



BUILDING A
CLEARER
PICTURE
OF YOUR
ORGANISATION



Retained Organs Commission

MEDIA ANALYSIS REPORT

January 2001 – April 2002



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BACKGROUND

The Retained Organs Commission is a special health authority which was established in Jan 2001 in shadow form, and fully in April 2001, following the recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer, and in response to the Redfern Inquiry into the Royal Children's Hospital, Liverpool, where organs were retained.

A previous inquiry into the management of the care of children receiving complex heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary found that the retention of hearts and other organs removed during post-mortem examination of the child's body had occurred without the consent or knowledge of parents. The Alder Hey Inquiry revealed a more extreme situation where the collection of children's hearts and other organs had been accumulated over several decades. The Inquiry established that it had been common practice to retain organs without express parental knowledge and agreement. The Alder Hey Inquiry also discovered that, between 1988 and 1995, the then Professor of Fetal and Infant Pathology was responsible for the removal of all organs from all babies and children at post-mortem and their storage. It appears that in the majority of cases, the organs were never put to any useful research purpose.

Individuals and groups of relatives began enquiring in other parts of the country and the responses suggested substantial stores of retained human organs. This was confirmed by a census of all pathology departments in England carried out in 2000 at the request of the Chief Medical Officer.

A great deal of public concern was generated by these events. Considerable distress had been caused to relatives in Liverpool, exacerbated by the handling of their enquiries. Calls were passed from person to person and, on occasion, incorrect information was given and multiple organ returns and funerals were experienced by families.

The Commission has been set up partly to help restore public confidence in the institutions responsible for retaining organs and tissues.

Its key aims are:

- *That the NHS can and does provide accurate and comprehensive information about organs & tissue retained following post mortems*
- *That the arrangements for returning organs & tissue, if requested, reflect the needs and wishes of relatives*
- *That the organs and tissue whose return is requested are returned promptly and sensitively in a single, comprehensive process to avoid the risk of multiple funerals*
- *That future Government policy and legislation relating to the removal, storage, retention and return of human organs and tissue takes full account of the needs of relatives and partners*
- *To identify and promote the introduction of measures designed to respond to the needs of those families involved in organ retention*
- *To determine how organs and tissue whose return is not requested should be dealt with and, where appropriate, disposed of respectfully*
- *To restore public confidence in the post mortem system and improve public understanding of the need for retention of organs and tissue*

- *To establish, via consultation, what system of regulation should be introduced to apply to collections and archives of retained organs and tissue*

The Commission also advises Ministers and provides guidance to the NHS and universities, as well as monitoring Trusts to ensure that they deal properly with organ returns.

MEDIA ANALYSIS OBJECTIVES

The key objective of the media analysis was to provide retrospective benchmarking for January 2001 – March 2002. In particular, the objectives were:

- To assess the how the Commission is viewed
- To assess the Commission's message delivery through the media
- To inform the future communication strategy for the Commission, helping to identify, refine and prioritise key messages.

Clips were provided by the Commission and relatives' groups and were also down-loaded from the internet. Scottish coverage was omitted where it referred mainly to Scottish initiatives or bodies, but included where it mainly referred to events occurring In England.

REPORT

HIGHLIGHTS

| PERIOD: | January 2001 – April 2002 | |
|--|---|--|
| | Overall | The Commission only |
| Total Volume: | 920 | 102 |
| Total Impressions: | 390.8 million | 40.2 million |
| Favourable % (vol): | 36 (336) | 83 (85) |
| Unfavourable % (vol): | 5 (42) | 3 (3) |
| Neutral % (vol): | 59 (542) | 14 (14) |
| Overall Rating: | 53.0 | 58.7 |
| Leading Article Focus (vol): | Alder Hey scandal / revelations (168) | NHS Trust / hospitals initiatives to address problem, information giving (24) |
| Leading Issue (vol): | Organs taken without consent (353) | Organs taken without consent (44) |
| Leading Positive Message (vol): | Effective action is being / will be taken to deal with the past and the future (77) | (The Commission is ensuring) Accurate records and catalogues are made before making returns (16) |
| Leading Negative Message (vol): | Legal measures to be put in place to prevent organ retention without consent happening again are inadequate / too slow in coming (14) | Legal measures to be put in place to prevent organ retention without consent happening again are inadequate / too slow in coming (3) |
| Leading Regional Publication (vol): | Bristol Evening Post (40) | Manchester Evening News (7) |
| Leading National Media (vol): | The Times (54) | The Times (6) |
| Leading Spokesperson (vol): | Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer | Alan Milburn, Health Secretary |
| Leading Interest Group (vol): | General Medical Council (GMC) | General Medical Council (GMC) |

IN THE NEWS



January 2001

Redfern report
Prof Donaldson's census of retained organs
Helplines set up
National Organ Retention Summit
Alan Milburn announces The Commission set up



February 2001

Helplines inundated
Dick van Velzen may face charges
Hospitals introduce revised autopsy guidelines



March 2001

Call centres to remain open



April 2001

Retained Organs Commission formally established
Hospitals ordered to start searches for retained organs
Some trusts authorised to release information



May 2001

Group legal action initiated by families



June 2001

The Commission authorises first trusts to release information to families
Project Sunshine research project in US
GMC hearing of Janardan Dhasmana



July 2001

BMA conference
Van Velzen pleads guilty in Canada



August 2001

The Commission issues guidelines to hospitals for return of organs
Inquiry ordered into Royal Manchester Children's Hospital
Van Velzen suspension extended



September 2001

The Commission holds meeting in Liverpool
All but one Alder Hey doctor cleared



October 2001

Revelation that children's bones were used in nuclear research in Scotland
Independent Review announced at Birmingham Children's Hospital



November 2001

Prof Sheila McLean heads Scottish inquiry
Hilary Rowland found guilty of misconduct
Service for families at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral
The Commission holds meeting in Birmingham



December 2001

BMA campaign to increase organ donation
The Commission Commissions Cellmark Diagnostics to study DNA testing
Merseyside Police to investigate Alder Hey organs scandal
The Commission holds meeting in Bristol



January 2002

DoH invites comments on new consent form
1st anniversary of Redfern report



February 2002

Hilary Rowland to appeal dismissal



March 2002

Alder Hey families outraged at Bodyworlds exhibition
The Commission publishes consultation document on management of organs and tissue
The Commission holds meeting in Leeds
Parents seek court order to force GMC to reconsider refusal to take disciplinary measures

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The media profile of the Retained Organs The Commission has not been especially high – around 100 mentions over 15 months, 30% of which appeared in January – February 2001, when it was announced that the Commission was being established.
- But the quality of the profile has been good, in that – in the context of highly emotive coverage – it generally appeared in a positive or, at least, neutral light, and was remarkably free from criticism. In articles mentioning the Commission, 38 Commission-specific positive messages appeared, and 111 positive messages altogether. Only four Commission-specific negative messages appeared, and just 12 negative messages altogether.
- Moreover, plenty of the coverage not mentioning the Commission itself furthered the Commission's aims by transmitting the messages that it is working to communicate: altogether a ratio of positive to negative messages of more than seven to one.
- The Commission's profile was strongest when it could communicate that it was taking tangible steps to improve matters, which was mostly when it authorised various trusts / hospitals to release information. One very productive press briefing, which occurred in late April '01, featured Margaret Brazier. There were only a few occasions in which the Commission came across as clearly proactive in its communications.
- Although a wide range of issues was raised and almost no stone left unturned, from the removal of thymus glands in operations to nuclear research involving retained bones, to the use of inappropriate containers to return retained organs to families, these remained relatively marginal issues. The key issues that influenced the coverage were straightforward: getting accurate information to families who might have organs to be returned to them, as quickly but comprehensively as possible, thereby avoiding multiple funerals and ensuring explicit consent is obtained in the future so that this will never happen again.
- As time went on, despite the relative absence of negative messages, dissatisfaction with the slowness of the Government's response to the Alder Hey revelations and Redfern Report was increasingly visible. The Commission was less a target of this dissatisfaction than the Government generally, and the medical profession, for its culture of arrogance. The coverage of the Bodyworlds exhibition in March 2002 was proof that the organ scandal is still considered a topic of national importance, near the forefront of the media's awareness.
- ***“The reason why the focus is still on the organs scandal is very simple. It is also entirely the fault of this government. More than a year ago, the government pledged to change the law on organ retention. But what has been done? Nothing. What has Mr Milburn done? Nothing.”*** Leader, Liverpool Echo, 22/3/02

QUESTIONS

DOES THE COMMISSION NEED TO RAISE ITS PROFILE AS INDEPENDENT...

- Is the Commission's profile as an independent commission sufficiently well established, to enable it to restore public confidence and provide effective support to families? By communicating its independence more strongly and highlighting lay representation, could it differentiate itself better from the Government without losing opportunities to influence the development of government policy, or risk losing the support of Ministers which it needs to manage the return process in the NHS effectively?
- Would it be useful to raise the media profile of those lay representatives? If this were not possible would an alternative be for other representatives, but especially Margaret Brazier, to act as a vehicle for transmitting the positive messages that the Commission aims to communicate and to position itself as a voice for families caught up in this problem?

