



World Health Assembly Simulation 2023 Committee B Theme Guide

Guideline Strengthening Infodemic Management Theme Guide

How Do We Strengthen Infodemic Management in the Modern World?

While the Covid-19 pandemic continues to claim lives and livelihoods around the world, a silent infodemic is proving to be as dangerous.

The infodemic, defined by the World Health Assembly as the overabundance of information including false or misleading ones, has significant implications for public health management. Specifically, the creation and dissemination of inaccurate information hinder individual access to reliable sources and guidance, leading to the rejection of health interventions, disregard for epidemiological guidelines, and the proliferation of conspiracy-motivated beliefs and behaviour. For example, the association of vaccines with microchips and magnets has fuelled anti-vaccine sentiments, with data from across 23 countries in January 2021 showing that only 63% of respondents will accept a vaccine, well below the threshold of 75% minimum to attain herd immunity in a post-pandemic world.

Against this backdrop, it is important to improve existing information management mechanisms and generate new ones to ensure effective responses to health emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, applying evidence and risk-based interventions that drive positive health-seeking behaviour is key to building social resilience, promoting a sound understanding of public health, and providing citizens with the toolkit to protect themselves and their communities.

Governments, organisations, and other stakeholders must strengthen infodemic management, regulate the information landscape, and create credible, constructive public health narratives. It is only with such collective efforts can the pandemic be truly and effectively addressed.

Theme Guide Agenda for May 1st

Committee Session 1 – *Social Media*

Social Media is increasingly the way the world connects and learns. It has the capacity to do good and create safe spaces that allow communities to flourish and grow. Social media also has the potential to radicalize, indoctrinate and manipulate individuals. We aim to discuss the power of social media and how it intersects with global health work and institutions.

1. **Collaboration and coordination:** This includes coordinating efforts across different sectors and stakeholders to manage the infodemic, including public health agencies, media outlets, and social media platforms.
2. **Capacity building:** This includes building the capacity of public health agencies, media outlets, and other stakeholders to manage the infodemic effectively, including training and education programs.

Guiding Questions

1. Should media platforms, as private actors, be held accountable for the content their users promote/ spread?
2. Should the WHO conduct ethnographic research on various social media platforms to track social trends and movements?
3. Should the WHO use social media as a primary information dissemination source?

Resources

- [Reimagining social media governance: harm, accountability, and repair](#)
- [Fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media: a review](#)
- [Evolving Role of Social Media in Health Promotion: Updated Responsibilities for Health Education Specialists](#)

Committee Session 2 - *Should the WHO recommend member states educate their youth on digital literacy?*

Social media has the potential to affect positive change and global collaboration. It also has the potential to cultivate hate and deception. We aim to discuss whether the WHO has the authority or ability to encourage or require member states to educate their youth on digital literacy.

1. **Education and awareness:** This involves educating the public about the risks of misinformation and disinformation and providing them with the skills to identify and avoid false information.
2. **Research and evaluation:** This involves conducting research to better understand the infodemic and its impacts & evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to manage it.

Guiding Questions

1. Does the WHO have the authority to make this recommendation?
2. What should be included in the curriculum?
3. How often should the curriculum be updated to include on-going innovations?

Resources

- [Fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media: a review](#)
- [Digital literacy across the curriculum](#)
- [A systematic review on digital literacy](#)
- [The correlation between digital literacy and parents' roles towards elementary school students' critical thinking](#)

Theme Guide Agenda for May 2nd

Committee Session 1 - *Misinformation*

Misinformation is a broad and variable term, ranging from information being correct but misrepresented to presenting opinions as reliable arguments to factually incorrect statements being disseminated as credible scientific evidence. We aim to discuss the impact of misinformation on global health work and institutions.

1. **Information verification:** This involves verifying the accuracy of information and sources before disseminating them to the public.
2. **Ethical considerations:** This includes considering ethical principles in the management of the infodemic, such as ensuring that information is accurate, transparent, and respects individual privacy.

Guiding Questions:

1. Should there be a standardized definition or criteria for misinformation?
2. How should misinformation be handled at the international level?
3. Should world leaders/ governments be held accountable for instigating/ spreading misinformation?

Resources

- [Fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media: a review](#)
- [Systematic Literature Review on the Spread of Health-related Misinformation on Social Media](#)
- [Prevalence of Health Misinformation on Social Media: Systematic Review](#)
- [Public Health and Online Misinformation: Challenges and Recommendations.](#)

Committee Session 2 - Centralized AI-Fact Checking Initiative

There is a vast amount of misinformation that is spread throughout the world, both online and off-line, which is further compounded by the difficulty of ensuring its reliability or credibility. We aim to discuss the feasibility and utility of a centralized fact-checking initiative to counter misinformation at the international level.

1. **Risk communication:** This includes providing accurate and timely information to the public about the infodemic, the risks involved, and the measures being taken to manage it.
2. **Technology and innovation:** This includes using technology and innovative approaches to manage the infodemic, such as developing algorithms to detect and flag false information.

Guiding Questions:

1. How would the verification process work?
2. What sources are considered 'reliable'?
3. Who would run this initiative, and how would it become & stay equitable?

Resources

- [Fake News, Disinformation and Misinformation in Social Media: A Review](#)
- [The Epistemology of Fact Checking](#)
- [A Survey on Automated Fact-Checking](#)
- [The Rise of Fact-Checking Sites in Europe](#)