

MEDIA COVERAGE OF WOMEN'S SPORT

Theme: Visibility & Portrayal

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Sport NZ and Isentia are conducting a major study of gender balance in sports media coverage and the journalists doing that reporting. The study involves human (rather than computer) analysis of 40,000 media stories a year – around one-third of all sports coverage in New Zealand. A separate part of the study is exploring gender balance in the social media content published by national sport organisations and regional sports trusts.

The Sport NZ-Isentia study is one of the largest of its kind globally. Its purpose is to:

Gain a clear picture of gender balance/imbalance within sports media coverage and media reporting

Be in position to recognise and celebrate progress, and fuel that progress into the future

Add to the body of evidence based on which Sport NZ and others can advocate for greater visibility of women in sport in the media

The study involves coding and analysis of 40,000 items a year for two years starting in July 2019. The project was suspended from March to June 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 on sports leagues and events.

The scope covers print, broadcast and internet media within New Zealand, including locally-published magazines. It excludes match broadcasts and live blogs, together with community newspapers.

Items are randomly selected daily and analysed by people across 100 different markers. These track the subject, sport and/or event and how the subject is portrayed through imagery, media commentary and the comments of third parties. It also tracks the gender of all those involved, including the journalist.

Multiple researchers work on the project to ensure inter-coder reliability and consistency, and that they use a set of criteria to consistently analyse the way media frame each subject.