

# Challenges to Large-scale Scientific Knowledge Sharing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic poses major challenges to researchers using existing cyberinfrastructures to collaborate and share COVID-19 scientific knowledge. This paper enriches the existing literature by investigating the following challenges: (1) the mass influx of publications imposes a cognitive overload on COVID-19 researchers, (2) increasing speed of publications requires additional efforts to preserve peer-evaluation quality, (3) decentralization of research communities imposes impediments to informing the larger community about inappropriate results/interpretations in papers, (4) rigidity of papers imposes barriers to updating prior findings, and (5) difficulties with establishing common ground make interdisciplinary research more challenging. We manually reviewed approximately 1,300 tweets about large-scale collaborative research problems. We conducted a thematic analysis of about 10% of these tweets through a grounded theory approach and affinity mapping. We call on the CHI community to design scalable solutions for rapid knowledge sharing that help researchers collaboratively summarize, organize, share, and peer-review/improve their knowledge.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing → Social content sharing; Collaborative content creation; Social networks; Computer supported cooperative work; Social media.**

Additional Key Words and Phrases: E-science, E-research, CSCW, Collaborative Research, COVID-19, Knowledge Graph, Knowledge Sharing

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous studies on scientific data collection, sharing, filtering, analysis, and maintenance in the domains of E-science and CSCW. However, the design community has paid less attention to the dissemination, distillation, organization, and improvement of the result of analyzing, interpreting, and learning through the data, i.e., scientific knowledge. While traditional methods, such as knowledge sharing through journal publications, and classification of publications in knowledge repositories have been relatively efficient in past years, in the wake of the pandemic, new issues have arisen. In this study, we review the recent literature and analyze tweets by COVID-19 researchers explaining the difficulties they experience in scientific knowledge sharing, evaluating, and improving due to the nature of expedited research during the pandemic.

Within the pandemic, there is also an infodemic [125]. Misinformation about COVID-19 has spread across media platforms [32, 92], incorporated numerous topics [17] and exacerbated public

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\*Note 1

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panic [35]. While all of this is bad, there exists another underlying cause of the infodemic, taking root in the place where the pursuit of novelty and rigorous evaluation is supposed to prevent misinformation, the inability to effectively share scientific knowledge during the pandemic.

Due to the massive influx of COVID-19 related knowledge, researchers are struggling to find enough time to understand the contributions and limitations of findings [16]. The number of publications is unprecedented, with the number of academic papers related to COVID-19 being approximately 12 times more than for the MERS outbreak and more than 30 times the SARS outbreak [49].

In a recent study, it was shown that the majority of COVID-19 related papers (80%) are from medical science and only 3% from computer science, psychology, and engineering together [48]. This distribution in the number of published papers indicates that there is not a robust multidisciplinary approach to fight against the pandemic.

Knowledge sharing has been hindered by a paywall of publications, with roughly 20% of publications costing money to access. To make things worse, the number of paywalled papers increasing faster than open-access ones [114], and expected to rise to as high as 50% [16].

Preprints (papers published before peer review) accelerate the knowledge sharing process [57] and have been widely adopted as a way to do so during the pandemic. Glasziou et al. [46] reported that views and downloads of preprints had increased 100 fold. While preprints have been found useful, they are not an alternative to peer-reviewed publications [71]. Embracing of preprints can be justified by the fact that around 6/24/2020, more than 283 papers appeared in preprints in comparison to about 261 papers in journals [68]. Many novel technologies were introduced to collect and centralize publishing to facilitate searching and finding papers. Additionally, some NLP based systems were deployed to retrieve information, classify and summarize them from those repositories. However, there is a doubt whether those technologies have succeeded to address problems of medical researcher [100].

Parallel to preprint repositories, researchers have used social media (e.g. Twitter) to disseminate information faster. It might have been overlooked so far, but the lack of communication among researchers and sharing research that has been failed may cause repetitive research. Researchers have also utilized messaging technologies like Slack to communicate with each other and get informed about the state of the are research [68].

Providing researchers with technologies supporting efficient knowledge sharing and trustworthy research is crucial to solving the current crisis.

## 2 BACKGROUND

The Web has drastically changed scientific knowledge generation, evaluation, dissemination, and improvement. This large-scale virtual lab has helped researchers, engineers, and technicians to asynchronously connect and collaborate to share, analyze, and interpret data, information, and knowledge. Social media, collaborative editing tools, cloud computing, and scalable data processing units, accessible data warehouses, cheap sensory data collectors, crowdsourcing data collection and labeling, and fast searchability of a plethora of research papers including pre-prints have significantly increased the speed and the volume of knowledge generation and dissemination. In addition, citizen science has enabled non-scientists to engage in the process of data collection, filtering, assessment, and labeling, which has significantly facilitated transdisciplinary knowledge coproduction. These new technologies and methods have been studied in multiple disciplines including cyberinfrastructure, e-Science, citizen science, and transdisciplinarity. Pacheco et al. [88] classified these disciplinary fields under the term “digital science” and defined it as “a system that yields common (digital) spaces for knowledge coproduction based on open access and connectivity” (p. 378).

99 A large spectrum of people like researchers, citizen scientists, students, academic staff benefits  
100 from digital science. They collaborate and share information through connected technologies such  
101 as cloud computing. A common knowledge space is required to collaborate interdisciplinarily. [88,  
102 p. 5,6] Cyberinfrastructure (CI) was coined to give a prospect of how computing technologies can  
103 be exploited to facilitate academic research or researchers (i.e., scientists, engineers, humanists) [6].  
104 National Science Foundation (NSF) defines CI as a union of technology, interdisciplinary groups,  
105 and new educational and workforce enterprises. In other words, CI is simply a combination of  
106 shared “computing systems, data, information resources, networking, digitally enabled-sensors,  
107 instruments, virtual organizations, and observatories, along with an interoperable suite of software  
108 services and tool” among interdisciplinary research groups who generate, establish and utilize  
109 “transformative approaches to scientific and engineering discovery and learning [28]” [88, p. 2].

110 In European countries, CI corresponds to the notions of e-science (eS) and e-infrastructure. E-  
111 science is defined as “global collaboration in key areas of science and the next generation of  
112 infrastructure that will enable it. [52]”

113 Some times e-infrastructure is used instead of CI or to refer to the infrastructure part of CI. In  
114 this sense, e-science might be considered as a scientific method which facilitates the acquiring the  
115 latest digital platforms known as e-infrastructures [88, p. 2,3].

116 In the UK the realm of e-Science is so widely spread that not includes natural and physical sciences  
117 but also the social sciences and humanities. As a result, the term e-Science is being substituted by  
118 ‘e-Research.’ Consequently, Digital Humanities and e-Social Science have attracted more attention  
119 and financial support. e-Research can be seen as a collection of computing infrastructures and  
120 applications aimed to support distributed and multidisciplinary research collaboration. [56]

121 Several digital science challenges and trends have been investigated in the literature Pacheco  
122 et al. [88]:

- 123 • **Social and psychological aspects: Science of Team Science, Citizen Science and Trans-**  
**124 disciplinarity:** concerns roles, goals, norms, incentives, conflicts, attitudes, training, project  
125 management, ethics, equity, actions, and reactions within research communities and those  
126 between researchers and non-researchers who directly or indirectly engage in research  
127 projects.
  - 128 – *Science of Team Science:* Hall et al. [50] comprehensively reviewed the empirical evidence and  
129 research gaps on collaboration in science including formation, composition, performance  
130 of scientific research teams, within and between group interactions, institutional influences,  
131 and interdisciplinary research.
  - 132 – *Citizen science:* Bonney et al. [15] gives an overview of the application, requirements, and  
133 difficulties with citizen science and suggests next steps and strategies to follow. They  
134 exemplify the dataset of crowdsourced observations of more than five million birds peer  
135 month, which has been the source of analysis in more than 100 research papers so far.  
136 Carlson et al. [18] explains the coral reef data collection and analysis by 90 Earthwatch  
137 volunteers who made 6,000 measurements from 2000 to 2008 in Jamaica, as one of the  
138 successful applications of citizen science to enhance zoological research and policy making.  
139 Crabbe [30] discusses the case of Anchorage Coastal Beluga Survey conducted by trained  
140 volunteers between 2008 and 2011. Through 444 hours of observation with 507 beluga whale  
141 sightings, they collected the data regarding the presence, characteristics, and behavior of  
142 beluga whales.
  - 143 – *Transdisciplinary research:* Pohl et al. [96] describe how transdisciplinary research can  
144 address wicked societal problems through engaging private and public sectors, represen-  
145 tatives of the society, and researchers from multi-disciplines. In the same textbook [42],  
146

148 Defila and di Giulio [34], through analyzing survey results, shed light on how inter- and  
149 transdisciplinary teams frame problems based on a common ground, to reach out to a  
150 consensus in their collaboration. They also discuss “content-rich moderation” and the  
151 importance of balancing group and individual work to achieve the best outcomes.

152 • **Technological aspects: E-Science and Cyberinfrastructure:**

- 153 – *Cloud and grid computing*: Lee [73] review portability, interoperability, and scalability of  
154 cloud computing; and suggest a trajectory of best practices and standards for development,  
155 deployment, and fundamental research agendas. Nabrzyski et al. [82] provides a detailed  
156 description of the grid computing applications and technologies with a special focus on  
157 resource management.  
158 – *CSCW and e-research*: The affordances provided by CSCW technologies have enabled scientific  
159 collaboration to take place in large-scale, distributed, and international contexts. One  
160 of the prominent examples is the emergence of virtual labs and remote experimentations  
161 [3]. *Crowdsourcing scientific data management* is another application of CSCW in e-research.  
162 Lee [73] present Super-Ego as a framework for location information privacy management  
163 in ubiquitous environments and through a 2-week study show that their automated methods  
164 can predict privacy preferences for 80% and semi-automated methods for up to 90%  
165 of users. Law et al. [72] proposes strategies and circumstances of using crowdsourcing  
166 for generating, processing, or analyzing research data. Wilkinson et al. [127] define and  
167 promote the FAIR guiding principles to improve management and reusability of scientific  
168 data. O’Grady et al. [87] shed light on the issues with sparse sensor networks and suggest  
169 leveraging the power of citizen scientists as data collection relays. This trend of research  
170 has contributed to a greater interrelation between CSCW and e-science and e-research. De-  
171 signers seeking to address e-science problems through CSCW must be able to integrate the  
172 dimensions of science, sociality, and technology and develop a socio-technical perspective  
173 and approach [56].