...BY FRONTING MORE SPOKESPEOPLE, STEPPING UP FAMILY-FACING COMMUNICATIONS

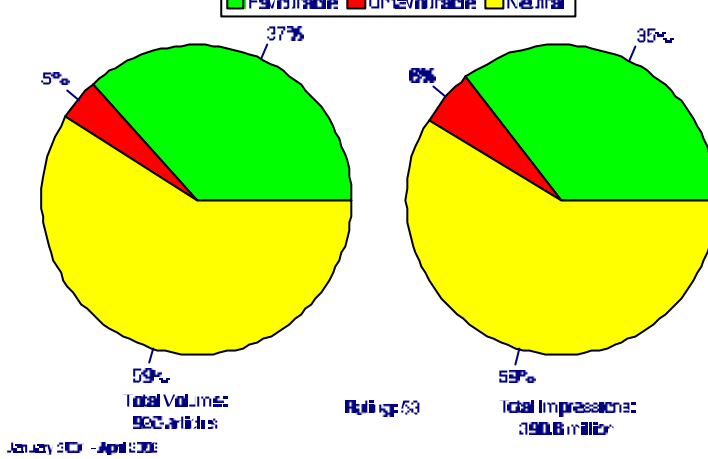
- Would it also be productive for the Commission to be seen to be aligning itself proactively more closely with family / consumer groups such as NACOR and Pity II, perhaps through joint meetings with relatives, joint initiatives, etc? Should the Commission proactively assert its determination to encourage the Government to implement the measures required to restore public trust?

AND FOCUSING ON ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO INFORM AND ON OTHER CORE ISSUES?

- Coverage of the Commission was most positive when it was seen to be doing something tangible, namely authorising the Trusts to release information, partnering with Cellmark Diagnostics to look into DNA testing of tissue, and holding public meetings with families in various cities. Given the relative slimness of the coverage of these stories and the lack of visible proactivity (very few Commission spokespeople quoted), are there opportunities to communicate progress more emphatically? Could this and should this be positioned not as blowing the Commission's trumpet, but as keeping families better informed?
- In prioritising the issues, should the focus of the communications strategy be on the core issues which need to be got right – changes in legislation, changes in process that are implemented and enforced and can be trusted to be in place?
- Only once a certain level of confidence is achieved and is visible in the media can the separation between emotions around organ retention and organ donation be achieved. In the meantime, should initiatives to encourage organ donation be left to medical profession interest groups and the Department of Health?

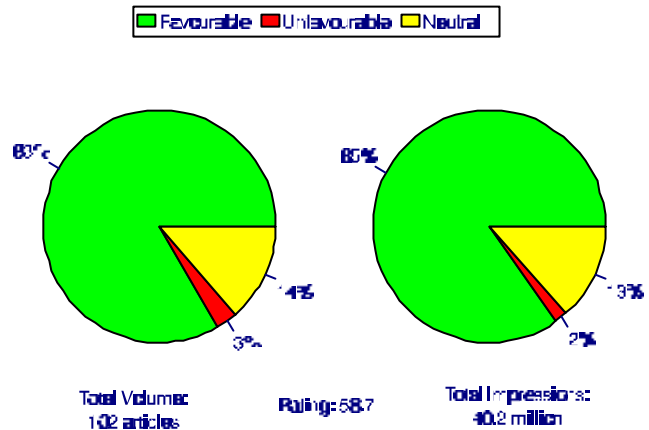
Favourability Comparison

By Volume & Impressions



Favourability Comparison - The Commission Only

By Volume & Impressions



January 2001 - April 2002

Charts 1 & 2

- Over the 15 months from **January 2001 - March 2002**, over 900 articles in the UK media covered organ retention and related issues, generating nearly 400m impressions or opportunities-to-see.
- Just over 100 of those articles mentioned the Retained Organs Commission, beginning in late January, when Prof. Donaldson recommended the setting up of an independent commission which Health Secretary Alan Milburn confirmed would be done.
- Overall, despite the sense of outrage and suffering characteristic of much of the coverage, there was a much greater tendency to look forward to what was being done, and what should be done, than there was to be negative about the efforts – of the government, the NHS trusts and of the Commission - to make sure this never happened again.
- As a result, over a third of all articles overall were rated **favourable** – that is they furthered the aims of the Commission, and / or communicated some of the same messages it intends to communicate – while less than 5% were **negative**. The remaining, **neutral** coverage, neither

promoted nor hindered the Commission’s aims, or carried balancing positive and negative messages.

- In articles in which the Commission itself was mentioned, the outcome was even more positive: that is, the mentions of the Commission were accompanied by positive messages about what it was doing / is trying to do more than 80% of the time, while only three items featuring the Commission were critical on balance.

Monthly Comparison

By Volume, Favourability & Rating

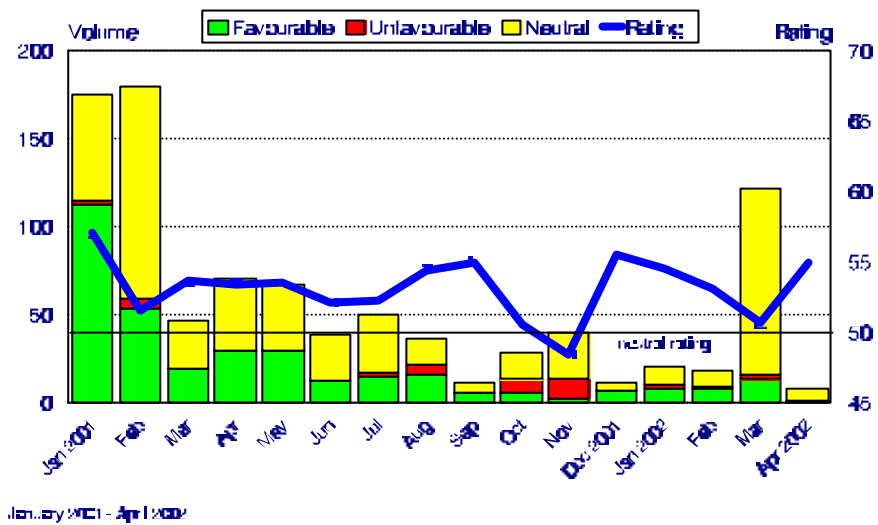


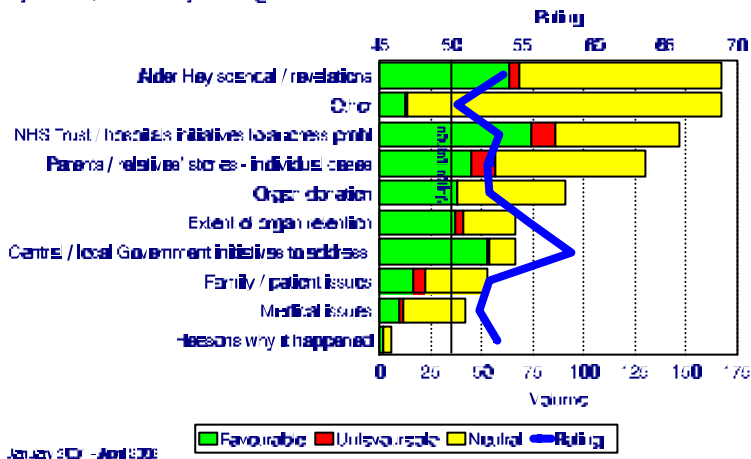
Chart 3

- Overall, during the 15-month period under review, organ retention was so high on the media’s agenda that coverage appeared at a rate of about 60 articles a month, on average. Monthly volume ranged from 11 in each of **September** and **December 2001**, up to 179 in **February 2001**.
- After the first two months of concentrated attention and daily developments in **January** and **February 2001**, coverage fell off perhaps more than might be expected, and only approached the same sort of volume again in **March 2002**, when the Bodyworlds exhibition brought the outrage of bereaved families suddenly back to the top of the media agenda for a while in the context of the exhibition.
- All months except **October** and **November 2001** carried more positive than negative articles. The revelations about children’s’ bones having been used in nuclear research in Scotland caused an outcry and raised fears again that organ retention without consent could still be happening. Additionally, in October and November, the decision by the GMC to drop charges against most of the doctors they had been investigating triggered allegations by parents of a cover-up and anger from some in the medical profession that the doctors were set up as scapegoats.
- Zooming in on just those articles mentioning the Commission shows that its mentions were highest when its formation was announced, in late January (18 items) and February (12), and

were also relatively high in **June, July and August 2001** – when the authorisations to NHS Trusts to communicate to parents were coming through and guidelines were being developed. They then ran between two and five mentions a month for the remainder of the period until March 2002, when the Bodyworlds exhibition fired awareness again. News of trusts being authorised to release information in **May and June 2001** was not attributed to the Commission.

