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infodemic
MANAGEMENT



World Health
Organization



Infodemic Management News Flash

Friday, 8 January 2021 | Issue #7

Feature Artwork

Dear 2020: buh-bye, good riddance, see ya never!

While many of us would prefer to leave 2020 in the past, we look to 2021 with hope, but also with the reality that a fresh start to a new year doesn't mean all of our problems are solved. Though artist [Carlos Latuff](#) illustrates that we are on the verge of a turning point (fingers crossed).

With new strains of COVID-19 circulating, the rollout of vaccination programs worldwide and political changing of the guards, there are new threads of misinformation, and so our work as infodemic managers must continue. Let's kick-start this new year not with an ominous feeling of doom, or unrealistic expectations of a COVID-free world, but with determination to use our learnings from last year to go head-to-head with the infodemic challenges we will inevitably face in 2021.

Recent Events



WHO's 3rd Virtual Global Infodemic Management Conference

11 December 2020

If you missed any of the discussion that took place at the [3rd Virtual Global Infodemic Management Conference](#) closing session on 11 December, fear not! You can find the whole program below, and we encourage you to pause and visit the [Call for Action](#) page where you can make your personal commitment to managing the infodemic in the world around you. The [Call for Action](#) page will remain open for signature through 14 February 2021.

Recordings from WHO's 3rd Virtual Global Infodemic Management Conference

[Meeting opens and welcome remarks](#)

- Sylvie Briand, Director, Global Infectious Hazards Preparedness, World Health Organization
- Jaouad Mahjour, Assistant Director-General, Emergency Preparedness, World Health Organization

[Message by WHO Director-General](#)

- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization

Statements from Member States Representatives

- [UK - Alex Aiken](#), Executive Director for Government Communications, Prime Minister's Office & Cabinet Office Communications, United Kingdom
- [Latvia - Viktors Makarovs](#), Special Envoy on Information Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
- [Niger - Abache Ranaou](#), Secretary-General, of the Ministry of Public Health, Niger

Call for Action: Whole-of-Society Infodemic Management

- Mike Ryan, Executive Director, Health Emergencies Programme, World Health Organization

Discussions from Six Conference Tracks, Moderator: Sylvie Briand, World Health Organization

Country Health Authorities Track

- [Neville Calleja](#), Director, Directorate for Health Information and Research, Ministry for Health, Malta

Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations Track

- [Praveen Gomez](#), Head of Programmes and Strategy, Alliance Development Trust
- [João Breda](#), Head of WHO European Office for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO Regional Office for Europe

Media and Journalism Track

- Ida Jooste, Global Health Media Adviser, Internews
- Genevieve Hutchinson, Senior Health Advisor, BBC Media Action, UK

Digital Health and Tech Sector Track

- [Irene Jay Liu](#), News Lab Lead, APAC, Google

United Nations and Multilateral Organizations Track

- Guy Berger, Director, Director for Strategies and Policies in the field of Communication and Information, UNESCO
- Miguel Luengo-Oroz, Chief Data Scientist, UN Global Pulse

Science and Research Track

- Siouxsie Wiles, Microbiologist and Science Communicator, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Closing remarks

- Sylvie Briand, World Health Organization

Opportunities for Action



Help tackle the top issues impacting social media platforms.

[All Tech is Human](#) is assembling a diverse range of collaborators to inform the issues that burden social media platforms...you know...like misinformation. The goal of the project is to build a more responsible tech community and to promote knowledge-sharing and collaboration. [Fill out the form with your input here.](#)



Apply for a job at the ECDC.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control is hiring a scientific officer of behavior change. [Apply here](#). **Deadline is 5 Feb. 2021.**



Submit an abstract to this conference.

Share your work by [submitting an abstract](#) to the 14th European Public Health (EPH) Conference in Dublin, Ireland. Abstracts are invited for workshops and single presentations in all areas of public health research, practice, policy and education. Submission is open from 1 February until 1 May 2021.



Watch this TEDx talk.

[Hear medical student Saad Uakkas](#) talk about his work as a doctor in a Morocco emergency room and the unexpected gifts of the pandemic.

Upcoming Events

The banner has a blue background. On the left, there is a logo for 'Medical Informatics Europe MIE 2021' with the EFMI logo below it. Next to the text is a graphic of a globe made of interconnected nodes. On the right, the text 'VIRTUAL CONFERENCE' is in large white letters, followed by 'PUBLIC HEALTH AND INFORMATICS' in a white box. Below that, it says 'FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME OR OFFICE' and '29TH - 31ST MAY, 2021' in a dark blue box. The GBHI logo is in the bottom right corner.

