

Considerations for national health authorities to counter Online vaccine misinformation

Vaccine misinformation can lead to increased vaccine hesitancy and reduced vaccination uptake. To counter vaccine misinformation, public health authorities need to focus on:

Monitoring the (social) media landscape

Understand the information needs and concerns of the public, and consider dedicating special resources (human, technical, financial) to implement systems for monitoring and countering online vaccine misinformation.

Engaging

Occupy the social media space and engage in proactive, evidence-based online communication.

Using interdisciplinary expertise

including public health experts, big data analysts, digital health experts, behavioural psychologists and communication specialists to optimise the efforts in countering online vaccine misinformation.

Applying a strategic approach

If needed, apply a (more) strategic approach for vaccine communications in general, and for responding to online vaccine misinformation in particular with aligned messaging between involved parties.

Applying inoculation* and debunking

Learn and apply effective inoculation and debunking communication techniques to constructively engage with people who have sincere questions, using an empathetic approach.

Training health professionals

Facilitate training opportunities for health professionals and health communication experts to become well versed in effective techniques and tools for countering online vaccine misinformation.

ECDC is currently developing a training course for this, which will be available in 2022.

Searching for partnerships

Partner with traditional media, online platforms and stakeholders in education and training, to increase the public's digital and health literacy.

*'Inoculation' is a pre-emptive action that warns people in advance about how misinformation is used, thereby giving them the ability to 'resist' such information should they be exposed to it in the future.

Based on ECDC's report

Countering online vaccine misinformation in the EU/EEA

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/countering-online-vaccine-misinformation-eu-eea>