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 52 years old and didn't exercise at all.

Only a few weeks she had started noticing that she would start coughing 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 didn't think it was much in the end. Three months ago, she had even been overweight. But then when she thought about it, she realized that her sister had told her a lot of health problems, including heart disease.

So she decided to go and talk to her doctor. She was very surprised, but when she weighed Sally, the doctor looked concerned.

"Sally, I am afraid you are putting too much of a strain on your heart," he said.

"What can I do?" asked Sally, horrified to think that she was damaging her heart.

"Well, firstly," smiled the doctor, "you need to lose some weight. Together they sat down and decided 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 heart and body. Even though it was sometimes hard, she stuck to the plan. She even started to eat healthier and to exercise more.

In the next couple of months, but in the last couple of months, but she had had no idea that it was her weight that was the problem.

"Yes," said the doctor, "and your blood pressure is now normal. Your weight has gone down and your health is improving."

"My God," said Sally, "what do you mean?"

"Your heart," said the doctor, "has improved."

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The New-Heartfile: public awareness drive national heart disease
A DCR-funded project
Website: http://heartfile.org