

Pampa García Molina, chief editor

@pampanilla



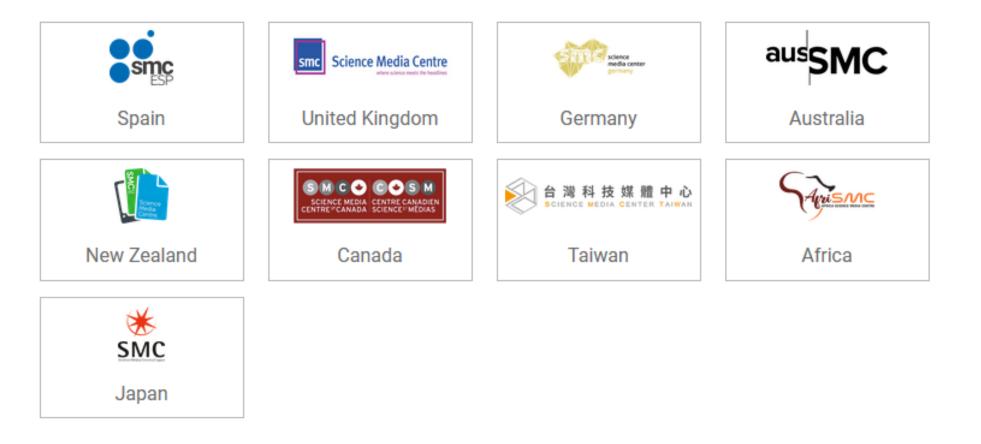
What is a Science Media Centre

- It is an independent communications office that:
 - helps to ensure that the public has access to the best scientific evidence and knowledge
 - through the **media**
 - when science hits the **headlines** and generates **social debate and controversy**.



The network members

On each of the five continents (excluding Antarctica) there is at least one SMC following local, national, and international science news.







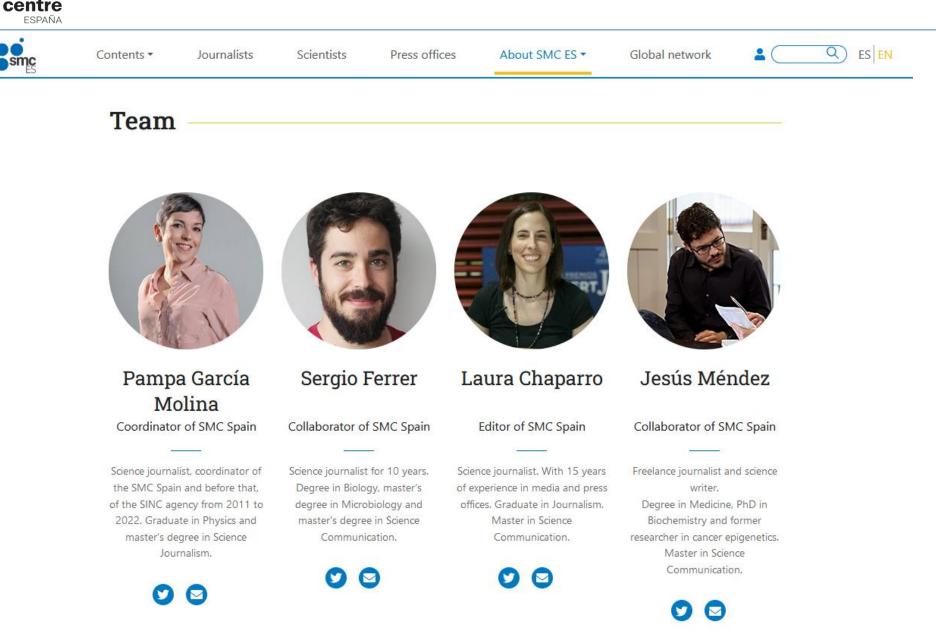
25 March 2022, Madrid



@sciencemedia_es

@pampanilla







Context

- During the pandemic, public needs quick, reliable, relevant and well-checked information in a context of **uncertainty**.
- Preprints storm: science is happening live before our eyes.
- Science has been demanded an absolute predictive power. Frustration has left room for disinformation.
- Noise from various sources: media overexposure, infodemics, polarised discourse and misinformation.
- We need journalists specialized in science and expert sources in the media.



SMC Spain: objectives

- To provide journalists with **reliable information** and **sources** on current science-related news.
- To work with the scientific community to engage as a source with national and international media, thanks to SMC's global network.
- To serve as a speaker for **press offices** to amplify the messages of research staff.
- To encourage the public to be informed about controversial scientific issues in order to improve the quality of public debate.



Our features

- We depend on FECYT (public funding), but we are studying multi-funding with donations that do not compromise our editorial independence.
- We publish in Spanish and English.
- We have a Creative Commons license.
- We have Twitter and Facebook.



Our features

We have a **statute** and an advisory board to ensure editorial independence.

Advisory Board

This voluntary team of independent experts provides expertise and advice to the SMC Spain team.

