

Myths About COVID-19 in the Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the whole world is facing the consequences of a unique pandemic such as COVID-19. This pandemic has put immense pressure on each country's healthcare system causing serious economic and social problems. The role of social media is as important as ever, contributing in their own way to informing people about this new disease. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that they can cause serious problems when they become a means to spread myths, misinformation and fake news, an obstacle that public health and government officials have to overcome in order to be effective on their efforts against this pandemic. Even though social media is a very effective tool of spreading information globally towards huge numbers of users, they also bear certain disadvantages. This report is a review about the myths regarding the coronavirus causes and treatment which have aroused from the beginning of COVID-19 outbreak. Myths associated with the virus origin or its treatment or with conspiracy theories that the virus was artificially created in laboratories. These are some of the myths that found a way to be communicated through social media platforms, sometimes leading to dangerous acts for public safety, either by not taking precautions, such as quarantine or social distancing seriously or by using drugs and other substances to treat this new disease for which treatment is yet to be found. For this report we systematically searched articles in the PubMed repository, the World Health Organization and other health related literature; our purpose is to summarize available literature aiming to inform people about using social media responsibly as an effective tool in the fight against the pandemic with reliable information provided to the public.

Keywords: Social media, COVID-19, Myths, Pandemic

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