



Infectious diseases and the media

Harnessing the hype!

Peter Griffin, Science Media Centre





EBOLA-TEST

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eumonia and

MRSA

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'ersa') are staphylococcal bacteria
d in the n





**ZIKA
VIRUS**

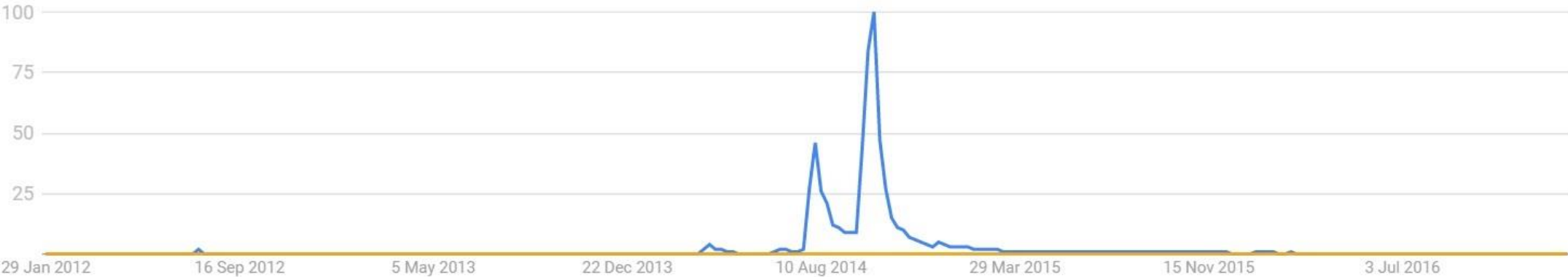




Interest in infectious diseases is spiky

Google Trends

Interest over time



● ebola
Search term

● infectious disease
Search term

● superbug
Search term



BRIT

1. Have multiple consistent and accurate messages

- DON'T** be responsible for the hype yourself
- DO** be specific - 'what, when, how, and for how long'
- DO** tailor the messages to the audience
- DO** pre-test messages with diverse audiences

2. The vacuum will be filled... make sure it is by you

DON'T hope that interest will fade quickly

DON'T overload journalists with detail

DO respond quickly to media queries

DO outline uncertainty and limits of knowledge

3. Be proactive in correcting misinformation

- DON'T** automatically blame journalists for inaccuracies
- DO** request corrections quickly
- DO** adjust key messages if necessary
- DO** look for follow-up media opportunities

4. The public has a voice – listen to it

DON'T bombard the public with more facts

DO accept their concerns, even if they are irrational

DO look for opportunities to engage directly

DO correct misinformation on social networks

5. Build science communication capability in peace time

DON'T wait until need for information spikes

DO take time to foster media relationships

DO develop your science and risk communication skills

DO take time to work with hard to reach audiences

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Risk Communication and
Infectious Diseases in an Age
of Digital Media

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Raz

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Media SAVVY

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SCIENCE MEDIA | SAVVY

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SAVVY: Media skills for researchers