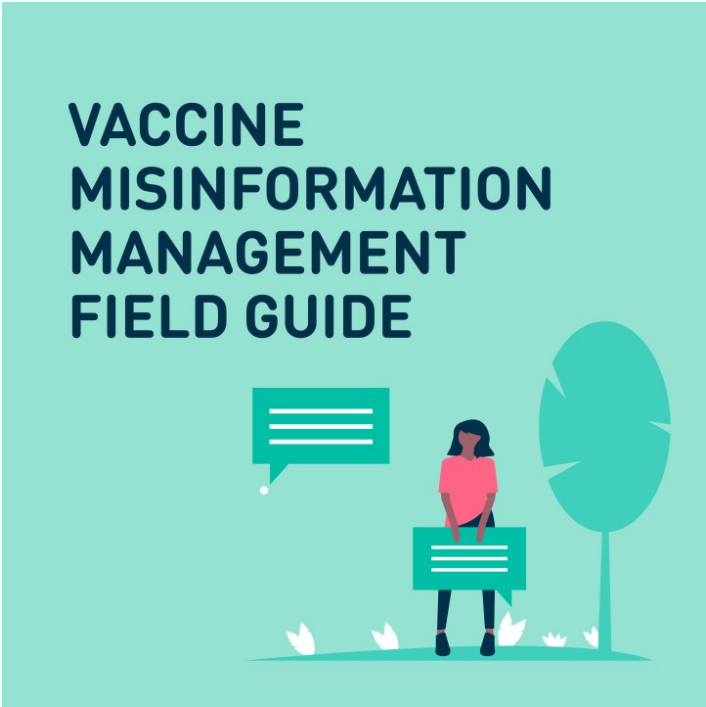
Medical Informatics Europe
MIE 2021
EFMI

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
PUBLIC HEALTH AND INFORMATICS
FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME OR OFFICE
29TH - 31ST MAY, 2021
GBHI

[29 - 31 May 2021](#)

The MIE2021 conference is a unique opportunity to meet experts from all involved fields, from deep learning or genomics, up to human factors, ethical and societal aspects. The MIE conferences not only attract senior researchers and top-notch experts from the field, it's also a place where young scientists come to present their works, meet peers, network, and seek career

What We're Reading



[Vaccine Misinformation Management Field Guide](#)

December 2020

Unicef, First Draft, Yale Institute for Global Health, and PGP (The Public Good Projects) have partnered to create the Vaccine Misinformation Management Field Guide. This guide aims to help organizations to address the global infodemic through the development of strategic and well-coordinated national action plans to rapidly counter vaccine misinformation and build demand for vaccination that are informed by social listening.

[Pandemics and infodemics: Research on the effects of misinformation on memory](#)

23 November 2020

In the current essay, researchers discuss the consequences of exposure to misinformation during this infodemic, particularly in the domain of memory. They review existing research demonstrating how inaccurate, postevent information





impacts a person's memory for a previously witnessed event. They discuss various factors that strengthen the impact of misinformation, including repetition and whether the misinformation is consistent with people's pre-existing attitudes or beliefs.

[Going viral: How a single tweet spawned a COVID-19 conspiracy theory on Twitter](#)

20 July 2020

In late March of 2020, a new hashtag, #FilmYourHospital, made its first appearance on social media. The hashtag encouraged people to visit local hospitals to take pictures and videos of empty hospitals to help “prove” that the COVID-19 pandemic is an elaborate hoax. Using techniques from Social Network Analysis, this case study examines how this conspiracy theory propagated on Twitter and whether the hashtag virality was aided by the use of automation or coordination among Twitter users.

[European Health Forum Gastein Conference Report](#)

December 2020

The EHFG team has assembled a report coming out of their September/October 2020 conference

EHFG 2020

EUROPEAN
HEALTH FORUM
GASTELINE

Online live event
30 September – 2 October

As discussed in Gastein:
Conference Report



which highlights new models and ways of working to impact social determinants of health and well-being, and looks at how to build back as we aim to recover from crises faced in 2020.

Fun With Numbers

3.96 Billion

According to a [Digital 2020 Global Snapshot](#) (a product of [We Are Social](#) and [Hootsuite](#)) from July 2020, that's the number of social media users around the globe. That means more than half of the world's population now uses social media, and more people are using social media than not. While this tells us there are probably more cute puppy videos and hilarious memes than we could ever want, it also means there's a lot of room for misinformation and unreliable sources of information to creep into the world around us and influence those we care about. Just remember that infodemic management isn't an end state. It's a practice.

About the News Flash

An infodemic is an overabundance of information—some accurate, some not—that spreads alongside a disease outbreak. Infodemics are nothing new, but in the digital age, they spread in real time and create a breeding ground for uncertainty.

Uncertainty fuels skepticism and distrust, which is perfect environment for fear, anxiety, finger-pointing, stigma, violent aggression and dismissal of proven public health measures. To manage an infodemic, we need to understand what contributes to it. So that's why we're sending you these updates. In each issue of the WHO's Infodemic Management News Flash we'll share the latest work happening at the global level, as well as highlight some of the challenges and solutions with infodemics in local contexts. We'll also provide you with a few takeaways to help you be an effective infodemic manager in your daily life.

If you have a tip on infodemic management or an idea for a future News Flash, email us at **infodemicmanagement@who.int**. Thanks for joining us on this journey.



Our mailing address is: infodemicmanagement@who.int

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