

The Covid-19 Pandemic: Transmission, Misinformation, and Implications on Public Health

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Abstract : A pandemic, such as that of COVID-19, can be a time of panic and stress; concerns about health supersede others such as work and leisure. With such concern comes the seeking of crucial information— information that, during a global health crisis, could mean the difference between life and death. Whether newspapers, cable news, or radio, media plays an important role in the transmission of medical information to the general public. Moreover, the news media in particular must uphold its obligation to the public to only disseminate factual, useful information. The circulation of misinformation, whether explicit or implicit, may profoundly impact global health. Using a discursive analytic framework founded in linguistics, the images and headlines of top coverage of COVID-19 from the most influential media outlets will be examined. Micro-analyses reveal what may be interpreted as evidence of sensationalism, which may be argued to a form of misinformation, and ultimately a departure from ethical media. Withdrawal from responsible reporting and publishing, expressly in times of epidemic, may cause further confusion and panic.

Keywords : public health, pandemic, public education, media

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