Article Focus

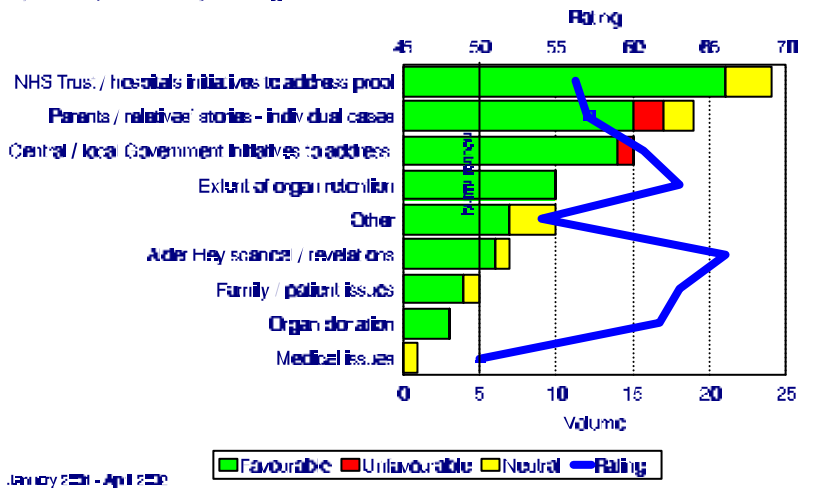
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Article Focus - The Commission Only

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Charts 4 & 5

- The focus of coverage shifted over time. Initially, it focused predominantly on the **Alder Hey scandal / revelations** and the Chief Medical Officer's immediate response – ie **central / local government's initiatives to address the problem**. The coverage turned positive quite quickly as Prof. Donaldson made a public apology, held the National Organ Retention Summit and expressed the commitment that this would never happen again. This was early days for the Commission, and it did not feature widely.
- Articles focused on **parents' / relatives' stories (individual cases)** were a regular feature throughout, but especially in the first half of the year; after August, they dropped off in

frequency quite significantly. This is one type of coverage that is likely to be most troublesome for the Commission, because it tended to detail graphically how the system had failed, or was continuing to fail, parents.

- The other area where most critical comment appeared was when the media focused on **Trusts' efforts to address the problem**. This was traceable to complaints about delays in families receiving information about organ retention, because trusts / hospitals were having to comply with onerous procedures and bureaucracy, blame for which was sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, laid at the door of the Commission.

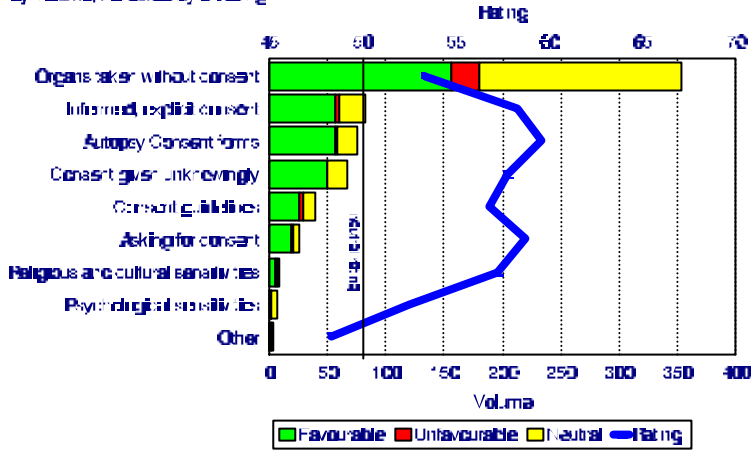
“After the report in January, the Government set up an Organ Retention Commission to oversee the work of returning organs to loved ones. Few realised at the time that it would create the huge amount of work that hospital trusts have subsequently faced and lead to such a lengthy process.” **Leicester Mercury, 29/6/01**

- At the same time, this was also the area where – eventually – the most positive coverage appeared for the Commission, because of reports that it was making sure trusts / hospitals were following the right procedures and that it was authorising various of them to release information to families. About three-quarters of all favourable articles of this type mentioning the Commission appeared in June 2001 or later.
- The **extent of organ retention** was the focus of a flurry of articles in late January 2001 prompted by the Redfern report and recommendations, which included setting up an independent commission.

THE ISSUES – OVERALL

Consent Issues

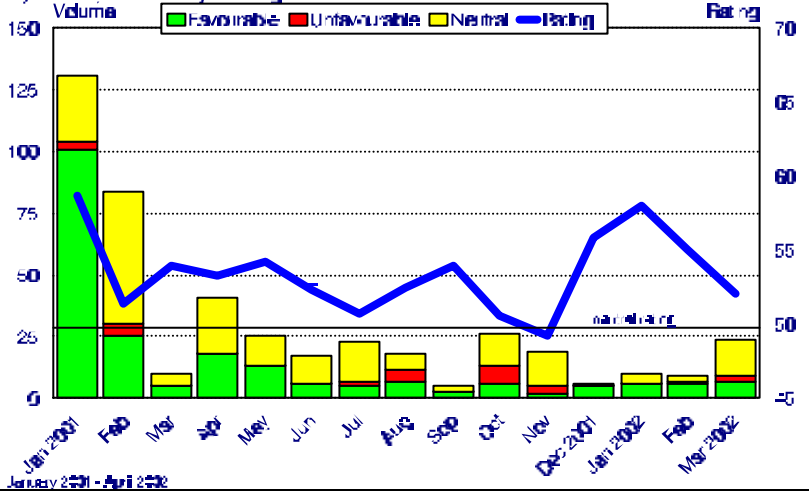
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Consent - Monthly Comparison

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Charts 6 & 7

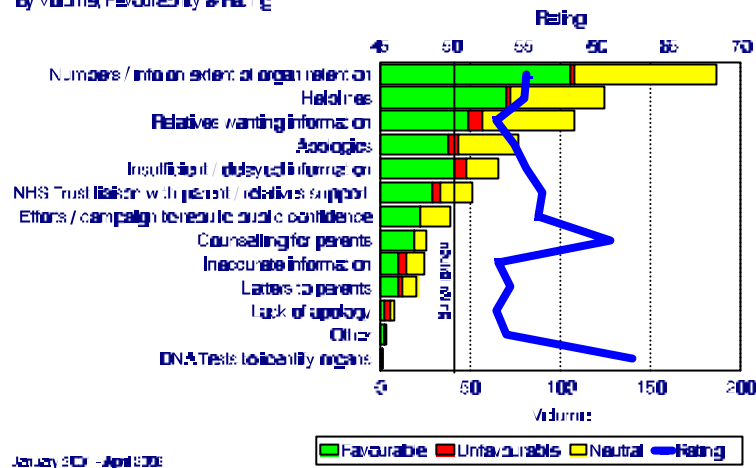
- The single, most central issue was, obviously, the **taking of organs without consent**. Less obvious, however, is the fact that it did not fade from the media spotlight: it was still as much of an issue in March 2002 when “up to 50 parents” were expected to join a demonstration in Birmingham “led by Martin and Michelle Carter of the Rest in Pieces group” (Birmingham Evening Mail, 15/3/02) as it was in January and February 2001. Also in March 2002, the creator of the Bodyworlds exhibition insisted that the body parts in his show had been donated with consent.
- That **consent was given by parents unknowingly** was highlighted in the early stages of the coverage (January and February 2001) and then mostly taken as understood after that.

- This may be credited at least in part to how strongly the promise of **informed, explicit consent** came through during that same period in communications from Health Secretary Alan Milburn.

“Yesterday, Mrs [Michaela] Willis said she was ‘delighted’ at the announcement by Health Secretary Alan Milburn of a package of measures to ensure in future that explicit consent would have to be gained from the next of kin before organs could be removed.” **Western Morning News, 31/1/01**

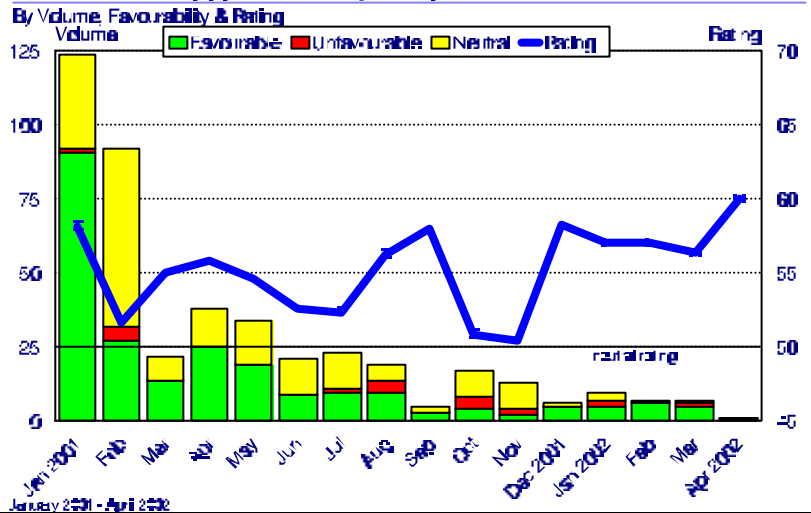
- **Religious / cultural sensitivities** came up as an issue infrequently (in nine articles). A few highlighted the agony of Jewish bereaved families and, in the Daily Mail (5/2/01), Mary Kenny said that *“Chinese people wish to be buried with their bodies intact”*.