174 • **Political aspects: Science and Technology Management**: König and Gorman [65] study  
175 how public research funding agencies such as NSF and ERC identify, promote, and constrain  
176 interdisciplinary research and how organizational constraints affect them. Huutoniemi and  
177 Rafols [55] provides a meta-analysis of the notion of interdisciplinarity in research, how to  
178 evaluate its value and significance, and tools that help with this evaluation. Roemer and  
179 Borchardt [102] discusses concerns and controversies about measuring scholarly impact of  
180 publications using bibliometrics and different alternative, and arguably more robust objective  
181 metrics to measure quality and impact of scientific publications. Walker [118] compares  
182 national, transnational, and international science; the fact that science is being perceived as  
183 national and its implications.

184 **2.1 Scientific knowledge sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic**

185 The rapid spread of the coronavirus was met with an increasing number of publications and  
186 scientific knowledge. However, the existing infrastructures for knowledge sharing failed to cope  
187 with these abrupt changes. In this section, we investigate the literature about knowledge sharing  
188 problems during the pandemic and evolved solutions to address those issues.

189 **2.2 Repetitions in COVID-19 Literature**

190 Papers and Ozimec [91] complains about the copious number of repetitive papers and review letters  
191 and call for a solution for the upcoming similar crisis. Majority of early COVID-19 articles provide  
192 no new information on the disease [36]. In a recent study, a total number of 14719 papers about  
193 COVID-19 were collected from Google Scholar, Springerlink, and PubMed. By using Mendeley  
194

197 Desktop they recognized 8499 were duplicate studies [117]. In another study, 10 paper out of  
198 157 collected papers were identified as repetitive papers [106]. Which might be because of the  
199 poor communication among researchers and being informed about ongoing research by other  
200 communities which highlights the importance of having robust social networks.

201  
202 *2.2.1 Use of Social Media for knowledge Sharing.* Twitter with more than 330 million users [109],  
203 turned out to be a useful platform for sharing health care information [126]. Twitter was used  
204 extensively to share information during the pandemic to the extent that there is a new COVID-19  
205 related Tweet every 45 milliseconds [2]. Between January 16 and March 15 there were 2, 792, 513  
206 Tweets and 18, 168, 161 retweets about COVID-19 [109], and by March 30, 2020, the number of tweets  
207 using #COVID-19 reached 386, 686, 511 [104]. About 6, 162 COVID-19 literature was mentioned  
208 in 1.4 million tweets. It was shown that about 68.1% of COVID-19 publications were mentioned  
209 by Twitter users at least once. Papers were buzzing within the first couple of days after their  
210 publication [39]. For instance, a paper titled “uncanny similarity of unique inserts in the 2019-nCoV  
211 spike protein to HIV-1 gp120 and Gag” with 21.360 mentions was among the top ten controversial  
212 papers on twitter which was retracted later [40]. As long as very few percent of annually published  
213 two million academic papers, tend to be cited and employed by other researchers, discussing papers  
214 on Twitter enhances the probability of papers to be cited and employed [85]. Currently, there  
215 are 27 active Twitter-based journal clubs that use Twitter to discuss and learn about important  
216 publishings. Recently the discussions are often centered around COVID-19. After a discussion,  
217 reviews are archived to be searched and retrieved later.  
218

219 A shortcoming of scientific communication on Twitter is that tweets are evanescent. Additionally,  
220 scrolling through tweets after the journal club is over, may not be a convenient and efficient way  
221 to grasp the ideas and information discussed live [110]. Twitter is considered a useful platform  
222 for the rapid dissemination of information. However, to overcome the flood of information it  
223 is suggested to limit the use of Twitter and only following verified sources [104]. Twitter, like  
224 other social networks, is not immune to misinformation and myths [86, 109]. One study showed  
225 24.8% of COVID-19 related tweets incorporated misinformation, and 17.4% included unverifiable  
226 information[66]. It was shown that unreliable information spread at the same rate as reliable ones  
227 on Twitter [21] which makes Twitter vulnerable to misinformation and hence may limit its use by  
228 researchers.

229 YouTube has a wide spectrum of users from ordinary people and patients to healthcare staff. It has  
230 about 2 billion users [10]. YouTube with Coefficient of relative amplification of 0.1 cuts unreliable  
231 information out over the time [21]. However useful videos are overwhelmed by deceiving videos  
232 based on average view counts, view ratios, and “Video Power Indices” and only about 37.5%  
233 of COVID-19 related videos are useful and 10.4% of English videos have misleading content [5].  
234 Another study showed that 27.5% of most-viewed English videos on YouTube contained unauthentic  
235 or misleading information, attaining over 62 million views [74]. This might be because uploaded  
236 videos on YouTube are not peer-reviewed. For instance there was a video on Youtube claiming  
237 finding an effective drug against COVID-19. Pharma Society tweeted (11 RT, 12 L): “Response  
238 to Claims of a COVID-19 Cure by Biobert Research group“Mr. Kijumbi, let the clinical trials and  
239 experiments on your drugs talk for you not the YouTube videos” [115].”

240 Wikipedia has been used for collaborative knowledge sharing. In the initial stages of the pandemic,  
241 more than 4, 500 new Wikipedia pages on COVID-19 were created and have attained almost 250M  
242 views. Content generation is continuing on WikiProject COVID-19 [22]. COVID-19 articles are  
243 usually cited in Wikipedia in advance to their official publication, because of early access versions  
244 of articles [22].

246 Although social media platforms have been used to alleviate knowledge sharing and scientific  
247 communication, lack of peer-review and dissemination misinformation and disinformation on  
248 those platforms [132] may hinder their utility.  
249

250 *2.2.2 Preprints and Repository Systems.* After the pandemic began, preprint servers took a larger  
251 role in knowledge dissemination as the research community was ever more in need for sharing  
252 findings and results. Because fast dissemination is critical, but the traditional publication takes time,  
253 more researchers are utilizing the preprint servers, and in some cases, advertising their papers via  
254 social media, e.g., Twitter. Preprint servers like arXiv, Research Square, PrePrints.Org, OSFPreprints,  
255 bioRxiv, medRxiv have been used to quickly publish findings [57]. The number of posted papers in  
256 medRxiv and the page view has been largely increased [41].  
257

258 Search and Repository tools have also been proposed to facilitate finding new publishing. CORD-  
259 19 dataset deployed a set of about 59,000 papers including coronavirus literature from as early as  
260 the 1950s [16]. However, by one an estimate only 40% of the papers in CORD-19 are even directly  
261 related to COVID-19, and about 19,000 papers in the dataset lack the full-text [16] and only 13%  
262 were deemed genuinely significant to the medical knowledge on COVID-19 [29]. CoAID [33]  
263 is another dataset focusing on news and social networks posts including verified true and false  
264 information to help differentiate fake and real news for covid2019 hashtag. They showed about 17%  
265 of the news was fake [33]. LitCovid is another literature hub for tracking up-to-date scientific data  
266 [20]. WHO introduced its own database [124]. COVID-END is a database maintained by McMaster  
267 University [129].  
268

269 Extracting valuable and meaningful knowledge from such a large set of literature is critical for  
270 decision making during a pandemic [51]. To this end, machine learning and NLP techniques were  
271 exploited to distill information from the ocean of publications. CAiRE-COVID [111] is a system that  
272 incorporates natural language processing (NLP) question answering (QA) to find related results  
273 based on a keyword and also provides a short summary of the papers [111]. EVIDENCEMINER  
274 [119] is a web application for textual data exploration for life sciences. Users' query is received  
275 as a natural language statement and EVIDENCEMINER returns textual data from a background  
276 corpora (i.e. CORD-19) automatically. Covidex [133] is a similar online service that employs deep  
277 learning and neural architectures for ranking the papers recovered from CORD-19 and incorporates  
278 BioBERT to highlight the sentences in the returned results. SciSight is a dataminer service based  
279 on CORD-19. It shows related literature to facilitate filter search results and draws connections  
280 within the literature on browseable maps [16].  
281

282 However, multiple concerns and criticisms are raised regarding the extensive usage of preprint  
283 servers even before the pandemic, one of which is the absence of a "peer-review" process. This is  
284 why the total number of peer-reviewed publications is roughly three times more than preprints [54].  
285 If the lack of a peer-review process were to result in unsound science, it is far more consequential  
286 for the COVID-19 research to directly touch on a matter of life and death. As far as preprints are  
287 not peer-reviewed they might be prone to include nonfactual findings and misinformation and  
288 readers must self-assess reliability of information. Misinformation can cost lives and exacerbate  
289 the spread of COVID-19 [43, 83]. As a solution, fact-checking websites (e.g. MythBusters [123]) and  
290 crowdsourced peer-reviewing are proposed [103].  
291

292 Numerous platforms are deployed to employ crowdsourced peer-reviewing. Science Rapid  
293 PREreview is a system for fast review of preprints related to COVID-19 [58]. Reviews on this  
294 web system are crowd-sourced and can be anonymous [107]. PubPeer is another service for post-  
295 publication peer review [71]. Additionally, to inform the research community about retracted  
296 papers Retractionwatch was launched as a web system aimed to make a list of retracted papers [37].  
297 According to this website, more than 30 papers about COVID-19 were retracted, being 1410 times  
298

295 cited totally. Each paper retracted because of misconduct costs the National Institutes of Health  
296 (NIH) about 425,000US\$ [37].

297 Preprints are not meant to be a substitution of peer-reviewed publication, they are only hoped  
298 to reduce the reviewing delay [71]. Researchers highlight the quality of papers, not the quantity,  
299 many papers have been shared on social media or as preprints— which are not peer-reviewed and  
300 may contain non-factual and misleading information [63, 68, 130].

301 2.2.3 *Multidisciplinary Research During the Pandemic.* The uneven distribution of COVID-19 related  
302 papers among different disciplines [48] may indicate the lack of interdisciplinary collaborative  
303 research. As long as fighting against the pandemic is a multifaceted task and involves researchers  
304 of a variety of disciplines, ignoring researchers of the fields outside medical science has raised  
305 some concerns. Miranda van Tilburg tweeted (6 RT, 68 L): “Sad to notice the pediatric research  
306 agenda around #COVID19 excludes psychosocial aspects of the #pandemic and #lockdown. We  
307 cannot view health as purely biologic. Currently the approach to this virus is behavioral (eg, social  
308 distancing) [112].”

