

The different forms of COVID-19 misinformation and their consequences | HKS Misinformation Review

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As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, an understanding of the structure and organization of beliefs in pandemic conspiracy theories and misinformation becomes increasingly critical for addressing the threat posed by these dubious ideas. In polling Americans about beliefs in 11 such ideas, we observed clear groupings of beliefs that correspond with different individual-level characteristics (e.g., support for Trump, distrust of scientists) and behavioral intentions (e.g., to take a vaccine, to engage in social activities). Moreover, we found that conspiracy theories enjoy more support, on average, than misinformation about dangerous health practices. Our findings suggest several paths for policymakers, communicators, and scientists to minimize the spread and impact of COVID-19 misinformation and conspiracy theories.

[...]

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