Information & Support
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Information & Support - Monthly Comparison
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

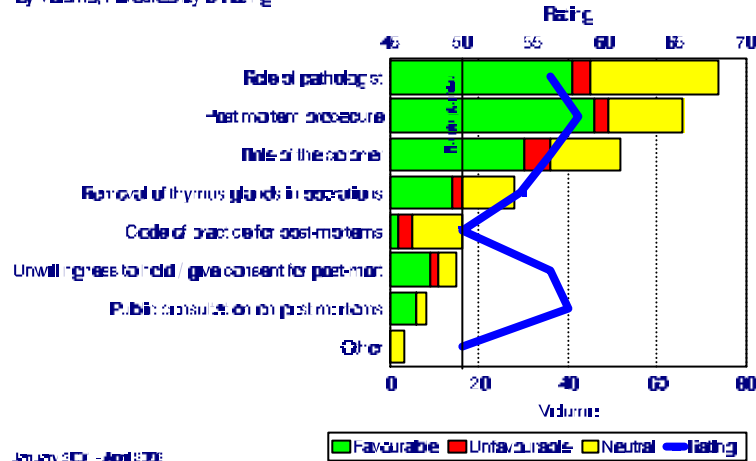
Charts 8 & 9

- **Information** on the extent of organ retention and the helplines set up to provide it were prominent issues throughout the first half of 2001, but became less topical after the Commission had authorised several hospitals / Trusts to release information to families. In early February, several hospitals / trusts reported how many calls their helplines had received.
- The recommendation from the Redfern report at the end of January that hospitals should employ bereavement **counsellors** to help and champion relatives was not widely picked up. Counselling was mentioned in less than 30 items, compared to over 80 references to obtaining explicit consent.
- The decision to commission Cellmark to look into **DNA testing** to improve identification of retained organs was reported just twice, which was a pity as it came across as something tangible and decisive that the Commission was doing. "A crucial development" the Bristol Evening Post (13/12/01) called it, in view of the fact that some parents "were shocked to

discover there is no guarantee if the parts they buried” belonged to their baby (Bristol Evening Post, 17/12/01).

Removal Process & Post-mortems

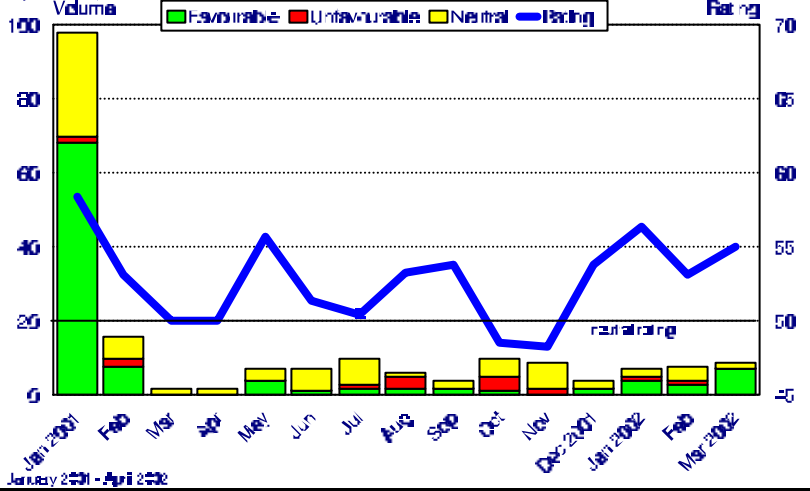
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Removal Process & Post Mortems - Monthly Comparison

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



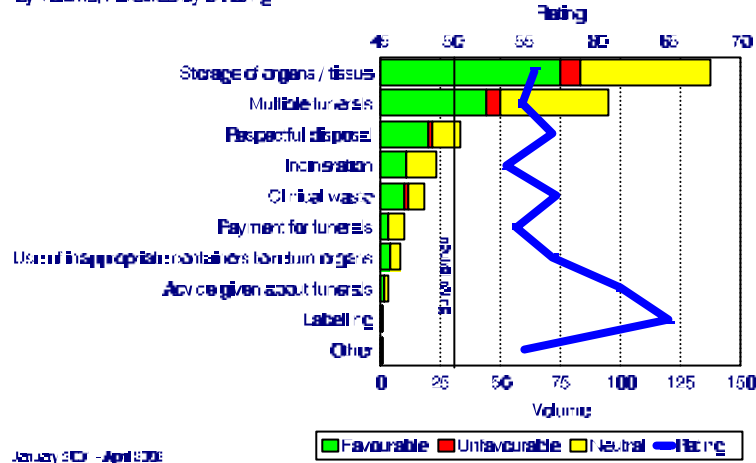
January 2001 - April 2002

Charts 10 & 11

- Details about the post mortems and coroners' / pathologists' procedures were not discussed widely, except in January-February 2001 when the publication of the Redfern report singled out the **role of the pathologist** at Alder Hey, Dick van Velzen. Whether or not Alder Hey was the fault of one rogue pathologist became a secondary issue, once it was established that explicit consent should be obtained first and strict guidelines be implemented for the management of organs retained.
- The issue resurfaced, however, in October / November when the GMC dropped charges against all Alder Hey doctors except two.
- Early coverage (January / February) highlighted that **thymus glands** were sometimes removed in operations and retained. But this was rarely mentioned again.

Storage & Disposal

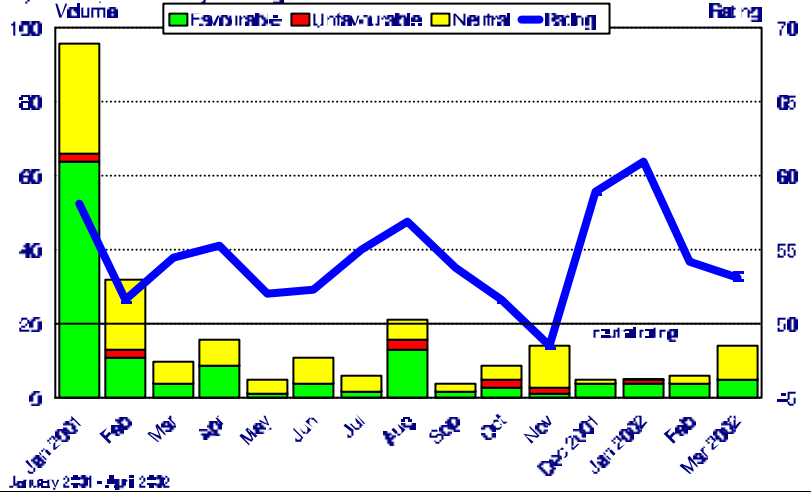
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Storage & Disposal - Monthly Comparison

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Charts 12 & 13

- The storage of organs was the main broad issue, described often in emotive terms as “stockpiling”, or worse:

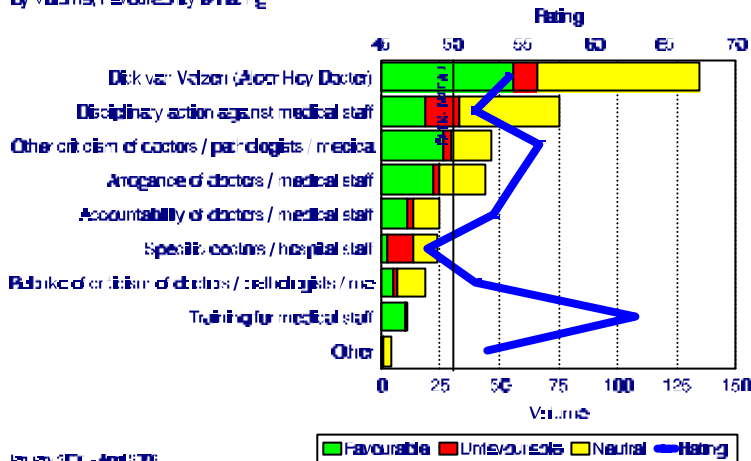
“Doctor ‘had child’s head in a jar’: Hospital braced for violent protest...” The Observer, 28/1/01

- Subsequent disposal of organs / tissue as clinical waste, often by incineration, was often described as being the fate of retained tissues.
- The **use of inappropriate containers to return organs** was rarely brought up after the issue was first raised in January. One item described how some families “were handed parts of their children in plastic boxes, while one set of parents were obliged to walk across a car park carrying their child’s testicles” (The Independent on Sunday, 21/1/01).
- The need for **multiple funerals** was the most common way to convey graphically the implications for bereaved families having organs of loved ones returned. But **payment for**

funerals was a more materialistic rather than emotive issue and therefore was not much dwelled on.

Medical Staff

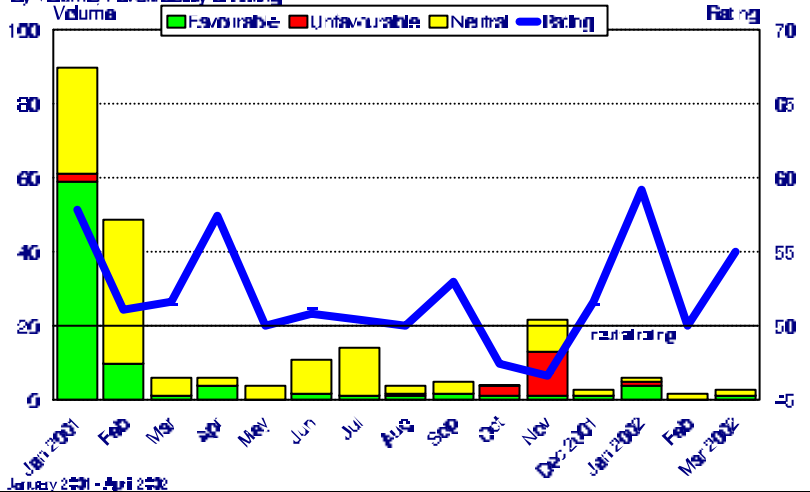
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Medical Staff - Monthly Comparison

