CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings in the research report demonstrate the extent to which the news media can engage with women’s health in the realm of PMTCT. All of the theory and literature discussed in previous chapters will be confirmed and or challenged in this chapter and the following chapter of analysis. In this chapter I will present the qualitative findings of the thematic content analysis of newspaper texts from the Star and the Mail and Guardian and the interview transcripts from media practitioners and health professionals. The chapter consists of summaries and broad observations of these texts that then leads into the thematisations of both the news articles and interview transcripts. To keep coherence throughout this chapter I firstly examine the news articles followed by the same sequence of summary and thematising for the interviews with the various stakeholders. In the next chapter I will analyse and discuss these findings in response to my research questions.

The chapter outline is as follows:

- **Summary**: generalises the findings of the prominent matters, sources and gaps within the newspaper texts; and the concerns and ideas raised in the interviews;

- **Thematisation**: based on the theory and literature discussed in other sections as well as the texts, this is a ‘theory-driven’ description of the broad themes and more specific sub-themes that have been identified throughout the texts of newspapers and interview transcripts.
5.1 Summary of news articles from the *Star* and the *Mail and Guardian* in relation to PMTCT and women’s health

These articles selected from the *Star* and the *Mail and Guardian* demonstrate media’s engagement (or lack thereof) with women’s health in this arena of HIV/AIDS discussions. As I discuss throughout this chapter, the coverage within the *Star* and the *Mail and Guardian* cannot be simplistically described, while these texts include a lot of expected coverage there are some insightful stories that illustrate a meaningful engagement of news media with this particular issue of development. In the following paragraphs I summarise my observations of the selected news articles.

Firstly, the general theme that HIV/AIDS is a terrible illness devastating families and communities occurs covertly throughout the texts. However this is counteracted by some personal stories of resilience and triumph throughout the newspaper texts selected. Also, though a high amount of the articles tend to be fixated on the political disputes between government and civil society, there are ‘human interest’ stories that are good examples of what media can do in regards to the development of women’s health in the realm of PMTCT. Generally the coverage of PMTCT and discussions of NVP is not deplorable in these newspapers, rather there are model articles that I argue demonstrate the newspaper’s capacity to be a media for development (some of these articles I include in full text in Appendix D).
Secondly, there are unevenly disbursed articles pertaining to PMTCT issues throughout the year within these two publications, this can be a result of “World AIDS Day,” which is annually the 1st of December, and also the 15th International AIDS Conference in mid July 2004. World AIDS Day and the International AIDS Conference are two events with clear relevance and significance for the country; consequently there is expected news coverage around these dates. Also, the fact that these are two internationally recognised events amplifies the newsworthiness of general HIV/AIDS issues in the news. Thus these two newspapers seem to attribute particular news value to these two stories, which Galtung and Ruge (1981) describe as that of local and international relevance and importance.

Thirdly, part of my first research question asks who is represented and whose voices are neglected within these articles. The sources of these news texts are overwhelmingly those ‘voices of authority.’ This finding was expected because of the prior research from Spurr (2005) and Finlay (2004) that states HIV/AIDS stories often source the local and international medical community (doctors, medical researchers), politicians (predominantly the present Minister of Health), and AIDS activists and civil society (mainly the Treatment Action Campaign). This choice of sourcing is characteristic of the linear top-down transmission of information approach used in the modernisation paradigm Melkote (2003) describes.

Also, the use of “well-known” or respectable persons, Galtung and Ruge (1981) perceive as adding value to such stories. The consistent use of these high-profile or ‘celebrity’
sources results in what Schudson (1997) calls a “personification” of the social challenge discussed. For instance the Minister of Health Manto Tshabalala-Msimang and Zackie Achmat of the Treatment Action Campaign, personify the political disputes of providing anti-retrovirals to millions of HIV-positive peoples in South Africa. Another dominant source throughout the articles are international development or health bodies, such as extended bodies of the United Nations, including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and others, and on occasion the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States. In addition to news values, the use of official sources brings a sense of authority and objectivity to the news story (Cottle, 2003).