Read more









Alfonso Valencia

Romano Corradi







Manuel Franco

Alicia Pérez-Porro

Elea Giménez

Toledo

Eduardo Suárez

Federico Kukso Coral Larrosa

Victoria Toro

María Martinón-

Torres

Patricia

María Mayán











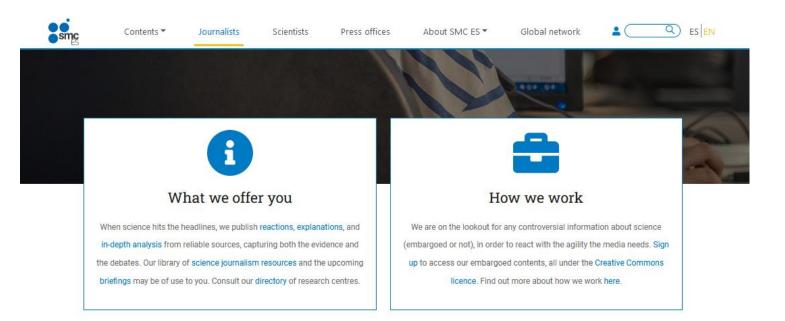
Fernando Valladares

Sonia Zúñiga

science media centre

Our features

- We communicate
 with registered
 journalists through
 emails with
 embargoed or not
 embargoed content.
- Registered journalists sign an embargo agreement.

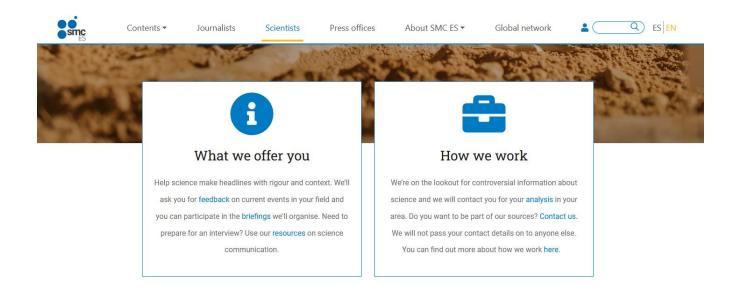


Sign up for the SMC You will have access to our embargoed content so that you can work on your information in good time. Don't miss anything! Register



Our features

- We **encourage scientists** to join us as information sources.
- We offer science communication resources.
- We never pass their contact details on to anyone else; if a journalist asks us for the contact details of a scientist, we refer him or her to his or her press office.



Do you want to join the SMC?

You can participate as an expert source on the topics we cover.

Write to us

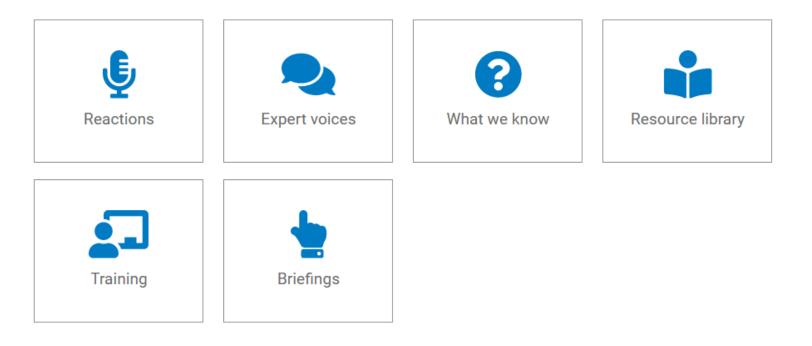




Our formats

SMC Contents

We offer you different formats with more or less depth and immediacy depending on current events. They have a Creative Commons licence and you can use them quoting SMC Spain as the source.



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Reactions

When science hits the headlines, we seek the views of expert sources who assess the news rigorously and quickly, according to the available evidence.



climate change

Reactions to the loss and damage fund and other agreements reached at COP27 $_{\mbox{\scriptsize SMC Spain}}$

After two long weeks of negotiations and outside the official deadline, COP27 has reached an agreement to create a loss and damage fund to help the most vulnerable countries face the impacts of the climate crisis. However, other issues such as greater ambition in mitigation strategies to avoid exceeding 1.5°C of warming and less dependence on fossil fuels have not achieved the commitment of all parties.



animal health

Reactions: sales of antibiotics for animal use have fallen by almost 50 % in the last ten years

SMC Spain

The EMA's annual European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) report shows that sales of antibiotics for animal use have decreased by 47% between 2011 and 2021. In addition, sales of antibiotics considered "critically important" for use in humans have also decreased.



ophthalmology

Reactions: five genetic variants increase the risk of myopia with schooling

Using genetic data from more than 340,000 participants of European descent, research has identified five genetic variants that make people more susceptible to myopia in combination with intensive schooling, especially university studies. The results are published in *PLOS Genetics*.

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Expert voices

In-depth analysis by experts on current scientific issues. In general, they are not as quick as the reactions.