### 310 311 2.3 CSCW and knowledge management

312 The history of knowledge management can be divided broadly into two generations: repositories  
313 and expertise or knowledge sharing. The former is associated with data and information flows  
314 while the latter deals with the transmission of knowledge through interpersonal communication  
315 channels [CoP , knowledge embedded within practice] [1].

316 Having mutual knowledge between collaborating researchers is integral to their success in  
317 coordinating actions in order to reach their research goals. Mutual knowledge is the knowledge that  
318 communicating parties share and are aware that they share. However, for dispersed researchers  
319 whose main form of communicating and collaborating is through technological spaces, it is more  
320 challenging to maintain mutual knowledge. When relaying knowledge to their peers, researchers  
321 often experience what is called “uncertainties”. This is defined as “the gaps in information needed  
322 for decision-making during the process of designing and executing a research project” [72]. Five  
323 identified challenges in maintaining mutual knowledge are as follows: “failure to communicate  
324 and retain contextual information, unevenly distributed information, difficulty communicating  
325 and understanding the salience of information, differences in speed of access to information, and  
326 difficulty interpreting the meaning of silence” [31].

327 Socioality and its connection to technology and science can be examined through the lens of  
328 communities of practice (CoP). CoP is a concept developed to investigate the ongoing practices  
329 and interactions within a community as the community’s means of developing knowledge and  
330 expertise within a particular domain [122]. A scientific community can be examined as a CoP, which  
331 usually will be made up of groups of knowledge workers. Each group will focus on a particular  
332 problem or topic [60]. When compared to CoP in corporate contexts, scientific communities are  
333 more heterogeneous and its groups will operate with greater independence [38].

## 334 335 3 METHODS

336 We analyzed 130 tweets which was about 10% of the total tweets we manually collected from  
337 COVID-19 researchers discussing problems, or topics related to problems, with large large-scale  
338 collaborative research. The tweets we selected for our analysis were chosen based on their relevance  
339 to our research question: What are the challenges of large-scale scientific knowledge sharing and  
340 collaboration in the context of the pandemic?

341 We followed a grounded theory [45] approach to develop concepts and categories which in-  
342 formed our theoretical sampling. As we developed and refined these concepts and categories, we

344 simultaneously consulted relevant literature to compare our interpretations to existing theories.  
345 To facilitate our analysis, we used open and axial coding alongside an iterative construction and  
346 reconstruction of an affinity diagram.

### 347 3.1 Data collection

348 An initial phase of data collection allowed us to create a preliminary set of problem categories  
349 to refine our search. These initial categories were substantiated and expanded by a review of  
350 the pertinent literature [4, 16, 90]. In our initial literature review, we identified a few themes of  
351 challenges and met with four senior epidemiology PIs at R1 schools in the U.S. who had recently  
352 published a significant number of research papers on the COVID-19 pandemic. These researchers  
353 validated the themes we had identified and provided us with accounts of experiences they have had  
354 with these issues, including their frustrations with the magnitude of incoming research papers they  
355 have to review. They also introduced us to new themes and keywords to include in our research  
356 data collection process. Based on the keywords we learned from these PIs and the literature, we  
357 initiated our tweet search and expanded the list of keywords as we found them in tweets. We  
358 searched for tweets that included content related to our problem categories:

- 360 • Time-consuming to self-judge many rapidly released papers leading to cognitive overload;
- 361 • Difficult to efficiently inform the research community about inappropriate results/findings;
- 362 • Repetition among studies;
- 363 • Published papers are static and do not get updated dynamically;
- 364 • Difficulties in multidisciplinary research collaboration;
- 365 • Flawed preprint papers are shared without peer-review process;
- 366 • Marketing and subscription fees of journals leading to inaccessibility to knowledge;
- 367 • Personal ambitions and career incentives.

368 We followed two approaches to locating tweets:

- 369 (1) Keyword search for all tweets posted during the COVID-19 pandemic;  
370 (2) Keyword search filtered to only include tweets made by a list of prominent COVID-19  
371 researcher profiles we had followed.

373 For our second approach to tweet searches, we followed Twitter accounts of COVID-19 re-  
374 searchers from multiple disciplines including epidemiology, statistics, science communication,  
375 virology, and biostatistics. The researchers that we followed were usually verified by Twitter  
376 (indicated by a blue checkmark icon) or had their academic/research title(s) and affiliated institu-  
377 tion(s) listed in their profile bio. These researchers had titles such as *Professor, Researcher, Scientist,*  
378 *Epidemiologist, and Director*. We also continuously followed new accounts to expand our author  
379 sources for collected data. During the retrieval period (May 1, 2020 – August 19, 2020), we used  
380 Twitter's search function and entered different keywords suggesting a problem (e.g., *difficulty,*  
381 *challenge, barrier, jargon*) combined with keywords suggesting collaborative, COVID-19 research  
382 contexts (e.g., *COVID-19, collaborative, research, multidisciplinary, across disciplines*). All the data  
383 we collected from Twitter is public and includes both original tweets and reply tweets in Twitter  
384 threads. We compared new data to our existing thematic analyses and iteratively constructed and  
385 reconstructed a large affinity diagram to aid in data and code organization and interpretation. All  
386 the tweets and their classifications from our affinity diagram are available in the appendix.

387 testing again

### 388 3.2 Thematic analysis

389 Our thematic analysis was facilitated by iterative phases of coding and affinity mapping. Through  
390 this process we were able to determine which tweets to analyze based on how well they addressed  
391

	A Title	Post	Sequences	Causes / Conditions	Themes	
393	1	Natalie E. Dean tweets about the challenges she's encountered while reading through scientific papers	*Most common issues I see in scientific writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doesn't explain why the problem is important.</li><li>• No clear takeaway message. (How would the reader explain it to a colleague?)</li><li>• Sentences too long/complex.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scientists produce papers with poor scientific writing &gt; Papers are less useful to and less understood by other scientists</li><li>• Researchers are eager to share their insights with the research community &gt; Researchers write conclusions that don't discuss limitations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researchers often write without considering their audience</li><li>• Researchers assume that scientific papers should or must be written in complex, wordy, and jargon-laden prose in order to be published and/or accepted in</li></ul>	<span style="background-color: #ADD8E6;">Scientific writing and discourse</span> <span style="background-color: #FFFFE0;">Info overload</span>
394	2	Kareem points the need to show both sides to the argument using literature review to come to a consensus.	"In the age of covid, I've seen a few literature reviews that amount to 'a list of all the papers that say I'm right'. Gentle reminder: the goal of a literature review is to determine the state of the scientific CONSENSUS through a BALANCED survey of ALL available evidence."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Incomplete/unbalanced literature reviews &gt; Papers published that exhibit selection and confirmation bias</li><li>• Preprint papers are published without peer review &gt; Scientists are able to conduct cherry-picked literature reviews that reinforce their</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Covid-19 research is being published through preprint papers which lack peer review</li><li>• Scientists are under pressure to publish Covid-19 research with strong and definite conclusions/implications</li></ul>	<span style="background-color: #FFFFE0;">No peer review</span> <span style="background-color: #FFDAB9;">Criticism of claims</span>
395	3	Steven Nono tweets about the importance of science communication with so many papers being published	This pandemic has proven to me that researchers have to spend less time in lab and more engagement in #SciComm. Great COVID-19 research is happening but it's being lost in the sea of journal publication. We need more front-facing researchers communicating results + implications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Important Covid-19 research is conducted &gt; Research is "buried" in the influx of new journal articles</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Massive influx of literature being published on Covid-19</li><li>• Papers are published and their significance is not explicit / complicated</li><li>• Researchers don't have means of easily surfacing most important and relevant</li></ul>	<span style="background-color: #ADD8E6;">Info overload</span> <span style="background-color: #ADD8E6;">Scientific writing and discourse</span> <span style="background-color: #FFDAB9;">Limits of journals</span>
396	4	Ellie Murray tweets about how to communicate with other scientists from other disciplines to collaborate	This pandemic has scientists & scholars from a multitude of fields all working towards a common goal, which is good! But it means when we write our research findings, we can no longer assume shared context or jargon among our readers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Media misinterprets science &gt; scientists reinforce misconceptions &gt; leading to further misunderstanding among non-specialists</li><li>• Researchers lacking key context/expertise &gt; Researchers fail to understand significance (or lack thereof) of research finding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Researchers communicating with other researchers in different disciplines</li><li>• Researchers lacking key context/expertise</li><li>• Researchers across disciplines have the same goal</li></ul>	<span style="background-color: #ADD8E6;">Scientific writing and discourse</span> <span style="background-color: #FFDAB9;">Disciplinaries and expertise</span> <span style="background-color: #FFDAB9;">Criticism of claims</span>

Fig. 1. Our open coding of tweets using Airtable

our research question. We also considered whether a tweet addressed a specific problem and provided context.

To begin our thematic analysis we first looked at the causes and conditions of each tweet. We then used an open coding approach to code terms to specific phrases within these causes and condition statements.

These general themes emerged in our initial coding phase:

- Scientific writing and discourse
- Information overload
- Lack of peer-review
- Criticism of claims made by researchers
- Limits of journals
- Disciplinaries and expertise
- Knowledge access
- Credibility of researchers
- Roles/audience (public versus science)

After labelling tweets with associated codes, we categorized grouped codes using axial coding. These categories were then used to restructure our affinity diagram. Through an iterative theoretical sampling approach, we were able to redevelop, refine, and validate our concepts and categories.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Online communities of researchers emerge out of a need to collectively summarize, share, and discuss recently published studies (i.e., to quickly and efficiently share scientific knowledge). This section focuses particularly on the inefficiencies and unsuitability of current information organization and filtration mechanisms of these platforms for the scientific community. We also highlight the consequences of not having an appropriate infrastructure in place for scientists during the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity for it.

One example of Twitter being used to summarize and disseminate recent scientific research can be seen in a tweet by Professor Francois Balloux (3,000 RT, 5,100 L): "Over the last weeks, a substantial amount of new evidence has become available about immunity to #SARSCoV2. This information can be difficult to process and integrate. As such I felt it may be helpful to write a thread to summarise the information and provide some context (1/13) [7]. "Understanding copious

amounts of new literature regarding COVID-19 literature is timeconsuming and tiresome to do by oneself.

While Balloux acknowledges these difficulties, he also provides insight into an important solution - the power of crowds. By summarizing the literature and sharing it with others to more efficiently learn the novelty of the findings, he has saved other researchers more time than he spent in his efforts.

