

The Mercury Project | Social Science Research Council (SSRC)

By SSRC

November 16, 2021

The Mercury Project is a global consortium of researchers dedicated to combating the impacts of mis- and disinformation on public health and to finding interventions that support the spread and uptake of accurate health information.

Together, we can build a healthier information environment.

The information networks that carry public health guidance into communities are among the most essential elements in a disease outbreak response. However, in today's information ecosystem, accurate information is not getting through to everyone, everywhere. The viral spread of mis- and disinformation has been widely acknowledged in the global health space as a major and growing threat to public safety and to effective pandemic response.

The Mercury Project, which alludes to the ancient Roman god Mercury of messages and communication, will fund researchers to discover new, evidence-based, data-driven tools, methods, and interventions to counter mis- and disinformation and to support the spread and uptake of accurate health information. These solutions will be an essential resource for social media and technology companies and for global policymakers as they build an information ecosystem that supports the sharing of accurate and effective health information.

The Mercury Project will provide research grants over a three-year period to researchers and organizations for the purpose of:

a) estimating the **causal impacts of mis- and disinformation** on online and offline outcomes in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, including health, economic, and/or social outcomes, differential impacts across socio-demographic

groups, and quantifying the global costs of those impacts;

b) estimating the causal impacts of online or offline interventions in the **United States, Africa, South Asia, and Latin America** to increase uptake of Covid-19 vaccines and other recommended public health measures by countering mis- and disinformation, including interventions that target the producers or the consumers of mis- and disinformation, or that increase confidence in reliable information.

The Mercury Project will also provide **a suite of research sharing and policy development activities** for grantees and other invited organizations to enable more effective policy and regulatory responses to current and future public health emergencies. The work of the consortium will provide a foundation for data-driven policy and regulatory interventions enabling the creation of a healthier information environment.

Source: [The Mercury Project | Social Science Research Council \(SSRC\)](#)