



REPORT 44/2018

Content Department

**Analysis of  
disinformation online about cancer**

## Conclusions

The purpose of this report is to identify audiovisual contents on the internet that contain disinformation regarding cancer treatment according to the European Commission's definition of disinformation: 'verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm.'

A huge amount of disinformation about cancer can be found among online content related to this illness. By way of example, a search for 'cure cancer' gives about 11 million results on Google and another 68,300 on YouTube. An analysis of the first 50 YouTube results reveals that most - 74% - can be considered as disinformation about the illness, while on Google this proportion is 22%.

In this context we have analysed the content of 14 videos on YouTube, which in total have had 25 million views and which are found on channels totalling close to 2.5 million subscriptions.

In addition to examining the content of the videos, we have also analysed users' reactions to them, as this not only shows the effect of the content but also lends credibility to it when people's comments often add to or supplement the audiovisual discourse. Some of the videos analysed include a statement saying that the advice given is not intended to replace that of medical professionals, although the context in which this is given often invalidates it.

The videos analysed have the following characteristics:

- **They present products or therapies with healing properties to combat cancer**

"Today we are going to show you a home remedy. **The cancer dies in just 42 hours. This juice has cured over 45,000 people** [...] This juice [...] destroys cancer cells in the short term. More than 45,000 people **with cancer and other incurable illnesses** have experienced the benefits of this juice."

(Video *CANCER DIES IN JUST 42 HOURS, A JUICE THAT HAS CURED MORE THAN 45 THOUSAND PEOPLE!*)

"The reason why it is so important is firstly that the **man had a cancer that has never been cured by orthodox medicine**: metastasis of colon cancer to the liver (there is no solution in orthodox medicine for this type of problem); secondly, **he did it by himself, following the book** and, thirdly, he not only **used the book to heal himself**, but he also healed others."

*(Video Cure Advanced Cancer with The Gerson Therapy)*

"This ginger and honey recipe has become popular all over the web because many people say they have effectively fought cancer with it. **Cancer patients who have taken this recipe say they have managed to improve or overcome the illness without the need for surgery or chemotherapy.**"

*(Video This powerful root destroys ovarian, prostate and colon cancer and is stronger than chemotherapy)*

The rhetoric in the videos is primarily validated and reinforced by comments from users who add to and supplement the original content, for example by recommending other alleged cancer treatments:

"APPARENTLY **THE ANAMÚ PLANT IS VERY GOOD FOR CURING CANCER** THE YOUNG LEAVES ARE LIQUIDISED [...] AND YOU DRINK A GLASS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING ANOTHER MEDICINAL PRODUCT IS BICARBONATE WITH LEMON WHICH APPARENTLY CURES CANCER..."

*(Video Treatment of uterine breast prostate cancer natural home medicine channel 5 uriel tapia 2)*

- **The discourse purports to be scientific with use of specific terminology and references to studies and medical personnel to support the proposed therapy**

"There is **an article on the conclusions of two British scientists and researchers, Professor Gerry Potter from the Cancer Drug Discovery Group and Professor Dan Burke**. Their combined results reveal the following: Cancer cells have a unique biomarker that normal cells do not have. **This is an enzyme called QI1B1**"

*(Video Cancer is a fungus and is curable)*

"[...] **Numerous studies have led to a new discovery** that has given hope to cancer patients and people who want to prevent it. [...]. **The study reveals** that ginger contains medicinal properties that specifically combat cancer. **This was published in the journal Food and Chemical Toxicology [...]**"

*(Video This powerful root destroys ovarian, prostate and colon cancer and is stronger than chemotherapy)*

"The source of this information is fascinating: **it comes from one of the largest drugs manufacturers in the world** who state that **after more than 20 laboratory tests** carried out since 1970 **the extracts revealed that** it destroys malignant cells in 12 types of cancer, including colon, breast, prostate, lung and pancreas..."

*(Video THE CURE FOR CANCER [ Guanabana ])*

➤ **They support the therapy presented, which is further reinforced by user interactions**

"Cancer is being beaten, even in a short time. We're talking about a month and a half and the patient ... in fact **I believe that in 15 days the patient already knows that their cancer is being cured. Amazing! In 15 days! It's quite astonishing.**"

*(Video Treatment of uterine breast prostate cancer natural home medicine channel 5 uriel tapia 2)*

"And I know that he ['Doctor' Tullio Simoncini] is achieving **remarkable results in drastically reducing and eliminating cancer completely, even in some real late-stage cancer types, using sodium bicarbonate.** This may take months in some cases, but in others, such as breast cancer, **when the tumour is easily accessible, in a matter of days it may no longer exist.**"

*(Video Cancer is a fungus and is curable)*

"Doctors said that Maria would only live until March of this year and as a last resort she got in touch with Dr Tapia. Who would have thought that he would achieve exactly what he said? The prescription he gave would end her cervix cancer in less than 6 months."

"And meanwhile we are **curing pancreatic cancer** in not just one patient. **This cured woman appeared in the newspapers. She has been well for 16 years. Her cancer was so advanced that she couldn't eat or drink.** She brought everything back up. She was vomiting blood. Her doctor said that if she went to Mexico she would not see her birthday, which was a week away. Well, in one week she was eating and drinking, the pain had gone and she had stopped vomiting."



(Video *Cure Advanced Cancer with The Gerson Therapy*)

In addition to comments from users who support the treatment proposed and suggest it is credible, another indicator of how many people believe the content of a video is the number of 'likes' it has, which in all of the videos analysed here far outweighs the 'don't likes'.