Back to the Moon!

After almost three months of delays caused by various technical problems and two hurricanes, the Artemis I mission was successfully launched this morning, the first of a programme that will take the first woman astronaut to the moon. It has 42 days ahead of it, during which the spacecraft will orbit our satellite and test the stability of this lunar orbit, because in the future a space station will be located there to receive the astronauts on their journey from Earth.



infectious disease

A list of mushrooms to save millions of lives Ana Alastruey

The WHO has published the first list of priority fungal pathogens, which affect more than 300 million people and kill at least 1.5 million people every year. However, funding to control this scourge is less than 1.5 % of that devoted to infectious diseases.



Top 100 World Geology: Living History of the Earth

The Basque Coast Geopark has recently hosted the presentation of the first 100 geological heritage sites of the International Union of Geological Sciences. The flysch of Zumaia (Gipuzkoa), the mercury mines of Almadén (Ciudad Real) and the volcanic relief of La Palma (Santa Cruz de Tenerife) are among those chosen.

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What we know

The SMC team produces explanatory articles on topical issues to answer society's questions, with the necessary context and depth.



limate change

Key facts about COP27, the Climate Summit in Egypt SMC Spain

In the midst of an energy, economic and geopolitical crisis, and still in a pandemic, the Climate Summit in Egypt (COP27) will kick off on 6 November with the challenge of bringing the climate fight to the forefront. We explain the main stumbling blocks, the unfinished business from the previous summit and the goals it has set itself.



Bird flu

What we know about the first case of H5N1 avian influenza in humans detected in Spain

SMC Spain

The National Microbiology Centre has confirmed the first positive human case of H5N1 avian influenza detected in Spain, Animal's Health said yesterday. This is the worker of a poultry farm located in the province of Guadalajara who remained asymptomatic and isolated until he tested negative. This is the second case detected in Europe after the UK declared its case in January this year.



Should I be re-vaccinated against covid-19?

The new tailored doses against Omicron have arrived just in time for the upcoming autumn and winter wave. Although we do not know which variant will circulate in the coming months, these vaccines are safe and will help reduce transmission in what could be difficult months from a care pressure point of view.

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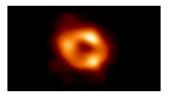
📫 Resource library

How do you read a scientific article? What are the phases of a clinical trial? What are the differences between climate change and global warming? These guides answer questions for journalists and communication departments. Other specific guides help research staff when dealing with the media.

Journalists

Scientists

Press offices



cosmology

A brief guide to understanding black holes SMC Spain

After many decades of study and thanks to the use of very precise techniques, we know more and more about these mysterious and huge bodies in the cosmos. Astronomers around the world are networking with powerful telescopes to better understand them.



science communication

Types of scientific papers: beyond "according to a study" SMC Spain

"According to a study" is a phrase that is as used as it is inaccurate: not everything that journals publish is a study, nor have all their articles been peer-reviewed. As in traditional media, there are different genres ranging from Letters to Editorials. Here are some of the most important ones.



Comparative anatomy of the scientific and journalistic article SMC Spain

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🖢 Briefings

We bring together journalists and scientific sources to answer questions and discuss current issues. These can be face-to-face or virtual. Registration is required.



limate change

Pep Canadell: "We are heading for a much warmer world than 1.5 degrees warmer"

SMC Spain

At current CO₂ emission levels, there is a 50 % chance of exceeding 1.5°C warming in nine years. This is one of the conclusions of the Global Carbon Budget 2022 report presented by its coordinator, researcher Pep Canadell, at a briefing organised by SMC Spain.



Training

The SMC Spain team provides practical training on science journalism and science communication adapted to different profiles: journalists or research staff.



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Media impact

- More than 1,300 impacts, most of them in the Spanish media.
- Also in international publications such as The Washington Post, AP, El Espectador or Factchequeado.

Media using our content





Media impact

- We ask to be cited (**CC license**) for branding and impact monitoring.
- We value the invisible impact: to be used as a source of inspiration or to contact expert sources on our topics.
- We even value the **negative impact**: when the media use our reactions to finally decide not to cover a paper that does not deserve media coverage.



Speed is key to get impacts and visits

- Agility in very quick reactions to immediate current affairs and breaking news.
- Examples: Nobel prizes, monkeypox, childhood hepatitis, COP27.

What we know about the new monkeypox outbreak

Following the detection of several cases of people infected with the simian smallpox virus in the UK, health authorities are concerned that there may be EU-wide transmission with undetected infections, both within and outside the country. In Spain, the Community of Madrid has identified 23 possible cases of infection.

SMC Spain 18/05/2022 - 08:30 CET

Versión en castellano

Update 19/05/2022 - 09:48 CET Updated information on new suspected cases in the Community of Madrid.





Don't be afraid of political issues related to science

 We focus on politically controversial issues. Examples: Mar Menor Law, Science Law, Animal Protection Law, transgender minors.

