

8 - Scientific Literacy and Socio-scientific Issues | Empirical

SP - (16051) - INOCULATING ADOLESCENTS AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE MISINFORMATION

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Short Abstract

In the "post-truth" era, where fake news are increasingly present and young people rely on social media as information sources, teaching strategies to counter such online misinformation becomes pivotal. Inoculation theory has shown to be a promising vehicle to effectively neutralize the influence of misinformation with adults. However, possible applications of inoculation theory for climate change education with young people have not been researched yet. In this study, we investigated whether Austrian adolescents can be "inoculated" against misinformation targeted at the scientific consensus regarding climate change. In a randomized online survey experiment (N = 1066) we demonstrated (like previous studies with adults) that adolescents are susceptible to misinformation targeted at the scientific consensus. However, it is possible to pre-emptively protect adolescents against such misinformation through cognitive inoculation by exposing them to severely weakened doses of misinformation. For future research, we recommend to further elaborate possible applications of inoculation theory in climate change education or when teaching other supposedly socially controversial topics.