



UCL

How to get news coverage with UCL Media Relations

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The Team

Higher Education issues and institutional strategy

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Media monitoring and evaluation, experts requests

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Media Relations Officer

What do we do?

- Respond to journalist queries and arrange expert comment (24/7)
- Prepare press releases for distribution – mostly research-based – in collaboration with other institutions
- Pitch stories and op-eds
- Collate and promote media coverage across UCL channels
- Manage reactive media issues
- Advise on issues and support with institutional messaging and strategy

Context

- UCL consistently achieves **high levels of coverage** through national print, broadcast and online media: Essential for building UCL's reputation and brand in the UK, but also globally.
- UCL's **media profile has grown** as the university continues to climb in the world rankings and is, on the large part, **positive**.
- Largely achieved by promoting **research outputs** from academics. **Expert comment** is also a key driver of coverage.
- **Main channels:** UCL homepage, UCL News, UCL News Twitter feed and weekly media-round up.

Coverage



- Around 500 press releases, UCL news stories & pitches in last year
- Resulting in nearly 900 pieces of 'top tier' media coverage
- Over 600 expert requests

Recent coverage

BBC 30Linden

Home News Sport Weather iPlayer

NEWS

Home UK World Business Politics Tech Science Health Family & Education Entertainment

England | N. Ireland | Scotland | Alba | Wales | Cymru | Local News

UK man 'free' of HIV with new stem cells

The patient has shown no sign of the virus for nearly 19 months since having the treatment.

2h | Health



itv NEWS

2,698 views

1:37 / 4:01

Drugs

Drugs before sex more common in UK than in Europe or US - study

UK citizens more likely to use alcohol, MDMA or cocaine before sex, researchers find



had sex after taking MDMA. Photograph: portokalo/Getty

UK citizens more likely to use alcohol, MDMA or cocaine before sex during the last year than Europeans or those living in the US, researchers find.

A small proportion of the population has a mutation that makes them more likely to use drugs before sex, researchers find.

Researchers have not evolved to cope with alcohol, but a mutation in the UK population has a mutation that makes them more likely to use drugs before sex.

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Superwoman who never feels pain



In Cameron, above with her family. Below: In Cameron with her family. Photograph: In Cameron

I didn't even need pills after surgery

My story

When people tell me about being in pain, I know what they mean. I know what it's like to be in pain. I know what it's like to be in pain. I know what it's like to be in pain.

At the age of 65, I had a total hip replacement. I didn't need any painkillers. I didn't need any painkillers. I didn't need any painkillers.

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Genetic perks

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Why do media?

- Personal, departmental and institutional profile
- Value of 'impact'
- Relationships with funders & partners
- Results of publicly funded research should be communicated
- Educating the public, enacting change through dialogue/openness, debunking myths



Media and Google

- Credibility in search results
- Keywords
- Domain authority and page rankings
 - News sites linking to your webpage improve its ranking

The multi-colored Google logo, with 'G' in blue, 'o' in red, 'o' in yellow, 'g' in green, and 'l' in red, and 'e' in blue.A white, rounded rectangular search bar with a thin grey border. On the right side of the bar, there is a small, colorful microphone icon.

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky



UCL

What makes news?

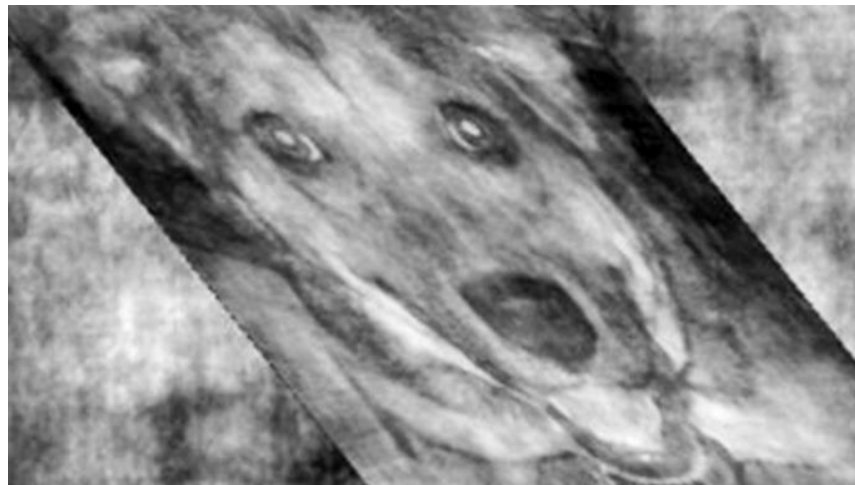


What makes news in general?

- Will the findings affect people's lives/behaviour?
- Are the results surprising or quirky?
- Is it a controversial/high profile topic?
- Is it something you'd realistically expect to see on the BBC, in the Daily Mail or the Guardian?
- Can you tell the story in 1-2 sentences in plain English?
- *Less promising*: Old news, grants, project launches, awards, appointments, events, conferences or visits – these may suit other channels
- Not every story will come from a paper – your opinion or comment counts.

Good science news story

- Timing: News is new
- Implications
- Conflict and resolution
- Major discovery
- Image or video
- Human interest: patient case study



Press release process

- Tell us when a paper is accepted in a journal
 - Include top-line lay summary
- We assess media potential and strategy
- We'll speak to researcher before drafting a release
- Agree final wording with researchers, collaborators & funding bodies
- We issue the release timed to online publication



Example

Woman with novel gene mutation lives almost pain-free

A woman in Scotland can feel virtually no pain due to a mutation in a previously-unidentified gene, according to a research paper co-led by UCL.

She also experiences very little anxiety and fear, and may have enhanced wound healing due to the mutation, which the researchers say could help guide new treatments for a range of conditions, they report in the *British Journal of Anaesthesia*.

“We found this woman has a particular genotype that reduces activity of a gene already considered to be a possible target for pain and anxiety treatments,” said one of the study’s lead researchers, Dr James Cox (UCL Medicine).



Impact

- 60+ pieces of top-tier media coverage
- 80+ people with pain insensitivity have contacted Dr Cox and his team, potentially to take part in research

What we can do for you

- Promote your work to earn press coverage
- Offer guidance and help prepare for interviews
- Pitch in op-eds
- Media training in development
 - *What makes the news – introduction to the media*
 - *Promoting your work in the media - where to start*



Getting started

- Look out for stories relating to your field in the media
- Explore resources and awards for training
- Sign up to the UCL Expert Database
- Get in touch with us when you have a story to promote
- If you think you've spotted an issue which could get picked up by media, let us know ASAP

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