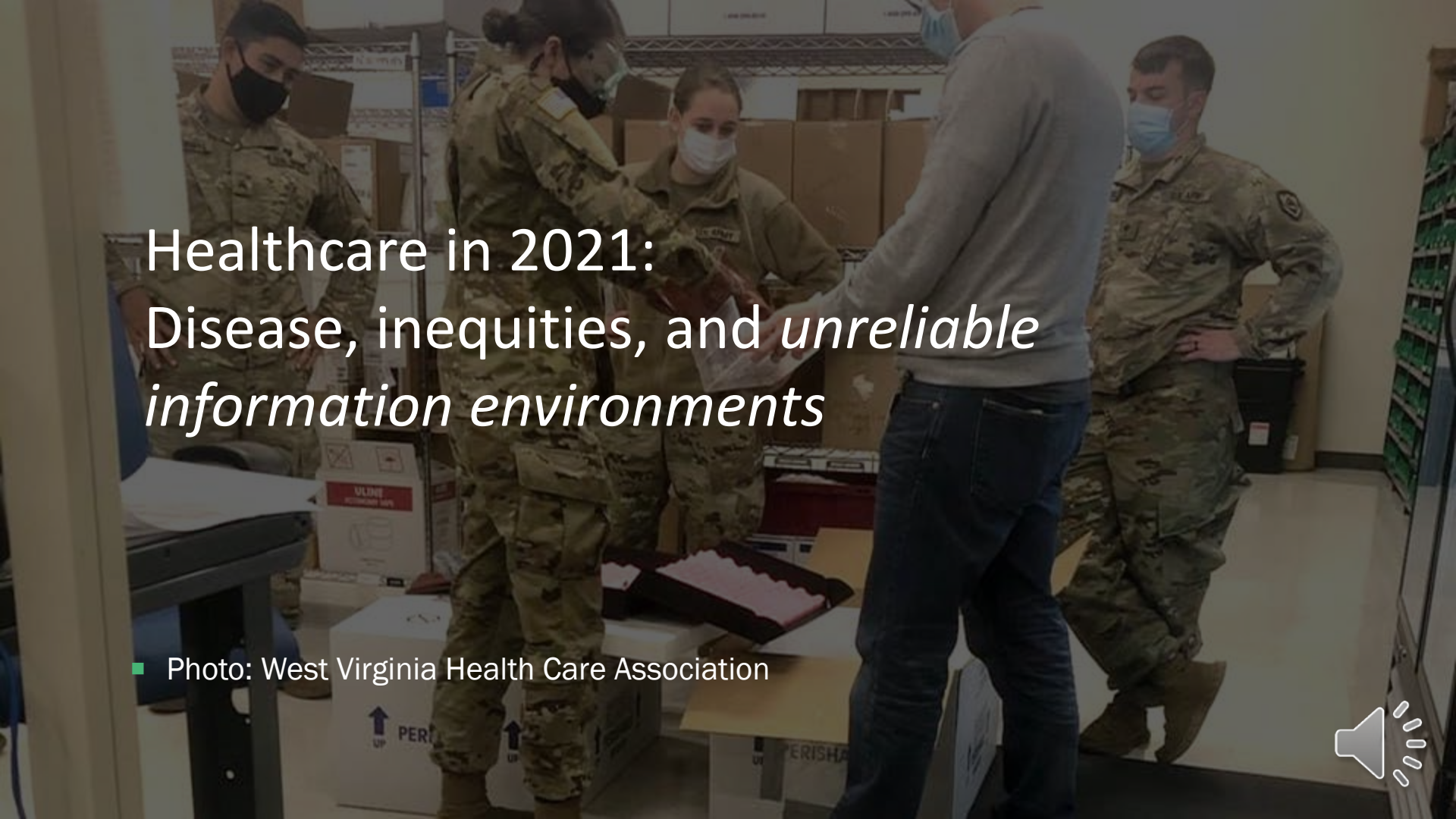


Building Health System Capacity to Address Medical Misinformation and Improve Colorectal Cancer Screening

Brian Southwell





Healthcare in 2021: Disease, inequities, and *unreliable information environments*

■ Photo: West Virginia Health Care Association



Rural residents and social media

Pew Research Center 

- Majority of rural Internet users regularly engage with Facebook, e.g., roughly 60% as of 2018.