- **They include promotional references to products or services related to cancer treatment**

One feature found in most of the content analysed is references to products or services linked to cancer treatment that can be construed as advertising.

In several videos the discourse is set around the figure of a supposed 'therapist', whose contact data is also provided:

"From then on **doctor Cancer** dealt with terminally ill patients - men and women who had seen dozens of doctors and were now resigned to waiting to **lose their battle with cancer. Incredibly their whole lives were turned around when they let him treat them.**"

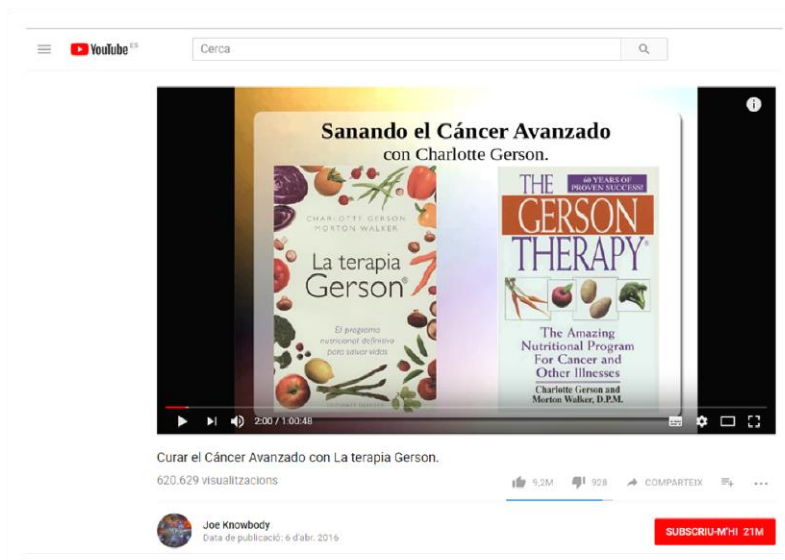
(Video *Treatment of uterine breast prostate cancer natural home medicine channel 5 uriel tapia 2*)

"This treatment was not approved by the FDA but **some doctors, including John A. Richardson MD**, started using it 'illegally' to treat cancer patients **at his clinic in San Francisco.**"

(Video *Vitamin B17 is banned because it cures cancer*)

and destroys all malignant tumours)

In other cases the video includes explicit references to products linked to the proposed cancer treatment such as books that supposedly give details about the procedure or links to websites to purchase them:



"It is always more difficult after chemotherapy, but **the new book, the new Gerson therapy book** gives you exact details about the therapy and how to alter the treatment."

*(Video Cure Advanced Cancer with The Gerson Therapy)*

Furthermore, we also found that very often **people use the comments boxes** to promote other products or services linked to various cancer therapies:

**"Kalanchoe is a natural cancer remedy, sale of kalanchoe daigremontiana, gastonis and pinnata plants shipped to Mexico and USA. TEL [telephone number] [link to YouTube video]"**

*(Video CANCER DIES IN JUST 42 HOURS, A JUICE THAT HAS CURED MORE THAN 45 THOUSAND PEOPLE!!)*

Lastly, our analysis found **the dissemination of rhetoric against conventional cancer treatments**. Often the videos contain statements that are critical of or reject conventional cancer care, especially chemotherapy:

**"What destroys the immune system faster than anything else? Chemotherapy.** And we can add radiation to that too. Chemotherapy is a poison to kill cells. [...] The cutting-edge of cancer treatment is to use the

treatment of poisoning the victim in the hope of killing sick cells. But wait. **This chemotherapy poison also kills the immune system cells** and wrecks it [...]. Then, it is spread to other parts of the body to start the process again **causing the spread of cancer cells**. [...] In a nutshell, **chemotherapy involves killing people who should be getting cured.**"

*(Video Cancer is a fungus and is curable)*

"Unfortunately, **most cancer drugs** currently **on the market are not only seriously ineffective in permanently reducing tumours but actually make tumours grow more and kill the patient more quickly**. [...] **even some of the most expensive drugs are a death sentence for many of the patients who take them**. [...]"

*(Video This powerful root destroys ovarian, prostate and colon cancer and is stronger than chemotherapy)*

"More and more doctors are stating the obvious: **chemotherapy damages healthy cells, which makes them segregate a protein that encourages the tumour to grow. Cancer cells reproduce faster in chemotherapy**. Researchers are failing to treat cancer with chemotherapy."

*(Video Chemotherapy causes more cancer..)*

Comments from users who circulate messages with similar views are also frequent:

"I know you are blind now but **oncologists are the last people to use chemo or radio on themselves. radio fries your body and chemo kills you**. I hope your son gets well but please open your eyes. the system is rotten, corrupt. [...]"

*(Video Chemotherapy causes more cancer..)*

"But why they always say that it cures better than chemotherapy. but **why they don't say that chemotherapy is destructive and does no good**. I was diagnosed with colon cancer and doctors **recommended chemotherapy but I refused**, now I am fighting this evil that has done me so much damage by eating healthy"

*(Video THE SEED THAT CURES CANCER, BETTER THAN CHEMO)*

One last factor to consider is the extent to which these videos **go viral** on the same platform. A search for the videos analysed gives a high proportion of results of videos

with titles that promote the same or a similar 'cure' for cancer as the original content or with a similar discourse.

In summary, the audiovisual material analysed presents alleged cancer therapies using rhetoric that is backed up both by a supposedly scientific basis and first-hand accounts of proven effectiveness. This type of content, which in some cases includes a rejection of conventional medical treatment, is widely circulated online with numerous references that defend the same approaches.