Pause. Take care before you share

As the COVID-19 pandemic has gripped the United States, most people’s lives have been derailed in some way—their health, employment, child care, education, etc. People have searched for ways to understand what is happening and how best to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. During the pandemic, an overwhelming amount of COVID-19 information has circulated online and on social media. But is the information always accurate or helpful? Social media often fills people’s immediate needs for information about this virus that is overwhelming enough for a coordinated response. The pandemic shows that our population needs better media and health literacy. Ms. Hoffman and Dr. Sidani want to learn the reasons why people are resistant to getting a COVID-19 vaccine (https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/patient/prep/pdf/covid.pdf). Both Ms. Hoffman and Dr. Sidani are surprised to see antivaccine sentiment and misinformation from groups on Twitter that are not usually against vaccines or spreaders of misinformation. “This is particularly concerning because we have seen some targeting of this misinformation to communities that are particularly hard-hit by COVID-19, like the African American community,” says Ms. Hoffman. Recent polls show that about 50% of the United States plan to get a COVID-19 vaccine when one is available. Considering data picked by COVID-19, racism and misinformation from groups on Twitter that are not usually against vaccines or spreaders of misinformation is especially concerning because we have seen some targeting of this misinformation to communities that are particularly hard-hit by COVID-19, like the African American community,” says Ms. Hoffman. Recent polls show that about 50% of the United States plan to get a COVID-19 vaccine when one is available. Considering data picked by COVID-19, racism and misinformation from groups on Twitter that are not usually against vaccines or spreaders of misinformation is especially concerning because we have seen some targeting of this misinformation to communities that are particularly hard-hit by COVID-19, like the African American community,” says Ms. Hoffman.

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