The News-Heartfile public awareness campaign

‘The News International’ is the largest circulating English newspaper in Pakistan, reaching out to over 2.5 million readers every day. The prestigious national daily provided complimentary space for Heartfile articles as part of ‘The News-Heartfile Public Awareness Campaign against Heart Disease.’ The target group for this campaign was the English literate urban and rural population.

Weekly articles along with coloured illustrations of the Heartfile mascot and the logo lettering in red were prominently posted on the inside front page of the newspaper. The style of the articles varied from topic-oriented discussions on a specific aspect of a risk factor to information-based articles generated in response to a particular question; in addition, stories and checklists advocating healthier lifestyles were also published. Boxes were inserted in the articles, inviting questions via e-mail.

The campaign started in February 1999, and at the time of its conclusion in May 2006, as many as 259 articles had been published. The archive of publications can be accessed below. The project evaluation can be viewed here.

**Funding:**

Canadian International Development Agency; 1999-2001
Sally was overweight. And she was worried. She was 52, and weighed 80 kilograms. She was 55 years old and did not exercise at all.

A few weeks earlier, she had started noticing that she would start sweating after walking only a few minutes and would have to sit down to catch her breath. She knew that she had been putting on weight recently, but she did not think it was too much. She took a deep breath and thought about it. She realized that her eating habits had gone downhill. She decided she needed to go and talk to her doctor. She was very nervous, but when she weighed herself, the doctor looked concerned.

"Sally, I am afraid you are putting on too much, in a short time, a few weeks, it is worrying me. I mentioned it to your husband as well. Do you have any health problems?"

**Heartfile Checklist**

- Have you checked your blood pressure?
- Have you started exercising?
- How are you feeling lately?

Sally was very surprised. In fact, her husband had been noticing her for the past few months, but he had never noticed it until now. He was worried, as was Sally.

"What can I do?" said Sally, indicating that she was changing her habit.

"Start slowly," said the doctor. "You need to lose some weight, but you need to do it slowly and maintain it."

Together they sat down and discussed what Sally should eat and what exercise she should do. Sally started that very day, determined to get rid of the extra kilograms that were burdening her and her heart. Even though it was sometimes hard, she stuck to it and within a few months, she had lost 5 kilograms and was feeling better. She had not even noticed the kilograms going on!

Three months later, she went back to the doctor. He was very happy with her progress. Sally was happy too, and had a new lease on life.

"I want to lose more weight," said Sally. "How do you think?"

"Every step is progress," said the doctor, "and it's all about making small changes. You're doing great!"

**Heartfile**

The News-Heartfile public awareness drive is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Website: [http://heartfile.org](http://heartfile.org)