PRE-CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM FROM
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

# 1st WHO infodemiology conference

How infodemics affect the world
& how they can be managed

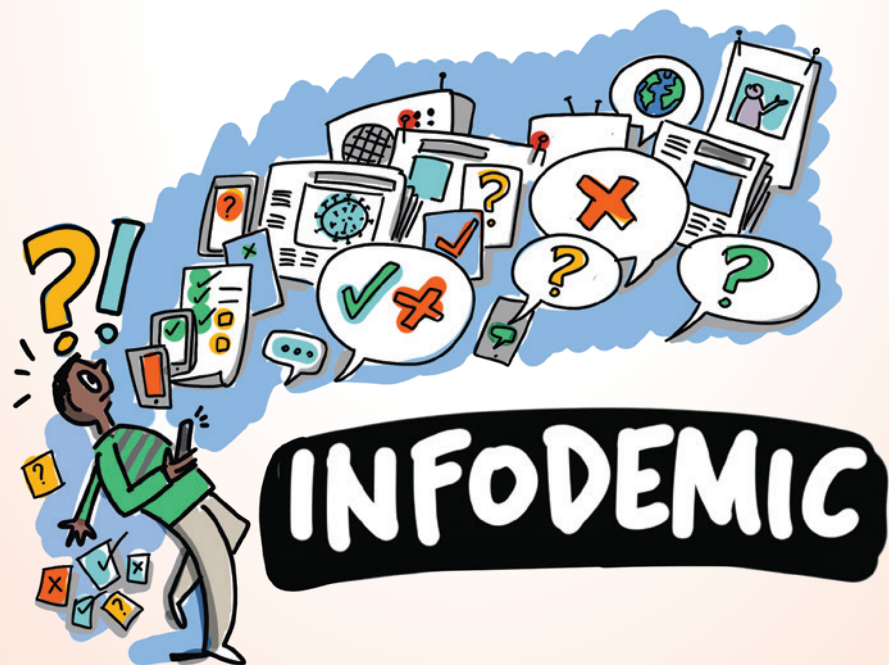29 JUNE 2020

**World Health Organization** | infodemic MANAGEMENT

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# Scope & purpose

## Background

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the phenomenon of an 'infodemic' has escalated to a level that requires a coordinated response. An infodemic is an overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – occurring during an epidemic. In a similar manner to an epidemic it spreads between humans through digital and physical information systems. It makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it. During epidemics and crises, it becomes even more important to disseminate accurate information quickly, identify and lower barriers for individuals to take steps to protect themselves, their families and communities against the infection. Even when people have access to high-quality information, there are still barriers they must overcome to take the recommended action. Like pathogens in epidemics, misinformation spreads further and faster and adds complexity to health emergency response.

## Aim

An infodemic cannot be eliminated but it can be managed. To respond effectively to infodemics, WHO calls for adaptation, development, validation and evaluation of new evidence-based measures and practices to prevent, detect and respond to mis- and disinformation. Additionally, these measures will help propagate, disseminate and amplify evidence-informed guidance for individuals and populations to take protective measures, and in the long-term sustain best practices for infodemic preparedness and response. In the context of this meeting, "infodemiology" is defined as the science behind managing infodemics. The overall aim of this consultation is to take stock of relevant research and effective practices and define public health research needs in order to advance this field. The working language of the meeting will be English. Public webinars will be interpreted into Spanish and French.