Much of the struggle COVID-19 researchers are facing with effectively sharing knowledge could be alleviated with more awareness of the issues. Through our analysis of tweets and recently published articles, we identified the following themes of challenges to the large-scale scientific knowledge sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Shortcomings of scientific knowledge sharing on Twitter;
- Preserving quality of evaluation while increasing speed;
- Difficulties in efficiently informing research community about inappropriate results/interpretations in papers;
- Reliance on bibliometrics and altmetrics;
- Repetition in Published Papers;
- Rigidity of papers;
- Difficulties in multidisciplinary research.

Throughout the rest of this section we will discuss our analysis of each of these challenges in details. We refer to all authors of tweets by the specific profile name they used on Twitter at the time we collected their tweet. Additionally, we will be including the number of retweets(RT) and likes(L) as part of tweet descriptions.

#### 4.1 Shortcomings of Scientific Knowledge Sharing on Twitter

Researchers have turned to Twitter as a very popular social media platform for research communication [23, 59, 116]. However, this platform lacks key design affordances needed to address the particular needs of users engaged in scientific knowledge sharing. As evinced by Professor Francois Balloux's tweet in , Twitter is used by researchers to quickly and efficiently share knowledge, but the dissemination of misinformation and an experience that is not tailored to research communication has left researchers using the platform looking for more support. PTPeters tweeted (1 RT, 1 L) "The word limit, and fleeting nature of Tweets, makes this format best for a simple IT KSM: Knowledge Sharing Network. ... Twitter is not good format for debate... [98]."

Lacassin et al. [70] call the reliability and legitimacy of knowledge sharing on Twitter into question, due to the lack of peer-review of the content. Additionally, they claim that some scientists may be reluctant to share novel findings or knowledge on Twitter because there is a chance of publishing the data or analysis by other researchers rather than the original author. It can be dangerous to both the public and research community when unreliable content is widely disseminated on Twitter. Dr. Krutika Kuppalli describes this situation in Figure 2 referring to a tweet made by Michael Levitt, with 2K RT, 4.5K L.

Pershad et al. [93] discuss the drawbacks of knowledge sharing on Twitter in medical sciences. One issue is that the limited number of characters in tweets restrains researchers to briefly convey sophisticated research, which may result in miscommunications and negatively impact scientific communication. The second problem is the time required to go through all tweets to self-judge and filter the necessary information. For instance, 80% of tweets from reliable professionals are posted during the workday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. that may deprive health care workers to allocate their time to patient care routines.

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Dr.Krutika Kuppalli   
@KrutikaKuppalli

Why do these ridiculous statements without any scientific data come from old white men who have zero experience working on #infectiousdiseases outbreaks? Just b/c you are affiliated with a big name university doesn't give you credibility. In fact it causes more problems.

Michael Levitt @MLevitt\_NP2013 · Jul 25  
US COVID19 will be done in 4 weeks with a total reported death below 170,000. How will we know it is over? Like for Europe, when all cause excess deaths are at normal level for week. Reported COVID19 deaths may continue after 25 Aug. & reported cases will, but it will be over. [twitter.com/MLevitt\\_NP2013...](https://twitter.com/MLevitt_NP2013...)

7:43 PM · Jul 25, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

30 Retweets 161 Likes

Fig. 2. Twitter used to disseminate inaccurate information by academics with institutional credibility [69].

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511 Researchers are using Twitter to communicate science. While some take their papers to social  
512 media to share, others use the platform to actively challenge studies that they found misleading,  
513 as an unofficial form of quality control [16]. In a conversation among researchers on Twitter, the  
514 context of the conversation can get confusing. A researcher may have a diverse set of followers from  
515 many backgrounds: other researchers (possibly from different disciplines), laypeople, politicians,  
516 etc. This can have negative ramifications on how a message is framed and received, since different  
517 audiences can react differently to the same message. Kareem Carr tweeted (156 RT, 486 L) “One  
518 big problem is there are at least four possible ways for a scientist to have a conversation on  
519 Twitter...Talking to other scientists as a scientist...Talking to other scientists as a member of the  
520 public...Talking to the public as a scientist...Talking to the public as a member of the public...These  
521 conversations are happening all at once and it can change from sentence to sentence. Scientists are  
522 generally not good about specifying the role we’re playing in public discussions. This can lead to  
523 terrible fights [19].”

#### 524 4.2 Preserving Quality of Evaluation While Increasing Speed

525 Rapid dissemination of the COVID-19 research findings is important to facilitate the acceleration  
526 of the research. Dissemination of fast and rapidly reviewed papers makes researchers self-judge  
527 and screen most of the studies on their own, which is extremely time-consuming. While fast  
528 dissemination of factual information is beneficial, misinformation can grow fear and panic or cause  
529 lethal movements in society [77]. Palayew et al. [90] stresses the importance and the need for novel  
530 solutions to guarantee sustainable trust in the large-scale scientific publishing process during a  
531 pandemic. They conducted single-query searches on PubMed and analyzed data for COVID-19 and  
532 Ebola-related papers. The results showed that COVID-19 publications had a median acceptance  
533 time of 6 days, while it was about 15 days for Ebola. The fast dissemination of information is  
534 needed to keep up with a global pandemic but has cast doubt on the quality of publications and the  
535 probability of misinformation [90]. Some medical journals have drastically reduced publication  
536 time [54, 68]. Peer-review delay has been reduced by 49%, or 57 days on average (even higher  
537 for some journals like Archives of Virology) [54]. Fourteen medical journals that published most  
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540 COVID-19 papers reduced the average time taken from submission to publication to about 60 days  
541 [16], which may adversely affect the quality of published papers.

542 Lonni Besançon investigated 12,682 publications related to COVID-19 on PubMed. Their study  
543 revealed that about 8% of papers were published in the day that they were submitted. What can be  
544 inferred is that the peer-review process might have been rushed for some papers. Editorial conflicts  
545 of interest were recognized in 43% of these papers. Such a short acceptance interval raises concerns  
546 about the integrity and clearness of the peer-review process [12]. Some concerns regarding quick  
547 peer-review surround the ethics of research being done. Mamas tweeted (74 RT, 145 L): “Pandemic  
548 vs paperdemic, the risks of speed science and research ethics as exemplified by #covid19 Sometimes  
549 we take at face value the honesty of researchers and veracity of data [76].” Mamas’ concerns are  
550 noteworthy given recent scandals surrounding data that could have cost lives, namely Surgisphere’s  
551 mishandling of Hydroxychloroquine data [108]. Sapan Desai, the founder of Surgisphere who has  
552 published two papers in the most reputable medical journals, is currently being sued in two different  
553 medical mal-practiced cases and had incentive to promote work using data from his company, and  
554 yet the Lancet and New England Journal of Medicine both published his work in fields completely  
555 unrelated from his expertise, largely due to a lack of adequate peer-review [95].

556 Falsified data and misleading findings in publications may also stain the reputation of journals  
557 and decrease public trust in scientific findings. Gregory Makles tweeted (0 RT, 0 L): “NEJM is  
558 suddenly reliable again? Have they investigated their latest peer review incredible failure? [75].”

559 Speedy peer-review is not the only gateway for improper research to disseminate throughout the  
560 scientific community. Preprints, who publish work with no peer-review process also pose a threat.  
561 Block tweeted (0 RT, 0 L): “...I’m seeing a ton of COVID-19 pre-print research coming out, though  
562 that poses issues of its own because of lack of peer review Block [14].” Preprints have certainly  
563 been a useful resource for scientists to communicate with one another efficiently, but at what cost?

#### 564 **4.3 Difficulties in Efficiently Informing Research Community About Inappropriate 565 Results/interpretations in Papers**

566 Researchers have expressed concerns about the lack of an efficient mechanism to communicate their  
567 criticisms. After analyzing recent studies, they lack a unified platform to document their criticisms.  
568 Other researchers who come across the same studies may not be aware of those criticisms if they  
569 do not have contact with previous readers or forgot what has been critiqued.

570 We have noticed many instances that researchers express their frustrations in informing the  
571 research community when they identify issues in analysis, methods, results, or interpretations  
572 reported in a paper. An example of researchers using Tweets to inform the research community  
573 about retracting a paper is shown in Figure 3. Other examples of advocating on social media for  
574 retraction on Twitter is shown in Figure 4. The use of Twitter for science communication has been  
575 very valuable, however for reasons we discuss in subsection 5.1, system design tailored to science  
576 communication are needed.

577 In a recent study, it was found that the researchers’ followers on Twitter are relatively low and  
578 only 25% of researchers have more than 429 followers[25]. Another study discusses that nearly 40%  
579 of scientists’ followers are nonscholars [27]. Also, it was shown that only 1.1% of Web of Science  
580 researchers in the field of biomedical and health sciences use twitter. And the use of twitter by  
581 scholars is mostly (40%) confined to the USA and the UK [26].

#### 582 **4.4 Reliance on Bibliometrics and Altmetrics Exacerbates the Issue**

583 Bibliometrics is a set of methods for estimating scholarly impact which might generate conflicts  
584 and concerns [102]. Internet-based impact metrics known as alternative metrics or altmetrics  
585 were proposed to mitigate those problems. There is an ongoing challenge to find and develop  
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 **Elisabeth Bik**   
@MicrobiomDigest

**Blog post describing some problems with the Gautret et al. paper about Hydroxychloroquine and Azithromycin treatment of COVID-19 infections**

treatment of COVID-19: results of an open-label non-randomized clinical trial

Philippe Gautret <sup>a, b, §</sup>, Jean-Christophe Lagier <sup>a, c, §</sup>, Philippe Parola <sup>a, b</sup>, Van Thuan Hoang <sup>a, b, d</sup>, Line Meddeb <sup>a</sup>, Morgane Mallie <sup>a</sup>, Barbara Douillet <sup>a</sup>, Johan Couppen <sup>e, f</sup>, Valérie Giordanengo <sup>b</sup>, Vera Esteves Vieira <sup>a</sup>, Hervé Tissot Dupont <sup>a, g</sup>, Stéphane Honore <sup>i, j</sup>, Philippe Colson <sup>a, c</sup>, Eric Chabrié <sup>a, c</sup>, Bernard La Scola <sup>a, c</sup>, Jean-Marc Rolain <sup>a, c</sup>, Philippe Brouqui <sup>a, c</sup>, Didier Raoult <sup>a, c, k</sup>

<sup>a</sup> IHU-Méditerranée Infection, Marseille, France  
<sup>b</sup> Aix Marseille Univ, IRD, AP-HM, SSA, VITROME, Marseille, France  
<sup>c</sup> Aix Marseille Univ, IRD, APHM, MEPHI, Marseille, France  
<sup>d</sup> Thai Binh University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Thai Binh, Viet Nam  
<sup>e</sup> Infectiologist, Hôpital d'Archet, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Nice, Nice, France  
<sup>f</sup> Université Côte d'Azur, Nice, France  
<sup>g</sup> U1065, Centre Méditerranéen de Médecine Moléculaire, C3M, Virulence Microbienne et Signalisation Inflammatoire, INSERM, Nice, France  
<sup>h</sup> Department of Virology, Biologocal and Pathological Center, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Nice.

