An infodemic is accompanying the pandemic

- An infodemic is an overabundance of information – good and bad – that makes it difficult for people to make decisions for their health (including changing behaviors)

  - Misinformation\(^1\) and disinformation\(^2\) can cause real harm to health, public trust, and social cohesion – undermining the emergency response and extending the pandemic

We’re not just fighting an epidemic; we’re fighting an infodemic.

15 February 2020

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General, World Health Organization

---

1 inaccurate information
2 false or inaccurate information intended to mislead
Infodemic cannot be eliminated but it can be managed
Technology has changed the way information is produced, distributed and consumed

- Managing the infodemic has become more challenging with more rapid spread of mis- and dis-information through digital media
- An infodemic thrives online and offline, requiring a whole-of-society and whole communication ecosystem approach
- Infodemic management will help us better manage this pandemic and more quickly tackle new and resurgent health threats
DATA ANNEX

INFODEMNIC

Science

Infodemiology

Interventions

1. Listen to concerns
2. Communicate risk & distill science
3. Promote resilience to misinformation
4. Engage & empower communities

PHYSICAL WORLD

VIRTUAL WORLD

Impact

Behaviour change & epidemic risk mitigation
PILOT with 20 countries and 4 languages:

Enable health information professionals to respond earlier to the infodemic, with a real-time analysis of narratives of the general public.

Building world-leading information infrastructure to serve countries to understand attitudes of the general public. Moving from surveys, to datapools and AI analytics that are real-time, flexible and locally adaptive.

See whoinfodemic.citibeats.com
WHO works with communities to protect health during epidemics

• WHO EPI-WIN has established representative groups from key communities (faith-based, youth, employers and workers) who communicate regularly with WHO and give input on projects and initiatives. Examples:
  - **Co-development** of practical guidance on COVID-19 education, preparedness and response to support faith-based organizations and faith communities
  - **Collaborating** with young people to design creative, engaging and relevant communication around ‘reducing transmission of COVID-19’
  - **Facilitating** a virtual dialogue series together with leaders and representatives from the World of Work

• Since the beginning of the pandemic, WHO EPI-WIN has hosted 93 COVID-19 related webinars with participants from 149 countries
Co-developing COVID-19 guidance with the faith community

Working with religious leaders, faith-based organizations and faith communities to:

- share best practices and experiences
- co-develop practical guidance and recommendations to support the special role of religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and faith communities in COVID-19 education, preparedness, and response

- Access the publication
- Access the risk assessment tool
- Access the decision tree
UNESCO and WHO have leveraged more than 2500 radio stations in 128 countries globally, **to provide public health information and combat misinformation and disinformation**, especially for those in remote areas in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

- **8 topics covered by 10 messages:** COVID-19 transmission, contract tracing, mask, schools, traditional market, public gathering, science evolution and vaccine
- **20+ languages and indigenous translated**

https://en.unesco.org/covid19/communicationinformationresponse/unesco-who-audioresources
First global WHO infodemic manager training, November 2020

- 278 participants from 78 countries
- Various lectures by infodemic management specialists on topics such as:
  - Tools for analysis of the infodemic
  - Public health and epidemiology in context of infodemic response
  - Risk communication and community engagement

Link to training curriculum: https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication/infodemic-management/1st-who-training-in-infodemic-management

2nd training in June 2021
INFODEMIOLOGY
49 priority research questions that need an answer

AREAS TO FURTHER EXPLORE

• How do overwhelming amounts of information affect behaviour in emergencies and what interventions are effective in addressing it?

• How does online behaviour affect offline action?

• How does the infodemic affect cognition and influence seeking of health services?

• How does the role of policy interventions successfully address and mitigate health misinformation?

• How does the infodemic affect closed networks and vulnerable populations?

Download the research agenda: http://bit.ly/WHOpublichealthresearchagenda
Weekly knowledge packs: Science distilled for everyone

https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication/epi-win-updates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous updates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 March 2021 Update 54 – Clinical long-term effects of COVID-19</td>
<td>19 March 2021 Update 53 – COVID-19 vaccination and travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 March 2021 Update 52 – COVID-19 vaccines and immune response</td>
<td>4 March 2021 Update 51 – Pandemic overview, where are we now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 February 2021 Update 50 – 10 steps to community readiness</td>
<td>13 February 2021 Update 49 – Immune response to SARS-CoV-2 &amp; viral infections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Safe Ramadan practices during COVID-19

Update 56

Download the Arabic version of Update 56 [here](#)

WHO COVID-19 guidelines development process

Update 55
Translating science into protective measures
WHO video guidance on COVID-19

**MASKS**
- *Medical and fabric masks: who wears what when?*
- *How to wear a fabric mask safely*
- *How to wear a fabric mask*
- *How to wear a medical mask*

**TRANSMISSION**
- *How to break the chains of transmission*
- *NEW! Three factors help you make safer choices during COVID-19*

**PROTECTING OURSELVES**
- *How to protect yourself against COVID-19*
- *Seven steps to prevent the spread of the virus*
Call for Action: Managing the infodemic

A global movement to promote access to health information and mitigate harm from health misinformation among online and offline communities

Sign the Call for Action

Call for applicants: Training in infodemic management

Experienced professionals in the fields of epidemiology, behavioural science, risk communication, health workers, digital health and policy making in health are encouraged to apply

Apply for Infodemic management training

Learn: WHO COVID-19 infodemic response

Evidence-based infodemic management tools and interventions, informed by cross-disciplinary infodemiology research

Learn about the infodemic response

Subscribe: Infodemic management news flash

A fresh approach highlighting infodemic challenges and response activities happening at both the global and local levels

See all newsletters
http://bit.ly/3r90Ts0