## Objectives

- Understand the multidisciplinary nature of infodemic management
- Identify current examples and tools to understand, measure and control infodemics
- Build a public health research agenda to direct focus and investment in this emerging scientific field
- Establish a community of practice and research

## Participants

- Experts from the fields of Epidemiology & Public Health; Applied Math & Data Science; Digital Health and Technology Applications; Social & Behavioral Science; Media Studies & Journalism; Marketing, UX & Design; Risk Communication and Community Engagement; Ethics & Governance and other relevant scientific disciplines and practices
- UN agencies
- Public health authorities

digital health
risk communication
Experts
social & behavioral science
epidemiology
data
Public health
science
ethics
community engagements
technology
governance
media studies

# Format

## 1) Pre-conference: **29 June 2020**

### OBJECTIVES

- Understand the multidisciplinary nature of the infodemic and its management
- Learn from experts on potential interventions to manage infodemics
- Get feedback from participants on discussion papers, working documents and infodemiology glossary

### FORMAT

- Open to the public with 7 inspiring talks how the infodemic affects the world currently and reflections how it can be managed. Planned talks:
  - *Paradigm shifts in epidemiology and making multidisciplinary connections*
  - *Battling a Pandemic in a Fact-resistant World: Epidemiology, Public Health, and the COVID-19 Infodemic*
  - *A New Digital Reality: How Fake News and Misinformation are Derailing the Largest Vaccination Effort in History - A Case Study of Polio Programme*
  - *'Gotong Royong': Blunting the impact of multiple infodemics via a whole-of-society approach*
  - *Conspiracies, Rumors and Falsehoods: The truth about why the infodemic is so dangerous*
  - *When fact-checking, media and misinformation collide in Africa*
  - *Viral (p)articles: A network mapping approach to infodemiology*
- ZOOM limit for the public session is 5000 participants
- Anyone can join in and listen, and submit questions on *Slido*
- Participants will be invited to provide feedback to the draft discussion papers, working documents, and infodemiology glossary

## 2) Scientific conference: 30 June & 1 - 16 July 2020

### OBJECTIVES

- Define the scientific discipline of infodemiology
- Support the transdisciplinary discussions and identifying commonalities and connections between them
- Identify current examples and tools to understand, measure and control infodemics
- Build a public health research agenda to direct focus and investment in this emerging scientific field
- Establish a community of practice and research

### FORMAT

- The scientific conference is closed to the public.
- **Day 1 (30 June):**
  - Opening by WHO Director-General
  - 4 scientific key note discipline talks. Planned talks:
    - > Epidemiology, Public Health and infodemic
    - > Psychology, marketing and behavioural insight and infodemic
    - > Data science, applied maths and physics and infodemic
    - > Society, ethics, governance and infodemic
  - Roundtable discussion: Epidemiology and its linkages to the new scientific discipline of infodemiology
- **Day 2, 3, 4 & 5 (1, 7, 9, 14 July):**
  - Working sessions on 4 working topics:
    - > **Topic 1:** How can the digital-physical information environment be measured and monitored? Using data triangulation, real-time surveillance and monitoring and metrics development
    - > **Topic 2:** How does information originate and spread? Information environment, how low-quality information develops into harmful narratives, and how misinformation propagates

> **Topic 3:** How does information affect and impact individuals and populations? Understanding the risk factors, impact on population & societies behaviour and action, building and maintaining trust, and resilience to misinformation

> **Topic 4:** What interventions work to protect and mitigate? Improving intervention design and building the evidence-based response toolkit

– Each team rotates through the themes over a 2-week period

● **Day 6 (16 July):**

– Reporting back from experts to review the outcomes from working groups

## 3) Public summary: 21 July 2020

### OBJECTIVES

● Inform participants and the viewing public on conclusions of the scientific conference and next steps

● Link participants and the viewing public with possible follow up opportunities after the conference

● Get feedback from participants on outcomes of the conference and next steps

### FORMAT

● Public interactive webinar with summary, conclusions of the scientific conference and next steps

● Anyone can join in and listen, and submit questions on *Slido*

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|---------|------------|-------------|
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# Agenda

## 1st WHO Infodemiology Conference

7 webinars taking place over 3 weeks

| | |
|---|---|
| **PRE-CONFERENCE** | 29 June 2020<br>13:00 –17:30  Geneva time |
| **SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**<br>(closed) | 30 June 2020<br>1 - 16 July 2020 |
| **CONCLUSIONS OF THE**<br>**SCIENTIFIC INFODEMIOLOGY**<br>**CONFERENCE** | 21 July 2020<br>15:00 –16:30  Geneva time |