Thoughts on the Gautret et al. paper about Hydroxychloroquine and Azithro...  
There has been a lot of excitement – and even a presidential tweet about a recent paper from the lab of Didier Raoult, an infectious disease specialist in ...  
@scienceintegritydigest.com

4:58 PM · Mar 24, 2020 · Twitter Web App

212 Retweets 27 Quote Tweets 341 Likes

608 Fig. 3. An example of researchers using blog posts, Tweets, and any medium they can to inform the research  
609 community about retracting a paper [13]

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 **Retraction Watch**  
@RetractionWatch

Elsevier investigating hydroxychloroquine-COVID-19 paper [retractionwatch.com/2020/04/12/els...](https://retractionwatch.com/2020/04/12/els...)



**Carlos del Rio**   
@CarlosdelRio7

Hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin as a treatment of COVID-19: results of an open-label non-randomized clinical trial - Time to take this study down  
@sciencedirect it was wrong to publish it, too much damage already. Take this study down!



Hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin as a treatment of C...  
Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine have been found to be efficient on SARS-CoV-2, and reported to be efficient i...  
@sciencedirect.com

2:51 PM · Apr 12, 2020 · WordPress.com

126 Retweets 47 Quote Tweets 215 Likes

630 Fig. 4. Examples of advocating for retraction on Twitter [101, 121]

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new methods for tracking scholarly impact [102]. Merely relying on citation count as a metric to measure the *quality* of research papers has exacerbated the difficulties bound up with efficiently informing the research community of inappropriate results and/or interpretations.

It is shown that the number of citation and publications are not a reliable gauge for scholars' talent and scientific merits [105]. NatureNews tweeted (0 RT, 0 L): "...Bibliometrics alone clearly do not offer a reliable way to gauge the quality of research [24]." Joe Kraus tweeted (0 RT, 0 L): "...Citation data does not provide reliable evidence of quality of research [67]." This heuristic can be misleading, especially, in case of retractions. We observed that retracted papers continue to receive citations. As an example, on 3/20/2020, a paper titled, "Hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin as a treatment of COVID-19: results of an open-label non-randomized clinical trial" was published by International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents [44]. The manuscript appeared on medRxiv on 3/16/2020. It was also submitted to the International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents on 3/16/2020. The paper was accepted for publication by the journal on 3/17/2020, and was published on 3/20/2020. This paper raised many concerns by multiple scientists on Twitter and ten days after publication, on 3/30/2020, another article titled, "A Rush to Judgment? Rapid Reporting and Dissemination of Results and Its Consequences Regarding the Use of Hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19" [62] was published by Annals of Internal Medicine, retracting Gautret et al. [44] and pointing out various flaws in it. However, as of 09/02/2020, while Gautret et al. [44] has received 2,304 citations on Google Scholar, Kim et al. [62] has received only 97. We hypothesized that most of the papers citing Gautret et al. [44] may have criticized or retracted it. However, reviewing a random sample of 100 papers out of the 2,304 that were citing the study, showed that 82 out of 100 papers were using the results or reporting follow-up studies, which indicates inefficiency of:

- Evaluation of publications merely based on their number of citations;
- Informing the research community about inappropriate results/interpretations in papers.

As another example, a paper titled "Cardiovascular Disease, Drug Therapy, and Mortality in Covid-19" was retracted on 4/6/2020 and had 358 citations however by 9/13/2020 the number of citation had reached 452. We hypothesized that it might be because the upcoming papers are retracting the original paper. We randomly went through 25 of those papers and to our surprise, 18 of those papers were really exploiting the findings of the retracted paper. To be able to compare the results we checked a third paper titled "SARS-CoV-2 infects T lymphocytes through its spike protein-mediated membrane fusion" was published in Nature Cellular & Molecular Immunology on 4/7/2020 and retracted about three months later on 7/10/2020 [120]. By 9/13/2020 this paper had 152 citations. We randomly picked 10 out of 40 papers citing that paper, which were published after the retraction date. We observed that only one paper was retracting the original paper. This might be due to prolonged delay before retracting.

The problem with retracted papers and how often they are cited is summarized in a tweet by Andrew R. Timming (34 RT, 334 L): "Why the h-index is a poor performance metric: I could write a bunch of egregiously bad papers and everyone would cite them by pointing out all the flaws. Plus, it punishes single authored papers and artificially inflates the worth of co-authored ones. Am I wrong? [113]"

#### 4.5 Repetition in Published Papers

To allow researchers to keep up with the massive and rapid dissemination of academic papers, it is important that the redundancy of content is as minimal as possible. With no great way to signal to an entire community what has already been done, we are in danger of wasting resources on what is already known (see Figure 6 and Figure 7). Take the hydroxychloroquine controversy where an excess of evidence came out against its efficacy, possibly wasting valuable time, energy and risk in the process. In Figure 5 Barbási tweets about the issue of redundancy as it pertains to active trials regarding hydroxychloroquine, stating that there was a whopping total of 77 active trials within the previous day. Barbási goes as far as to place the blame on "...lock[ing] out the science...", and

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**Albert-László Barabási** @barabasi · Apr 15  
Replies to @barabasi  
How much redundant work is taking place because we are not aware what our colleagues have already solved or failed at?  
Yesterday there were 77 active trials for Hydroxychloroquine — and we know exactly why.  
Why lock out the science and let tweets drive clinical trials?  
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**Albert-László Barabási** @barabasi · Apr 15  
I am with you -- patient safety first!  
But most scientist have login credentials to BioArxiv—stay true to your mission by creating a login-based COVID-19 list.  
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Fig. 5. Repetition in published papers [8]

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**Philippe** @Philippe31561573 · Jun 12  
#hydroxychloroquine inutile... again & again & again !!!



Three big studies dim hopes that hydroxychloroquine can treat or pre...  
Amid politicization and scandal, a disappointing scientific picture is emerging  
sciemag.org

Fig. 6. Repetition in published papers [94]

letting twitter drive research directions (see subsection 5.1 for more analysis on why twitter is not the optimal place for scientific dissemination).

Richard Poynder tweeted: “The number of publications related to COVID-19 is growing exponentially. Many articles are being hastily and non-critically published, contain repetitive or inaccurate information, illogical and non-evidence based recommendations, and are highly biased [97](5 RT, 12 L).”

Dmitri Zaitsev shared their hopes for reducing redundancy and the problems it creates: “When this pandemic subsides we could use this situation as a motive to reduce redundancy in publication, to modernize the way data is presented, and to avoid the same issues when the new pandemic arrives.- Any details about how that would happen? :) [131](0 RT, 1 L).”

#### 4.6 Rigidity of Papers

When a paper is published, its content stays static. Review papers of the publications of the previous day or week have gained significant attention, but they often miss some of the main points or

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 **Maximilian Konig** @MaxKonigMD · Jun 5  
Maybe we can come to our senses now at stop this insanity.

Hydroxychloroquine doesn't seem to work for COVID-19 and patients who need and cannot get hydroxychloroquine for lupus are harmed.

Another issue disproportionately effecting minorities in the United States.

 **Ilan Schwartz MD PhD** @GermHunterMD · Jun 5  
BREAKING NEWS from RECOVERY trial

NO benefit to hydroxychloroquine in inpatients

"We reviewed the data & concluded there is no evidence of a beneficial effect of HCQ in patients hospitalised w Covid & decided to stop enrolling patients to the HCQ arm with immediate effect"  
twitter.com/MartinLandray/...

Show this thread

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Fig. 7. Repetition in published papers [64]

misinterpret findings. As new investigations are made, there is no way to update these papers. Egon Willigh tweeted "I am really frustrated with the fact that our publications are static objects. why can't we improve them over time?... [128]."

This may be especially problematic when the number of citations is considered to be the primary metric to assess the quality of a publication and whether to pay attention to it. It would take a fair amount of time for new publications to get a comparable number of citations (Mathew's effect [11]) to grab attention and make the outdated papers obsolete, similar to the problems discussed in subsection 4.4. George Musser tweeted (2400 RT, 3200 L): "Google Scholar seems to be altering scholarly citation patterns. Citations are getting more concentrated: the same few papers get cited over and over, @jevinwest has found. People lazily cite whatever papers the search engine ranks highly [81]."

Jeffrey Barrett tweeted about desiring the capability of editing papers that have content that is redundant and not relevant in the near future (4 RT, 36 L): "I don't know who needs to hear this, but if you're writing a paper about Covid-19, just delete the sentence that states there is a pandemic and provides the current (already out of date) estimate of the number of global cases and deaths. Just. Delete. It. [9]." His sentiment echoes the claims from subsection 4.5, that too much space in COVID-19 literature is used to repeat the same things to the same audience.

To mitigate this problem a system called Manubot has been suggested. Manubot is an open collaborative authoring platform providing handy version control and multiple access levels. Casey Greene tweeted, asking about its usage (1 RT, 13 L): "What if you're writing a collaborative review paper using manubot, and you use its capabilities to update from external data sources each night? [47]." While Manubot works to alleviate some of the problems, using it requires some computational skills (e.g. version control workflows and GitHub). Also, discussions between writers are not tracked using Git [53]. As a result, collaborative authoring in many disciplines including medical science and epidemiology might be not very efficient using the platform [53].

#### 4.7 Difficulties in Multidisciplinary Research

Large-scale collaboration across different disciplines presents obstacles in reaching shared research goals due to differences in terminology and context within each discipline. Many researchers have taken to Twitter, open conversations about this insufficiency.

785 Ellie Murray tweets about how to communicate with other scientists from other disciplines to  
786 collaborate (58 RT, 221 L): "This pandemic has scientists & scholars from a multitude of fields all  
787 working towards a common goal, which is good! But it means when we write our research findings,  
788 we can no longer assume shared context or jargon among our readers [80]."

