

# Impact of 24/7 News Coverage on Mental Health During War

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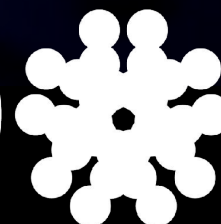
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# עדכון מיוחד

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# Introduction

## Background

Previous research has shown links between exposure to mass trauma events via media and psychological outcomes like PTSD.

## Current Study

This study examines the impact of 24/7 news coverage on Jewish Israelis during the 'Iron Swords' War in October 2023.

## Comparison

Results are compared to a similar study conducted during the 2014 Gaza conflict to assess differences over time.

# Methodology

## 1 Study Design

Cross-sectional internet-based survey conducted October 11-12, 2023

## 2 Participants

802 adult Jewish Israelis

## 3 Measures

News consumption, attitudes towards newscasts,

anxiety symptoms

## 4 Analysis

Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, comparison to 2014

("Protective Edge") data

**Views on the 24/7 newscast and wanting it to return to normal broadcasting**

**Attitudes towards the newscast** Perception

of newscast as:

- 1) Burdensome,
- 2) Relaxing,
- 3) Stressing,
- 4) Addictive,
- 5) FOMO,

- 6) Attempts to avoid watching

**Anxiety symptoms**

- 1) Sense of uncontrollable fear,
- 2) Physiological hyper-arousal,
- 3) Fearful thoughts,
- 4) Sleeping with difficulties

