

Covid-19 Misinformation Goes Unchecked on Radio and Podcasts | The New York Times

By Tiffany Hsu and Marc Tracy

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On a recent episode of his podcast, Rick Wiles, a pastor and self-described “citizen reporter,” endorsed a conspiracy theory: that Covid-19 vaccines were the product of a “global coup d’état by the most evil cabal of people in the history of mankind.”

“It’s an egg that hatches into a synthetic parasite and grows inside your body,” Mr. Wiles said on his Oct. 13 episode. “This is like a sci-fi nightmare, and it’s happening in front of us.”

Mr. Wiles belongs to a group of hosts who have made false or misleading statements about Covid-19 and effective treatments for it. Like many of them, he has access to much of his listening audience because his show appears on a platform provided by a large media corporation.

Mr. Wiles’s podcast is available through iHeart Media, an audio company based in San Antonio that says it reaches nine out of 10 Americans each month. Spotify and Apple are other major companies that provide significant audio platforms for hosts who have shared similar views with their listeners about Covid-19 and vaccination efforts, or have had guests on their shows who promoted such notions.

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