Dealing with the Infodemic

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13 May 2021

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@SCBriand

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

[1] inaccurate information
[2] false or inaccurate information intended to mislead

> **We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic.**
>
> **15 February 2020**
>
> **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**
> Director-General, World Health Organization

Infodemic cannot be eliminated but it can be managed

9-17
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Technology has changed the way information is produced, distributed and consumed


2016

VS.

1916

- 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

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INFODEMIC

Science

Infodemiology

Interventions

PHYSICAL WORLD

VIRTUAL WORLD

1 **Listen to concerns**

2 **Communicate risk & distill science**

3 **Promote resilience to misinformation**

4 **Engage & empower communities**

Impact

Behaviour change & epidemic risk mitigation

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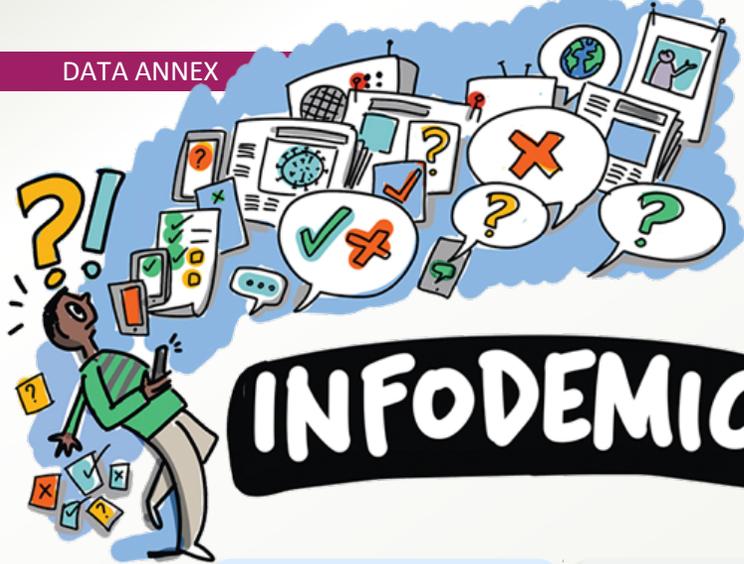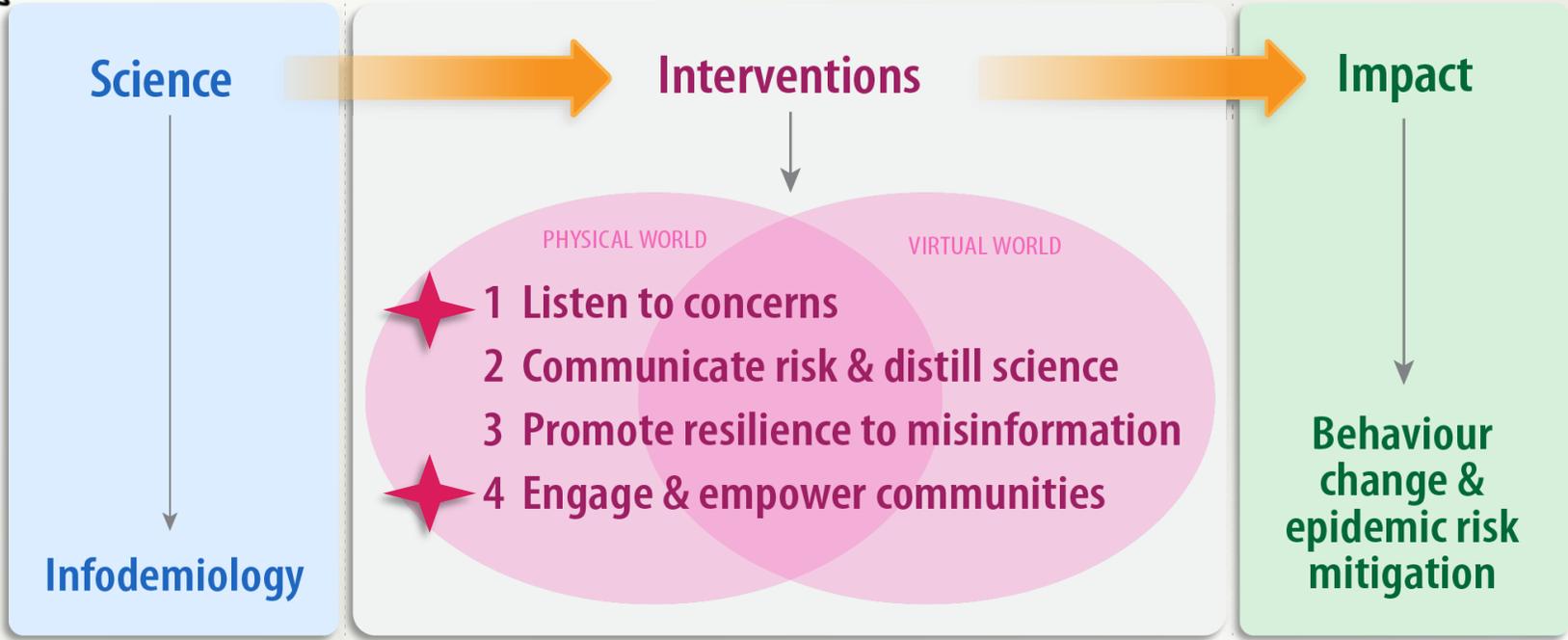
Early AI-supported Response with Social Listening