There are to a lesser extent, sources from the “bottom” which implies that news media’s engagement also involves an empowerment orientation by involving the voices of those directly affected by issues of PMTCT. When HIV-positive people or those affected by HIV in their families or communities are sourced the articles are mostly more than one page long and discuss the life experiences of persons living with HIV or those directly affected. This participation illustrates that news media is attempting to include what Curran (1996) calls an “agency of representation.” This is a signal of advocacy on behalf of these two newspapers, by providing a platform for HIV-women, in particular, to express their very pertinent viewpoints on living with and managing HIV. I also noticed that in some of these articles, person’s names are changed to ensure anonymity for these sources. This demonstrates that some journalists are careful and sensitive to issues of stigma and disclosure and this could encourage more participation from these sources.
My fourth general observation is that while most stories cover topics that are relevant nationally, the articles are predominantly Johannesburg based (with stories that refer to the Gauteng Department of Health, or personal stories from Soweto) with little mention of other major cities like Durban or Cape Town and virtually none investigating the experiences in the rural areas. Also, the major clinics that were cited were Chris Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto and Johannesburg Hospital. The *Star* is a Gauteng based newspaper thus it follows that their stories will be based on this region, nevertheless, since the *Mail and Guardian* is a national newspaper, this calls for more investigative stories throughout the entire nation with regards to the national concern of PMTCT and women’s health, however this was not the case.

Furthermore, considering that there is a disproportionate amount of prevalence among pregnant women in other provinces for instance in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, it will add substance to the reporting if there are articles about and sourcing from these seemingly unreachable areas. This observation speaks to the ability of the newspaper to “reach” (World Bank, 2002) rural areas with stories that have specific relevance to their lives. There could be numerous reasons for this apparent neglect, they could include: proximity between journalists and these sites and they could also signify that a lot of the prominent research taken place in regards to PMTCT is in Johannesburg and Soweto. From a commercial perspective, those with disposable income or the target market are located in the metropolitan areas, especially Johannesburg. Consequently, those living in the rural areas may not be seen as valuable consumers.
In the next section I will identify and discuss how themes and sub-themes were formulated, deriving from theory and seen throughout the text.

5.2 Thematisation of news articles

The guidelines of obtaining these themes are based on the methodological process of thematic content analysis (TCA), discussed in the previous chapter. The theory-drive themes were predicted through the contextualisation of the theories and literature discussed in previous chapters. These theories and literature present anticipated meaning of what to expect in the text; nevertheless the articles confirmed and also challenged these existing theoretical frameworks of media.

These main themes identify the primary discussion within news text of this context. The sub-themes are smaller debates, issues and ideas that occur throughout the texts in the context of PMTCT and women’s health. There is a constant interplay of themes and sub-themes throughout the texts; this implies that messages are not always clear cut but complex and intertwined. The themes and sub-themes are as follows:
Previous research states that PMTCT is a major topic in media AIDS coverage because of the Constitutional Court Case and the legal debates between the Treatment Action Campaign and the Minister of Health (Spurr, 2005; Finlay, 2004). Within the news articles from July 1, 2004 to July 1, 2005, this same type of political controversy is present. The issue of PMTCT is seen as reoccurring in the public’s eye mainly due to the Minister of Health’s statements at the AIDS conference in Bangkok and again when the dissidents question the efficacy of ARVs, including Nevirapine. This illustrates an amplified newsworthiness around these issues of PMTCT because of the high profile Minister of Health.

These sub-themes illustrate the overall engagement of these particular news media with the issues of PMTCT and the vulnerability of babies and children. Exclusions to this theme and sub-themes would be, for instance, if an article speaks about AIDS but does not mention women and children or specifically PMTCT, like articles that only talk about the Minister of Health and her views on nutrients for HIV/AIDS patients. The issue of Nevirapine is also discussed in relation to PMTCT; however I separate this into another theme and sub-themes because of the loaded debates about the single-dose regimen.
Nevirapine is probably the most known ARV drug in South Africa. This has a lot to do with the court battles between members of government, civil society and even pharmaceutical industries as discussed in articles by Heywood (2005) and Mbali (2004). Connelly and Macleod (2003) states that political conflict—i.e. controversial statements by politicians—heighten coverage around HIV/AIDS; and this is exemplified in news articles concerning issues of the antiretroviral regimen single-dose Nevirapine for PMTCT. This theme and the sub-themes reflect the theory of conflict and how this increases newsworthiness as Galtung and Ruge (1981) describe it.