Reactions to the adoption of the new Science Law

The extraordinary plenary session of the Congress of Deputies today approved the reform of the Law on Science, Technology and Innovation. After being passed in the Lower House without any votes against it on 23 June, the bill was approved in the Senate on 20 July with an amendment referring to indefinite-term contracts, which was rejected today in Congress.

SMC Spain 25/08/2022 - 17:46 CET



Versión en castellano

Expert reactions

María Blasco

CNIO Director

Spanish National Cancer Research Centre CNIO Science Media Centre Spain

S The first thing I would like to stress is that the approval of this reform of the Law on Science, Technology and Innovation is news to celebrate, because it takes up the historic demands of the Spanish scientific community.

The text, as approved, aims to guarantee that science will have stable and growing public funding. It



We act as prescribers of papers for the media

 Selection of weekly scientific publications that merit embargoed reactions and sending these reactions days in advance is key.

Reaction: expert group warns of cancer epidemic in Europe in the next decade if health and research do not improve

A panel of experts set up by the journal *The Lancet Oncology* analyses the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on cancer treatment and research and makes recommendations to mitigate these problems. With an estimated one million cancer diagnoses lost across Europe in the past two years, the team warns that the continent is heading for a cancer epidemic in the next decade if health systems and cancer research are not urgently prioritised.

SMC Spain 15/11/2022 - 23:30 CET

f V in 0

Versión en castellano

Expert reactions

Xosé r. Bustelo

CSIC research professor, vice-director of the Centro de Investigación del Cáncer, Salamanca, and former president of ASEICA

CSIC Cancer Research Center (CSIC-University of Salamanca) Science Media Centre Spain



Media like explainers

- Monkeypox, the possible Alzheimer's fraud or the glass of wine.
- Quality content useful for journalists, added value.

What we know about the health impact of drinking a glass of wine a day

"The level of alcohol consumption that does not harm health is zero," says a review of dozens of studies conducted in recent years on the effect of light drinking. The 20 or so authors of the paper, and other experts, insist that "alcohol is carcinogenic from the first drink". In their view, this message should be conveyed more clearly to the public.

SMC Spain 09/05/2022 - 11:04 CEST

Versión en castellano



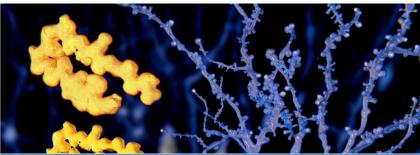
Potential fraud in major Alzheimer's research: what are the implications?

Science magazine has published a report revealing multiple indications of fraud in one of the most cited publications on Alzheimer's disease. We explain what it means for the science that studies this disease.

SMC Spain 03/08/2022 - 10:30 CEST

Versión en castellano

Update 17/08/2022 - 12:20 CEST Added the statements by Juan Fortea





"Expert voices" also have an impact and visitors

• Relevance and link with current affairs is key: fires, drought, Fields medal...





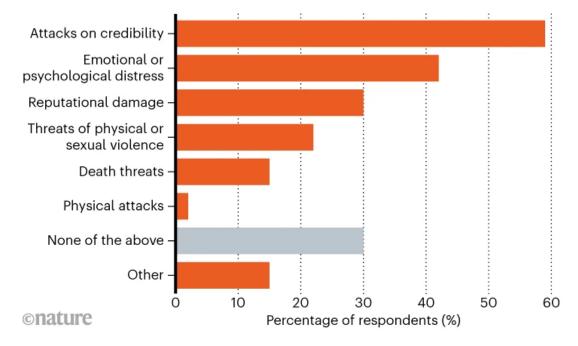
Next steps

- Focus groups with Latin America.
- New partners.
- New staff!!!!
- Infographics, more audios, videos, weekly newsletter, podcast...
- Study on harassment suffered by scientists in Spain due to their presence in the media, following the surveys done by other SMCs and Nature.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

In a *Nature* survey of scientists who have commented about COVID-19, 15% of 321 respondents said they had received death threats.

Question: Have you experienced any of the following negative impacts after speaking about COVID-19 to the media, or posting on social media? (You may select multiple options.)





Our achievements so far

- We are recognized as a trusted source of information for news agencies and other media, specialized and general, international, national and regional.
- Scientists call us to collaborate with us as sources. We get the right experts to talk about each topic and they feel safe.
- In an environment marked by polarization and a lack of expert voices in the media, we enhance the public conversation on controversial current science-related issues.



Thank you

pampa@sciencemediacentre.es

@pampanilla



Waves, storms & going viral: Science communication on social media during a pandemic

Isabella Eckerle, MD, DTMH

Geneva Centre for Emerging Viral Diseases



Geneva, Switzerland



My first presentation on the novel coronavirus on 24.01.2020 (Challenges in Virology, Grindelwald/Switzerland, 24.01.2020)

Outbreaks in the digital age: Twitter is the place where the (good, the bad and the ugly) action is...

#nCoV #coronavirus #WuhanPneumonia #WuhanSARS....



