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Disinformation in childhood immunization. A study with antivaccine videos in Spain

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Introduction: Vaccination is one of the most cost-effective means of preventing diseases (Lahouati et al., 2020), Parents' vaccine hesitancy is a global challenge for infectious diseases and an increase in public health expenses. This reluctance to vaccinate is highly visible on YouTube which is the most used social network in Spain by anti-vaccine groups. Our objective is to analyse the presence and use of disinformation and pseudoscience as persuasive resources in anti-vaccine videos on YouTube in Spanish, as well as the use of emotions and personal stories in such discourses. Despite the importance of the topic, we have found a dearth of studies utilising an inductive analytical framework to investigate the persuasive elements and emotional undertones in Spanish-language anti-vaccine YouTube videos. Our hypothesis states that YouTube videos with anti-vaccine content in Spanish use disinformation and emotions to influence parents' decision-making process about not vaccinating. Methodology: We conducted an inductive content analysis using Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) with videos released prior to Covid-19 and one with videos published after Covid-19 are slated for analysis. We select the most frequent videos in all the searches until reaching the saturation point, when the text does not show new ideas nor relations. Previous Results. Our first analysis results shows that disinformation and pseudoscience are persuasive resources used frequently in anti-vaccine videos. In a first study with videos about childhood vaccination prior to Covid-19, we found an intensive use of disinformation and established a first gradation of the content of disinformation and pseudoscience. Conclusions: Are imperative future initiatives aimed at promoting vaccination. The use that anti-vaccine speakers make of disinformation must be considered along with the recording location and the YouTube channel used. Similarly, the emotional aspect and design strategies must be examined considering the interests that motivate people who are reluctant to immunize.

Biography

After working in the business sector in a variety of responsible roles, Alicia García-Oliva is now retired. Her current focus is on persuasive health communication, including the use of deception to persuade. This paper is based on a case study of YouTube videos that contain anti-vaccine information in Spain as well as a review of previous literature. From an inductive standpoint, the study examines how emotions and persuasion can make parents not to vaccinate their children.

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