To put this theme and sub-themes into context many of these stories were published around the Minister of Health’s statements at the 15th AIDS Conference in Thailand in mid July, 2004. Prior to this time, articles rarely mention the Minister of Health or concerns about Nevirapine resistance. The week of the conference and a few weeks after, between mid- July and August 2004, Nevirapine became a hot topic for HIV/AIDS. This theme reflects the debates within newspapers concerning the use of Nevirapine for PMTCT in the South African public health system.

**Theme 2: Nevirapine is an antiretroviral used for PMTCT**

- 2.1 Nevirapine, like other antiretrovirals (ARVs), is toxic and there are concerns of resistance
- 2.2 There is confusion around the use and the effect of Nevirapine
- 2.3 Nevirapine is the only antiretroviral used in the public health system for PMTCT, but there are better regimens
This theme and sub-theme presents the news media’s coverage of issues concerning the risk factors involved with the use of Nevirapine for PMTCT in South Africa. The political debates took centre stage within the news texts. Consequently neglecting the numerous critical issues involved in the case of PMTCT, including the resources constrained settings that have few clinics and reliable staff as well as why and how HIV-positive pregnant women and their partners can ensure they go to clinics early in pregnancy for holistic treatment and counselling. Exclusions to this theme include articles that talk about HIV/AIDS but do not mention PMTCT or NVP and also the Minister’s statements, which I separated as a theme on its own.

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<th>Theme 3: The Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, is an impediment to the fight against HIV/AIDS</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 The Minister of Health does not support the use of Nevirapine for PMTCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 The Minister of Health lacks political will in dealing with issues of PMTCT and HIV/AIDS in South Africa</td>
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In Finlay (2004), which I discussed in Chapter 2, he states that a lot of the news articles regarding HIV/AIDS portray the Minister of Health in a negative light and he says this will also affect any future coverage of the Minister Tshabalala-Msimang. Throughout my reading of these news texts there are many articles that portray Minister Tshabalala-Msimang as the major factor delaying any progress in the roll-out of anti-retrovirals as well as being the main contributor to the debates around the use of Nevirapine. Spurr
(2005) states that the Minister of Health is a major source in any news coverage about PMTCT, with about 33% of all sources being government, and the Minister of Health being the most prominent.

This theme is significant to my overall research because, again, the Minister of Health is the major contributor in this discussion of PMTCT and women’s health. From the Constitutional Court Case in 2002, until the comments at the AIDS conference in 2004, issues related to PMTCT have had major news coverage, and this newsworthiness is heavily linked to her contentious statements. In relation to my research, this theme suggests that news media’s apparent fixation with the Minister of Health’s statements possibly overshadow and even silence the voices of HIV-positive pregnant women who could personally tell of any effects they have endured due to the intake of a single-dose of Nevirapine for PMTCT.

The sub-theme “The Minister of Health does not support the use of Nevirapine for PMTCT” is very visible in the sub-themes around Nevirapine previously discussed. One of Minister Tshabalala-Msimang’s remarks at the AIDS Conference states that she felt “forced” to roll-out the use of Nevirapine because of legal pressure from the Treatment Action Campaign (Star, 2004 Jul 30). These statements created a lot of spur and it was dramatised in news coverage.

This theme and sub-themes present the dominant picture of the Minister of Health in relation to PMTCT and issues of HIV/AIDS. With the Minister of Health being a
dominant source of information for news texts, news media seems to be reactive to her statements concerning HIV/AIDS, and in particular PMTCT. What is apparent throughout this presentation of findings is that this preoccupation with controversial statements outweighs news media’s engagement with those citizens of society, HIV-positive pregnant women, which are directly affected by these issues.

Throughout the selected news articles there are many stories concerning the Minister of Health’s alliance with advocates of nutrients and dissidents of antiretroviral medicines such as Dr Matthais Rath. I do not include this in my research report because it is a highly contested and politicised debate that extends beyond issues of PMTCT or women’s health and is out of the scope of this research.

This research report is centred on news media’s ability to facilitate the human development of women in relation to PMTCT. This theme is significant because news media in this research is constructed as having the ability to either perpetuate negative and harmful perceptions, or deconstruct such perceptions through informative and critical discussion about women and women’s health in the realm of PMTCT.

