

A Limiting Lens: How Vaccine Misinformation Has Influenced Hispanic Conversations Online | First Draft

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Hispanic people in the United States are nearly twice as likely as non-Hispanic white people to be infected with Covid-19 and 2.3 times as likely to die from it. They are over-represented in frontline jobs, where they face higher levels of exposure, and they are more likely to have underlying health conditions that increase the severity of the disease. While vaccination rates among Hispanic people have been rising, Hispanic people are still less likely than white people to have been vaccinated.

It isn't possible to tell a single story about how this vaccination gap came to be. A history of medical exploitation and discrimination may play one role. Data shows that language barriers, as well as concerns about immigration status, childcare and work schedules may also impede access to care.

All of these factors create a foundation of doubt and mistrust that allows misinformation about Covid-19 vaccines to flourish on social media. Unfortunately, little is known about how misinformation narratives emerge specifically in relation to Hispanic communities, how they circulate and how they ultimately affect people's health choices. Yet understanding these dynamics is critical to creating strategies that dispel misleading information and help distribute quality information to those who need it most.

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