Media, Politics, & The Public’s Health

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Land Acknowledgement

We pause to acknowledge all local indigenous peoples, including the Yokuts and Miwuk, who inhabit this land.

We embrace their continued connection to this region and thank them for allowing us to live, work, learn, and collaborate on their traditional homeland.

Let us now take a moment of silence to pay respect to their elders and to all Yokuts and Miwuk people, past and present.
Health (mis) information is everywhere
Health information is overwhelming and confusing!

"When you go on the news – they always say everything causes cancer. And then – I don’t know, it’s hard to believe. But they always come out like, don’t eat this, it causes cancer. Or don’t eat that, it causes cancer. Maybe some of the things are true but some of them are not – maybe if it’s on Facebook, maybe I won’t believe it. But I might if my doctor told me about it."

SOURCE: Ramirez & Arellano Carmona, Social Science & Medicine, 2018
Media compound confusion and overload.

SOURCE: Ramirez & Arellano Carmona, Social Science & Medicine, 2018
Too much of the wrong information & not enough of the right stuff
Access to information is essential for health
Inequalities in information access
Information Deserts
Information environment disparities

- Language
- Literacy
- Numeracy & Scientific Literacy
Health care system access (& lack thereof)
People look for health information from the media and Latinos & African Americans trust & rely on this information.
COVID information overload and the politicization of public health
The Infodemic

An overabundance of information – some accurate and some not– occurring during an epidemic.

Like pathogens in epidemics, misinformation spreads forth.

The World Health Organization, June 2020
We can hardly fail to see that these days, in addition to the pandemic, an ‘infodemic’ is spreading: A **distortion of reality based on fear**, which in our global society leads to an explosion of commentary on falsified if not invented news.

Pope Francis, January 28, 2022
Narratives focusing on misinformation obscure equity issues
COVID-19
Information Disparities
From “Infodemics” to Health Promotion: A Novel Framework for the Role of Social Media in Public Health

Despite the ubiquity of health-related communications via social media, no consensus has emerged on whether this medium, on balance, jeopardizes or promotes public health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has been

Over the past 25 years, the field of health communication has established itself as

information found via social media affects the way they deal with their health. In China, more

SOURCE: American Journal of Public Health
What can be done?
Journalist Training
Translating Science
Reporting from the Frontlines of a Pandemic
A Media Forum for Journalists

Toolkit & Report

THE LATINO CANCER INSTITUTE
Connect. Converse. Advocate.
Scientist Training

Science Communication
The media will “do” science better when science “does” the media better!
Community-Based Organization Training

Media Advocacy

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Citizen Training

Media Literacy
Science Literacy
Thank you!

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