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Media Reaction to High Profile Cases and the Impact On Professionals, Public Policy and Services – the Never Ending Paradox

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Psychiatry, forensic psychiatry and mental health are not photogenic. In the past few years, Israeli Psychiatry was majorly exposed in mass media reaching a highlight when the involvement of a psychiatrist as a consultant in a reality show has raised serious accusations as well as ethical and clinical questions regarding this involvement. As a public, we are constantly exposed to huge amounts of "raw" information by written and electronic media, influencing our perspective of our environment and as professional we are facing the consequences of this influence on our practice and our patients. In accordance to these, the insights from two years of managing active public relations and lobbying by the Israeli psychiatric association will be discussed. Subsequently a case of an 80 years old woman who was compulsorily hospitalized in a mental health center and that has attracted the mass media attention. This case clearly demonstrates the complex relations between the media and mental health and its impact over mental health services, the legal system, politicians influencing the formulation of public policy and the ambivalent attitude many clinicians share towards the media.