RELATIONS	24.50	156.74	144.00
TOTAL	194.99	705.43	812.42
<u>PER CENT OF TOTAL</u>			
MENTAL ILLNESS	80.0%	36.7%	30.0%
MENTAL RETARDATION . . .	0	1.1	13.5
SPECIAL EDUCATION . . .	0	6.2	0
DELINQUENCY; CRIME . . .	5.5	26.5	6.5
DRUGS	0	2.7	23.8
ALCOHOL	2.0	2.8	5.7
AGING	0	1.8	2.8
HUMAN RELATIONS	12.5	22.2	17.7
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In 1969 emphasis was still on mental illness and treatment facilities but had declined from the previous research years. Drugs was a significant area of coverage. The marked increase in coverage of mental retardation was mainly attributable to use of pictures with cutlines only. Although coverage declined, human relations was still one of the main categories. As in 1959, 1969 coverage showed a greater diversity over 1949.

Third, a fluctuating trend was also noted in sources of news, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
TOTAL INCHES AND PER CENT FROM NEWS SOURCES

	1949	1959	1969
<u>INCHES</u>			
STAFF	124.24	183.00	424.73
AP	52.50	405.93	268.96
NEWSPAPER WIRE	0	0	65.99
OTHER NEWSPAPER	0	76.50	28.74
SYNDICATE	18.25	40.00	24.00
TOTAL	194.99	705.43	812.42
<u>PER CENT OF TOTAL</u>			
STAFF	63.7%	25.9%	52.3%
AP	26.9	57.5	33.1
NEWSPAPER WIRE	0	0	8.1
OTHER NEWSPAPER	0	10.9	3.5
SYNDICATE	9.4	5.7	3.0
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The per cent of staff-written inches was up in 1969 from 1959 but did not achieve the high level of 1949. Use of AP articles was most prominent in 1959 as was use of other newspapers. Syndicated articles showed a steady decline during the research years. The Los Angeles Times-Washington Post news wire was not available to the newspaper in 1949 and 1959.

Fourth, as Table 5 indicates, the data showed a percentage decline in 1969 from at least one previous research year in use of the nine information source categories, except for treatment personnel. A 1969 percentage increase over 1949 was noted in treatment personnel, private persons, academia, schools and miscellaneous. An increase over 1959 was apparent in only treatment personnel and psychiatric hospitals.

Similar use of the first five information sources was noted in 1949 with 1959 increases only in five categories. In seven cases the information source was simply "doctor" with no indication of which particular kind of doctor--medical, academic, etc. These "unlabelled doctors" (one in 1949; three each in 1959 and 1969) were classified in the miscellaneous category.

A closer look at use of psychiatric treatment personnel is given in Table 6. Medically-oriented personnel made up the bulk of sources used in all three research years. Use of psychiatrists declined markedly from 1949 to 1959. Information sources in 1969 are notable for their increased diversity over previous years; more non-medical personnel were being used.

TABLE 5

TOTAL INCHES AND PER CENT FROM INFORMATION SOURCES

	1949	1959	1969
<u>INCHES</u>			
TREATMENT PERSONNEL . . .	38.75	167.55	327.93
GOVERNMENT	46.12	100.35	97.15
JUDICIAL	34.50	120.19	39.40
ORGANIZATIONS	29.50	64.25	69.44
PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS . .	41.12	29.95	108.00
PRIVATE PERSONS	0	56.02	43.38
ACADEMIA	0	25.37	20.12
SCHOOLS	0	76.50	54.30
MISCELLANEOUS	5.00	65.25	52.70
TOTAL	194.99	705.43	812.42
<u>PER CENT OF TOTAL</u>			
TREATMENT PERSONNEL . . .	20.0%	23.7%	40.4%
GOVERNMENT	23.6	14.2	12.0
JUDICIAL	17.7	17.0	4.8
ORGANIZATIONS	15.1	9.2	8.5
PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS . .	21.1	4.2	13.3
ACADEMIA	0	3.6	2.5
SCHOOLS	0	10.8	6.7
MISCELLANEOUS	2.5	9.3	6.5
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE 6