Now getting to 20+ tweets per second on #nCoV2019 #wuhan coronavirus situation:

crowdbreaks.org/en/projects/nc...







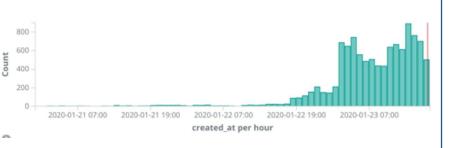
Pretty interesting to see how closely mention of countries follows the outbreak patterns of #nCoV2019. Happy to present more about this next week @appliedmldays in the Health & Al track hosted by @ensoesie! :)





Snakes could be the source of the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak Snakes -- the Chinese krait and the Chinese cobra -- may be the original source of the newly discovered coronavirus that has triggere... \mathscr{S} cnn.com





#snakefake

Science & social media during the pandemic:

The good, the bad and the ugly

Science, policy & social media - The good aspects

- Science has become visible discussions that normally take place among scientists have become visible to the public (including preliminary, inconsistent and contradictory results)
- Quick way to collaborate & connect with other researcher & exchange ideas
- Opportunity to find like-minded colleagues and build networks/start initiatives
- Scientists are heard, possibility to provide information to the public (welcomed by many)
- Scientists are leaving their ivory tower science is perceived as something that affects society as a whole and has an impact
- Some scientists have become almost "rock stars" which can serve as a role models and help to transport a positive image of science – (especially when showing diversity in science!)



Social media can connect like-minded scientists and facilitate initiatives (met only 2 of the authors so far in real life!)

JOHN SNOW MEMORANDUM

SCHOOLS SUMMIT DECLARATION JOHN SNOW MEMO

MORE THAN 6,900 scientists, researchers & healthcare professionals have now signed the John Snow Memorandum. We vet every signature, so it may take 72 hours for your name to appear. Thanks for your support, and please continue to share with your colleagues.



THE JOHN SNOW MEMORANDUM

The bad – Infodemics & misinformation

An infodemic is too much information including false or misleading information in digital and physical environments during a disease outbreak



Infodemic - epidemic of information – term coined during severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) to define the amplification effect of the news through information technologies

A more recent definition: "infodemic" includes elements of misinformation spreading rapidly through social media platforms

Briand et al. Infodemics: A new challenge for public health. Cell. Volume 184, Issue 25, 9 December 2021, Pages 6010-6014 Rothkopf, D.J. (2003) When the Buzz Bites Back. The New York Times. May 11, 2003.

Infodemics – a new element that needs to be understood and controled during outbreaks

- Study of infodemics is relatively new
- Little is known about the relationship with epidemics management
- Vaccine hesitancy as one example: eroded trust in institutions fueled by misinformation
- Scientists and policy-makers can study, model, and monitor both phenomena in parallel
- Enforces the much needed interdisciplinary of research areas in the management of epidemics (e.g. social sciences and biological sciences along)

Table 1. The main analogies between epidemics and infodemics

Features	Epidemics	Infodemics
Agent	Infectious agent (i.e., virus, bacterium, fungus, parasite)	Type of message in a given medium (e.g., particular conspiracy theory in a viral video, a statistic on vaccine efficacy in a tweet)
Medium	Route of transmission (respiratory, oral-fecal route, sexual contacts)	Communication channel (news, social media platform, newsgroup, radio program, blog)
Timescale	Infectious period, reproductive number	How quickly information spreads and accumulates, including the persistence of mis- and dis- information
Network of interaction	The pattern of contacts along which transmission occurs (individuals who have a contact at risk for transmission)	Communication network for the user and content interaction (nodes of transmission, interconnectedness, clustering, homophily, content filtering algorithms)
Control measures	Actions to limit the epidemic (vaccination campaigns, non- pharmaceutical interventions, epidemiological surveillance)	Actions to limit the infodemic (skill building, science and media literacy, pre-bunking)

Challenges of science communication on social media

- Science is a process, knowledge is **constantly under validation**
- Understanding of science as a self-correcting process (doesn't mean someone made a mistake (old tweets!)
- Misinformation can have life-or-death consequences
- **Responsibility of platforms** mark misinformation, or cancel it?
- Cherry-picking of debates (confirmation bias)
- Risk of communications and tweets taken out of context
- Algorithms are not made to provide the best (reliable) health information
- Lack of basic/technical understanding can make exchanges very hard to almost impossible (e.g. discussion about use of PCR, virus isolation)
- Danger of mixing opinions or personal views with scientific data
- Scientists are (usually) not trained to use social media institutions can provide only little guidance/support (protection, legal advice)

