

**Turkish Medical Association
Infodemic Management Working Group**

**Traps in the Socialization of Information:
Infodemic with the 21st Century Dynamics**

(Online) Symposium

Symposium Statement²

Symposium on "Traps in the Socialization of Information: Infodemic with the 21st Century Dynamics" was held by the Turkish Medical Association (TMA) Infodemic Management Working Group on May 13 and 14, 2022. Physicians, social scientists, communication experts and media representatives attended the symposium, which took place in eight live sessions. The event was livestreaming on the social media platforms of TMA. The symposium brought up different dimensions of the infodemic and its management.

In the course of the symposium, the following findings and suggestions came to the fore:

1. Infodemic is a global phenomenon.
2. Although infodemic is not a 'new' concept, it has been a very serious threat affecting global health during the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, *the first pandemic of the 'post-truth' era*.
3. Infodemic, *defined as abundance of information including misinformation, disinformation, information voids*, causes individual and social risks/threats.
4. Infodemic has its own determinants.
 - a. Borders are formed due to the effect of influential foci of power in the production of information in such a neoliberal environment.
 - b. The infodemic complicates the fight against the ecological crisis, which is among the prior global health threats. Therefore, an effective infodemic management is vital to combat with the ecological crisis.
 - c. Infodemic, depending on their circumstances, may negatively affect the groups with special needs, refugees, the elderly, the disabled, and the women due to gender inequality.
5. Different aspects of life have been affected by infodemic.
6. Lose confidence in the evidence, information, science and the truth has occurred due to infodemic.
7. Infodemic creates ethical problems.
8. Infodemic creates various problems in health/disease pattern. For example;
 - a. The disease pattern follows a wide spectrum.
 - b. The delivery of health services may be interrupted.
 - c. Disease management can be interrupted.

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- d. Access to treatment can be disrupted.
 - e. Delays can be experienced in the diagnosis and follow-up of non-communicable diseases.
 - f. There is an increase in mental problems and diseases.
 - g. Coping with stress has become difficult.
 - h. Discrimination and 'hate language' can effect on health/disease pattern.
9. Due to Infodemic, fulfillment of the function of the traditional media has become difficult.
10. To better understand the infodemic related health risks, social, economic, structural and commercial determinants of health should be taken into account.
11. Infodemic management is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field.
- a. There is a need for easily accessible fact checking tools.
 - b. There is a need to raise awareness about the importance of accurate information in the community.
 - c. To increase the health literacy, media literacy, scientific literacy, and digital literacy in the community, a collaborative work of the academia, professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, verification organizations and relevant people and institutions is needed.
 - d. Everyone has the right to access accurate information.
 - e. It is an important public responsibility to directing to accurate information sources.
 - f. Good communication is vital.
 - g. It is necessary to reduce the abundance of the information, to transform the technical and the terminological information into a form that the society can understand, to simplify the complexity of the information, and to confirm the accuracy of the information.
 - h. Capacity building is needed in infodemic management:
 - a. Physician organizations, health professional organizations should work together with other relevant components in infodemic management.
 - b. Health professionals, associations and other professional organizations should promote communication skills and media literacy.
 - c. Media and healthcare workers should collaborate in infodemic management.
13. In a broader perspective, for a fight against infodemic, democratic mechanisms in the recognition of social determinants of health, social legal state, and freedom of the press are vital.