Meeting the media: friend or foe?
应付傳媒：是友是敵？

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For various reasons, the emergency department is an area of interest for the media. As a result, emergency physicians have to prepare for the occasions of being interviewed by the media some day in their career. It is natural to have some anxiety and fear in meeting the media, especially for the inexperienced. However, developing a good relationship with the media would not only benefit the organisation and the specialty, but also the general public as well. This is a review of the preparation, techniques, tricks and pitfalls in dealing with the media, especially in regard to television interviews. (Hong Kong j.emerg.med. 2006;13:116-119)

Introduction

The emergency department (ED) is a news gathering arena. It is the first receiving station for victims of major accidents, mass casualty incidents and disasters alike. It is also a sentinel or collection point for disease epidemics, as infected patients will then flood into the ED. On the other hand, health crisis may strike anybody at any time, and celebrities are no exceptions. The ED is commonly their first point of contact with the hospital. Fighting between life and death is a daily ordeal here, and the story and process may be dramatic at times. In addition, the ED is a high-risk area of patient care. The overwhelming workload, the overcrowded condition, the multiple distractions, the distraught patients and families, the high-tension atmosphere, and the undifferentiated case-mix including the drunk, the drugged, the psychotic and the criminal, all contribute to risks of clinical errors, violence, complaints and lawsuits – all of which may have special attraction to the media in terms of “public interest”. It is very common to see press reporters stationed at the ED entrance, waiting for the firsthand version of red-hot news. In addition, it is not uncommon for medical emergency teams or medical control officers to be called to sites of accident or disaster, to resuscitate under the camera. Emergency physicians in Hong Kong are also heavily involved in rescue missions of the Government Flying Service and overseas mass casualty incidents involving Hong Kong