Engaging in policy & on social media has its price for scientists

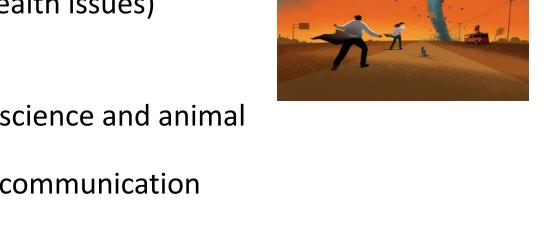
- Investment of time & energy
- High demand for information coincides with emergence of new research questions (e.g. new variants)/during research-intensive times
- Risks of **losing credibility** by being cited in a misleading way
- Journalists re-use tweets for newspaper articles (instead of conducting interviews, this is usually without authorization)
- Scientific engagement on social media is a young phenomenon & sometimes seen critical by older colleagues
- Easier in stabilized positions than for junior colleagues
- Intensive engagement in social media can be seen as "not working enough" (<-> professionalism)

The Ugly

Attacks on scientist engaging on social media

Public engagement & its side effects

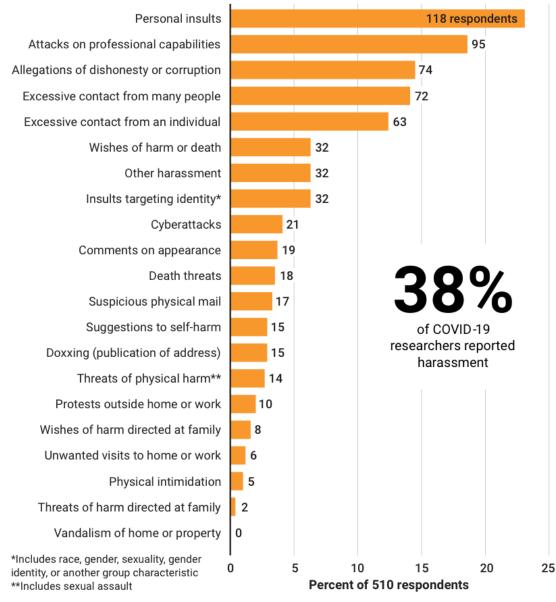
- Study done by the journal Science, published March 2022
- 9585 researchers who <u>have published on COVID-19</u> were contacted
- 510 responded:
 - 38% at least one attack
 - Insults to death threats on social media, by email or phone, or even in person
 - Effects on scientists lives (workplace, mental health issues)
 - Aligns with reports of violence on HCW
 - Harassment is not new or unique to COVID-19
 - Familiar to what has been observed in climate science and animal research
 - Harrasment has led to withdrawal from public communication (publicity/policy advice)



https://www.science.org/content/article/overwhelmed-hate-covid-19-scientists-face-avalanche-abuse-survey-shows

An outbreak of harassment

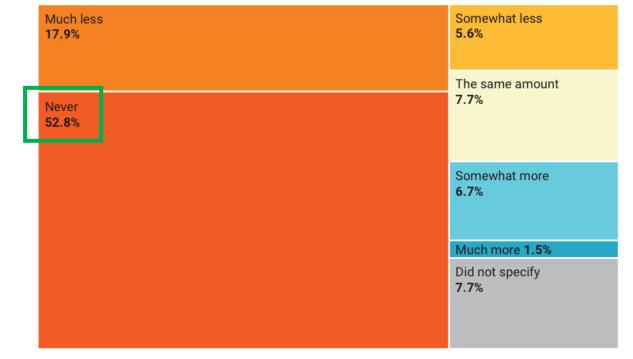
Out of 510 COVID-19 researchers surveyed by *Science*, 38% reported at least one kind of harassment. Personal insults and attacks on people's competence or integrity were most often reported. Threats of violence, "doxxing," and unwanted visits were far less common.



A new wave of abuse

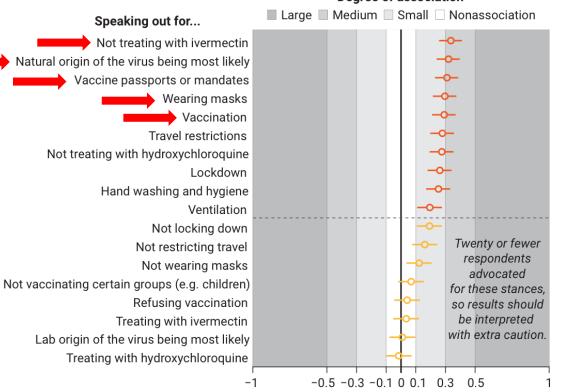
Among COVID-19 researchers who reported being harassed, 71% said they experienced far less abuse or none at all before the pandemic began.

"Before the COVID-19 pandemic, had you ever experienced unwanted behaviors, harassment, bullying, intimidation, stalking, or threats as a result of your work?"



K. FRANKLIN/SCIENCE

K. FRANKLIN/SCIENCE



Degree of association Medium Small Nonassociation

Strength of association (o) and uncertainty (-)

Death threats after a trial on chloroquine for COVID-19



Unfavorable results from a chloroquine clinical trial led to death threats and animosity towards researchers in Brazil. Estella Ektorp reports.