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



Charts 14 & 15

- **Dick van Velzen** was widely focused on: a – if not the – key culprit behind this whole problem. But despite a communications effort from certain corners to put most of the blame on a rogue, **specific doctor**, his value as a news hook dropped considerably after early-February, resurfacing only in November, when Hilary Rowland was censured by the GMC for failing to rein in Professor van Velzen.
- The **disciplinary action** against Ms Rowland triggered an outcry of dissatisfaction – that she earned her full salary while suspended, and that charges were dropped against other doctors. *“The parents involved remain angry that among those named in the Redfern report only Professor van Velzen and the former Alder Hey medical director Dr John Martin are certain to be disciplined.”* The Independent, 20/11/01



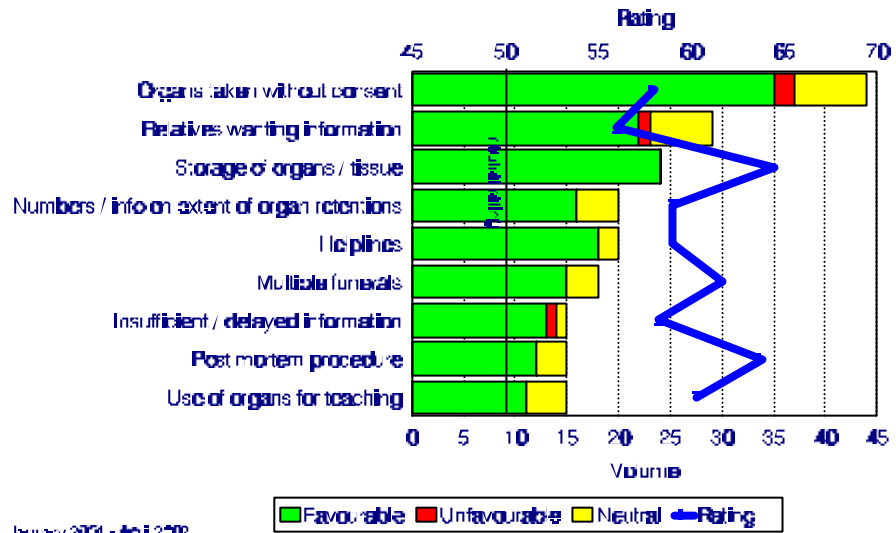
Retained Organs Commission

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JANUARY 2001 – APRIL 2002

- The **arrogance of doctors** was a popular topic but didn't have many, other than neutral, implications for the Commission. **Better training for doctors / medical staff** was highlighted as one of the recommendations of Prof. Donaldson's report in January but, again, was hardly ever pursued as an issue.

**THE COMMISSION ONLY –
LEADING ISSUES**

Leading Issues - The Commission Only
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



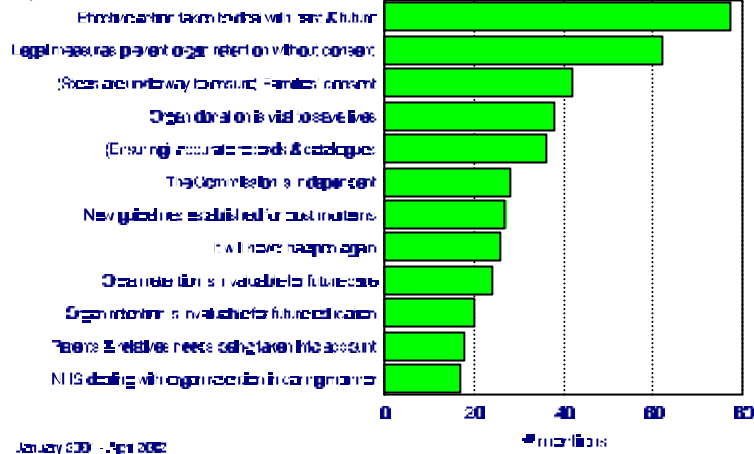
January 2001 - April 2002

Chart 16

- When the Commission featured in the coverage, the leading issues were the core ones with which it has been preoccupied since the start: **organs taken without consent**, the **extent** of the problem, the **storage of those organs**, and **relatives wanting information**.
- Two closely linked concerns in the coverage were **multiple funerals** and **insufficient / delayed information**.
- The delay was often attributed to the requirements imposed on hospitals by the Commission: but as the positive reasons for the requirements were also communicated – that is, the desire to avoid any further multiple funerals – the result was rarely negative. For example, explaining a delay in giving information to one family, Gloucestershire Royal NHS Trust’s Mariella Dexter said:
“The complicating factor is that the Retained Organs Commission – the national body set up in the wake of Alder Hey – last week produced definitive guidance to the NHS about how to return retained organs. We had to wait until it was received and all the retained organs were catalogued.” Gloucester Citizen, 9/8/01
 However, she added, the reason for the thoroughness was that:
“The Commission didn’t want to release anything for burial or cremation because in the Alder Hey situation, some parents unfortunately went through not just one further burial, but two or three, which is terribly, terribly disturbing.”
- Occasionally the Commission was blamed for unnecessary delays, and that often came from the trusts / hospitals as well:
“...the Government’s Retained Organs Commission has failed to establish a formal set of national guidelines, although it announced the initiative on January 30.” This is London, 21/2/01

Leading Positive Messages

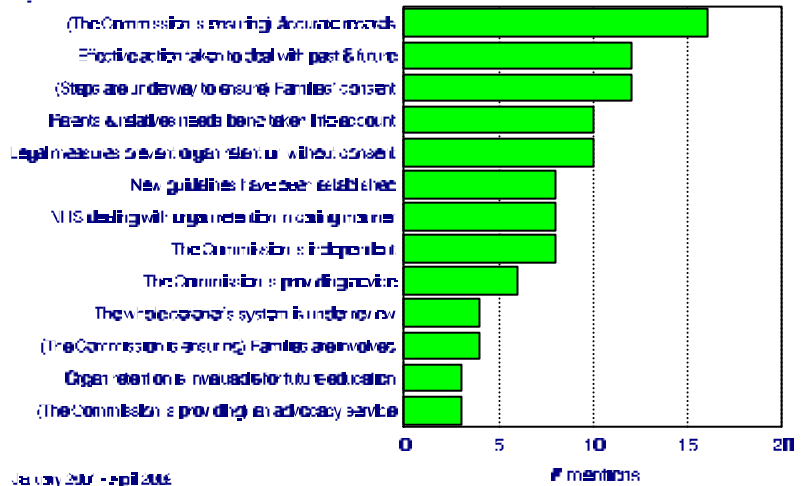
By Volume



January 2001 - April 2002

Leading Positive Messages - The Commission Only

By Volume



January 2001 - April 2002

Charts 17 & 18

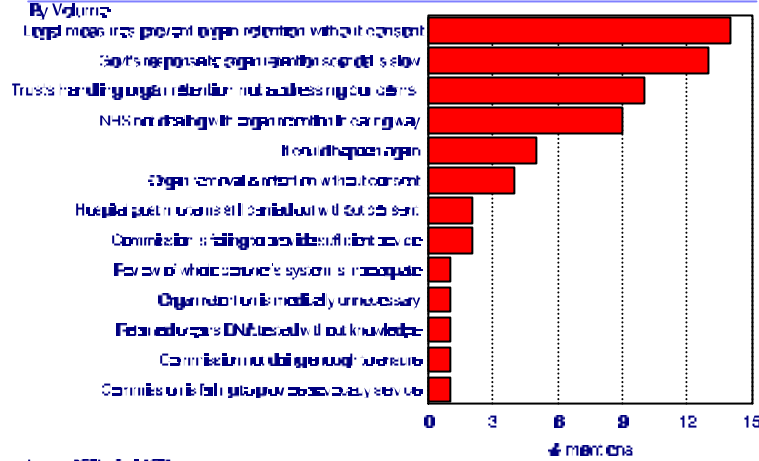
- The first important message was that **it will never happen again** which, accordingly, was transmitted mostly in January. *“Never again’ pledge on babies’ organs”* ran the headline in The Times (12/1/01).
- That message was only opposed five times by the negative message that it could happen again but even a few occurrences should be of concern. The latest expression of this was as late as 30 July 2001, when The Times quoted the bereaved Dr Austin Isaacs, son of a man whose brain was retained:
“They say it wouldn’t happen now. I say that these views are entrenched in certain aspects of the medical profession.”
- More satisfactory is that the three leading positive messages by volume overall were all concerned with specific **steps** being undertaken to ensure that things would change.
“[Prof Donaldson] will recommend that the Human Tissue Act 1961 be updated to prevent doctors using phrases such as ‘tissue retention’ to hoodwink parents into

donating whole organs. Failure to gain consent will become a criminal offence.” Daily Mail, 27/1/01

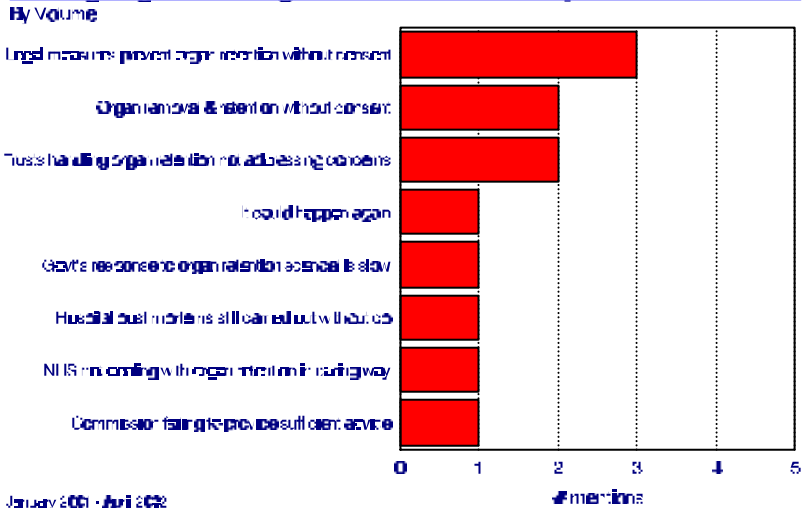
“The professor pledged to change the law to tighten up consent guidelines.” The Mirror, 12/1/01

