

The psychological drivers of misinformation belief and its resistance to correction | Nature Reviews Psychology

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Misinformation has been identified as a major contributor to various contentious contemporary events ranging from elections and referenda to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only can belief in misinformation lead to poor judgements and decision-making, it also exerts a lingering influence on people's reasoning after it has been corrected — an effect known as the continued influence effect. In this Review, we describe the cognitive, social and affective factors that lead people to form or endorse misinformed views, and the psychological barriers to knowledge revision after misinformation has been corrected, including theories of continued influence. We discuss the effectiveness of both pre-emptive ('prebunking') and reactive ('debunking') interventions to reduce the effects of misinformation, as well as implications for information consumers and practitioners in various areas including journalism, public health, policymaking and education.

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