WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS MISINFORMATION AND MISTRUST TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH

HEALTHY FUTURES SUMMIT
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
DECEMBER 2019

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Word of the year: misinformation. Here’s why.

misinformation
[mis-in-fur-mey-shuhn]

noun
1. false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is intent to mislead:

In the chaotic hours after the earthquake, a lot of misinformation was reported in the news.

An image from Dictionary.com shows an entry for the word misinformation, which Dictionary.com announced as its 2018 Word of the Year.

(Dictionary.com via AP)

By Valerie Strauss
December 10, 2018
Misinformation throughout media history

Belle Gibson
Belle Gibson claimed to be healing her terminal cancer with wholefoods - but now it's proven to be a cruel web of lies. Yet is Belle a hoax mastermind or simply a victim of the media's scrutiny?

FRESH-FACED, EARNEST. Naive. When Belle Gibson speaks, she cries easily and muddles her words. She's passionate about avoiding gluten, dairy and coffee, but doesn't really understand how cancer works. All of which begs the question: is this young woman really capable of masterminding one of the greatest 21st-century hoaxes?
Do we misunderstand our own vulnerabilities?

We need social connection.

We need hope for future.

The lack of either can invite misinformation diffusion if misinformation offers salve.
We need evidence on misinformation prevalence and effects.
Misinformation as a Misunderstood Challenge to Public Health

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What’s the problem?

We are biased toward acceptance.

There are reasons why we share misinformation.

Our regulatory approach (in democracies) emphasizes post hoc detection.

Correction is hard.
Why rumors spread

Discomfort of uncertainty
Lack of corrective information

Also: information as potential relationship currency
What can be done?
Navigating Misinformation Across Three Continents

A 19th Century Japanese map of the world. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

June 24, 2019 BY: BRIAN G. SOUTHWELL, PHD
Beyond fact checking: Addressing misinformation
Building and Maintaining Trust in Science:
Paths Forward for Innovations by Nonprofits and Funding Organizations

Brian Southwell, Angelique (Angel) Hedberg, Christopher Krebs, and Stephanie Zevitas, Editors
Coming in 2020

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENGAGEMENT

MEDICAL SCHOOL AND ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAM TRAINING

BASS CONNECTIONS PROJECT SUBMISSION TO STUDY TRUST IN RURAL NC
Spring 2020: How to Use Health News

Pilot course offering at
Rockingham County Community College
Training for health care professionals

- February 2020: We are offering workshop for Duke AHEAD.

- This is first step in a larger effort.
Support for our efforts

Craig Newmark
Philanthropies
Thank you!  

Let’s talk: bsouthwell@rti.org