# The pandemic coupled with an infodemic and data deficit

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| The COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by an infodemic, where vaccine disinformation was weaponised to polarise communities and disrupt social cohesion. One consequence was the wide spread of misinformation, an additional challenge for health care professionals to manage during a public health emergency. Central to managing communication crisis is the equipping of health professionals and community leaders with information and resources to ensure that they are in the information loop, and able to confidently address concerns and convey consistent messages. When key components of vaccine crisis communications strategies are not included in immunisation campaigns, vaccine confidence can be quickly eroded.Of all concerns people hold about vaccines, vaccine safety is consistently the most cited, a pattern unchanged for over two centuries. In addressing such concerns, it is vital to have rigorous post-marketing data about the safety of vaccines to include in messaging. While such data is usually derived from hospitalisations linked with vaccine exposure information, primary care is currently an untapped reservoir of potential data for conditions occurring after vaccination unlikely to present to tertiary care. In NZ we have excellent health administration data, however we have not tapped into its power for vaccine pharmacoepidemiology since 2008.This talk will cover some of the challenges in talking about COVID-19 vaccines and what people worry about most along with some evidence-based solutions to under pin how we can do better. |