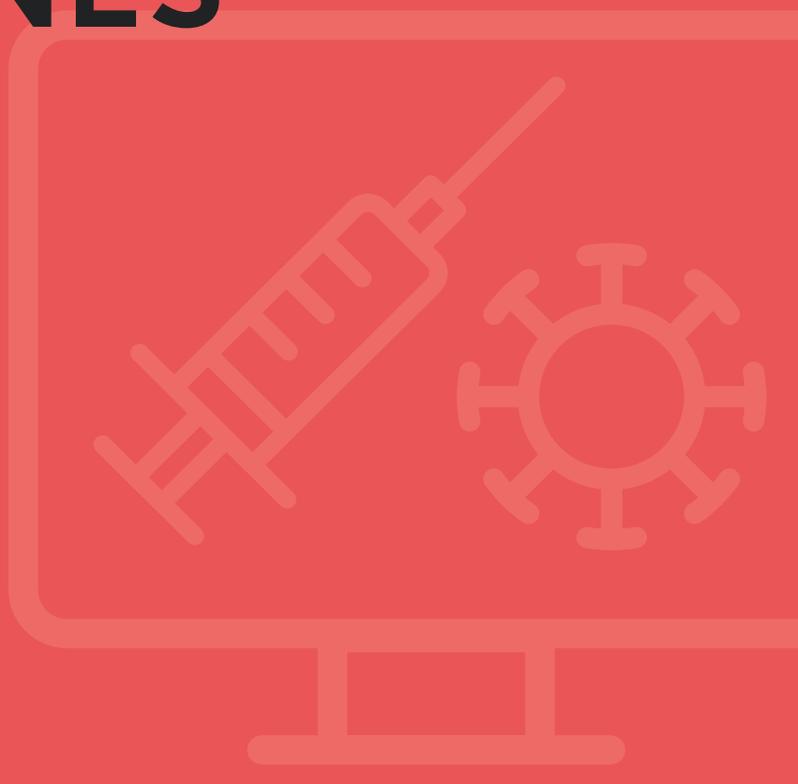


## RECOMMENDATIONS

# AUDIOVISUAL CONTENT ON COVID-19 VACCINES

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December 2020



Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Departament  
de Salut**

COL·LEGIIS  
DE METGES  
CONSELL DE  
CATALUNYA



**Col·legi  
de Periodistes  
de Catalunya**

# Introduction

According to data from the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Sociological Research Centre, CIS) in December 2020, some 40% of people would have the Covid-19 vaccine immediately.

The media play a role in providing truthful information on the safety and efficacy of vaccines. They can also help to **combat disinformation**, which in the case of the Covid-19 vaccine, poses a threat to public health.

**All media and all programme formats and genres** (news, talk shows, reports, etc.) have these two duties. Similarly, providers and users of platforms and social networks should take them into account.

With a view to **providing the media with tools** to report accurately on Covid-19 vaccines and to avoid disinformation in all audiovisual content, the Catalan Audiovisual Council together with the Ministry of Health of the Government of Catalonia, the Consell de Col·legis de Metges de Catalunya (Catalan Society of Doctors) and the Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya (Catalan Society of Journalists) have drawn up a series of recommendations on specific matters to be considered when creating audiovisual content.

The recommendations include a **list of references to drug agencies, science societies and bodies** that specialise in vaccines as background information and documentary resources for meticulous reporting on this topic.

**Empowering the public** to distinguish between information and disinformation is essential to achieve a responsible, better-informed society.

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# Recommendations

Recommendations that should be taken into account in relation to audiovisual content on Covid-19 vaccines.

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## RECOMMENDATION

### 01

With regard to the **vaccination, broadly** there is scientific, empirically provable consensus that:

- The benefits of vaccination for society as a whole are widely proven.
- The risks of not vaccinating are far higher than the possible risks of vaccination.
- The safety of vaccines is guaranteed and historically proven.

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## RECOMMENDATION

### 02

The media can contribute to **boosting vaccine confidence** among the population by reporting on the highly regulated procedures involved in approving a vaccine, including the Covid-19 vaccine, which guarantee vaccine safety even in the event of an emergency use authorisation. It is important for the public to be aware of pharmacovigilance systems in Catalonia, Spain, the European Union and the World Health Organization.

The media can contribute to combating disinformation and to forming a responsible opinion on issues such as the safety and tolerability of new vaccines made with technologies such as mRNA (messenger ribonucleic acid).

Likewise, the media can also transparently inform people about the objectives of each type of vaccine (preventing a disease or blocking transmission).

