

Facebook failing to protect users from Covid misinformation, says monitor | The Guardian

By Dan Milmo

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Misinformation and sceptical views about Covid-19 and vaccines has been allowed to spread on more than a dozen Facebook and Instagram accounts, pages and groups that together have gained 370,000 followers over the past year, according to a report.

The misinformation and promotion of vaccine hesitancy includes posts in Facebook groups claiming that children are being “murdered by the experimental jab they’re being pressured to take”, and an Instagram account promoting a documentary by Andrew Wakefield, one of the key figures in promoting discredited links between MMR inoculation and autism.

The 20 accounts, pages and groups have been tracked by NewsGuard, an organisation that monitors online misinformation. Since September last year NewsGuard has submitted regular reports to the World Health Organization, at the WHO’s request, flagging social media sites and other digital platforms that are spreading falsehoods about Covid-19.

In research published on Tuesday, NewsGuard said 20 of the sites that it had monitored over that period had gained a total of 372,670 followers. A full report containing the research has been sent to the WHO.

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