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Dig Deeper

November 15, 2021

Aaron Rodgers' Misinformation: What source(s) should the public consult on vaccines?

Directions:

1. Obtain "[Scientists fight a new source of vaccine misinformation: Aaron Rodgers](#)" (Ken Belson and Emily Anthes, The New York Times).
2. Use this think sheet to take notes as you read the article.
3. Assess a celebrity's role as a source in the information landscape. What source(s) should the public listen to and why?

Resource Connection Tip: Visit NLP's [COVID-19 vaccine misinformation resource page](#), which is updated periodically.





* **spew:** to put forth or expel forcibly in a rush
platform: the ability to use fame to influence others

PART A: Aaron Rodgers' platform

<p>Excerpt:</p> <p>So <u>when news broke that he tested positive for the coronavirus</u> last week and was <u>unvaccinated</u>, Rodgers justified his decision to not get vaccinated by speaking out against the highly effective vaccines and <u>spewing a stream of misinformation and junk science</u>. Medical professionals were disheartened not just because it will <u>make it harder for them to persuade adults to get vaccinated, but because they are also starting to vaccinate 5- to 11-year-olds</u>.</p>	<p>My reaction to this excerpt:</p>
<p>Quote or summarize another excerpt related to Rodgers' platform and ability to influence people as a famous athlete.</p>	<p>Why I think this is important:</p>

Why does it matter if Aaron Rodgers is unvaccinated and/or spreads misinformation?	What damage could result from Rodgers' statements?	Other details I think are important relating to Rodgers' platform:
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PART B: Misinformation vs. accurate information

<p>Use this chart to correct or clarify Rodgers' misinformation related to COVID-19. The first column lists one of Rodgers' statements. Find evidence in the article to correct or clarify the statement. Write your findings in the second column. For the third column, write down the source that provides the correct explanation or clarification.</p>		
<p>COVID-19 misinformation referenced by Rodgers</p> <p></p>	<p>Correct explanation or clarification</p> <p></p>	<p>Source for accurate information (the first one has been done for you)</p>
<p>"...Rodgers suggested that the fact that people were still getting, and dying from, Covid-19 meant that the vaccines were not highly effective." [This is FALSE.]</p>		<p>A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</p>
<p>"Rodgers also expressed concern that the vaccines might cause fertility issues..." [This is FALSE.]</p>		
<p>"Rodgers said he ruled out the mRNA vaccines, manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna, because he had an allergy to an unspecified ingredient they contained." [This is UNVERIFIED.]</p>		
<p>How would you describe these statements Rodgers made about the COVID-19 vaccine?</p>		

PART C: Repercussions

What happened with Rodgers' partnership with Prevea Health and State Farm as a result of his actions, including amplifying COVID-19 vaccine misinformation?

How are other athletes, TV commentators and doctors reacting to Rodgers' comments?

Does Rodgers' vaccination status and public comments spreading vaccine falsehoods matter to the larger world? Why or why not?

Conclusion: Assess a celebrity's role as a source in the information landscape. What source(s) should the public trust for information about the COVID-19 vaccines and why? Use details from this think sheet to support your answer.



Extend: Go to a reputable medical information website like the [World Health Organization](#) and make a list of as many facts as you can find about COVID-19 and the vaccines.