FOR RELEASE MARCH 1, 2018.

Social Media Use in 2018

A majority of Americans use Facebook and YouTube, but young adults are especially heavy users of Snapchat and Instagram

BY Aaron Smith and Monica Anderson



Social media as (mis)information source

- Of 20 most-shared 2016 articles on Facebook with “cancer” in headline, over half reported discredited claims.
- Public health officials have faced misinformation challenges during COVID-19 pandemic.

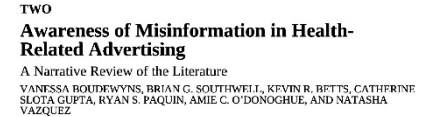


Emerging literature on misinformation

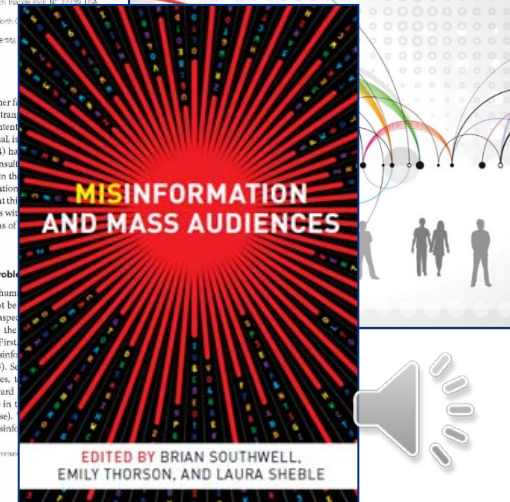
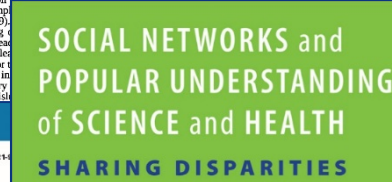
Why does misinformation spread?

How do we stop people from sharing misinformation?

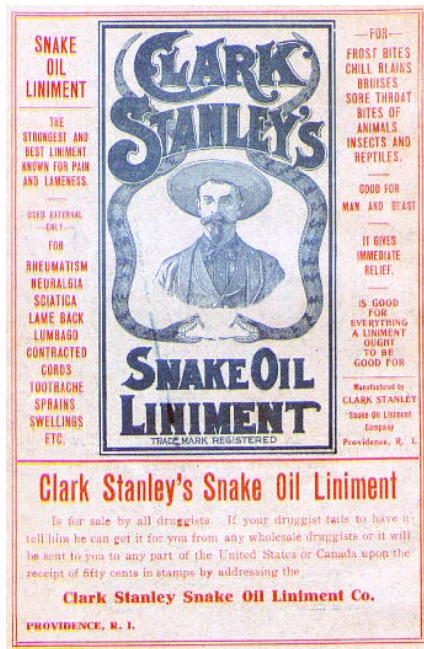
How can we mitigate effects?



Health-related advertisements, such as direct-to-consumer (DTC) and direct-to-physician (DTP) advertisements for prescription drugs, are a consequential source of information for consumers and physicians alike. Ideally, information provided in advertisements should be of high quality to support consumers and health care providers (HCPs) in making informed, evidence-based decisions. This information should contain no false or misleading claims in text, graphics, or any other format. Critically, this is not always the case. In regard to prescription issues compl...



Misinformation: Not a new phenomenon



A wave of mass hysteria seized [and] still, stations here and in other thousands of radio listeners (times of the United States and Can.



What's the problem?

