



Infodemics and libraries

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Infodemiology, the study of distribution of health information and misinformation, is not a new invention. The first studies on it were published already in the late 1990s (1). Since then fake news and “digital toxicity” have been growing massively (2, 3). COVID-19 pandemic escalated these phenomenon into an infodemic, i.e. overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – that can lead to confusion and mistrust in governments and public health response (4, 5). Gunther Eysenbach gives four key elements on how to manage the infodemic: 1. information monitoring (infoveillance); 2. building eHealth Literacy and science literacy capacity; 3. encouraging knowledge refinement and quality improvement processes such as fact checking and peer-review; and 4. accurate and timely knowledge translation, minimizing distorting factors such as political or commercial influences (6).

Here we as information professionals have a big role to play (7) and that’s why we dedicated this issue to this topic. We are very happy to present three highly interesting papers. Anu Ojaranta, Eeva-Liisa Eskola and Kristina Eriksson-Backa explore the sources, amounts and emotions of corona-related information in the early stages of the pandemic, based on their survey in 2020. Ruth Carlyle and Sue Robertson describe developing health literacy skills for both the general public and health professionals. Oksana Pyzik, John Hertig, Hoda Kanso, Anika Chamba and Sofia Khan describe the relationship between fake news and fake medicines: how misinformation has fuelled the sale of COVID-19 substandard and falsified medical products.

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PREFACE

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