COVID-19 Narratives of the General Public

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

SEE DATA FROM: Last 7 days | All categories

What are people talking about?

Overview across countries

👆 Click on a category to see it on the map

Volume		Rising ↑
7%	Industry	↗ 0.9%
7%	Personal measures	↗ 0.7%
3%	Current treatments	↗ 0.4%
2%	Vaccine distribution and policies on access	↗ 0.4%
2%	Disinformation	↗ 0.2%
1%	Non-proven treatments	↗ 0.2%
3%	The cause of the virus	↗ 0.2%
2%	Measures in public settings	↗ 0.2%
1%	Digital Health Technology	↗ 0.1%
3%	Demographic vulnerability & risks	↗ 0.1%

Proportion (%) and rising proportion (%) of the conversation.

Map | Trend **Intensity per country**

You are seeing data for Industry

Proportion of this category of conversation compared to other categories in that country. Rolling average of the last 7 days.

No data 2%   27%

The limits, colors, denominations and other information shown in these charts do not imply any judgment on the part of the WHO regarding the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of said limits.

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**

Examples of youth entries for 'Reducing transmission' Design Lab
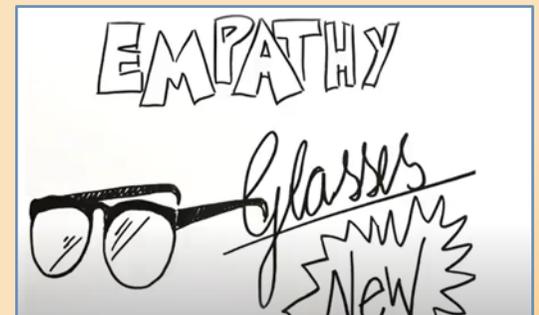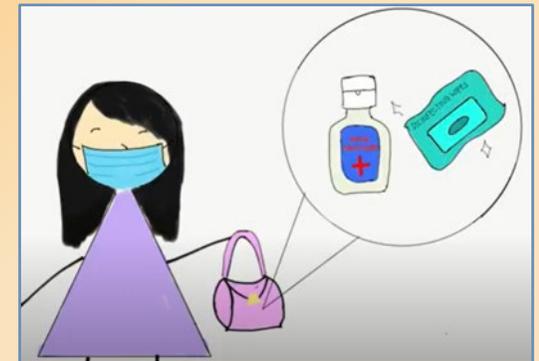
Co-developing COVID-19 guidance with the faith community

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

o share best practices and experiences

o 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**

Reaching individuals offline
WHO X UNESCO radio program

- 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

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

World Health
Organization

World Health
Organization

EPI·WiN

infodemic
MANAGEMENT

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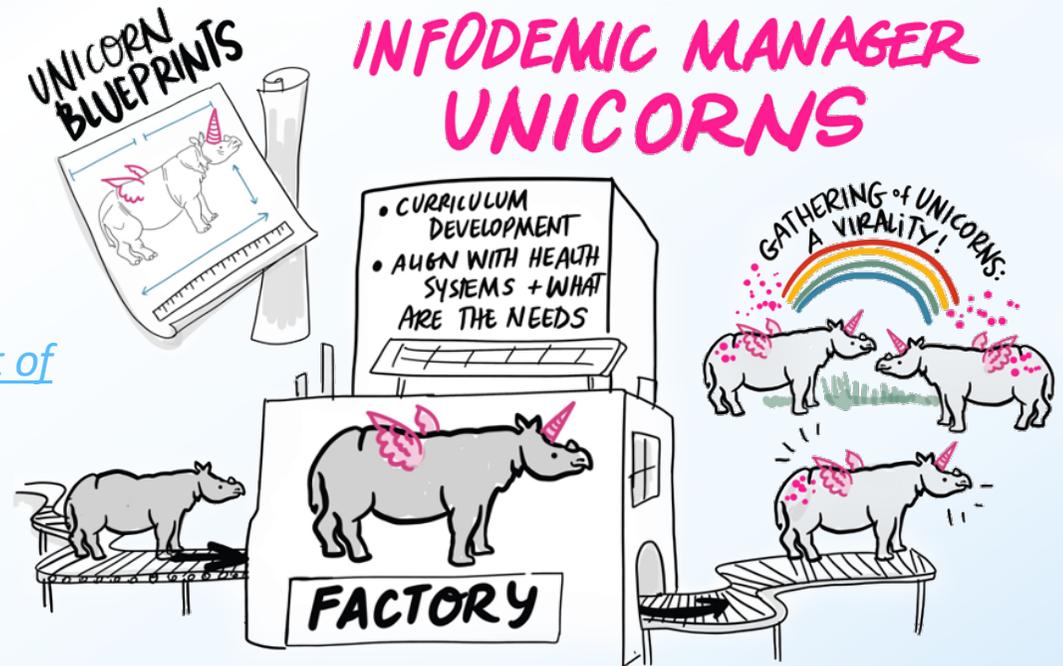
Link to training curriculum:
https://www.who.int/teams/risk-communication/infodemic-management/1st-who-training-in-infodemic-management

