

## Health Journalism: A Unique Specialty in Nepal

Yogendra P Singh

---

### Author(s) affiliation

Department of Surgery, Maharajgunj  
Medical Campus, Tribhuvan  
University Teaching Hospital,  
Institute of Medicine, Maharajgunj,  
Kathmandu, Nepal

### Corresponding author

**Yogendra P Singh, MD, PhD**  
ypsingh2065@gmail.com

---

**H**ealth Journalism is both science and art. Journalism is the concept of providing well-balanced information to the public. It must be a natural way of description so that everyone can understand. It is different from medical writing which is usually complex and peers review publications. Health journalism is reporting on health research, medical news, and scientific breakthroughs to the public.<sup>1</sup>

This is a unique and novel specialty to write, edit, and manage research and articles in various fields of medical science. However, there have been growing challenges in methods of reporting information along with rapid development in both medical science as well as journalism technology. Print media is less common nowadays. Most health journalistic works are published online or through social media.

There is a paradigm shift in recent years towards online communication globally and even in Nepal. There are so many journals, magazines, newspapers, websites, and publications from public relations or pharmaceutical companies. Health-related publications including news are very sensitive issues. There is a booming business of media coverage without a valid source in Nepal. The overall quality of health reporting in Nepali media has been improving.<sup>2</sup> A health journalist should be aware of the impact of the publication. There must be a valid source of information. There must not be a conflict between healthcare and the media. Both are working for the betterment of the health of the society. However, there has been an increase in unhealthy strife between healthcare and media in Nepal.<sup>3</sup>

A well-motivated person with scientific understanding; not necessarily a health science expert, is required to be a health journalist. He or she must have the ability to write and publish. There are some courses on health journalism. The aim of the course is to train students to be able to work at medical journals as editors or at medical research centers as research and publishing consultants. Specialized training is crucial for health journalism. Expert journalists will have such potential to change health development and innovation in a positive direction. In Nepal, only a few journalists have specialized training in some health-related topics. In general, they are playing an important role in the dissemination of health-related information for some years.

After the New Communication Policy 1992, the number of both print and online media has remarkably increased in Nepal. Monitoring health reporting is crucial to improve the quality of reporting in Nepali media.<sup>4</sup> Monitoring and evaluation will provide data on health issues covered in media. It can also provide feedback to the concerned authority for correction and improvement.

Health Journalism is a multidisciplinary field aiming to familiarize with key concepts related to designing, implementing, reporting, and publishing medical science productions such as copyright laws, ethics in publishing, scientific and technical editing, principles of scientific writing, etc. Trained journalists are expected to use their expertise to enhance the quality of reporting and publication of science in all paramedical and medical disciplines. They will be able to write, edit, and revise medical articles, manage editorial responsibilities in medical journal offices, plan, design, and evaluate research

related to medical journalism, and methodologically criticize medical research.

## REFERENCES

1. Whelan J. Medical journalism: Another way to write about science. *Med Writ*. 24: 219-21; 2015.
2. Schwind JS, Norma SA, Rahman MK, et al. Health reporting characteristics among journalists in Nepal utilizing a one health framework. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 18: 2724; 2021.
3. Sharma A. Healthcare and media: An unhealthy strife. <https://swasthyakhabar.com>. 31 August 2019.
4. Tuladhar S, Shrestha KR, Regmi N, et al. Current status of health reporting in Nepali press. *Bodhi* 6: 21-35; 2013.