



3RD VIRTUAL GLOBAL WHO INFODEMIC MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

COVID-19 infodemic response overview for Canada

Shannon Turner, Ian Roe, Lucie Bucci, Ron White, and
Craig Thompson
Canadian Public Health Association

DIGITAL POSTER



infodemic
MANAGEMENT

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Coordination, resourcing and strategy

- National vs. provincial/territorial (P/T) jurisdictions and coordination for infodemic response
- Health is managed by the P/T governments. Some variation on how infodemic is managed by jurisdiction (e.g. British Columbia) as a result.
- National coordination through groups such as the Canadian Immunization Committee, Pan Canadian Public Health Network, Canadian Public Health Association
- No coordinated national infodemic management strategy. Private resources available through organizations such as Ryerson University – www.covid19misinfo.org

Working relationships across society

- Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada has existing relationships with factchecking organizations and technology companies on health information related issues.
- Ministry of Health fosters active relationships with stakeholders across whole of society, including pro-vaccine advocates and allies, media, journalists and civil society, that can amplify messages within their constituencies and help codevelop messaging and strategies.

Integrated measurement, research and data analysis

- Indicators for tracking misinformation and how it affects target and vulnerable populations are defined and regularly tracked.
- Questions related to infodemic management are integrated into ongoing KAP surveys and will contribute to the the generation of infodemic management insights.
- Tools used for social listening and analysis are customized for the local social listening needs.
- Attitudes and behaviours, such as trust in Government and traditional media are indicators used Canada for monitoring the impact of the infodemic on Canadian's intentions to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Reporting and integration into decision-making

- Insights from social listening or response activities are triangulated with other socio-behavioral and epidemiological data to inform program and policy design.

Evidence-based interventions and implementation research

- The Public Health Agency of Canada's Immunization Partnership Fund (IPF) has funded the implementation of various interventions that address the infodemic in Canada, including the provision of reliable, evidence-based information and resources to vulnerable populations and those at risk.
- Evidence of subnational use of infodemic management tools and principles

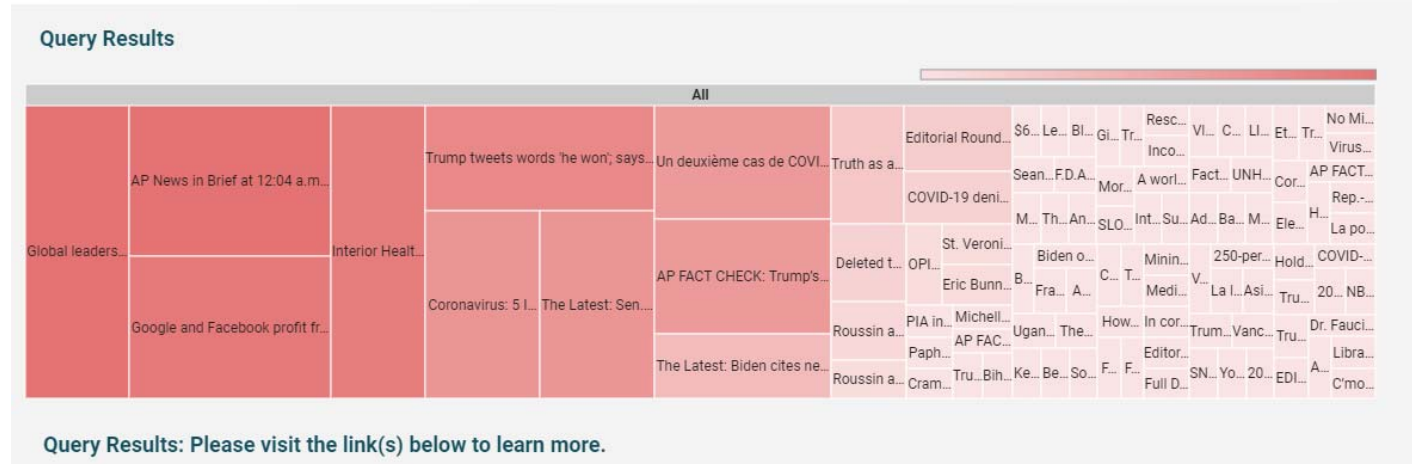
What did infodemic management and response look like before the COVID-19 infodemic in your country?

- Some lessons learned from H1N1.
- Ministers, Prime Ministers and Provincial Health Officers were the key authorities at the F/T/P levels to provide consistent messaging.
- CPHA had policy on dealing with misinformation.
- Other NGOs contributed to infodemic management in their own unique ways. Unique approach to dealing with infodemic in British Columbia is through the ImmunizeBC brand through multiple strategies such as I Boost Immunity/Kids Boost Immunity.

What has changed in infodemic management and health misinformation response since start of COVID-19?

- Overall greater awareness of misinformation thanks to daily press briefings at all levels of government (F/P/T)
- Who is leading the response varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (e.g. Provincial health officer vs Premier)
- Questions from the press related to 'fake news' get addressed and debunked quickly as part of daily press conferences and on various communications channels such as [websites](#) and social media.
- "Canadians should look for multiple sources on information they read online, and should verify public health advice given on official websites for public health agencies." (Trudeau)
- Scientific community also actively participate in debunking misinformation quickly (e.g. flu vaccine contributing to COVID spread, racism and COVID – BCCDC Foundation research)
- New federal [law](#) to fight pandemic misinformation being considered
- F/T/P government funding various initiatives to counter mis(dis)information such as the Digital Citizen Contribution Program from Heritage Ministry, as well as [I Boost Immunity](#) and [Kids Boost Immunity](#).

Ryerson - <https://covid19misinfo.org/>



What are the lessons learned from the experience of infodemic and infodemic response in COVID-19?

What advice would you give to other countries developing their own infodemic response plans?

- Need to equip the public with the skills and education to be able to debunk misinformation on their own.
- Important to communicate early and clearly to health care providers when it comes to misinformation and the potential for treatments etc.
- Important to educate children about critical thinking and understanding how to deal with mis(dis)information (e.g. Kids Boost Immunity).
- Important to raise scientific literacy overall (understanding that science evolves – e.g. messaging around masks)
- Important to be transparent about what we know and don't know as the crisis evolves. When you say nothing, people fill in the gaps.
- Be active in combatting anecdotal observations that can become popular ('n' of 1).

What are your plans for future infodemic management work in your country?

- Audit and review of the whole experience post pandemic.
- Importance of direct engagement with citizens outside of traditional government channels (grassroots - [PlaceSpeak](#), [Kids Boost Immunity](#)/[I Boost Immunity](#))
- Importance of engaging industry/business and NGOs to more effectively manage and deal with a pandemic (already done in things like food security)
- National discussion about the need to manage a pandemic more from a federal perspective as opposed to P/Ts
- Advocate for more critical thinking skills and education in schools.
- Foster greater awareness of the interconnectivity of all things due to a pandemic (economic, political, social, mental health)
- Emphasize the importance of vaccine safety, dispelling anxiety, encouraging clinic visits,
- More work to be done in the vaccine safety infrastructure (post marketing surveillance, vaccine injury, Adverse Events Following Immunization)
- Leading up to COVID-19 vaccine distribution there is an opportunity to educate the population about how vaccines are developed, tested, approved and monitored.
- Call to governments to strengthen infodemic management in Canada. (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.17269/s41997-020-00423-1>)
- Learning to communicate to audiences using a positive voice to build public morale and confidence.