- In Commission coverage specifically, what came through most strongly was the message that **it is ensuring accurate records and catalogues are made before making returns**. This was obviously potentially controversial, as highlighted above, but it was communicated positively enough to cause minimal problems.
- Also strongly linked to the Commission was the message that **parents’ and relatives’ needs are being taken into account in the handling of organ retention enquiries**. This was usefully furthered through the coverage of Commission meetings in various locations, at which local trust / hospital representatives were also present.
- The fact that new guidelines were being established, and that **families were being involved in the consultation process** also went hand in hand:
“The Retained Organs Commission has begun consultation on the proper management and care of human organs and tissue removed during post-mortem examinations.” Liverpool Daily Post, 5/3/02
- Also potentially significant for the Commission were the messages which did not feature widely in the coverage: notably the message that **parents / relatives are represented on the Commission**, which only appeared once. This may be more an issue of communications opportunities lost rather than a signal of any problem – parent representing groups such as NACOR and Pity II were frequently quoted. Encouraging more media appearances by Commission members, especially parent representatives, might well raise its profile.
- The **importance of organ retention** – with consent – was emphasised strongly enough in the media, though not through the Commission: there were enough medical professional spokespeople willing to make this point. That **organ donation is vital to save lives** was the fourth leading message by volume.
“Don’t let organs scandal stop you carrying a card” Gloucester Citizen, 5/12/01

Leading Negative Messages



Leading Negative Messages - The Commission Only



Charts 19 & 20

- The main complaint in general – which sometimes implicated the Commission – was that the Government’s response to the organ retention scandal has been inadequate / too slow and, more specifically, that legal measures are too slow in coming.
- This emerged as a general lack of trust in the Government’s ability to effect real change or even, perhaps, the extent of its commitment to try to do so:
“When New Labour came to office it promised ‘a first class NHS in which there was no room for second best’, but four years later there is still nothing to protect you from unacceptable treatment. And nine years after the whistle was blown on Bristol, it is now the only place where I’m confident it won’t happen again.” Phil Hammond, The Express, 30/1/01
“Robin Makin, solicitor for some of the parents, accused senior NHS managers and the Government of ‘sacrificing’ Alder Hey to divert attention from how early they had known about the scandal.” Western Daily Press, 31/1/01

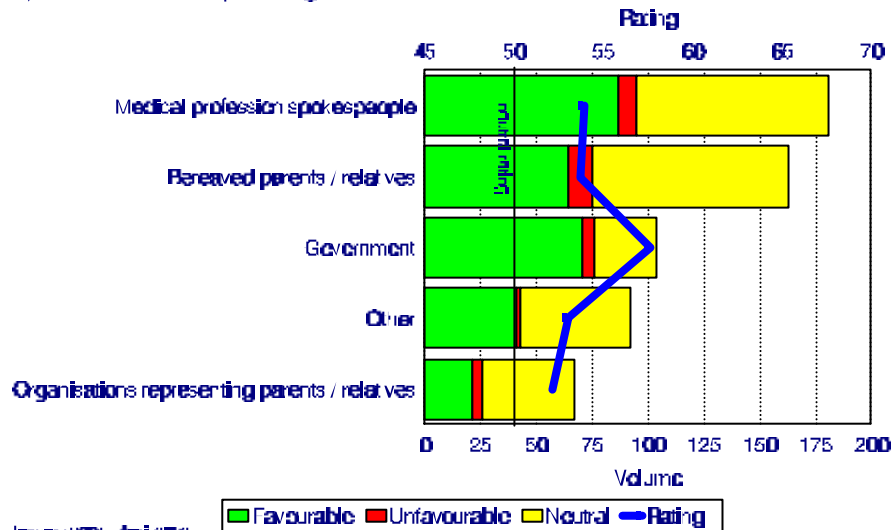
- But this was also directed specifically at the processes instituted by the Commission, which were causing Trusts to delay giving information to families:

“There is something the Retained Organs Commission can do to help those families now awaiting the return of stored material. And that is to reverse the illogical, offensive and downright unnecessary delay in the process.” Nottingham Evening Post, 18/5

[Conservative MP David Wilshire] “recently complained to the Government about the unacceptable delays faced by over 170 residents chasing information about the quantity and fate of the organs retained by the trust.” This is London, 21/2/01

Stakeholders Quoted

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



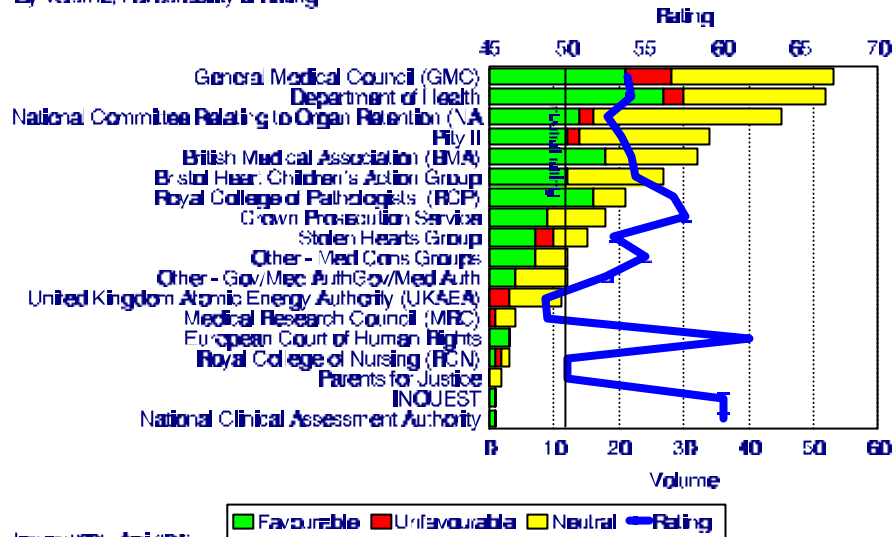
January 2001 - April 2002

Chart 21

- **Medical profession spokespeople** were only marginally more vocal than the bereaved parents / relatives. About half the time they were quoted, the coverage did nothing to further the Commission’s aims, as when they were complaining about being made into scapegoats.
- Articles quoting **bereaved families** were inevitably the most likely to be negative / critical. But a large proportion was nevertheless working in the same direction as the Commission in a positive way. Sometimes they were connected to **organisations representing parents / relatives**.
- Three-quarters of all appearances by **Government spokespeople** were in January and February 2001. They receded into the background after that, leaving the way clear for the Commission to raise its profile.

Interest Groups

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Chart 22

- Government and medical authority groups had the highest profile: the **GMC**, the **Department of Health** and the **BMA**.
- But two consumer groups were also visible – **NACOR** and **Pity II**. NACOR was highly visible in the first half of 2001, while Pity II carried on pressing the issues throughout, including in March 2002, voicing outrage at the Bodyworlds exhibition.
- Although the media prominence of parents / consumer groups was very relevant to the Commission, they actually overlapped very little in the media, appearing together in articles just twice, in the case of Pity II, and only once in the case of NACOR. For the Commission, the **Stolen Hearts Group** was more prominent, involved with the Commission in seeing an inquiry take place into “how Birmingham Children’s Hospital dealt with inquiries from families and issued information” (Birmingham Post, 6/10/01).

Spokespeople

By Volume, Impressions & Rating

| | Volume | Impressions (millions) | Rating |
|---|--------|------------------------|--------|
| Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer | 77 | 8404 | 57.7 |
| Alan Milburn, Health Secretary | 76 | 11561 | 55.9 |
| Michaela Willis, NACOR | 27 | 4114 | 54.6 |
| Margaret Brazier, Chair, Retained Organs Commission | 22 | 8295 | 52 |
| Paula O'Leary, Pity I | 16 | 20322 | 52.3 |
| Ian Gibson, Lawyer for Pity II | 16 | 8279 | 51.6 |
| John O'Hare, Pity II | 16 | 9550 | 52.5 |
| David Evans, Health Minister | 12 | 4312 | 57.1 |
| Ian Kennedy, Inquiry Chairman | 11 | 3362 | 51.8 |
| Helen Rickard, NACOR | 10 | 2486 | 52.5 |
| Michael Wilks, Chairman of the BMA | 9 | 6361 | 53.11 |
| Ed Bradley, Pity I | 3 | 413 | 55.7 |
| Chris - Mrs Chris Group | 2 | 264 | 52.5 |
| Ian Boggs, Chairman of the BMA | 7 | 4125 | 52.9 |
| Rufus Anderson, Prof. OPCA | 7 | 5202 | 52.6 |
| Sir Greg Allcroft, Registrar of the Royal College of Physicians | 2 | 1481 | 50 |
| Andie Patale, Liverpool's Coach | 1 | 53 | 50 |