"The only conclusion you can take from the study is that this drug, when used in high doses, is not safe", declared Marcus Lacerda, the principal investigator of the first randomised controlled clinical trial that tested chloroquina

administered extremely high doses and used a less-safe version of the drug hydroxychloroquine, then used this as a pretense to indicate that chloroquine was ineffective and dangerous". Soon after Brazilian president's son

of evidence, and anecdotal accounts, to support treating COVID-19 with chloroquine, a drug traditionally used to treat malaria and having potential adverse effects, in particular relative



to cardiovascular function "These This online nublication has

THE LANCET Infectious Diseases

CORRESPONDENCE | VOLUME 21, ISSUE 4, P457-458, APRIL 01, 2021

Cyber harassment of female scientists will not be the new norm

Caroline Samer 🖾 🛛 Karine Lacombe 🖉 Alexandra Calmy

Published: December 23, 2020 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30944-0

«having been victims ourselves—female professors of medicine—to varying degrees of threats of all kinds, including violent defamatory statements, stalking, and misogynistic and gender-oriented attacks. These attacks were exclusively linked to public interventions in the media...»

https://www.science.org/content/article/overwhelmed-hate-covid-19-scientists-face-avalanche-abuse-survey-shows

Ektorp E. Death threats after a trial on chloroquine for COVID-19. Lancet Infect Dis. 2020; 20: 661 https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(20)30944-0/fulltext

'I hope you die': how the COVID pandemic unleashed attacks on scientists

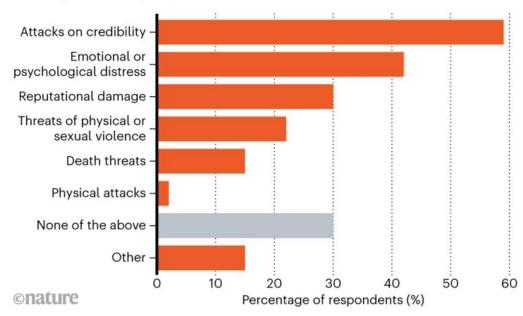
Dozens of researchers tell *Nature* they have received death threats, or threats of physical or sexual violence.

Bianca Nogrady

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

In a *Nature* survey of scientists who have commented about COVID-19, 15% of 321 respondents said they had received death threats.

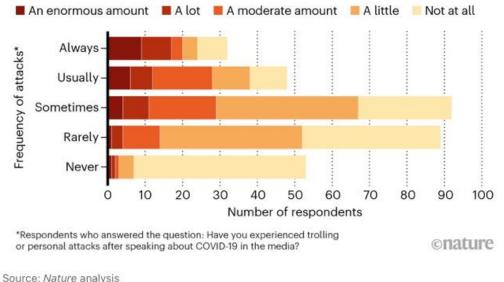
Question: Have you experienced any of the following negative impacts after speaking about COVID-19 to the media, or posting on social media? (You may select multiple options.)



CHILLING EFFECT?

In *Nature's* survey, scientists who reported the highest frequency of trolling or personal attacks* were also most likely to say that their experiences had greatly affected their readiness to give future media interviews.

Question: How much have your experiences with trolls and personal attacks affected your willingness to speak to the media in the future?



Among the scientists who responded to *Nature*'s survey, 63% used Twitter to comment on aspects of COVID-19, and around one-third of those said they were 'always' or 'usually' attacked on the platform

85% of survey respondents said that their experiences of engaging with the media were always or mostly positive

https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02741-x

Source: Nature analysis

Being a CoV researcher on Twitter....

About myself:

- Research on CoVs since 2011
- Networks for information during MERS-CoV-2 outbreaks and before: Promed.mail, informal networks as source of information
- On Twitter since 2014, at that time with a few 100's followers
- Today: >95K Followers
- Twitter has become an important source for real-time of information from colleagues, follow conferences, keep up to date
- But interaction more difficult due to much ,noise'
- Attacks, need to block & report comments on daily basis ($\uparrow \uparrow$ in 2022)

Experiences engaging in policy & (social) media:

- Scientific advice unwanted, especially in the beginning, & pandemic threats downplayed
- Accusations of **fear mongering**
- Concepts delivered by scientists not welcomed
- Scientific advice from ,convenient' experts preferred
- Many experts emerged that never worked in the field of emerging viruses before 2020



Jan 1st and we have already the first outbreak due to #emergingviruses of the new year - interested to know the source, civet cats and bats sold on this market? #SARS, or SARS-related CoV?

😮 onisillos sekkides @onisillos - Jan 1 China shuts seafood market linked to mystery viral pneumonia outbreak | South China Morning Post scmp.com/news/china/pol..





so the real risk of ongoing transmission will only be assessed with a diagnostic test #coronavirus

H2H transmission. Also mild cases could go undetected

Isabella Eckerle @Eckerlelsabella · 25 Jan 2020 This is not good! Asymptotic shedding will make surveillance very difficult. In SARS, virus was shedded after symptom onset -> key for containment #nCoV2019 #coronarvirus twitter.com/MackayIM/statu...