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## RECOMMENDATION

### 03

**Experts** play a very important role in informing and divulging vaccination campaigns, on the news and current affairs reports as well as informative and entertainment talk shows. In-depth interviews with experts are a useful format to divulge information and are rated highly by audiences.

**RECOMMENDATION**

04

In relation to the Covid-19 vaccine, it is key to **back up the information**. It is important to provide data on the official results of vaccine efficacy and safety, and to avoid spreading speculations from vested interests that the scientific community has not analysed. It is also necessary to differentiate between information on the processes prior to vaccine approval and the official final results of the approval.

**RECOMMENDATION**

05

It is very important to **put information in context, particularly when it comes to personal stories**, so as not to portray a specific anecdote or case as anything more than that. This is especially relevant for radio and television programme formats with an entertainment dimension.

**RECOMMENDATION**

06

A **adverse event following immunisation** is an untoward medical event after vaccination that is **not necessarily** directly linked to the vaccine.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, caution should be taken when covering such events to convey objective, non-alarmist information about suspected adverse reactions: suspicions are not confirmed reactions. It is also important to provide figures on the total number of people vaccinated to show the actual scope of an adverse event. It is also important to note that vaccines do not prevent other common diseases that are unrelated to Covid-19 and may occur in both vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

**RECOMMENDATION**

07

Avoid **sensationalism** when reporting on vaccines, either textually or visually.

**RECOMMENDATION**

08

It is important that the media show the **consequences of the illness** for individual health and society, the gravity of transmission and the consequences of a vaccine not being available or people refusing to have it.

**RECOMMENDATION**

09

For the good of public health, **balanced information** does not mean putting scientists on a par with deniers, but rather giving them the importance that comes from the backing of science.

<sup>1</sup>OMS <https://vaccine-safety-training.org/adverse-events-classification.html>

**RECOMMENDATION****10**

Careful analysis is required to assess whether **reporting rumours or disinformation**, even from a critical standpoint, about the Covid-19 vaccine contributes to a free and democratic debate on vaccination. When such rumours or disinformation could cause harm, it is advisable not to report them or, if deemed necessary, to provide arguments to refute them. Particular caution must be taken here when moderating shows with spontaneous, dynamic participation, such as talk shows. Experts should ideally take part in this type of programme as a point of reference.

**RECOMMENDATION****11**

**Video-sharing platforms and social media** are part of a media ecosystem in which content is created and spreads rapidly from multiple sources. We must therefore call upon providers and users to act responsibly. In line with commitments to the EU<sup>2</sup>, providers must monitor content and provide links to accredited sources. Users can also contribute to the fight against disinformation about Covid-19 vaccines by refraining from creating or disseminating content that is not scientifically proven.

**RECOMMENDATION****12**

Coverage of information on vaccines must always comply with the provisions and criteria set down in journalism codes of ethics.

<sup>2</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation\\_es](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/fighting-disinformation_es)

# Resources

## GOVERNMENTS

Ministry of Health of the Government of Catalonia

<https://salutweb.gencat.cat/ca/inici/>

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Health Channel - Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

<https://canalsalut.gencat.cat/ca/salut-a-z/c/coronavirus-2019-ncov/>

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Health Channel - Vaccinations

<https://canalsalut.gencat.cat/ca/salut-a-z/v/vacunacions/>

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Spanish Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare

<https://www.mscbs.gob.es/>

## PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Col·legi de Metges de Barcelona (College of Physicians of Barcelona)

<https://www.comb.cat/>

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Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya (Catalan Society of Journalists)

<https://www.periodistes.cat/codi-deontologic>

## MEDICINES AGENCIES

Spanish Medicines and Health Products Agency

<https://www.aemps.gob.es/medicamentos-de-uso-humano/vacunas/autorizacion-de-vacunas/>

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European Medicines Agency

<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory/overview/public-health-threats/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/treatments-vaccines-covid-19>

## PHARMACOVIGILANCE

Pharmacovigilance Centre of Catalonia

<https://www.icf.uab.cat/ca/ficf>

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Coordination centre of the SEFV-H

<http://www.aemps.gob.es/>

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Pharmacovigilance at the European Medicines Agency

<https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory/overview/pharmacovigilance-overview>

## SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

Asociación Española de Vacunología (Spanish Vaccine Association) (AEV)

<https://www.aeped.es/>

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Asociación Española de Pediatría (Spanish Association of Paediatrics) (AEP)

<https://www.vacunas.org/>

## PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANISATIONS

World Health Organization (WHO)

<https://www.who.int/home>

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European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en>

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/>