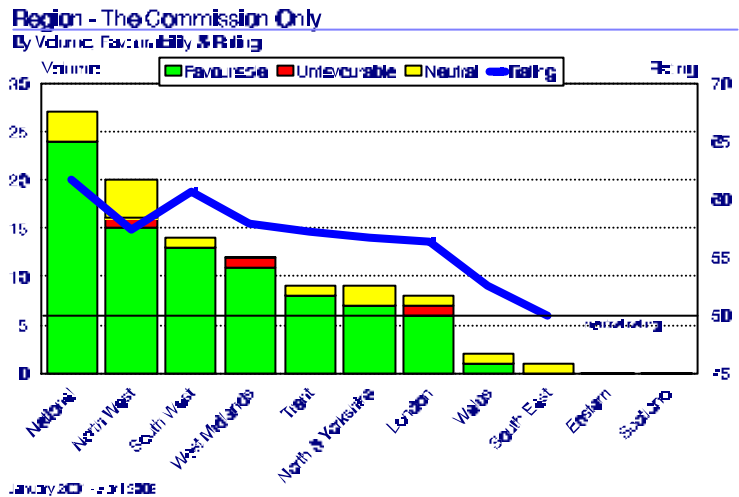
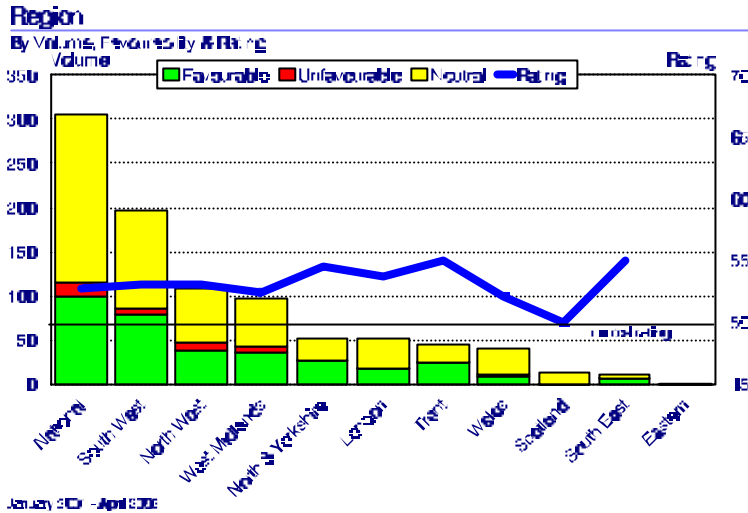
January 2001 - April 2002

Chart 23

- Government spokespeople – **Prof. Donaldson** and **Alan Milburn** – gave the situation high priority attention in January 2001, but became less prominent after that and more reactive, rather than proactive.
- The most prominent Commission spokesperson – **Margaret Brazier** – appeared less often than NACOR's Michaela Willis, and was mostly quoted in late April, when she announced that the release of information could soon begin. She emphasised that the Commission had wanted to ensure that:

“We do not drip-feed information or see again the situation of multiple funerals as happened with some of the families.” The Independent, 28/4/01

- NACOR's chief spokespeople, **Michaela Willis** and **Helen Rickard**, were quoted 36 times altogether, compared to Margaret Brazier's 22 times.
- Added together, Pity II spokespeople were the most vocal, quoted 59 times, and were also the most critical. **Paula O'Leary** called the GMC's decision to drop charges against “dozens of doctors” a “cover-up” which “adds insult to injury” (Daily Mail, 19/10/01). **John O'Hare** described the decision to allow the Bodyworlds exhibition to go ahead as “an absolute disgrace” (Sunday Telegraph, 3/3/02).



Charts 24 & 25

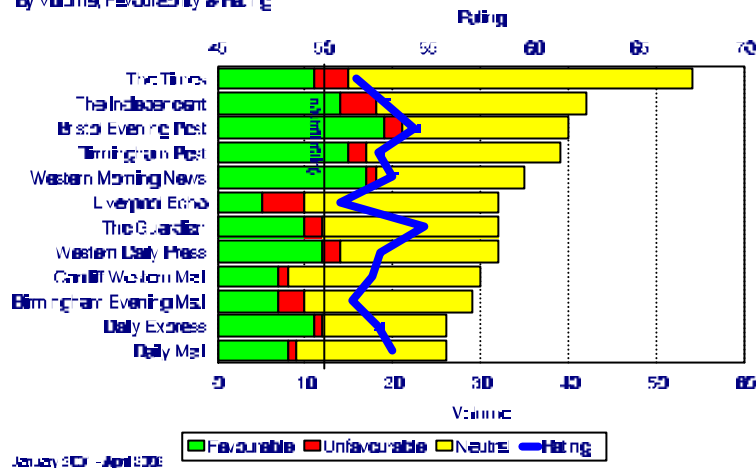
- So strongly was the organs scandal a matter for the national consciousness that a third of all items – and 85% of impressions – arose in the **national** media.
- Breaking coverage down regionally, most attention was given to the subject in the **South West** – all around the Bristol area mainly, but also covering the Gloucestershire press.
- The **North West** was the next most interested – including the Liverpool area, Greater Manchester and Lancashire generally – followed by the **West Midlands**, including Birmingham and Coventry.
- In the **South East** and **East**, it was almost a non-issue, suggesting either a relative lack of problems with the regions' NHS trusts and / or greater complacency.
- Attention in **Scotland** was limited: when the news emerged in October 2001 that retained bones had been used in nuclear research in Glasgow and London, a spokeswoman for the Scottish Parents for a Public Inquiry into Organ Retention was quoted, but all the coverage was

in the English press. The Scottish papers were interested in the Bodyworlds exhibition in March 2002.

- Looking at regional analysis of Commission mentions specifically, the most important coverage was again national. Among the regions, the North West gave it a higher profile than the South West, because the Commission held more public meetings there.
- Inevitably, these two regions also harboured the most controversy and therefore included a few critical items. The other region where this happened was **London** (This is London). National coverage notably was never actually negative towards the Commission and its intentions.

Leading Publications

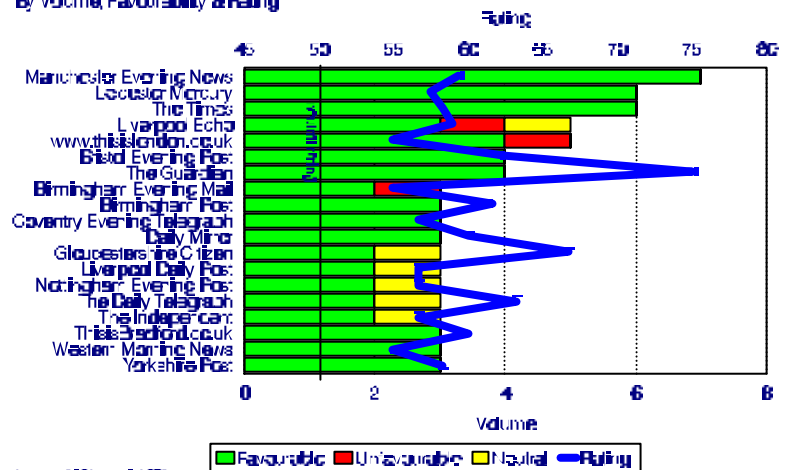
By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Leading Publications - The Commission Only

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



January 2001 - April 2002

Charts 26 & 27

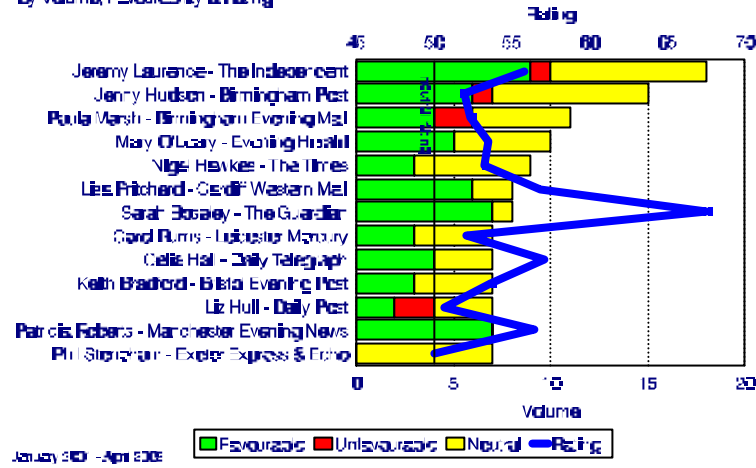
- Overall, the various media types tended to report in different ways. The quality national press were inclined to report factually and to feature more in-depth items on the issues, often contributed by Health Correspondents. The down market press and many leading regionals tended to report individual family stories under emotional headlines.
- Over the 15-month period of the report, the leading media by volume remained fairly constant in terms of the level of reporting by month. In other words, the Times and The Independent consistently covered the story. Regional media in the top ten by volume reported more strongly when led by local stories.
- The Times has been easily the most attentive national broadsheet covering the issues, and was also the national newspaper that generated the most mentions of the Commission.
- The Independent, only slightly less comprehensive in its coverage, mentioned it just three times, however, to The Times' six. The Guardian was the third-placed national.

- Regional newspapers covering the issues of concern for their local readers were led by the Bristol Evening Post, Birmingham Post and Western Morning News. But for the Commission, the Manchester Evening News, Leicester Mercury and Liverpool Echo were more important.

- The Liverpool Echo was the most critical voice overall, and frequently turned to Pity II spokespeople for comment. It ran a damning editorial in March 2002 criticising Alan Milburn and the Government generally for promising much and doing too little (quoted in the Executive Summary).