Isabella Eckerle @Eckerlelsabella · 26 Jan 2020

Very important note, especially since chances are we will not be able to contain this outbreak. The sooner we accept this the better to start preparing for a huge challenge to all health systems (high income countries too) #coronavirus #nCoV2019 twitter.com/richardhorton1...

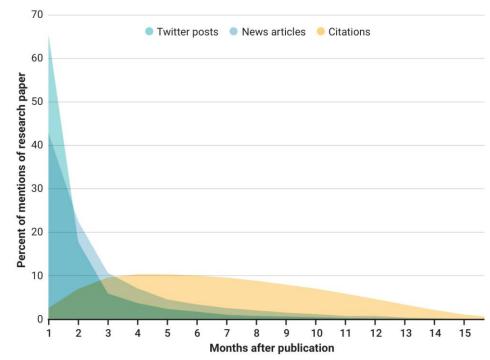


Science communication on social media in the middle of a crisis my personal take-away

- Use it to connect with colleagues and then interact with them on other channels for a more **professional exchange**
- Take the opportunity to make your own science visible why is this an important field, what can we learn, what are implication of our findings?
- Advice on policy has more impact when it is delivery by a panel of experts (from different disciplines, & personal attacks reduced)
- Know who you follow & who to trust (many scientists communicate great, follow the real experts & benefit from their knowledge)
- Block hard & early, do not feed the trolls, report harassment
- Take social media breaks & time to rest
- Engagement of scientist can make a difference but comes at a cost
- Cave: Balance pros & cons (has changed a lot since 2022!)

Rapid responses

Conversations about new research papers on Twitter happen quickly—then soon tail off, like mentions in news stories. Citations in other journal articles, the more traditional channel for scholarly attention, are spread out over many more months.



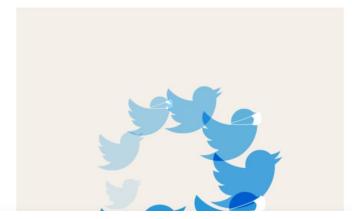
(GRAPHIC) K. FRANKLIN/SCIENCE; (DATA) L. WALTMAN ET AL., SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS, RESEARCH ON RESEARCH INSTITUTE, DOI: 10.6084/M9.FIGSHARE.17125394 (2021)

The future of (science) communication on Twitter: Stay or go?

OPINION GUEST ESSAY

Twitter Was Influential in the Pandemic. Are We Better for It?

Nov. 19, 2022



Carl T. Bergstrom, NYT Nov 19, 2022

«By early 2022, the value I found on Twitter had fallen off....Some of my colleagues left or locked their accounts. Coordinated harassment quashed nuanced debate. Covid Twitter is barely a trace of what it was two years ago.»

@CT_Bergstrom

SCIENCEINSIDER | SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

As Musk reshapes Twitter, academics ponder taking flight

Many researchers are setting up profiles on social media site Mastodon

4 NOV 2022 · 4:00 PM · BY KAI KUPFERSCHMIDT



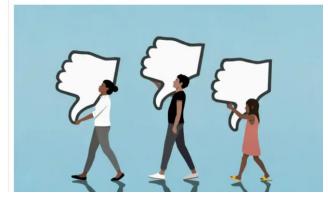
With Elon Musk's takeover, many scientists are considering doing away with Twitter for other options. DRUG NARODA/SHUTTERSTOCK AND ANYAPL/SHUTTERSTOCK, ADAPTED BY C. SMITH/SCIENCE

"If the people who like to tell me I'm a stupid/fat/ugly/old/unfuckable/unloveable/co mpromised/corrupt/conflicted/incompetent bitch get a free pass to say whatever without constraint or moderation, the **cost-benefit analysis would change for me**"

Angela Rasmussen @angie_raamussen

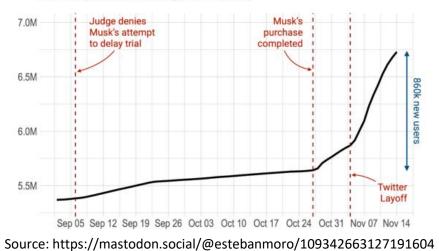
'Verified' anti-vax accounts proliferate as Twitter struggles to police content

Platform's paid verification system is being used to give sense of validity to accounts pushing health misinformation



Total mastodon users

Data from @mastodonusercount@bitcoinhackers.org



If Science communication becomes endemic on social media...

- Scientists need to consider the **impact of social media**
- Outreach activities are a chance for better science communication
- Training of scientists in the use of social media (wording, language, communication skills & strategies)
- Better **protection by institutions** against personal attacks
- Scientific community but also governments and funding agencies must take steps against silencing of science (not only in relation to infectious diseases but also other controversial topics)
- Limits of science communication on social media must be understood: Complexity of research cannot always be reflected
- Twitter may no longer be the place to be (only bad & ugly)
- Alternative platforms?

Thank you for your attention!

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