ABSTRACT
Maternal health care is a key societal issue which needs attention for any country working towards achieving millennium goals. The media has a role in highlighting and creating awareness on perceptions and policy on maternal health issues both to the government and the society. In Kenya’s mass media system, the editors have power and legitimacy to decide on media content. It is difficult for health or science to be covered regularly when politics and other major news carry more weight. Kenya enjoys a more diverse and liberalised media scene than many other African countries and therefore stands a good chance in in-depth coverage of reproductive health issues. Health policies do exist in our country, but they need to be strengthened, and made more relevant to particular health issues and in this case maternal health. The study sought to investigate how the print media covered free maternal health care programmes in Kenya a case of the Daily Nation newspaper. The period covered was January to June 2013; three months before and three months after the March General Elections. A content analysis of selected Kenyan print media publications specifically Daily Nation newspaper was done. The population of this study comprised all the 180 publications within the six months period. Analysis of the findings was done with the help of a code sheet. From the findings, the study concludes that print media coverage of maternal health news is wanting. Media houses are primarily profit-making organizations. They tend to focus on issues that will increase their sales and as a result prefer very sensational reports. Maternal health issues, by their nature do not fall under this category they need to be given more coverage as we endeavour to attain the millennium goals. The study recommends that print media as an information tool should give maternal health issues prominence in their coverage and must play its watchdog role in highlighting implementation of government policies such as this one on maternal health.