**Theme 4: There is a feminisation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic within Sub-Saharan Africa**

4.1 Women are victims and more vulnerable to HIV-infection then men
4.2 The ‘burden of care’ is left on women
The selected news articles cover issues of women and girls vulnerability to the pandemic particularly around July 2004, when the UN report on AIDS states new statistics about the disproportionate amount of women being infected with HIV in the region. This theme had major coverage around last year’s World AIDS Day, December 1, 2004. This could be attributed to the fact that the World AIDS Day campaign for 2004 was centred on the disproportionate impact of the AIDS pandemic on women and girls (see http://womenandaids.unaids.org).

5.3 Summary of interviews from media practitioners and health professionals

In this section of this chapter I will present the responses of interview participants in relation to news media’s engagement with women’s health in the realm of PMTCT. As I discussed in the Methodology chapter, these respondents were chosen because of their relevant experience with commercial print media’s engagement with women’s issues, and health professionals who have insightful information on this pertinent issue of women’s health in the realm of PMTCT. In the following paragraphs I will recapitulate my general observations of the interviews.

Firstly, all respondents believe that on many levels PMTCT, and in general HIV/AIDS, is a complex and huge issue for South Africa and should be comprehensively covered in news media. One of the main issues noted throughout the interviews is the increase in the
level of ‘AIDS orphans’ as a devastating social challenge that exacerbates the burden of care on grandmothers and young women in South Africa. Consequently, this increases economic hardship and an innumerable amount of other social challenges for the human development of South Africa, particularly for women. For this primary reason, the respondents perceive news media as not doing enough to cover the issues around, not only PMTCT, but HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

One of the main critiques of media is that there are not enough human stories. There is a dominance of coverage that focuses on the Minister of Health’s controversial remarks around Nevirapine. Many respondents believe that the debates around Nevirapine resistance were simply overplayed, and there are plenty of other parameters to this pandemic that could be covered in the media. All respondents view the media as having a pivotal role in distributing clear and informative message to the public in regards to these issues surrounding PMTCT, and women’s health. Some respondents mention however that with all of the constant modifications with the science and dramatised politicisation around HIV/AIDS, journalists do not have an easy task of providing clear messages around Nevirapine, PMTCT, or infant feeding, or HIV/AIDS in general.

The media analysts, out of all the other respondents, mention that while community media has a mandate to promote or advocate issues pertaining to a specific community, commercial media have to negotiate with advertisers and internal forces (i.e. editorial policy and decisions). Thus, writing meaningfully on such issues as PMTCT and women’s health poses a particular challenge for profit-oriented media. One respondent
believes however that using advertisers as an excuse is exaggerated, and in fact, media have more negotiating power than they admit or utilise. Also, most respondents still believe that HIV/AIDS and this issue of PMTCT falls under the ‘health beat’ and ‘women’s issues,’ consequently these stories are generally hard to sell.

My last question to most respondents involved the place of media in a developing country such as South Africa. I questioned whether or not commercial media has a responsibility to cover developmental issues, particularly for marginalised communities. The media analysts, in particular, say ‘development communication’ has an unsavoury reputation of a media that supports the government’s agenda of development—i.e. political propaganda. This agenda is seen to be a threat to one of the most primary and uncompromising democratic roles of the media to be a watchdog for the public (Curran, 1996; Negrine, 1994). Nevertheless, there is not one respondent who suggests that commercial media is void of any responsibility in covering a pertinent issue of PMTCT and HIV/AIDS in South Africa, regardless of the challenges that profit-orientation brings.

In the next section I present the two general themes that incorporate the wider-ranging responses of interview participants.
5.4 Thematisation of interview responses

The 11 semi-structured in-depth interviews provide many qualitative and diverse responses to the primary concern of media’s engagement with women’s health in the realm of PMTCT, as a development issue for South Africa. Again the methodological approach to this data is theory driven. The responses from the interviews are thematised in response to the theories and literature discussed in previous chapters. Also, as I stated earlier, in the next chapter I will analyse the collected data from the interviews, as well as the selected news articles in response to my research questions.