- We are biased toward acceptance.
- There are reasons why we share misinformation.
- Our regulatory approach (in democracies) emphasizes post hoc detection.
- Correction is hard.



Graphic: Abbasi (2020) in JAMA

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2774709>



BELLE GIBSON

FOUNDER OF THE BEST-SELLING APP AND
COOKBOOK *THE WHOLE PANTRY*

My life-long struggle with the truth

Belle Gibson claimed to
be healing her terminal
cancer with wholefoods
– but now it's proven to
be a cruel web of lies.

Yet is Belle a hoax
mastermind or simply

FRESH-FACED. EARNEST.
Naive. When Belle Gibson
speaks, she cries easily
and muddles her words.
She's passionate about
avoiding gluten, dairy
and coffee, but doesn't really understand
how cancer works. All of which begs
the question: is this young woman really
capable of masterminding one of the



• Image: *The Australian Women's Weekly*



Do we
misunderstand
our own
vulnerabilities?



We need social connection.



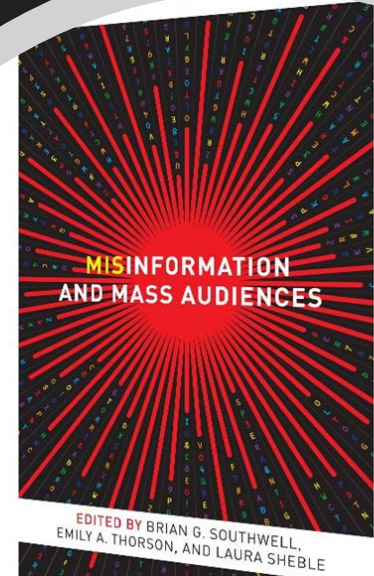
We need hope for future.



Without either, expect
misinformation diffusion if
misinformation offers salve.



We need more focus on building trust and transparency and less on blaming those who do not trust us.





What is *trust*?

Perception of credibility (or competence)

Perception of reliability (or consistency)

Perception of shared (or encapsulated) interest





What is *transparency*?

Making data and analysis visible
so others can evaluate.

Information *availability* matters,
yet physical availability not same
as deep public *understanding* of
information.





Four suggestions:

Promote open science.

Equip audiences for critical inquiry and search.

Educate scientists to become better communicators.

Collaborate to address misinformation.



Research translation to improve transparency

Can we spotlight data and methods through venues beyond journals or proprietary platforms?

Can journals provide public spaces and forums as part of portfolio?



Example: Michele Andrasik of U. Washington on WNCU's *The Measure of Everyday Life* to talk about clinical trials for HIV vaccines



What about health
education and health care
professionals?