TOTAL INCHES AND PER CENT IN TREATMENT PERSONNEL CATEGORY

	1949	1959	1969
<u>INCHES</u>			
PSYCHIATRIST	32.25	68.04	131.16
PHYSICIAN	4.00	52.93	71.64
PSYCHOLOGIST	0	28.79	43.83
PSYCHOANALYST	0	0	13.00
PEDIATRICIAN	0	14.54	20.00
NURSE	0	0	3.90
SOCIAL WORKER	2.50	3.25	4.40
ACTIVITY THERAPIST . . .	0	0	16.00
ALCOHOLISM COUNSELOR . .	0	0	16.00
VOLUNTEER	0	0	8.00
TOTAL	38.75	167.55	327.93
<u>PER CENT OF TOTAL</u>			
PSYCHIATRIST	83.1%	40.6%	40.0%
PHYSICIAN	10.2	31.6	21.9
PSYCHOLOGIST	0	17.2	13.3
PSYCHOANALYST	0	0	4.0
PEDIATRICIAN	0	8.7	6.1
NURSE	0	0	1.2
SOCIAL WORKER	6.7	1.9	1.3
ACTIVITY THERAPIST . . .	0	0	4.9
ALCOHOLISM COUNSELOR . .	0	0	4.9
VOLUNTEER	0	0	2.4
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Other Findings

Although not part of the original research design, the location of mental health-related articles was observed. In 1949 and 1959 most articles appeared in regular news columns. A few items, e.g. announcements of organizations' programs, were in the family section. However, in 1969 several interpretive articles were in the family section, which more consistently than the news section published such in-depth, relevant articles.

Comparison of Findings

Without a breakdown of articles into subject categories, these findings would present a confusing and inconclusive picture of trends in treatment of mental health-related articles.

In 1949 many articles were concerned with physical conditions of treatment facilities, particularly Rochester State Hospital. This year seems to have been one of a new awareness of and legislative action to improve an adverse situation. Hence, most articles were in category I, mental illness and treatment facilities. The per cent of staff-written articles was high because the local state hospital was integrally involved in investigations and plans. Many articles were of an interpretive nature, explaining background, present and future plans in detail. The use of hospital and treatment personnel made up a large portion of information sources, as did government sources since the state legislature and other governmental agencies were acting to correct conditions.

In 1959 the glamorous and bizarre were given ample coverage. The movie industry was a popular source of news, as were police records and court proceedings involving cases in which insanity

was a common plea. While articles were linking emotional problems to crime, others were also exploring the causes of such problems. Therefore, the occurrence of articles in category IV, juvenile delinquency and crime, showed a marked increase over 1959, as did articles in category VIII, human relations. Once physical conditions in treatment facilities were improved, articles were directed to actual treatment. A greater diversity of topics was noted in 1959. Interpretive articles achieved even more prominence, particularly in categories I, IV and VIII. Coverage now included editorials and pictures. The number of staff-written articles decreased as use of more exterior sources of news became more pronounced. The newspaper relied heavily on the AP for news in category IV. More diversity in information sources was also noted, with a marked decline in use of psychiatric hospitals as a major source of information.

In 1969 the most prominent increase was noted in category V, drugs. Reflecting a major social problem of the time, nearly one-fourth of the articles concerned social and emotional implications of drugs. Emphasis on juvenile delinquency and crime decreased severely and mental retardation was given a significant portion of photographic space. Brief news declined as more pictures were used. The staff was again the prominent news source. Emphasis on treatment was noted by increasing use of treatment personnel and psychiatric hospitals as information sources. Differing from 1949, concern was for treatment rather than for physical conditions at treatment facilities.

Comparison With Previous Research

In Taylor's survey reported in 1957, he found .38 mental health items and 8.5 column inches per issue of the 317 daily newspaper issues he studied. As the following table indicates, a similar number of items per issue, .35, was found for the nearest year, 1959.

TABLE 7
ITEMS AND INCHES: TOTAL AND CATEGORY I

	1949	1959	1969
<u>CATEGORY I: MENTAL ILLNESS</u>			
TOTAL INCHES	155.50	263.75	249.75
TOTAL ITEMS	23.00	32.00	23.00
ITEMS PER ISSUE23	.35	.27
INCHES PER ISSUE	1.52	2.90	2.82
<u>TOTAL</u>			
ITEMS PER ISSUE31	.90	.73
INCHES PER ISSUE	1.91	7.75	9.55

However, inches per issue in 1959, 2.90, were markedly fewer than Taylor found. These figures are based on data in category I, mental illness, closely corresponding to Taylor's narrow definition of mental health articles. Using a broadened definition, research revealed more items per issue than Taylor reported but rather similar numbers of inches per issue.

