



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2004 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Marianne E. Galligan-Oltmann	Project Number S0305
Project Title Creating a Culture of Fear in America	
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>Objectives/Goals The American public is bombarded with information from a variety of sources, including newspapers magazines, television, and radio. The media tends to report a story with such intensity, reporting the most emotive and shocking aspects of the issue. Most people can't fear something until they know it exists, and examples of this would be shark attacks, AIDS, the #deadly# flu, SAR#s, Mad Cow disease, and other epidemics. In my project I intend to highlight the three high profile topics of shark attacks, AIDS, and the #deadly# flu.</p> <p>Methods/Materials Select three high profile topics in the media. Search the Internet for the number of article that can be found on each topic for a certain year. Find data for the three topics from more reliable sources. Review information and compare statistical data with frequency that topic appeared in the media.</p> <p>Results Simple Analysis shows that there are many popular stories in the news today that produce pseudo fears. According to the chart from IFSA the #summer of the shark,# according to my research, the media published most of the articles on shark attacks the years after the #summer of the sharks.# According to my graph from the California department of public health, the flu mortality rate was at its highest ever in 1999- 2000 where the media produced only 6 articles between all 3 sources over the past 2 years. In 2003 the flu received the most media coverage of all the 6 years. The media published AIDS greatest number of articles in 2001 when mortality rates were declining.</p> <p>Conclusions/Discussion I conclude that some topics are reported with greater frequency and intensity regardless of actual statistics and factors. The flu, shark attacks, and AIDS were more deadly in years prior to the years that the media reported with a frenzy and greater frequency. Shark attacks have declined since the year 2000 in the #year of the shark.# Regardless of the threat of unavailible vaccines and a more virulent flu virus, admissions to the Kaiser Hospital System in Southern California this year were not as high as 1999-2000. While AIDs is a serious disease research proves that it is decreasing more and more each year. The intensity and sensationalism of the articles add to our awareness, but also our fears.</p>	
Summary Statement To prove that the media often exaggerates and manipulates information as a form of scare tactics in order to make a story more interesting.	
Help Received	