*Does all
misinformation
matter equally for
health behavior?*

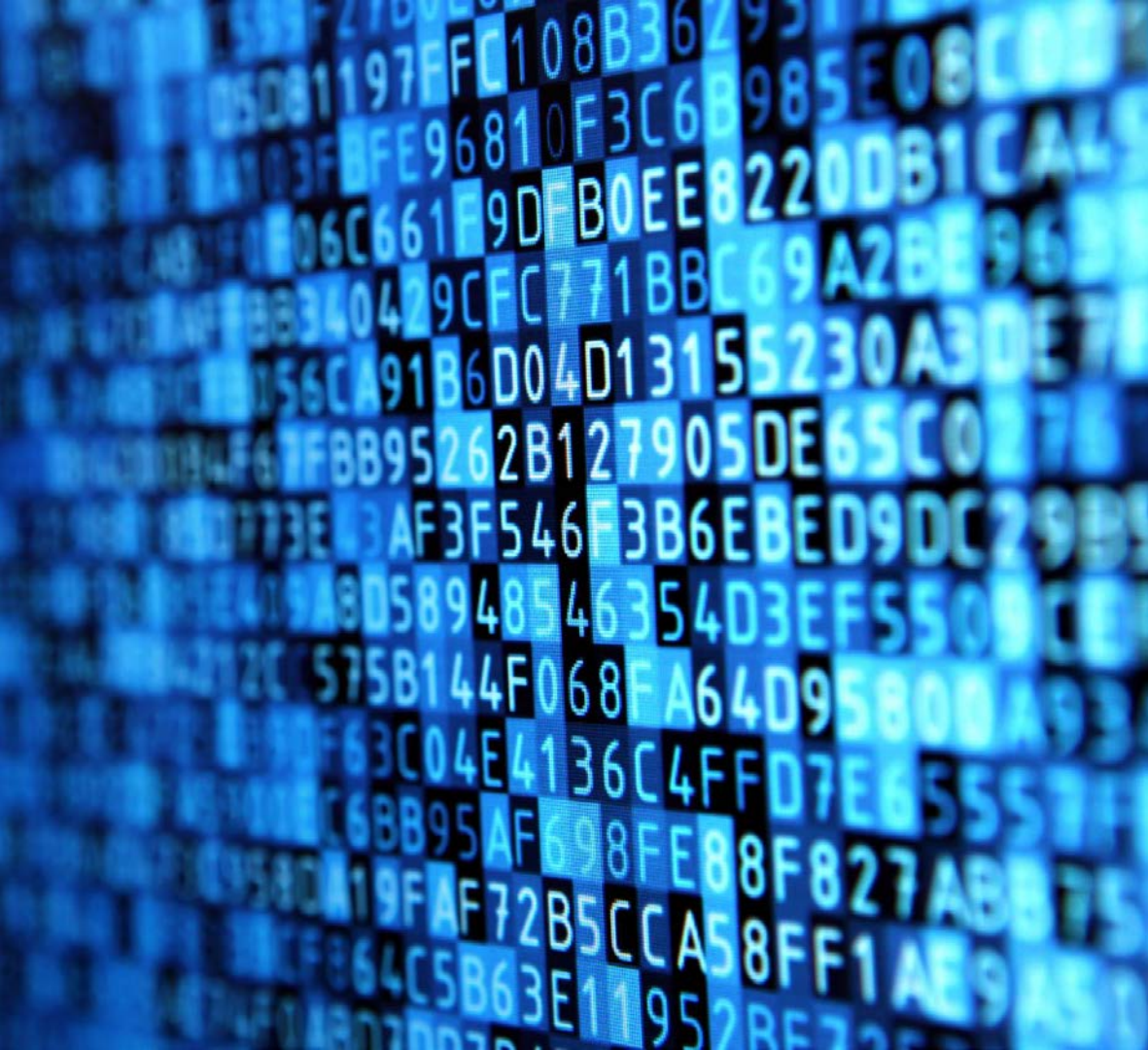
American Journal of
Preventive Medicine

CURRENT ISSUES

Misinformation as a Misunderstood
Challenge to Public Health

Brian G. Southwell, PhD,^{1,2,3} Jeff Niederdeppe, PhD,⁴ Joseph N. Cappella, PhD,⁵
Anna Gaysynsky, MPH,⁶ Dannielle E. Kelley, PhD,⁶ April Oh, PhD,⁶
Emily B. Peterson, PhD,⁶ Wen-Ying Sylvia Chou, PhD⁶





What information
do people *seek*?

What do they
accept?





Clinician workshop at Duke University:
*Why Patients Encounter, Believe, and
Share Medical Misinformation,
and What to Do about It*

Made possible by



**Craig Newmark
Philanthropies**



What can be done?

Encourage compassion

Embrace translation opportunities

Learn what people are encountering

Empower and improve information-seeking



For more information:
<https://www.hsq.dukehealth.org/medmis/>



The Duke Program on Medical Misinformation

Guiding Principles for Partnering with Patients



Medical Misinformation

Guiding Principles for
Partnering with Patients



Thank you!

**For more information:
bsouthwell@rti.org**

