

Pitching Prevention Science to Journalists

advice from Noah Smith, journalist from *The Washington Post* and *Direct Relief*



As part of its Helping End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) initiative, the National Institutes of Health funds researchers developing strategies to prevent opioid misuse and opioid use disorder. Under HEAL, Yale University's Play2Prevent lab is testing PlaySmart, a video game-based intervention for school-based health centers and programs.

On August 11, 2021, Play2Prevent and PlaySmart were featured in the *Washington Post*.^{*} How did they get there? And how can you get more media coverage for your prevention science efforts? Like many prevention scientists, you may be eager to share your findings with the public but don't have experience pitching your science stories to the media. Noah Smith, the author of the *Post* article, shared his suggestions in a recent webinar.

^{*} <https://www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2021/08/11/opioid-crisis-video-game-addiction-treatment-nih-who/>



Figure out your story first.

What's new or different?

Why does this research matter to people in your field?



Know the outlet you're pitching to.

Does your story affect people locally or on a national level?

What will be the impact?

How is the topic suited to this outlet's readers or viewers?



Tie your story to a trend.

Keep an eye on the news.



Mainstream media outlets aren't always a good fit.

Ask yourself why you are seeking media coverage.

How will coverage serve the research agenda?



Be selective.

Research a journalist before making your pitch.

Want to learn more? View the full webinar, *Getting Out Your Research Stories: Strategic Approaches to Disseminating Science Into Spheres of Influence*, at <https://heal.nih.gov/news/events/research-stories-approaches-disseminating-science-influence>.