The two themes and sub-themes are general; however, in following sub-sections, I incorporate the most illustrative quotes to present the variety of responses. The themes and sub-themes are as follows:

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<th>Theme 1: PMTCT is a major health and development issue, for South Africa, that should be critically discussed in news media</th>
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These theme and sub-themes include all responses made about the case of PMTCT in South Africa. All respondents believe that the vastness of this wide-ranging public health
issue, that directly affects millions of South Africans, should not be neglected in news media. Accordingly, respondents believe that there is the social responsibility of news media to cover the matters holistically. Though respondents acknowledge the profit-orientation of news media, there is a general reaction that this issue is too major to be neglected or narrowly covered by overstating the Minister of Health’s remarks.

Conversely, respondents, particularly the health professionals, assert that the case of PMTCT is complex for various reasons. The dominant cause of this many respondents refer to the political history behind the case of PMTCT in South Africa—from the Constitutional Court Case in 2002 to present debates. As Spurr (2005) and Finlay (2004) state, this politicisation has become centre stage in any media coverage around PMTCT. In addition to the political disputes, one respondent also mentions that the scientific and medical issues surrounding PMTCT and HIV/AIDS can be convoluted, making it very difficult for journalists to write accessible news articles. Consequently, this contributes to the dominant use of top-down and scientific sourcing on these issues.

Nevertheless, respondents, particularly the journalists suggest that many times it is up to the individual journalist to actively seek and write interesting new stories, with more sourcing and participation from the ground – i.e. HIV positive pregnant women. This ability on behalf of the journalists to decide what is written is what Cottle (2003, p. 16) argues, that journalists are more actively involved in the production of news texts then often acknowledged. Besides the lack of critical understanding of the very complicated issues surrounding PMTCT and HIV/AIDS, some respondents point out that journalists
fail to engage with the personal stories because of their own lack of commitment or interest in the stories. Furthermore, respondents state that this is important because an increase in personal stories within news media can add to the efforts to eradicate stigma and discrimination of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

This theme and sub-themes indicate broadly what is lacking from news media in order to contribute to this issue of women’s health and PMTCT. The next section involves themes and sub-themes that discuss the internal and external challenges as well as the orientation that is needed from media to fulfil this function.

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<th>Theme 2: News media can facilitate the development of women’s health in the realm of PMTCT</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 There are external and internal challenges that should be considered</td>
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<td>2.2 News media should focus more on the human imperative</td>
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Gurevitch and Blumler (2000) give expectations of media in society that are pertinent to formulating a media for development. Two of the functions that have particular importance to this research report include the news media’s ability to report on key socio-political issues that affect citizens and this leads to providing a platform for citizens to participate in their social and political environments, essentially providing information to lead to greater human development. Respondents, consonant with Gurevitch and Blumler’s (2000) portfolio, suggest that news media should at least provide an arena for
education and debate around women’s health and PMTCT in South Africa. This theme states that media can be involved in the development of society and particularly for socially marginalized groups.

This theme and sub-themes address the external and internal challenges as well as the generally orientation news media should consider in order to facilitate this aspect of development in South Africa. Among these external issues, the role of advertisements in news media is most pressing, as the news media is market-driven enterprise (World Bank, 2002; Cottle, 2003). Internal concerns involve the policy of the news room, and issues of news values which is also apart of the commercial imperative of newspapers. Respondents, mainly the media practitioners, suggest that the editorial policy can either contribute to or challenge news media’s ability to facilitate marginalized development concerns. However, the increased ‘juniorisation’ of the news room has contributed to the lack of specialisation and investigation into particular news beats, such as health or women’s issues.

Nevertheless, this theme states that news media can be a vehicle for creating awareness, debate and information for citizens about PMTCT, by focusing on the human imperative. In this research the human imperative is particularly: the empowerment of HIV-positive women through news media. Respondents believe this can be attained if news media prioritises human stories over political controversy. Curran’s (1996, p. 20) idea of the informational role of media intricately involves including other voices to create this empathy throughout the society—he calls it “creating public access to a diversity of
values and perspective”. This function of news media results in soft advocacy for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS by including their perspectives and their experiences. This form of empowerment is essential to their human development.

The general themes throughout the news text and interview transcripts suggest that news media is engaging with the issue of PMTCT but not in a comprehensive manner that can empower these women who face critical decisions daily. In the next chapter, I discuss these findings in relation to news media’s ability to facilitate the development of women’s health in this area of PMTCT and HIV/AIDS. As well as my recommendations based on these findings and the theory of a reconstructed news media for development.