## Day 0

**Monday, 29 June 2020, 13:00–17:30 Geneva time**

| | |
|---|---|
| 12:50 – 13:00 | **Warm-up *Slido* poll** |
| 13:00 – 13:05 | **Introduction**<br>*Sylvie Briand*, World Health Organization |
| 13:05 – 13:25 | **Headline key note talk**<br>*David Nabarro*, WHO COVID-19 Special Envoy & Imperial College Institute of Global Health Innovation, UK |
| 13:25 – 13:40 | **In conversation**<br>*David Nabarro* & *Sylvie Briand* |
| 13:40 – 14:00 | **Battling a Pandemic in a Fact-resistant World: Epidemiology, Public Health, and the COVID-19 Infodemic**<br>*Saad Omer*, Yale University, USA |
| 14:00 – 14:20 | **A New Digital Reality: How Fake News and Misinformation are Derailing the Largest Vaccination Effort in History - A Case Study of Polio Programme**<br>*Rustam Haydarov*, UNICEF |
| 14:20 – 14:40 | **In conversation**<br>*Saad Omer* & *Rustam Haydarov* |
| 14:40 – 14:50 | ***Away From Keyboard (AFK) break*** |
| 14:50 – 15:10 | **'Gotong Royong': Blunting the impact of multiple infodemics via a whole-of-society approach**<br>*Harry Sufehmi*, MAFINDO, Indonesia |
| 15:10 – 15:30 | **Conspiracies, Rumors and Falsehoods: The truth about why the infodemic is so dangerous**<br>*Claire Wardle*, FirstDraft News, UK |
| 15:30 – 15:50 | **In conversation**<br>*Harry Sufehmi* & *Claire Wardle* |
| 15:50 – 16:00 | ***AFK break*** |
| 16:00 – 16:20 | **When fact-checking, media and misinformation collide in Africa**<br>*Catherine Gicheru*, ICFJ Knight Fellow, Kenya |
| 16:20 – 16:40 | **Viral (p)articles: A network mapping approach to infodemiology**<br>*Camille Francois*, Berkman-Klein Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University, USA |
| 16:40 – 17:00 | **In conversation**<br>*Catherine Gicheru* & *Camille François* |
| 17:00 – 17:10 | ***AFK break*** |
| 17:10 – 17:30 | **Working together to manage infodemics**<br>*Tim Nguyen*, World Health Organization |
| 17:30 | ***Adjourn*** |

# Keynote speakers



## Camille François
*Berkman-Klein Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University, USA*

Camille François is the Chief Innovation Officer at Graphika—a cybersecurity company focused on information integrity issues—and oversees its data analysis, investigation and R&D teams.

Camille was previously the Principal Researcher at Jigsaw, a division of Google that builds technology to address global security challenges. There, she led several programs focused on protecting vulnerable users from online threats. She has advised governments and parliamentary committees on both sides of the Atlantic on cybersecurity and digital rights, investigated Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential election on behalf of the US Senate Select Intelligence Committee, and served as a special advisor to the Chief Technology Officer of France.

In 2019, Camille was recognized by the MIT Tech Review in its annual '35 Innovators Under 35' award, and named one of TIME Magazine's '100 Next' global leaders for her work on information operations. Camille is a Mozilla fellow and an affiliate of the Berkman-Klein Center for Internet & Society, where she conducts research on cyberpeace and the impacts of cyber conflict on civil society.

# Catherine Gicheru
*ICFJ Knight Fellow, Kenya*

Catherine is an ICFJ Knight Fellow spearheading a new women only Covid-19 reporting project— the Africa Women Journalists Project for Covid-19. Prior to this she was the senior programme manager with Code for Africa's Academy and Communities programme.