789 "There's been a fair amount of discussion of the dangers of pre-prints being misinterpreted by  
790 the public or journalists. But, we don't talk about a potentially more dangerous issue: scientists &  
791 scholars in other disciplines getting the wrong message b/c they lack key context [79]."

792 Murray continues in another tweet (2 RT, 36 L): "Second, since combating the pandemic is our  
793 shared goal, any failure to communicate between scientists & scholars creates a barrier to achieving  
794 that goal, and thus has a cost in human lives lost [78]."

795 Another tweet, by Dr. Angela Rasmussen, discusses the difficulty of communicating across  
796 disciplines because of different definitions and contexts to terms used in different disciplines (9 RT,  
797 53 L): "I think the real problem has been communication across disciplines. The terminology is  
798 confusing and means different things to different people, which is why I agree with SaskiaPopescu  
799 that we need to reconsider the language we use to discuss airborne' transmission [99]."

## 800 5 DISCUSSION AND DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

801 We found that researchers are having a difficult time keeping up with the massive influx of papers.  
802 This is due in part to the use of inefficient methods of organization and filtration of information  
803 that do not work at scale. Cognitive overload is being imposed on COVID-19 researchers as they  
804 struggle to stay aware of what has been studied.

805 Readers familiar with Natural Language Processing (NLP) may feel that the question of its  
806 efficiency in facilitating scientific knowledge summarization must be addressed. Many applications  
807 using NLP algorithms have been developed to summarize the newly published papers and reduce  
808 the overload on scientists who must review hundreds of newly published papers every day. However,  
809 researchers have raised concerns over NLP-based tools promoting retracted papers or papers with  
810 overstated findings [16]. One reason for this issue is the fact that the content of about 20% of  
811 subscribers-only journals papers is not free to download (which has a forecasted trend of a 50%  
812 increase) and therefore, cannot be reviewed by NLP-based tools [16]. Even among free publications,  
813 many of their papers are in a PDF format, which are not considered to be FAIR (Findable, Accessible,  
814 Interoperable, Reusable) and therefore cannot be processed by NLP algorithms [84]. To train  
815 machine learning models, researchers rely on preprint databases such as arXiv.org to be able to  
816 retrieve the content of a large number of papers for free [16].

817 In addition, reviewing the papers can be its own challenge. Scientific jargon is often complex  
818 and difficult to understand even by human standards. The terminology found in peer-reviewed  
819 literature is not always present in the mainstream text where the model training is performed. This  
820 problem is more common when the literature is domain-specific (outside of the training domain).  
821 This is present in the CORD-19 dataset (and others), leading to adverse effects on the fine-tuning of  
822 the text summarization models [61]. Some scholars also doubt the efficacy of automated procedures  
823 to help the research community. In our informal interviews with COVID-19 PIs, two of them told  
824 us "automated text summarization is very helpful for use-cases like distilling product reviews on  
825 Amazon.com, but research papers are totally different. If understanding the analysis or findings in  
826 research studies was that easy, our undergraduate students would be able to do it and we would  
827 not need to spend so much time reviewing papers on our own."

828 COVID-19 researchers' need for a faster mechanism to learn about new studies on one hand, and  
829 their frustration with the NLP-based text summarization services, on the other hand, necessitates  
830 design and development of an online crowdsourced research hub, where researchers collaboratively  
831 summarize newly published literature and continuously update it as new findings are published.

Every day COVID-19 researchers and their students study and summarize newly published research papers. They present their summaries in focus groups, classes, and journal clubs to help each other cope with the accelerated rate of publications. For the same reason, some research groups have also focused on publishing review papers of studies published in the past few days to help a larger community of researchers. However, focus groups and journal clubs are only helpful for small groups of people. Review papers are also rigid (as discussed in subsection 4.6) and any misinterpretation or missing findings of a study would not be corrected until new review papers make the old ones completely obsolete. The time and energy used by the existing research community could be more efficiently utilized if an online crowdsourcing research hub existed which would enable researchers to collaboratively summarize, discuss, comment, and criticize research publications.

In the remainder of this section, we discuss and ideate the necessary features of such a research hub to mitigate the issues discussed in the analysis and results section. We follow the same order of classifications of difficulties based on the themes identified from the analyzed tweets.

## 5.1 Shortcomings of Scientific Knowledge Sharing on Twitter

In lack of a platform tailored for and populated by scientists for collective knowledge sharing, researchers have turned to Twitter as a very popular social media platform for research communication.

## 5.2 Difficulties in efficiently informing research community about inappropriate results/interpretations in papers

Our analysis of tweets indicates that many COVID-19 researchers experience difficulties to find a tribune to let other researchers hear their voice. They have expressed a need for a large-scale online research hub only for certified researchers, where they can easily access:

- Each other's names and validated credentials;
- Published papers with their number of citations;
- Comments about each publication and related discussions;
- Classified questions and answers about each topic;
- Direct contact channel to other researchers for follow-up questions/comments.

## 5.3 Reliance on bibliometrics and altmetrics

We found many tweets indicating the researchers' reliance on citation count to assess the quality of research papers has misled many, especially in the case of retracted papers. While algorithms such as PageRank [89] have been proven helpful for website searching, similar citation-based ranking does not necessarily guarantee the quality of research papers. While altmetrics also consider mentions of a paper on tweets, blogposts, and other online social networks, it is still insufficient. A mere citation does not indicate anything about the quality of a study. In the research context, a citation should be assigned a positive, neutral, or negative weight. Then a weighted summation of the citations could be produced and it would be a more accurate metric for evaluation of research papers.

- **Positive:** if a study is cited to be admired/replicated/continued/rederived in another paper.
- **Neutral:** if a study is cited to be reviewed/meta-analyzed/classified in another paper.
- **Negative:** if a study is cited to be retracted/contradicted/corrected in another paper.

#### 883 5.4 Difficulties in multidisciplinary research

884 The COVID-19 pandemic has made the need for multidisciplinary research more prominent than  
885 ever. However, COVID-19 researchers' tweets indicate that they need a more efficient communica-  
886 tion method between researchers from different disciplines. They need a common ground around  
887 a shared set of vocabulary that can be easily deciphered by any researcher, regardless of their  
888 discipline and specialty area. To fulfill this objective the large-scale online research hub should  
889 provide a new search UI to researchers where they can easily find the term/concept they need  
890 to understand and facilitate back-tracking prerequisite concepts to be learned to understand the  
891 searched query.

892 Conventionally, scientific jargon or words are highly interdependent to each other where un-  
893 derstanding one requires understanding others and to understand the others, one should read a  
894 graduate level textbook. This makes building a common ground between researchers extremely  
895 difficult. To solve this issue, a collaborative prerequisite linking mechanism is necessary where re-  
896 searchers link every concept/term/jargon to its prerequisites and expand upon them. This should be  
897 an asynchronous collaborative process because the scale of the terminology in different disciplines  
898 is growing fast and providing data to such a search tool requires crowdsourcing and collabora-  
899 tion between many scientists and possibly their students. The tool should enable researchers to  
900 start from a term/concept and back-track the prerequisite knowledge required to understand that  
901 term/concept recursively. Compared to the conventional method of studying a textbook to learn a  
902 new field's jargon, this tool enables researchers to only focus on the concepts/terms necessary to  
903 efficiently learn what they need without getting distracted by other concepts or discussions around  
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## 905 6 CONCLUSION

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1178        improve them over time? Fix a typo here, some character casing there... just the typography, not the content... sigh  
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A TWEETS

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Fig. 9. Alice Sim tweets about fueling the infodemic with misinterpreted terminology

Alice Sim (@alicesim) · Jul 6  
Explaining technical scientific findings to the public is a whole science - called Risk Communications. Those who are fueling the **#infodemic** are not helping public health during this critical time 😞

Dr. Saskia Popescu (@SaskiaPopescu) · Jul 5  
This kind of sensationalism is absolutely not ok and fuels fear 🙏 As @apoorva\_nyc emphasized, these events are in close range/indoors, and ultimately, as @BillHanage noted, the way we communicate aerosols and call things "airborne" is poorly done and often misinterpreted.  
[Show this thread](#)

**#SARSCoV2** coronavirus is airborne. Epidemiologists & aerosol Scientists have been saying it for months. Now 239 scientists have penned a letter to **@WHO**, coming out next week, demanding WHO acknowledgement. Implications? 🧬

4:28 AM · Jul 6, 2020 · Twitter Web App

11 Retweets 2 Quote Tweets 46 Likes

Fig. 10. Andy Slavitt tweets about the variety of sources of information and the public being unaware of the differences

Andy Slavitt (@ASlavitt) · 23h  
People are getting information from pre-prints, observational studies, Journal articles, opinion pieces, increasingly double blind trials & challenge trials.

It's difficult for the public to know the difference. And gives ripe opportunity for some to cherry pick data. 4/

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Fig. 11. Andy Slavitt tweets about confusion over scientists advice

Andy Slavitt (@ASlavitt) · 23h  
We feel like we're told one thing one day, the opposite the next. No masks/masks. This medicine works/it doesn't (it doesn't). Spreads on surfaces/spreads through the air.

Definitely. Maybe. Probably. 3/

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 Dr. Angela Rasmussen ✅  
@angie\_rasmussen

Replies to @angie\_rasmussen @jjcolorado and 7 others

I think the real problem has been communication across disciplines. The terminology is confusing and means different things to different people, which is why I agree with @SaskiaPopescu that we need to reconsider the language we use to discuss "airborne" transmission. 2/2

5:09 PM · Jul 12, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

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8 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 53 Likes

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Fig. 12. Dr.Angela Rasmussen tweets about the miscommunication across disciplines

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 Dr. Angela Rasmussen ✅  
@angie\_rasmussen

Unfortunately the focus on who is "right" and when they were right is giving oxygen to the "infodemic" that is contributing to the extreme political polarization of public health priorities. Nobody can be "right" about a pathogen that is still mired in so much uncertainty.

4:40 PM · May 25, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

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45 Retweets 3 Quote Tweets 219 Likes

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Fig. 13. Dr.Angela Rasmussen tweets about the focus on validity of statements

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 Dr. Angela Rasmussen ✅  
@angie\_rasmussen

Replies to @angie\_rasmussen @jjcolorado and 7 others

Oh and one more thing: I think the adversarial posture towards WHO is counterproductive. They are not above criticism and clearly they got this wrong. But it's not helpful to treat WHO as the enemy if we want to come to consensus across disciplines.

