Kratom faces a tsunami of unfair and unbalanced media coverage today:

- **92 percent of kratom coverage is negative**, with little or no balancing information. Only about 6 percent of kratom coverage was found to be neutral/balanced.

- **Negative coverage of kratom is driven by local media**, which tend to be more unfair/unbalanced in their approach than national reporters. 90 percent of all kratom news coverage is local.

- **Attacks drive coverage of kratom**, with two critical federal reports accounting for 66 percent of all coverage.

- **There is virtually no positive coverage of kratom**, with health-based attacks serving as the No. 1 story focus (79 percent). By contrast, stories about positive kratom research/consumer experiences account for only 7 percent of total coverage.
• The period of coverage analyzed was February 1 - May 17, 2019.
• Media coverage was drawn from the Cision database.
• A total of 2,484 stories were reviewed.
• Each story was evaluated as to: (1) geography; (2) audience; (3) focus; and (4) tone.
• Tone was ranked as follows: (1) “negative” with little or no balancing information; (2) “neutral/balanced” with no favoritism shown and including meaningful balancing information; and (3) “positive” with little or no balancing information.
The **2484 stories** in this analysis reflected the following:

- Saturation coverage in **all the top 25 metro areas in the United States**.
- Saturation in terms of coverage in **49 states**, with Delaware being the sole hold-out.
- **90 percent local origin**, accounting for 2228 of all stories and leaving just 256 stories at the national level.
- **Heavy emphasis on local TV/radio coverage** (accounting for most of the 1048 broadcast stories or 42 percent of all coverage), 53 print-only stories, and 1383 print/online stories.
KEY FINDINGS (1)

• Overall coverage of kratom is decidedly unbalanced with 92 percent of it negative, 2 percent of it positive, and only 6 percent rated as neutral/balanced. This trend is driven by negative and unbalanced local coverage at 93 percent.

• National coverage of kratom is somewhat better than overall coverage, with 80 percent of it negative, 5 percent positive, and 15 percent neutral/balanced.
• **Coverage of kratom is driven by its critics.** A tidal wave of negative coverage (1644 or 66 percent of the total coverage in this review) hit in April in the wake of attacks by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Little or no balancing information was included in the bulk of these stories.

• **Health-based attacks dominate coverage.** The focus of stories breaks down along these lines: regulation/legislation (11 percent); positive kratom research/consumer experiences (6 percent); health risk claims (79 percent); commercial announcements/other issues (4 percent). (Little variation was seen here between local and national coverage.)
Examples of Inflammatory News Headlines


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