She co-founded PesaCheck, East Africa's budget and public finance fact checking and verification initiative which has been debunking a lot of the claims around the Covid-19 pandemic. She was a member of the advisory board of the Open Society Foundation's Fiscal Governance Program which seeks to promote openness, accountability, and equity in fiscal and economic systems around the world. She was an advisory member of the State of Technology in Global Newsrooms survey which looked at how media professionals are adopting and adapting to digital technologies. She is also an advisory board member for IWMF's Online Harassment Initiative.

Catherine contributed to the Open Government Partnership publication Trust: The fight to win it back released at the margins of the UN General Assembly in 2017 and looked at what media organisations can do to win back public trust. She also contributed to the African Muckraking: 75 Years of Investigative Journalism from Africa, a collection of investigative and campaigning journalism written by Africans about Africa.

She is a jury member of the Money Trail, a collaborative project to stimulate cross-border collaborations between investigative journalists. In 2018, she was recognised as one of New African's 100 Most Influential Africans for her work in the media.

She is also actively involved in the Kenya open data movement.

Gicheru is a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, a Reuters Institute Journalism fellow at Oxford University, and a 1992 IWMF Courage in Journalism award winner.

# Rustam Haydarov
*UNICEF*

Mr Rustam Haydarov is a Senior Communication Manager at Global Polio Eradication Programme in UNICEF New York HQ. Mr. Haydarov served with UNICEF for nearly 20 years in various positions, development and emergency contexts of Central and South Asia, East and Southern Africa and Eastern Europe. He is a passionate professional, who works with communication teams across the world. Mr Haydarov strives for applying technical expertise and social data in design of communication strategies to enable polio campaigns and support public demand for immunization.

Prior to taking his leadership role in HQ, Mr Haydarov worked for several years in the Horn of Africa, coordinating communication response for polio outbreaks in the sub-region, including Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and other countries. Mr Haydarov for two years led GPEI C4D programme in high-risk endemic areas of Pakistan. During his earlier career Mr. Haydarov worked with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and K-State University in the fields of health communication and applied marketing research. He combines a unique competence, where social data and behavioral science meets practical application in the field.

Mr. Rustam Haydarov is an Edmund S. Muskie fellow of the US Department of State. He earned his Master's degree from A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communication at K-State. He also holds M.S. and B.S. degrees in International Affairs (Regional Studies for Middle East and North Africa) from the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies. Mr. Haydarov is a researcher and an author of several published works on determinants of vaccination acceptance, message framing design and engagement strategies with mobile and high-risk populations. Mr Haydarov is a national of Uzbekistan.

# David Nabarro
*WHO COVID-19 Special Envoy &
Imperial College Institute of Global
Health Innovation, UK*

David Nabarro is the Co-Director of the Imperial College Institute of Global Health Innovation at the Imperial College London and supports systems leadership for sustainable development through his Switzerland based social enterprise 4SD. From March 2020, David is appointed Special Envoy of WHO Director General on COVID-19. He secured his medical qualification in 1974 and has worked in over 50 countries – in communities and hospitals, governments, civil society, universities, and in United Nations (UN) programs.

David worked for the British government in the 1990s as head of Health and Population and director for Human Development in the UK Department for International Development. From 1999 to 2017 he held leadership roles in the UN system on disease outbreaks and health issues, food insecurity and nutrition, climate change and sustainable development. In October 2018, David received the World Food Prize together with Lawrence Haddad for their leadership in raising the profile and building coalitions for action for better nutrition across the Sustainable Development Goals.

# Saad Omer
*Yale University, USA*

Saad B. Omer is the inaugural Director of the Yale Institute for Global Health, and a Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at Yale University, Schools of Medicine and Public Health.  He has conducted studies in the United States, Guatemala, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and South Africa. Dr Omer's research portfolio includes clinical trials to estimate efficacy and safety of maternal and/or infant influenza, pertussis, polio, measles and pneumococcal vaccines and trials to evaluate drug regimens to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV. He has published over 290 papers in peer reviewed journals and has mentored over 100 junior faculty, clinical, and research post-doctoral fellows and PhD and other graduate students.