2nd training in June 2021

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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?

WHO PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH AGENDA FOR MANAGING INFODEMICS
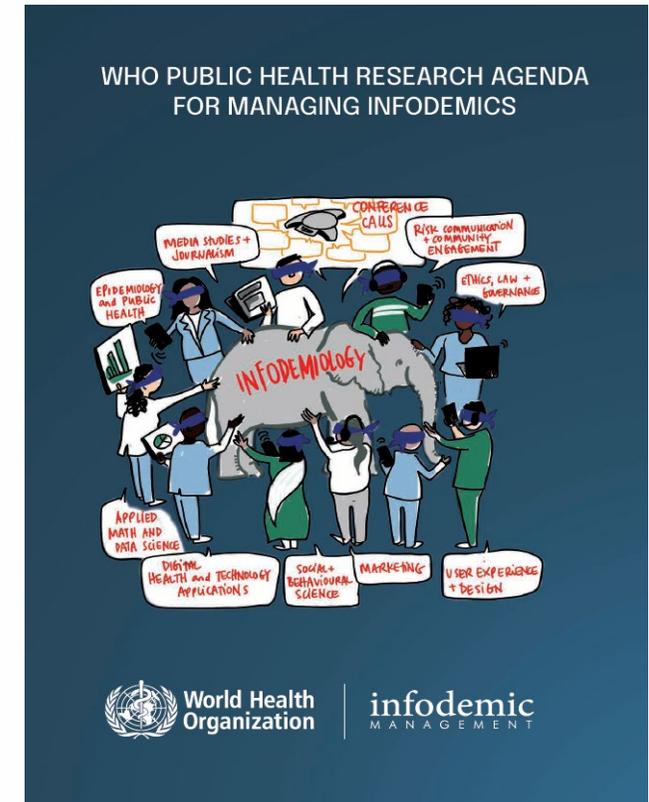
Download the research agenda: http://bit.ly/WHOpublichealthresearchagenda

Weekly knowledge packs: Science distilled for everyone

LAST UPDATE: 19 April 2021

CORONAVIRUS
UPDATE
57

Update on
Safety monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines

THE LATEST ON THE COVID-19 GLOBAL SITUATION
& MONITORING VACCINE SAFETY

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Safe Ramadan practices during COVID-19
Update 56

– Download the Arabic version of Update 56 here

WHO Handbook for Guideline Development

WHO COVID-19 guidelines development process
Update 55

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

Previous updates   All →

19 March 2021
Update 54 – Clinical long-term effects of COVID-19

19 March 2021
Update 53 – COVID-19 vaccination and travel

11 March 2021
Update 52 – COVID-19 vaccines and immune response

4 March 2021
Update 51 – Pandemic overview, where are we now?

22 February 2021
Update 50 – 10 steps to community readiness

13 February 2021
Update 49 – Immune response to SARS-CoV-2 & viral infections

7 February 2021
Update 48 – The allocation of COVID-19 vaccines

29 January 2021
Update 47 – SARS-CoV-2 virus mutations & variants

15 January 2021
Update 46 – Testing strategies for COVID-19

21 December 2020
Update 45 – COVID-19 vaccine development

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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
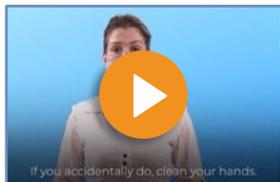
How to wear a fabric mask

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

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@drawingchange

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**

https://bit.ly/3nqKOeR

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**

https://bit.ly/3nqKOeR

Learn:

WHO COVID-19 infodemic response

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

**Learn about the
infodemic response**

https://bit.ly/WHOinfodemic

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

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