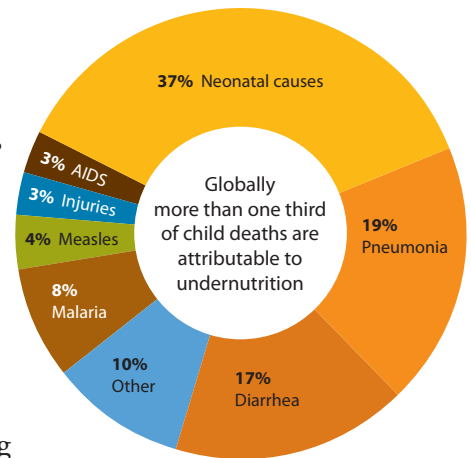


Module 2

Student Handout Global Child Health in the Media

Every day more than 24,000 children die of preventable causes (see Figure 1). Most of the treatments and preventions are easy and cost-effective. For example, a simple mixture of water, salt and sugar, or a single dose of a common vaccine, can mean the difference between life and death for many children who live and die in developing or lesser-developed nations.

Given the great numbers of children who die before reaching their fifth birthday, there's no question this is a big news story. But is this global health tragedy being reported in the media? And how does it compare to coverage of a hot topic like the H1N1 virus?



Child Info: Child Mortality, http://www.childinfo.org/mortality_progress.html, Sept 2009.

Assignment

(Note: If H1N1 is no longer relevant, choose another current health topic in the news.)

1. Go to Google News: www.google.ca/news
2. Search recent health articles to determine the current worldwide death toll from the H1N1 virus. Also visit the World Health Organization at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/updates/en/index.html> for H1N1 situation updates.
3. The first recorded deaths due to H1N1 occurred in the last week of April 2009. Calculate the number of weeks between the last week of April 2009 and today's date. Divide the *current death toll from H1N1* by the *number of weeks* to get the *average number of deaths per week* (see example on pg. 25). Record this in your chart.
4. Enter the health issues from the Google Search column in the chart below into the search field. Choose 'Past Week' or "Past Month" from the list on the left. Note the number of articles that come up for each issue, and record in the chart.
5. Determine the ratio of the number of articles published per deaths for each of the four health issues. Divide the *total number of articles per week* by the *number of deaths per week* to get the *article per death ratio*.
6. Skim read a few of the articles you pulled up with your Google searches, looking for examples of bias (see handout [How to Detect Bias in the News](#)). Make notes on the types of bias in each article and answer the following questions:
 - i) Make observations about your Google News searches and calculations. What conclusions can you draw?
 - ii) Why are global child health issues not as widely and frequently covered as issues like H1N1?
 - iii) Which health issue do you think deserves more of your attention? Why?

Module 2

Health Issues in the Media Chart

*Statistics from [Child Mortality: Progress](http://www.childinfo.org/mortality_progress.html), Sept 2009.¹

Google search	Number of Articles/Week	Number of Deaths / Week	Article / Death Rate
e.g. H1N1 Virus	125,000	100	$125,000 / 100 = 1,250$ articles / one death
H1N1			
Under Five Mortality		169,000	
Pneumonia + Child		32,000	
Diarrheal Disease + Child		28,700	
Malaria + Child		13,500	

¹ Childinfo. Child Mortality: Progress, http://www.childinfo.org/mortality_progress.html, UNICEF, Sept 2009