

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19, also known as SARS-Cov-2 or “coronavirus”, originated in China. The virus is believed to have passed through a market located in the heart of Wuhan city in Hubei province (Hassanin & Université, 2020). Recent articles have shown the urgent need for vital supplies, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), which are needed for healthcare workers in hospitals throughout the United States (Feffer, 2020). Articles have also shown the abundant amount of misinformation being spread by our very own leaders and politicians in the media. The goal of this poster is to educate people on how politics has affected healthcare systems during this COVID-19 crisis and how media can affect the transmission of a deadly virus by outlining how politics has negatively impacted our healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SIGNIFICANCE

- “Even when the pathogen was detected for the first time in the United States on January 21 — in a young man returning to Washington state from China — right-wing pundits continued to downplay the risk for weeks on end” (Feffer, 2020, para. 5).
- “In many cases, radio and TV hosts... are simply following President Trump's lead as he convenes daily press briefings to boast about his supposed expertise, attack those he sees as political foes, demean the press corps, blame the disease's spread on immigrants and foreigners, and make false claims about the federal response to the global pandemic” (Karr, 2020, para. 2).
- “58 percent of America is getting COVID-19 information through news media, while 20 percent is getting information from websites and posts from governments and health organizations” (Bruce, Nguyen, Ballard, & Sanders, 2020, para. 4).
- “After the President Donald Trump put Vice President Mike Pence as the point person in the country's response to the coronavirus, nearly a quarter (24%) said they have a lot of confidence in the VP to handle the situation” (Bruce et al., 2020, para. 8).

POSITION STATEMENT

Politics has negatively impacted our healthcare system during the COVID-19 crisis.

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

- “The Free Press petition catalogs several incidents in which both radio and television broadcasters have aired dangerous misinformation about coronavirus, leading to real personal harm and even death. One instance is the death of an Arizona man and hospitalization of his wife after they ingested the drug chloroquine phosphate” (Karr, 2020, para. 13).
- On February 24, Rush Limbaugh stated, “The coronavirus is being weaponized as yet another element to bring down Donald Trump. Now, I want to tell you the truth about the coronavirus... I'm dead right on this. The coronavirus is the common cold, folks,” to his radio audience (Feffer, 2020, para. 6).
- “A flurry of new national polls released (March 21, 2020) [revealed] that while anxiety about the disease is rising on both sides of the partisan divide, Democrats consistently express much more concern about it than Republicans do, and they are much more likely to say they have changed their personal behavior as a result” (Karr, 2020, para. 9).
- The growing supply chain shortage of [PPE] and the ripple effect to those on the front lines is a foremost concern for all health care professionals (American Medical Association [AMA], 2020, para. 3).
- Hospitals are not receiving the vital supplies they need to properly fight this virus due to the government's late response (Westervelt, 2020, para. 1).
- There has been a cycle of misinformation circulating throughout the media, many falsehoods given by the President himself, leading to lethal spreading of the virus in the United States (Karr, 2020, para. 4)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- In a letter to President Trump, the AMA, the American Hospital Association, and the American Nurses Association, urged the president to “immediately use the Defense Production Act to increase the domestic production of medical supplies and equipment that hospitals, health systems, physicians, nurses and all front line providers so desperately need” (AMA, 2020, para. 2).
- “The COVID-19 economic stimulus package should include \$1 billion to ensure that hospitals, health systems, physicians and nurses are viable and directly supported for preparedness and response” (AMA, 2020, para. 4).
- “The AMA is teaming with the essential partners in health care to reach the highest levels of government to fight for physicians and patients by listening to front line physicians and channeling their collective voices into action” (AMA, 2020, para. 8).
- “Require companies such as 3M to ramp up production of N95 masks, face shields and other supplies and to prevent their export abroad” (Westervelt, 2020, para.11).
- “Share accurate, credible updates and advice from trusted sources like the World Health Organization, public health authorities and reputable news outlets” (“Web Foundation”, 2020, para. 5).
- “Fighting against viral misinformation online will give us the best possible chance to defeat the virus and save lives” (“Web Foundation”, 2020, para. 13).



(Mercury News, 2020)

CONCLUSION

Politics has negatively impacted our healthcare system during this COVID-19 crisis. Not only has television and radio broadcasters aired false information on the coronavirus, but the President of the United States has also spoken misleading information. This has created a cycle of misinformation which in some cases has proven lethal.

The downplaying of the virus has led to a major lack in proper education, preparedness, prevention strategies, and vital supplies such as PPE. Not only does this put our healthcare workers at risk, but it increases the transmission to the general public. Unless political parties and our nation's leaders take responsibility for their falsehoods and misinformation given to the public, a pandemic such as COVID-19 cannot be effectively contained and eradicated with as few casualties as possible.

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