

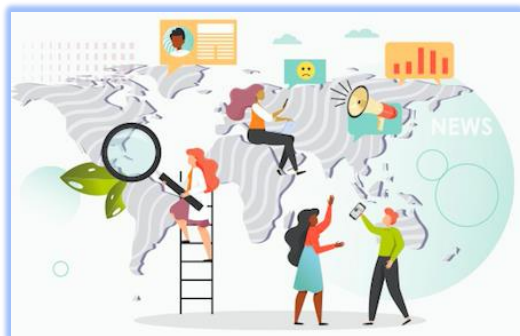
Special issue on
**Infodemiology and infodemic management in the
age of digital interdependence**

CALL FOR PAPERS

The [Pan American Journal of Public Health](#), published by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), announces a call for papers for an upcoming special issue on "Infodemiology and infodemic management in the age of digital interdependence" to be published in 2021, as part of a global initiative launched by the World Health Organization as detailed below.

Background and justification

As stated in the joint call for papers "Special issues on Infodemiology"¹, launched on 18 August 2020, "The global community is facing a major challenge as a highly infectious virus is spreading globally with more than 21.5 million cases and 766,000 deaths as of August 17, 2020. At the same time, a deluge of information, including misleading or false content is spreading even faster through the internet, social networks and the media, dangerously altering risk perceptions and disseminating false information about the disease, potential cures, and probable sources.



This abundance of information includes misinformation, disinformation, and rumors, which may lead to confusion, disorientation and risky or improper behavior, and ultimately to mistrust in governments, experts, researchers, and the media. These outcomes may seriously endanger the effectiveness of the response and of public health measures. There is an increasing awareness that the surge of excessive, false, or misleading information may pose new and serious threats to global health that should be adequately tackled through major

research efforts and carefully targeted, evidence-based policy interventions.

¹ World Health Organization. Joint call for papers - Special issues on Infodemiology, 18 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/joint-call-for-papers-special-issues-on-infodemiology>.

Due to its consequences at the global scale and its analogies with the transmission mechanisms of a pandemic, the term “infodemic” is used to denote a rapid, large-scale dissemination of all kinds of health information and misinformation through a variety of media and informational channels.

This overabundance of information –some accurate and some not– makes it harder for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when needed. When an infodemic occurs during an epidemic, its potential threat for public health is significantly amplified.

Five scientific journals with a common goal

The scale of the infodemic and the complexity of the required response makes this topic of high importance and concern for public health and government response. Governments need to properly prioritize not only pandemic responses but also infodemic ones, providing reliable information, while at the same time building on solid and scientifically tested methods, facts and analytics, in designing policy interventions, and in constantly checking and updating them through a close monitoring of the informational flows and trends and of their impacts with respect to policy targets. A whole new field of research is needed to cope with the current and future similar threats, a field that requires a novel, complex synthesis of specialist knowledge from many different existing disciplines, and that can be termed “infodemiology”.

For this reason, the World Health Organization has launched an unprecedented collaboration between several scientific journals which, in view of their complementary aims and scope, may serve as a useful platform of dissemination of high quality, relevant scientific knowledge on infodemic-related issues. All together, these journals are launching a joint Call for Papers¹ and furthering a global research effort toward understanding infodemics.

The list of the participating journals and their respective call for papers for this joint Special issues on Infodemiology can be accessed [here](#).



Putting infodemiology into context in the Region of the Americas

Access to the right information, at the right time, in the right format is critical. In this context the Pan American Health Organization is working with strategic stakeholders and its Member States towards a digital transformation framework and the improvement of information systems and platforms. It also considers the challenges on providing trustworthy information for decision-makers, national authorities, researchers and the population.

As experienced with COVID-19, in times of pandemics this scenario is enhanced by the avalanche of information generated and shared in many databases, social media, networks, etc. "In other words, we

have a situation where a lot of information is being produced and shared to every corner of the world, reaching billions of people. How much of this information is accurate? Just some of it”².

In the context of this Call for Papers, the *Pan American Journal of Public Health* will consider manuscripts with a clear focus on public health and up-to-date information addressing:

- Strategies, lessons learned and experiences in managing infodemics in health emergencies
- Innovative methods and platforms aiming to manage infodemics and to inform decision-making, including unstructured data analysis, social networks analysis and artificial intelligence
- Countries strategic response to mitigate misinformation/disinformation



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Language of submissions:

Papers will be accepted in Spanish, English or Portuguese.





Publishing standards and types of contributions:

The manuscript selection process will follow the journal peer review usual procedures.



PAHO

Pan American Journal of Public Health

	The journal will consider original research articles, systematic reviews, special reports and brief communications; please see the Instructions for authors . Please indicate in the cover letter and in the electronic submission interface that the manuscript is being submitted for the Special Issue on Infodemiology.
	Deadline: October 30, 2020
	Questions: Please send your query to contacto_rpsp@paho.org . Please include in the Subject: "Infodemiology"

www.paho.org/journal

² Pan American Health Organization. COVID-19 Factsheets: Understanding the Infodemic and Misinformation in the fight against COVID-19. Available at: <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/52052>

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