

Studying Misinformation Surrounding COVID-19 in Hispanic Communities

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The pandemic saw a rise in the spread of false information through social media. Although many studies have examined misinformation spread in English, relatively fewer studies have examined the spread of misinformation in Spanish. Very often there is a delay in the removal of misinformation regarding COVID-19 when it is presented in a language other than English. As a result, Spanish medical interpreters, while under tremendous stress with increasing demand, cannot rely on online information. Consequently, negative effects of misinformation combine with the fact that most healthcare providers do not speak Spanish, hereby putting a greater emphasis on making interpreters readily available. Overall, limited English proficiency and a lack of ability to communicate with a healthcare provider in Spanish decreases trust between patient and provider, as well as overall knowledge of the care being received. This study will be conducted through surveys containing questions about experiences in medical settings both before and during COVID-19. The survey has been circulated among students at Wichita State University. Results suggest a reliance on social media for news about COVID-19, as well as an increase in the accessibility of information in Spanish since the start of the pandemic. The goal of the study is to use the personal experiences collected through these surveys to help understand the effects of COVID-19 misinformation, which will provide insight into ways of preventing such spread in Hispanic communities in and around Wichita.