Bogert's conclusion that editorial lineage in newspapers has grown by two-thirds in the last twenty years certainly holds true

for the focal newspaper. Exceeding Bogart's estimate, lineage increased approximately 130 per cent or one and four-fifths over the last twenty years. Bogart attributed much of his suggested increase to more coverage of special interests. Again, his conclusion appeared to be true for the focal newspaper. Relevant inches increased 416 per cent or four and one-sixth times over the twenty-year span. However, the fact that the focal newspaper was the only one in the city probably also contributed to its growth. With no other newspaper to compete for advertising, the newspaper could afford to increase its editorial lineage as demand for advertising space grew.

Another comparison is between data concerning information sources and the public image of psychiatric personnel, as reported by Elison. Data indicates greater use of psychiatrists as sources than of physicians. In contrast the public reportedly rates physicians higher than psychiatrists. Psychologists came in third as sources and in the eyes of the public. The previous research reported public confusion about but confidence in psychiatrists, physicians and psychologists; the content analysis found these three sources ranking highest of all other treatment personnel. Public confidence appears to have been met by the newspaper as it used these personnel for information sources.

National and local trends also have some discernable similarities. Inspection of hospitals began in 1948; in 1949 the focal newspaper had many articles about hospital conditions and improvement of facilities. Increased national attention to mental illness, such as the founding of "Mental Health Week" in 1949, is difficult to measure locally since years prior to 1949

were not studied. However, the increase in volume and topic areas since then testifies to a continuing interest. The 1969 emphasis on local and national drug problems may be somehow analogous to community emphasis nationally. Although detailed research would allow a more thorough comparison, data available indicates a degree of similarity between national trends in mental health and coverage in the focal newspaper.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

// The purpose of this study was to determine the amount and type of coverage given to mental health-related articles in a daily newspaper and the news sources and information sources used in those articles. To determine trends in these factors, a twenty-year time span was selected to provide ample perspective for the study.

The focal newspaper was the Rochester (Minnesota) Post-Bulletin, a daily newspaper with a circulation of 34,000. It was the only newspaper in the city, a major source of printed information for its readers. It had a variety of news sources and information sources available to it.

A random sample of 278 issues was selected from the years 1949, 1959 and 1969 to provide adequate information about trends. Relevant articles were based on a broad definition of mental health. They were measured in column inches, excluding headline and byline space, and analyzed for type of coverage, source of news and information source. Pictures with outlines only were treated similarly.

The research questions were (1) Over a twenty-year period, what have been the amount and type of coverage given to mental health-related articles and the news and information sources used in these articles? (2) What trends does this data indicate in treatment of mental health-related topics? (3) What implications does this data have in light of other related data in the literature?

Per cent of occurrence for the research years was 44.36. Column inches increased over the research years but showed a percentage decline from 1959 to 1969 in relation to increased size of the newspaper. Brief news and editorials showed a similar decrease in 1969 while interpretive news increased during the research years, but only slightly from 1959 to 1969. Pictures with cutlines only showed continuing percentage increases. Sources of news fluctuated during the research years. Staff-written articles were highest by percentage in 1949 over other years while the AP was highest in 1959. //

In 1949 most articles were concerned with mental illness and treatment facilities. In 1959 this interest was shared with juvenile delinquency and crime and with human relations categories. In 1969 drugs became a significant area of coverage.

Use of information sources showed an uneven pattern. A percentage decline in 1969 from at least one previous research year in use of the nine information source categories, except treatment personnel, was noted. An increase over 1959 was apparent in only treatment personnel and psychiatric hospitals. Medically-oriented personnel were major treatment personnel used in all three research years.

Diversity was a characteristic noted in all research areas. Topics, types of coverage, sources of news and information were more diverse in 1959 than in 1949. This diversity continued and in some areas expanded in 1969. Findings in all areas were closely linked to the topic categories being emphasized during each of the research years.

