

## Truth or Pandemic? Engagement study of an online platform and interactive game targeting COVID-19 misinformation

Vincent Gosselin Boucher, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Juliette François-Sévigny, BA<sup>2</sup>; Catherine Cimon-Paquet, MSc<sup>3</sup>; Étienne Aumont, MSc<sup>3</sup>; Brigitte Voisard, BA<sup>3,4</sup>; Simon L. Bacon, PhD<sup>4,5</sup>; Kim L. Lavoie, PhD<sup>3,4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>School of Kinesiology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Université de Sherbrooke, Longueuil, QC, Canada

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychology, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montreal, QC, Canada

<sup>4</sup>Montreal Behavioural Medicine Centre, Centre Intégré Universitaire de santé et services sociaux du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CIUSSS-NIM), Montreal, QC, Canada

<sup>5</sup>Department of Health, Kinesiology and Applied Physiology, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Canada

**Background:** The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic has been obfuscated by an increase in misinformation and disinformation, both widely disseminated through social media. The objective of this project was to evaluate engagement rates among young adults to a multilevel interactive education platform, Pandemic: True or False?

**Methods:** Information about the following topics was shared using an interactive, competitive online game platform: 1) history of pandemics; 2) health behaviours; 3) disinformation and conspiracy theories; 4) mental health, sex, and relationships; 5) work and well-being; 6) vaccination; and 7) the post pandemic. The topics were covered in French and English, and disseminated via social media, using: A) an online platform gathering existing information resources, and social media; B) a series of 6 French podcast episodes; and C) an online game. Engagement was measured using social media-specific metrics (e.g., interactions, comments), using Google Analytics for the webpage and use of the game (e.g., level reached, modules completed).

**Results:** Since its launch on June 21 (2021), more than 200 people have signed up for the game (21 completed all 7 modules) and 563 people follow the social media pages. The series of podcast have been listened to 1,426 times, and the videos have been viewed 21,091 times. Overall, the project has reached more than 30,000 unique users.

**Conclusions:** Overall the platform had satisfactory engagement from the target audience. The video content and infographics received a lot of attention relative to the number of people who signed up for or completed the game. We are exploring new methods of dissemination to optimize engagement.