

**PH150E Assignment 2: The Presentation of Public Health Research in Popular Magazines: The Case of Asthma, Breast Cancer, HIV/AIDS, or Alzheimer's disease**

The purpose of this assignment is to consider how leading public health topics are presented to the public. One of the important questions is whether the material presented to the public represents an accurate characterization of the scientific research on the topic. This assignment is designed to help you develop skills to make that determination.

Although the presentation of public health issues can take many forms, in this case, your assignment is to compare what is reported on a leading health condition in popular magazine articles, or other printed materials, intended for the general public with what is covered in a review article. A review article, found in a professional scientific journal, provides an overview of the research topics, methods, findings, and general conclusions in a specific area of research.

Choose one of the following health conditions for this assignment:

**Asthma,  
Breast Cancer,  
HIV/AIDS, or  
Alzheimer's disease**

Address the following, including specific examples and cite all references in AMA format.

1. Download the comprehensive review articles (posted on bspace) for the topic of your choice. Using the information in the review article, address the following issues:
  - a. Provide the definition of your health condition as presented in the review article.
  - b. Summarize the descriptive epidemiology for your health condition as discussed in the review article (for example: age, gender, and race/ethnic distribution of prevalence).
  - c. List contributing factors discussed in the review article for your health condition
2. Compare recent articles on the health condition that have been published in printed materials intended for the general public with information appearing in the review article.
  - a. Identify two or more popular articles intended for the general public and published in the last five years. The items you select should be related to

the specific issues presented in the review article. Attach a photocopy of each article you use.

- b. Summarize the content of the popular materials.
  - c. Use issues presented in the popular magazine article as a starting point to discuss other social factors discussed in lecture and readings that may be related to the issue.
  - d. Discuss similarities/differences between the information in popular articles and the information in the review article.
  - e. Do popular articles draw from the research published in the review?
  - f. Identify references that were included in the popular magazine articles.
  - g. Compare the language and style of presentation in the popular articles with that used in the review article.
3. Explain why the scientific research appearing in popular magazines may differ from that appearing in the professional literature.

Logistics:

Paper length: 7-10 pages  
Style: double-spaced 12 pt font  
References: AMA format  
Attach: photocopy of each article.  
Coversheet: Student ID and discussion section. No names.

**Due Date: April 19, 2007**

Summary of Learning Objectives:

1. Use library discovery tools to identify popular magazine articles on a condition.
2. Summarize information from popular and professional articles.
3. Compare the information appearing in popular articles with information appearing in professional journal articles.
4. Explain why the scientific research appearing in popular articles may differ from that appearing in the professional literature.