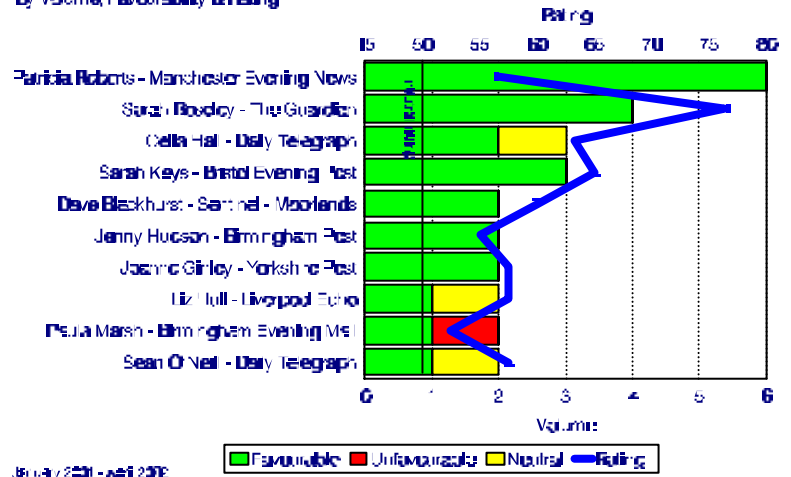
Leading Bylines

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



Leading Bylines - The Commission Only

By Volume, Favourability & Rating



Charts 28 & 29

- Looking at the specific writers who covered the reports reveals that the most attentive journalist on the subject nationally over the entire period was **Jeremy Laurence**, Health Editor of The Independent. The fact that he mentioned the Commission only once surely indicates an opportunity to raise its profile with him.
- Similarly with **Nigel Hawkes**, Health Editor of The Times, who didn't mention the Commission at all, but did transmit six of its target positive messages.
- For Commission-only items, the leading national journalist was **Sarah Boseley**, Health Editor of The Guardian. But after initially covering the setting up of the Commission, she only mentioned it once more, reporting that families were likely to initiate a mass legal action against the NHS and that *"the number of complainants may increase as the Retained Organs Commission authorises hospitals to let families know what organs have been stored around the country"* (4/8/01).

- **Patricia Roberts** in the Manchester Evening News was the most aware regionally, reporting on “*the first meeting outside London of the Retained Organs Commission*” (19/7/01), and when the inquiry was ordered into two Manchester hospitals (1/8/01). She also flagged the individual case of Thomas Beardmore which, she said, is now “*with the European Court and the Retained Organs Commission*” (5/3/02).

- **Celia Hall** of The Daily Telegraph only wrote about the Commission at its inception.

THE COMMISSION in Quotes

“Attention will also focus on the Retained Organs Commission, which Health Secretary Alan Milburn has agreed to set up immediately. The Commission will oversee the return of tissues and organs from collections, ensure these collections are properly catalogued, act as an advocate for parents, advise on good practice and make sure counselling is available.” Birmingham Post, 31/1/01

“A professor in Manchester today spoke of her great sense of responsibility in her task of returning thousands of children’s organs to their families. Prof. Margaret Brazier has been selected to head the NHS Commission on Retained Organs.” Manchester Evening News, 31/1/01

“Defending the hospital trust, Mr Wilshire claimed that it has been prevented from answering residents’ queries because the Government’s Retained Organs Commission has failed to establish a formal set of national guidelines, although it announced the initiative on January 30... he said he finds it hard to understand why providing such basic factual information needs input from national bureaucrats.” This is London, 21/2/01

“The Retained Organs Commission, which is overseeing the return of body parts to parents, thinks up to a third may remain unclaimed. And it is currently considering the mass burial idea.” Sunday Mirror, 3/6/01

“It is still not clear what will happen to the organs currently being held by the Trust. Hospitals are awaiting further guidance from the Assembly and the Retained Organs Commission.” Western Mail, 6/6/01

“Am I alone in being concerned that the NHS Retained Organs Commission is based at Hannibal House?” Letter to The Guardian, 29/6/01

“The number of complainants may increase as the retained organs Commission authorises hospitals to let families know what organs have been stored around the country.” The Guardian, 4/8/01

“Guidelines issued by the Retained Organs Commission last week means the hospital can now start releasing the 38 lungs, 14 brains, four hearts and two livers it has kept over the years, and families can decide whether to carry out another burial or cremation service...” The Gloucester Citizen, 9/8/01

“Dave Watts, Louise Ellman and Frank Field were given assurances by the Retained Organs Commission it was looking closely at procedures to take into account patients’ wishes.” Liverpool Daily Post, 23/11/01

“A crucial development into identifying organs and tissues retained by hospitals has been announced in Bristol. The Retained Organs Commission...has agreed to enter into partnership with a private diagnostic company to further studies into the issue.” Bristol Evening Post, 13/12/01



Retained Organs Commission

MEDIA ANALYSIS REPORT
JANUARY 2001 – APRIL 2002

“The Retained Organs Commission, the special health authority set up in the wake of the Redfern Report, is paying £15,000 to paternity testing firm Cellmark to develop the test. It could help reunite hundreds of children’s organs, which were stockpiled without labels and cannot be identified, with relatives. And it could also be used to give peace of mind to many parents who fear the organs of the wrong children have been returned to them.” Liverpool Echo, 31/1/02

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**APPENDIX 1 – BODYWORLDS
EXHIBITION COVERAGE
MARCH-APRIL 2002**

Some 100 articles on the Bodyworlds exhibition were analysed in March – April 2002, because it was frequently associated with the organ scandal and prompted renewed cries of outrage from bereaved parents and their representatives.

All of it turned out to be neutral, in that no messages either furthering or hindering the Commission's aims were conveyed.

Pity II spokespeople were the most frequently quoted, aside from exhibition creator Gunther von Hagens himself.

Bodyworlds

"...the exhibition... is 'an insult to the Alder Hey families and to the memories of their children.'"
Sunday Telegraph, 3/3/02

"Alder Hey group's outrage at corpse exhibition" headline, **Liverpool Daily Post**, 12/3/02

"Britain's leading anatomists have protested that a planned exhibition featuring dissected and ingeniously preserved human corpses is 'mere spectacle' and may deter families from donating bodies to medical science." **The Independent**, 16/3/02

"Britain has some of the tightest controls in the world when it comes to the handling of corpses, and Her Majesty's Inspector of Anatomy has spent weeks investigating the legality of von Hagens' show." **Daily Mail**, 23/3/02

"All the people who donated their bodies chose to do it so their bodies could be part of a wonderful and educational experience." Dr Gunther von Hagens, **The Mirror**, 28/3/02

APPENDIX 2 – TERMINOLOGY

Rating

The company evaluates each item (press article or broadcast item) and assigns a rating on a scale of 0 to 100. Each item starts with a neutral rating of 50, and is raised (more positive) or lowered (more negative) based on a number of characteristics. These include placement, prominence, visuals, the strength and presence of messages for and against the organisations tracked, sources, content and tone.

Apart from the **overall content or tone** of an article, there are three components which analysts consider when calculating the research item's rating:

1. **Messages.** These reflect the client's messages and are noted as opposing statements, implying praise or criticism. An example would be "*Product x offers value for money*", with the opposite being "*Product x does not offer value for money*".
2. **Sources.** These are broken down into three categories: those favourable to the client and its concerns, those unfavourable and those who are quoted on issues relevant to the topic, but neither condemn nor support the client and its concerns.
3. **Presentation** - this includes the headline, layout, and use of images.

Typically, the presence of a favourable comment, favourable message, quotation from a favourable source, or the presence of good company material (eg photograph, logo, press release items) would increase the rating by approximately 5 points for each occurrence. Conversely, negative occurrences of similar types would decrease the rating by approximately 5 points for each occurrence.

RATING

| | |
|-----|-------------------------|
| 100 | Favourable |
| 90 | |
| 80 | |
| 70 | |
| 60 | |
| 50 | Neutral/balanced |
| 40 | |
| 30 | |
| 20 | |
| 10 | |
| 0 | Unfavourable |

Points to consider are:

- **Content / Tone**
- **Placement**
- **Headline**
- **Messages**
- **Sources**
- **Size**
- **Visuals**
- **Bias**

- **Favourable** items have ratings between 55 and a completely favourable 100.
- **Unfavourable** items have ratings ranging between 45 and a completely unfavourable 0.
- **Neutral** items are rated as 50. These are usually of two types. First, items which just mention the client and its concerns in passing, with no evaluative comment: for example, a brief reference to a managerial appointment will normally be considered as neutral in the absence of any qualifying statement. Second, items which contain favourable and unfavourable comment in equal measure result in a balanced, or 'neutral' item.

Volume: The number of articles analysed during the report period.

Impressions: The combined circulation of the publications in which articles appeared. This equates to "Opportunities to see" (OTS).

Issues: These are the key topic areas. They can be simply products or services, or more complex items such as image statements or comparison with competitors. The first issue category is normally placement, which indicates where in the article the client is mentioned (headline, first paragraph etc).

Messages: These are usually pre-determined statements, describing the client's key branding, corporate and / or product statements, which are tracked by Echo analysts. Messages can be positive or negative towards the client. Often the message is implied rather than appearing verbatim.

Sources: Sources are commentators on the company / sector and the issues which surround it.