NORD® RARE EDU®

SOCIAL MEDIA, MISINFORMATION AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Developed with assistance from David Hill, MD

HOW CAN PEOPLE IDENTIFY ONLINE MISINFORMATION RELATED TO COVID-19?

> Online misinformation is common, but during the COVID-19 pandemic it has become "viral." It is important to check the source for any information you read online.

> A good rule of thumb: if you are looking for scientific information, it is best to access it from scientific or federal websites (Centers for Disease Control, US Food and Drug Administration, National Institutes of Health, US Health and Human Services) or from state and local health departments because they vet the information and provide reliable sources.

HOW CAN PEOPLE POINT OUT MISINFORMATION IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER?

> Avoid telling someone to take a post down. This can create "forbidden fruit" and actually encourage others to share it. If you are going to point out misinformation, it is best to also provide links to credible sources with accurate information.

HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA BE HELPFUL TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

> Social media is a great way to share resources and confirm information.

> It allows us to socialize when we may be stuck at home due to social-distancing measures.

> It also provides a way to check in with your friends and family to see how they are managing during the pandemic.

HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA BE HELPFUL TO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

> Social media helps health care professionals to stay up-to-date with rapidly evolving information. They can see information when it is released, as well as expert reactions to it.

> It is also a great way for health care professionals to communicate with their patient communities, spread scientific truth and fight misinformation.

NORD®
National Organization for Rare Disorders

rarediseases.org

WHY ARE COVID-19 STUDY RESULTS BEING PUBLISHED PRIOR TO PEER-REVIEW?

> This is being done to get data out rapidly when information is constantly changing and health care providers are continually looking for new treatments and approaches. The downside of this is that these findings are not yet vetted to ensure that the interpretation of data and conclusions are accurate.

> Anything that is released prior to peer-review should be taken with some degree of skepticism. Turn to medical experts to understand what the preliminary peer reaction is to the data.

WHAT ARE SOME RELIABLE RESOURCES?

> Go to official government or academic websites rather than your peers
> CDC: *cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html*
> State public health websites (below are the state websites where NORD offices are located)

        CT: *portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus*
        DC: *coronavirus.dc.gov*
        MA: *mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information*

> American Lung Association: *lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/covid-19*
> Johns Hopkins COVID-19 Dashboard: *coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map*
> NORD: *rarediseases.org/covid-19*

COVID-19 EDUCATION SUPPORT

This series is made possible by individual donations, grants and corporate sponsorships.