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Evaluation considerations for Ozioma

You can measure the effects of Ozioma at a number of levels. So one of them is just are we changing the information environment? Are you getting more stories into newspapers where they – where people can potentially be exposed to them? At another level, there are kind of reader effects. So is it changing what people who read the newspaper think or know or do? We're measuring that and we measured that in the first Ozioma study and have, I think, some decent evidence, at least among people who report reading these papers regularly and are particularly interested in health topics, that they're actually trying to make some changes.

The more exposure they have to these stories, the more they're trying to make changes. I think the more important, but more difficult to capture effects are can an Ozioma-like intervention change some of the public discussion or social norms or ideas that leaders have in those communities? And those are absolutely possible effects of media. So we know very well that there are changes of – we know very well that when media pays attention to certain topics, that sets what's called sort of an agenda, that sets the public agenda, what people think about or talk about. So can Ozioma stories contribute to setting that agenda? Yes, they can. Those effects aren't always easy to detect. And the effects in outcomes, like reduced cancer rates, are at simply too far a time horizon for us to detect in the study. But those are, I think, Ozioma can contribute to those sorts of effects.

So one of the things that we'll be able to answer with the Ozioma studies, is what are some of the characteristics of the stories that increase their uptake? What are some of the characteristics of the media outlets that determine whether they pick up a story or not? What are some of the activities that the local journalists do that determine whether a story gets picked up or not? So all of those, I think, will give us a nice sense of the multiple variables at work that influence the likelihood that this information is used by the audiences that we intend for it to be used.

KEYWORDS: D&I strategies, Evaluation, Findings & Impact, Ozioma