# Harry Sufehmi
*MAFINDO, Indonesia*

Harry Sufehmi is the founder and presidium of MAFINDO, an anti-hoax organization based in Indonesia. Since its founding in 2016, MAFINDO has expanded into multiple chapters in 17 cities, with over 80,000 local and online volunteers.

At MAFINDO, Mr. Sufehmi focuses on developing anti-hoax technology that volunteers can use to combat hoaxes and misinformation. These technologies include Yudistira, the core anti-hoax engine with an open API facility; Kalimasada, a WhatsApp chatbot that enables users to fact-check information on WhatsApp; and Hoax Buster Tools (HBT), an app that enables fact-checking on smartphones.

A seasoned IT consultant with over 20 years of experience, Mr. Sufehmi specializes in high-performance and high-availability systems and open source technologies. His technology was most notably used as the IT system for an Indonesian Election, the largest system for a same-day election in the world, which managed and processed data for over 540,000 voting booths and more than 100 million voters.

Mr. Sufehmi earned his master's degree in Computing at Birmingham City University. He currently lives in Jakarta, with his wife and 5 children.

# Claire Wardle
*FirstDraft News, UK*

Claire Wardle currently leads the strategic direction and research for First Draft. In 2017 she co-authored the seminal report, Information Disorder: An interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy for the Council of Europe. Previous to that she was a Fellow at the Shorenstein Center for Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School, the Research Director at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and head of social media for the United Nations Refugee Agency. She was also the project lead for the BBC Academy in 2009, where she designed a comprehensive training program for social media verification for BBC News that was rolled out across the organization. She holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Pennsylvania.

# Sylvie Briand
*WHO*

Dr Sylvie Briand (MD, MPH, PhD) is the director of the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH), WHO Emergency Preparedness (WPE) at the World Health Organization (WHO/WHE), HQ Geneva.

The Department of Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH) advances global efforts to prevent and control existing and emerging infectious diseases by increasing access to evidence-based interventions; fostering impactful innovation; and leveraging technical, operational and strategic partnerships. The scope of GIH includes COVID-19 but also other dangerous pathogens such as pandemic influenza, plague, Nipah virus, smallpox and other pox viruses and arboviruses (Zika, and Chikungunya).

Since 2001, Dr Briand has been actively involved in the detection, preparedness and response to global threats, leading the scientific and strategic component of the WHO response (avian and pandemic influenza, Ebola, Zika, Plague, yellow fever, cholera, MERS).

Before joining WHO, Dr Briand worked as public health project director for different global health agencies in various geographic regions.

# Tim Nguyen
*WHO*

Mr Tim Nguyen is the Head of Unit for High Impact Events in the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness Department of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (WHE). His team manages (i) the WHO Information Network for Epidemics (EPI-WIN), a platform to unite the work on managing disease infodemics during emergencies, and (ii) the strategic global governance of pharmaceutical interventions including pandemic influenza and smallpox vaccine as well as influenza antivirals. In the COVID-19 pandemic response, he co-manages the 'Managing Infodemic' pillar.

He joined WHO in 2006 initially working as a Technical Officer in the Yellow Fever Programme which managed an initiative funded by the GAVI Alliance to provide 40 million doses of vaccine to most at risk populations in low resource settings. In 2008, he joined WHO's Global Influenza Programme and took part in the global response work to the first influenza pandemic of the 21st century. In 2011, he was the founding member of WHO's Global Hepatitis Programme and project manager for the development of the first WHO treatment guideline for HCV.

From 2014-2017, he was the Unit leader for Knowledge Management, Evidence and Research for Policy-Making at the WHO Regional Office for Europe based in Copenhagen, Denmark. There, he established the scientific journal Public Health Panorama and was responsible for the development of the WHO/Europe resolution and action plan for evidence-informed policy-making. Before joining WHO, he worked as management consultant in the pharmaceutical industry.

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE
SCIENTIFIC INFODEMIOLOGY
CONFERENCE**

21 July 2020
15:00 –16:30  Geneva time

More information

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