5:23 PM · Jul 12, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

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4 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 37 Likes

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Fig. 14. Dr.Angela Rasmussen tweets how painting WHO as the enemy is counterproductive in terms of coming to a consensus

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Fig. 15. Dr. Angela Rasmussen tweets about the harm of others not sharing data and being unable to make her own analyses

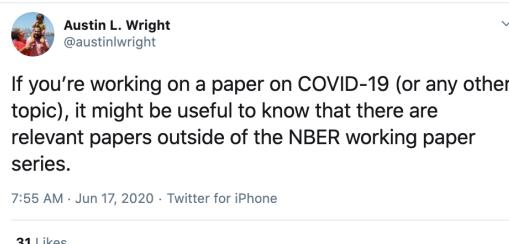


Fig. 16. Austin L. Wright tweets about using a variety of resources for finding papers



Fig. 17. Bhramar Mukherjee tweets about the increasing number of papers



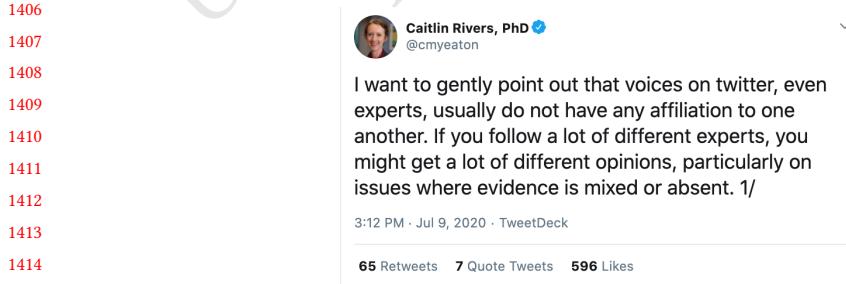
Fig. 18. Jonathan Block replies to tweet by Glen de Vries about sharing research within the research community



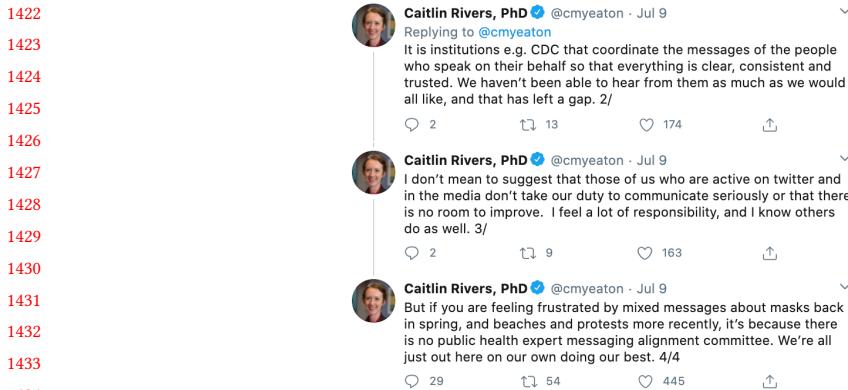
1389 Fig. 19. C. Michael Gibson tweets about surgisphere (a health analytics company) lying about collaborating  
 1390 with NHS Scotland



1403 Fig. 20. Caitlin Rivers tweets the original WHO report on COVID-19 modes of transmission



1417 Fig. 21. Dr.Caitlin Rivers tweets about the confusion led by many different expert opinions being shared on  
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 **Charulatha Banerjee**  
@drccbjee

@DrPatrickWebb in session on Challenges in Research & Practice in Covid 19 on Ag,Nut & Health.Need more info on what works particularly in crisis?The need for more evidence base before rushing into new measures for eg. in #childwasting. @IMMANA\_res

**Key Questions:**

1. What's happening? (science versus operations needs) – 'what works' is a key issue.
2. Who is most affected and why? Ethics of research *during* crises versus *on* crises?
3. How much information is 'accurate', and so what?
4. Can we 'do no harm' with imperfect knowledge?

8:56 AM · Jul 1, 2020 · Twitter Web App

2 Retweets 3 Likes

Fig. 24. Charulatha Banerjee tweets about the need for more evidence base for publishing on COVID-19

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 **Egon Willighagen** @egonwillighagen

but are you helping as much as you can? Enough?

why not make all #COVID19 papers CC-BY? what about the articles cited by this collection? Why are those not open too? Should we not expect readers to be able to read the cited articles too?

 **Springer Nature** @SpringerNature · Apr 1

We're continuing to support the needs of the research community during this unprecedented time, including free access to the latest research on the virus, assuring remote access to content for library users, plus tips for how to balance life working remotely [bit.ly/3dVmYng](https://bit.ly/3dVmYng)



3:15 AM · Apr 23, 2020 · TweetDeck

2 Retweets 9 Likes

Fig. 25. Egon Willighagen tweets about the inaccessibility to papers and their cited papers

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 **Eli Perencevich** @eliowa

Replying to @mlipsitch

Given we can't quarantine in the US, testing and tracing was never going to work. Given pre- or asymptomatic spread, it became even more unlikely. This is why we need effective PPE in the community. Saying this publicly since April. Works in healthcare need PPE everywhere

11:38 PM · Jun 27, 2020 · Twitter Web App

44 Retweets and comments 185 Likes

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Fig. 26. Eli Perencevich tweets about how he's been advocating for PPE since April

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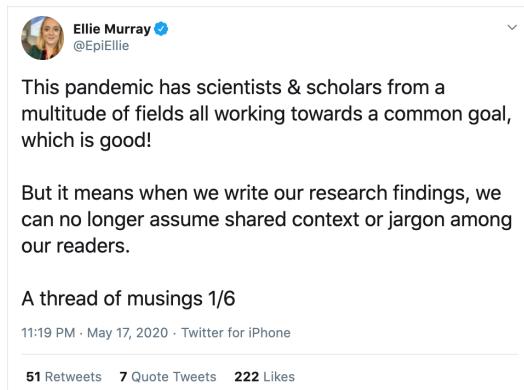


Fig. 27. Ellie Murray tweets about precautions when sharing research findings

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**Ellie Murray** @EpiEllie · May 17  
 Replying to @EpiEllie  
 There's been a fair amount of discussion of the dangers of pre-prints being misinterpreted by the public or journalists.  
 But, we don't talk about a potentially more dangerous issue: scientists & scholars in other disciplines getting the wrong message b/c they lack key context  
 1 5 65

**Ellie Murray** @EpiEllie · May 17  
 This is a big problem for a lot of reasons. First, many of the misconceptions among the public & journalists are being reinforced by scientists or scholars who, lacking key expertise, fail to understand the significance (or lack thereof) of a research finding.  
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**Ellie Murray** @EpiEllie · May 17  
 Second, since combating the pandemic is our shared goal, any failure to communicate between scientists & scholars creates a barrier to achieving that goal, and thus has a cost in human lives lost.  
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**Ellie Murray** @EpiEllie · May 17  
 I think we need a new kind of scicomm:  
 Detailed explanations expert-to-expert across fields, including not just methods & results but much more of the full context, definitions, assumptions, etc, needed to interpret those results than we are used to providing.  
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**Ellie Murray** @EpiEllie · May 17  
 My guess is that there are already some interdisciplinary fields which do this well.  
 Please share examples you've seen!  
 This is an unprecedented moment in history, and we all need to learn new skills to move forward.  
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Fig. 28. Ellie Murray tweets about precautions when sharing research findings

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 1681 Fig. 29. Dr. Emma Hodcroft tweets that when a scientist points out that a paper doesn't have enough evidence,  
 1682 they are not saying it is wrong

 Dr Emma Hodcroft ✅  
 @firefoxx66

When a scientist says "This paper doesn't show this"  
 or "We don't have enough evidence to say"

They are not saying it's wrong. Or that it will never be shown. They are saying we all need to be really careful how we interpret this.

#COVID19 #SARSCoV2

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10:25 AM · Apr 21, 2020 · Twitter Web App

226 Retweets 39 Quote Tweets 682 Likes

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 Gail Carson  
 @gail\_carson

Call to action on responsible communication of scientific research | COVID-19 Clinical Research Coalition @SCBriand @mvankerkhove @mugecevik @nicolamlow @BogochIsaac @ISARIC1 piero ollaro if was on twitter



Call for action on responsible communication of scientific research  
 More than ever, we need high quality scientific research to provide the evidence to answer pressing questions on how best to prevent the spread ...  
 covid19crc.org

10:43 AM · Jun 19, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

13 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 41 Likes

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**Geoffrey Siwo**  
@gsiwo

Crowdsourcing COVID-19 gene sets and drug sets from research community, great resource to find consensus, wisdom of the crowds @AviMaayan @lcahnMountSinai

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**AviMaayan** @AviMaayan · Mar 30  
Help us collect gene and drug sets relevant to #COVID19 research by submitting lists to this website: amp.pharm.mssm.edu/covid19/  
These sets can be used to identify consensuses & connections across studies; #crowdsourcing programmers r welcome 2 help us develop the site #COVID19cure

**COVID-19 Crowd Generated Gene and Drug Set Library**  
A collection of gene and drug sets related to COVID-19 research contributed by the community

Description	Genes	Enrichr link
ACG2 Pathway from BioCarta 2013	32 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
ACG2 Co-expressed genes from ARCH54	100 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
ACG2 PPI from the NCBI Gene database	11 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
COVID19-AI 332 protein host PPI from Kroger	332 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
COVID19-L protein host PPI from Kroger	6 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
COVID19-M protein host PPI from Kroger	20 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
COVID19-N protein host PPI from Kroger	15 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
COVID19-O protein host PPI from Kroger	6 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
COVID19-P protein host PPI from Kroger	3 genes	<a href="#">View</a>
COVID19-Q protein host PPI from Kroger	9 genes	<a href="#">View</a>

10:09 AM · Mar 31, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 3 Likes

Fig. 31. Geoffrey Siwo tweets about crowdsourced COVID-19 gene library that helps reach consensus



**Helen Branswell** ✨  
@HelenBranswell

With preprints playing such a big role in the dissemination of #Covid19 data & with there being such a firehose of info coming out, I wish journals would stipulate "this was out as a preprint" when they push out papers, especially ones for immediate release.

2:41 PM · Jun 22, 2020 · Twitter Web App

16 Retweets 79 Likes

Fig. 32. Helen Branswell tweets about how journals should be clear about using COVID-19 preprints

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 James Todaro, MD   
 April, 2020: My colleagues and I calculated the Infection Fatality Rate (IFR) of COVID-19 to be substantially below 1%.

People said that our estimate was absurd.