Using a broadened definition of mental health, research showed more items per issue than Taylor reported in 1957 but rather similar numbers of inches per issue. Bogart's conclusion that editorial lineage in newspapers has grown by two-thirds in the last twenty years was true for the focal newspaper. Public confidence appears to have been met by the newspaper as it used psychiatrists, physicians and psychologists as frequent sources of information. Data available indicates a degree of similarity between national trends in mental health and coverage in the focal newspaper.

CHAPTER VII

INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Interpretations

A factor to be considered in all areas of this research is that sampling was random; slight changes in data might result from an issue-by-issue study. But with a ± 5 per cent margin of error, the differences would be minimal in either direction. Also, throughout the research, inches of relevant information rather than number of relevant articles were used as a basis. By using this method, the differences in article length indicated actual units of relevant information. Thus, a short article was not equivalent to a long article.

Five particular areas of research lend themselves to interpretation and offer conclusions for application: (1) inches of relevant information; (2) designation of information sources; (3) relationship of topics to other factors; (4) diversity of topics, types of coverage, news sources and information sources; (5) location of relevant articles in the newspaper.

First, the trend in inches of relevant information was one of percentage increase in 1959 and decrease in 1969. A possible explanation for this trend is that the ratio of relevant articles to newspaper size reached a "saturation" level in 1959. The decrease in 1969 might have been considered an optimal level in relation to staff time and other news interests of the newspaper. Although a science writer joined the staff in 1960, his main interest was in medical areas. The editorship of the newspaper also changed between 1959 and 1969. However, any relationship of these factors to a percentage decrease in coverage during 1969 is speculative. Research in later years would indicate if the level of coverage in 1969 was retained or if this research finding should not be considered a true trend.

Second, information sources were generally adequately designated by name, discipline and location. However, in the seven cases in which "unlabelled" doctors were used, the reader was asked to believe the information source without any further indication of the person's expertise on the topic. This finding indicates that, regardless of how well the writer knows his source's qualifications, he should be careful to give the reader the benefit of also knowing. However, using an implied information source, such as an organization's spokesman, seems to be adequate

in many cases. If direct quotations are not used and if the implication of authority is clearly evident, no direct reference to source appears to be necessary. Letting a statement of fact stand on its own merit eliminates awkward documentation and excessive words. The writer should be cautious, however, and, if in doubt, include a direct reference to his information source.

Third, the topics of mental health-related articles were closely tied to other factors. Topics appeared to vary with public interest. Whether they preceded or followed this interest was not ascertained from the research. This conclusion was especially noted in the 1969 emphasis on drugs. Type of coverage and source of news seemed to depend on not only interest but also proximity. For example, the local state hospital received depth coverage from the newspaper staff while coverage of national crime problems logically came from sources other than staff. Improvements in coverage of mental health-related articles cannot be linked solely to increased use of staff-written or interpretive articles. Although this research was intended to be quantitative rather than qualitative, certain inferences can be drawn. Public interest, proximity and staff limitations are often the "given" factors for the newspaper. They become most important when determining how frequently and thoroughly topics are localized--but not in determining the quality of information. The source of information must be a prime consideration.

Fourth, the trend toward diversity of topics, types of coverage, news sources and information sources was particularly significant. It supported a more integrated definition of mental health, more encompassing than that used by Taylor in his research.

Assuming that the newspaper was at least to a degree reflective of public opinion, its readers throughout the research years began to link emotional well-being and disturbance to other factors in their lives--to parent-child relationships, to excessive use of drugs or alcohol. And the public began to recognize as authoritative sources persons other than those directly associated with medicine. Sociologists, teachers and activity therapists became part of the diversity. By 1969 using pictures with cutlines only as a means of communication of mental health information was a more common occurrence, possibly another indication of an increased openness to such information.

Fifth, the location of relevant articles proved to be an interesting factor which was not part of the research design. In 1969 more relevant, interpretive articles were found in the family section of the newspaper. Previous coverage was centered in the news section. This finding seems consistent with a broadened view of the family section--more than space for engagement and wedding announcements, fashion news and recipes. If this change is true for more newspapers than the one studied, a writer interested in the mental health field should consider writing for this section. The news section has intrinsic limitations; coverage is generally brief and confined to topics of immediate concern. By contrast, the family section has more room for interpretive articles with pictures or other art work to increase effectiveness. The writer may also explore topics of less-than-pressing news value. He can offer background and interpretation which regular news space does not permit.