# News Consumption Patterns

## Increased Consumption

Over 80% of participants reported increased news consumption during the war

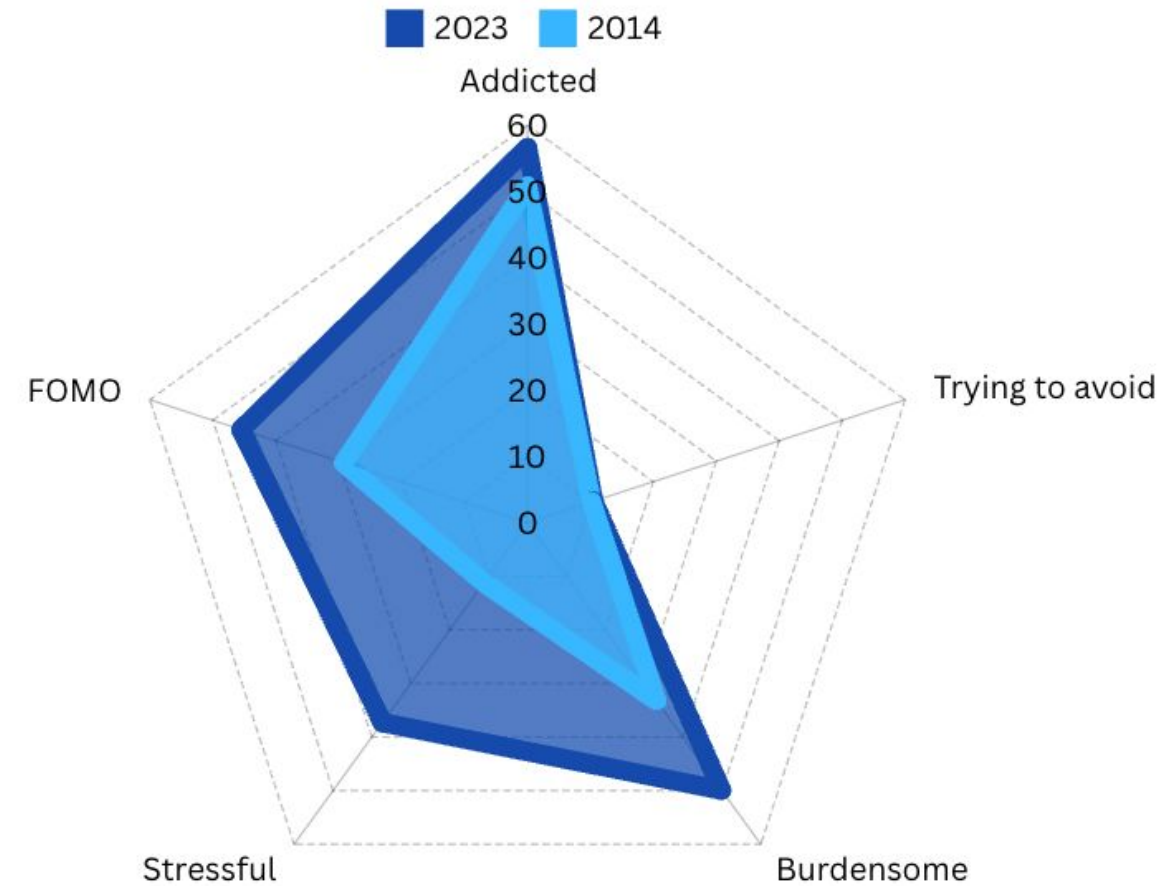
## Stress and Addiction

Over 70% found newscasts stressful, nearly 24% reported high addiction

## Difficulty Avoiding

More than 40% reported not trying to avoid newscasts at all

Percentage reported



# Anxiety Symptoms

Symptom	Prevalence (2023)	Prevalence (2014)
Sleeping difficulties	44.6%	22.3%
Fearful thoughts	62.0%	36.6%
Uncontrolled fear/anxiety	44.4%	18.4%
Physiological hyper-stimulation	39.3%	12.8%

Approximately two-fold increase in prevalence of anxiety symptoms across the sampled populations

# Attitudes Towards Newscasts and Anxiety Symptoms

<b>Anxiety symptoms:</b>	Uncontrolled fear	Physiological hyper-stimulation	Fearful thoughts	Sleeping difficulties	At least one symptom
<b>Attitude towards news:</b>					
Burdensome	62.1%	63.3%	58.7%	61.7%	57.0%
Relaxing	10.6%	12.0%	10.5%	12.3%	10.3%
Fear Of Missing Out	59.6%	59.2%	56.5%	60.6%	54.2%
Stressful	61.8%	64.4%	53.1%	60.0%	49.6%
Trying to avoid	15.2%	16.1%	12.1%	14.8%	11.9%
Addictive	70.5%	69.7%	67.8%	70.6%	60.4%

This table shows the percentage of respondents who agreed with various attitudes towards newscasts, broken down by reported anxiety symptoms.

All findings significant.

# Predictors of

## Anxiety

1

### Gender

Women reported more anxiety symptoms than men



2

### Age

Younger individuals reported higher levels of anxiety



3

### News Perception

Finding newscasts stressful or addictive predicted higher anxiety

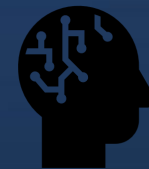


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### FOMO

Fear of missing out on news associated with increased anxiety

FOMO



# Comparison to 2014 Study

## 2014 Study

57.2% reported no anxiety symptoms

29% found security in watching news

## 2023 Study

29.3% reported no anxiety symptoms

19% found security in watching news

## Change

Significant increase in anxiety symptoms

Decrease in perceived security from news watching



# Impact Across Demographics



1

## Universal Impact

Increased news consumption and negative perceptions shared across all sectors of adult Jewish population

2

## Political Spectrum

Effects observed across entire political spectrum, transcending previous polarization

3

## Religious

## Differences

Religious individuals reported higher negative perceptions and anxiety compared to secular respondents

# Key Findings

## High Prevalence

Very high prevalence of stress indicators among Jewish viewers during 'Iron Swords' War

## Increased Impact

Stress indicators exceeded those reported in 2014 study

## Regulation Difficulty

Participants struggled to regulate news intake despite negative perceptions

## Risk Group

Nearly 25% of participants at risk for developing stress-related pathologies

# Implications

## Mental Health Risks

Excessive exposure to distressing news content can harm emotional and mental health

## Precursor to PTSD

High prevalence of anxiety symptoms may lead to development of Acute Stress Reactions and PTSD if left untreated

## Need for

**Intervention** for affected individuals poses challenge for administering effective psychological first aid



# Recommendations



## Raise Awareness

Educate public about risks of excessive news consumption during crises



## Promote Regulation

Encourage balanced news consumption habits



## Improve Access

Ensure easy access to mental health support services



## Further Research

Conduct longitudinal studies and expand to non-Jewish Israeli population

# Limitations

1

## Sample Limitations

Internet panel may limit generalizability to those with high digital literacy

3

## No Control Group

Widespread exposure to war-related news content prevented establishment of control group

2

## Population Focus

Study restricted to Jewish population due to Hebrew questionnaire

4

## Other Factors

Study did not account for participants' past trauma or other news sources like social media

**Thank you  
for  
listening!**  
**Contact**

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