Implications for Further Research

This quantitative research leaves some questions unanswered. By design it was limited to readily measurable factors. Therefore, further research would be necessary to answer all questions.

First, the research did not determine the extent to which the focal newspaper offered continual coverage of an area or simply responded to national trends in coverage or to local pressures. Did the newspaper discuss drugs before they became an important social and emotional problem or did it discuss the topic only after it became a major national and local issue? A researcher trying to answer this question would have to have more extensive knowledge of trends in national and local issues and of how the newspaper determines what issues are given attention.

Second, the research did not indicate the impact of the science writer who joined the newspaper staff in 1960. Although the percentage of staff-written articles increased in 1969 over 1959, what portion of these was done by the science writer? Of the relevant articles having bylines, many were done by the science writer, as presumably were many of the non-bylined articles. However, an accurate analysis of the impact of this specialized writer could best be determined by the person himself and would be a worthwhile addition to the research already completed.

Third, the trend toward diversity in all research areas could be confirmed by studying years beyond 1969. While a trend seemed to be evident during the twenty-year range of the research, this trend could be further substantiated in another ten years, especially concerning increased use of non-medical information sources.

APPENDIX II

INFORMATION SOURCES

CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES	NUMBER OF ARTICLES IN EACH
<u>TREATMENT PERSONNEL</u>	
Psychiatrist	29
Physician	20
Psychologist	12
Psychoanalyst	1
Pediatrician	5
Nurse	1
Social Worker	3
Activity Therapist	2
Alcoholism Counselor	1
Volunteer	1
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	
Legislator(ure)	18
State Official	13
Government Official	2
Governor	2
City Official	2
Government Committee	1
HEW	1
State Law	1
Welfare Official	1
Crime Bureau Official	1
<u>JUDICIAL</u>	
Police	17
Court Proceedings	14
Judge	2
Probation Officer	1
<u>ORGANIZATIONS</u>	
Organization	18
State Agency	3
NIMH	2

APPENDIX II--Continued

Agency Official	2
Foundation	1
Church	1
NAMH	1
Insurance Company	1
<u>PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS</u>	23
<u>PRIVATE PERSONS</u>	22
<u>ACADEMIA</u>	
Nutritionist	3
Sociologist	2
Cultural Anthropologist	2
Criminologist	2
Research	2
Researcher	1
Historian	1
<u>SCHOOLS</u>	
Teacher	5
School Official	2
School Counselor	1
School Psychologist	1
Student	1
<u>MISCELLANEOUS</u>	
Unlabelled Doctor	7
Army Expert	1
Minister	1
Drugist	1

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TRENDS IN TREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH-RELATED ARTICLES
AND USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES

by

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The purpose of this study was to determine the amount and type of coverage given to mental health-related articles in a daily newspaper and the news sources and information sources used in those articles. The focal newspaper was the Rochester (Minnesota) Post-Bulletin, a daily newspaper with a circulation of 34,000. A random sample of 278 issues was selected from the years 1949, 1959 and 1969 to provide information about trends. Relevant articles were based on a broad definition of mental health: mental illness and treatment, mental retardation, special education, juvenile delinquency and crime, drugs, alcohol, aging and human relations. They were measured in column inches and analyzed for type of coverage, source of news and information source. Pictures with cutlines only were treated similarly. These research questions were asked: (1) Over a twenty-year period, what have been the amount and type of coverage given to mental health-related articles and the news and information sources used in these articles? (2) What trends does this data indicate in treatment of mental health-related topics? (3) What implications does this data have in light of other related data in the literature? Column inches increased over the research years but showed a percentage decline from 1959 to 1969, in relation to increased size of the newspaper. Interpretive news increased but only slightly from 1959 to 1969. Staff-written articles were highest by percentage in 1949 over other years while the Associated Press was highest in 1959. The major areas of concern were: 1949, mental illness and treatment; 1959, more interest in juvenile delinquency, crime, human relations; 1969, more interest in drugs. Medically-oriented personnel were major treatment persons used for information sources in all three research years. Like topics, types of coverage and sources of news, information sources became more diversified during the research years. Findings in all areas were closely linked to the topic categories emphasized during each of the research years.