July, 2020: The consensus is that the IFR is actually "about 0.6%."  
 -Chief Scientist, WHO

 The Pandemic's Big Mystery: How Deadly Is the Coronavirus? Even with more than 500,000 dead worldwide, scientists are struggling to learn how often the virus kills. Here's ... [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)

12:42 PM · Jul 8, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

653 Retweets 50 Quote Tweets 1.2K Likes

Fig. 33. James Todaro's tweets about not finding a consensus on the IFR and current WHO estimates

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 Jason Pogue  
 @jpogue1

Guys. We need to talk about this Hydroxychloroquine + Azithromycin thing. It is out of hand. It all stems from this study that came out today. The study design: Comparative viral eradication on day 6 between HCQ, HCQ + Azithro, and control (not treated) COVID-19 patients.

**Hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin as a treatment of COVID-19: results of an open-label non-randomized clinical trial**

Philippe Gautret<sup>a,b</sup>, Jean-Christophe Lagier<sup>a,c</sup>, Philippe Parola<sup>a,b</sup>, Van Thuan Hoang<sup>a,b,d</sup>, Line Meddeb<sup>a</sup>, Morgane Mailhe<sup>a</sup>, Barbara Douvier<sup>a</sup>, Johan Courjon<sup>e,f,g</sup>, Valérie Giordanengo<sup>b</sup>, Vera Esteves Vieira<sup>a</sup>, Hervé Tissot Dupont<sup>a,h</sup>, Stéphane Honore<sup>i,j</sup>, Philippe Colson<sup>k,c</sup>, Eric Chabrière<sup>a,k</sup>, Bernard La Scola<sup>a,c</sup>, Jean-Marc Rolain<sup>a,c</sup>, Philippe Brouqui<sup>a,c</sup>, Didier Raoult<sup>a,c\*</sup>.

7:06 PM · Mar 20, 2020 · Twitter Web App

4K Retweets 1.1K Quote Tweets 8.4K Likes

Fig. 34. James Pogue's tweet about opening up a conversation on Hydroxychloroquine and Azithromycin

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Jeremy Howard  
@jeremyphoward

I'm yet to have a meeting or even an email with @WHO groups that has included a single aerosol scientist. In fact, IIRC, it's been 100% epidemiologists every time. They \*really\* need to bring in a wider group of experts.

Jose-Luis Jimenez @jljcolorado · Aug 4  
1/ Continuing errors in image used to discuss modes of transmission

This image ([frontiersin.org/articles/10.33...](#)) was shown multiple times by different presenters at WHO webinar a few hours ago. Nobody seemed to remark on large errors there, which continue to propagate misconceptions

Show this thread

5:57 PM · Aug 4, 2020 · Twitter Web App

49 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 217 Likes

Fig. 35. Jeremy Howard tweets about the lack of variety in experts at meetings

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Jose-Luis Jimenez  
@jljcolorado

1/ Continuing errors in image used to discuss modes of transmission

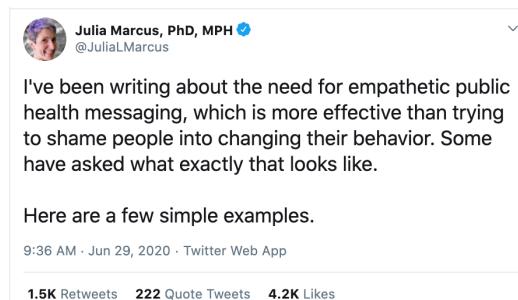
This image ([frontiersin.org/articles/10.33...](#)) was shown multiple times by different presenters at WHO webinar a few hours ago. Nobody seemed to remark on large errors there, which continue to propagate misconceptions

4:18 PM · Aug 4, 2020 · Twitter Web App

89 Retweets 11 Quote Tweets 196 Likes

Fig. 36. Jose-Luis Jimenez tweets about errors in presentation slides talking about modes of transmission

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**Julia Marcus, PhD, MPH**   
@JuliaLMarcus

I've been writing about the need for empathetic public health messaging, which is more effective than trying to shame people into changing their behavior. Some have asked what exactly that looks like.

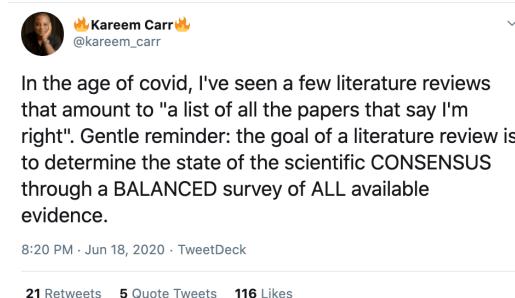
Here are a few simple examples.

9:36 AM · Jun 29, 2020 · Twitter Web App

1.5K Retweets 222 Quote Tweets 4.2K Likes

Fig. 37. Julie Marcus tweets about how public messaging should be more empathetic

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**Kareem Carr**   
@kareem\_carr

In the age of covid, I've seen a few literature reviews that amount to "a list of all the papers that say I'm right". Gentle reminder: the goal of a literature review is to determine the state of the scientific CONSENSUS through a BALANCED survey of ALL available evidence.

8:20 PM · Jun 18, 2020 · TweetDeck

21 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 116 Likes

Fig. 38. Kareem Carr tweets about unbalanced literature reviews

1885



**Kareem Carr**   
@kareem\_carr

DURING THE PANDEMIC, we scientists made a lot of science communication mistakes. One big problem is there are at least four possible ways for a scientist to have a conversation on Twitter. Let me explain ... 1/

8:23 PM · Jul 11, 2020 · Twitter Web App

129 Retweets and comments 419 Likes

Fig. 39. Kareem Carr tweets about science communication mistakes made by scientists

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Fig. 40. Kareem Carr tweets about science communication mistakes made by scientists



Fig. 41. Krutika Kuppalli tweets about releasing data on media



Fig. 42. Maria Tapia tweets about the importance of vocabulary in science

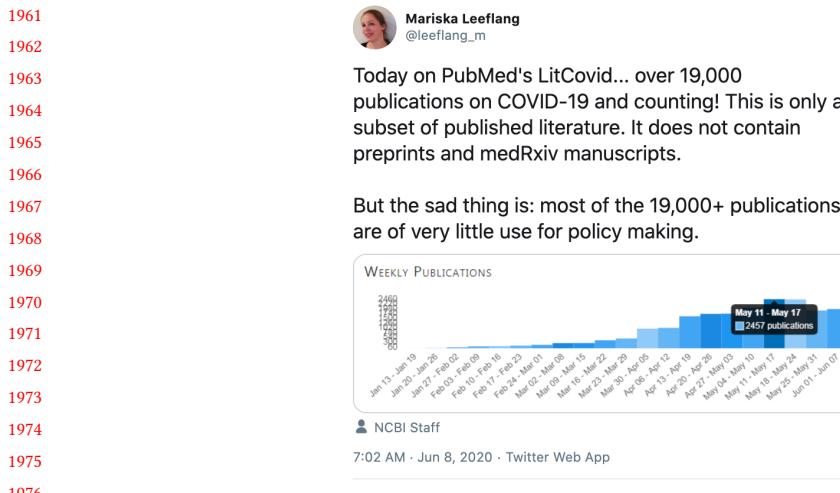


Fig. 43. Mariska Leefland tweets about how many COVID papers are being published but they are making little policy difference



Fig. 44. Matt Le Tissier tweets about the contradictions in inscientist point of views on COVID-19

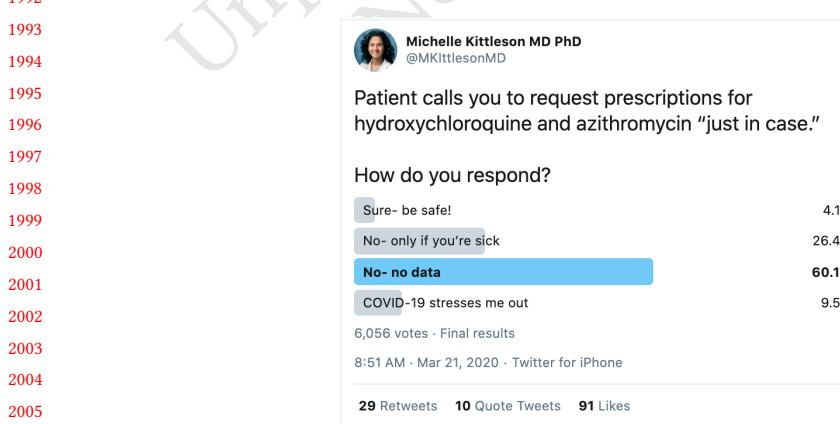


Fig. 45. Michelle Kittleson tweets a poll of how people respond to request for hydroxychloroquine

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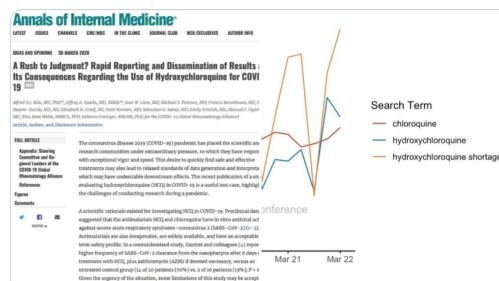
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 **Mike Putman**  
@EBRheum

Our letter (& color fig!) HCQ in COVID @AnnalsofIM

Great experience writing with @rheum\_covid folks, including  
**@rheum\_cat** **@alhkim** **@jeffsparks** **@Larhumato**  
**@AliDuarteMD** **@SituationRheum** **@pekor002**  
**@SattuiSEMD** **@emilysirotich** **@mugartegil**  
**@drkatiewebb** **@Drbeckyg**

[tinyurl.com/yx6j8qfj](http://tinyurl.com/yx6j8qfj)



3:49 PM · Mar 30, 2020 · Twitter Web App

47 Retweets 8 Quote Tweets 121 Likes

Fig. 46. Mike Putman tweets a letter they wrote on Hydroxychloroquine in COVID-19

 **Natalie E. Dean, PhD**   
@natalieydean

Most common issues I see in scientific writing:

- Doesn't explain why the problem is important.
- No clear takeaway message. (How would the reader explain it to a colleague?)
- Sentences too long/complex.
- Doesn't offer intuition for results.
- Over-stated conclusions.

7:09 PM · Jun 21, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

626 Retweets 82 Quote Tweets 3.6K Likes

Fig. 47. Natalie Dean tweets about the issues seen in scientific writing

 **neil\_ferguson**  @neil\_ferguson · Mar 27  
Agree. There is legitimate political and social debate about what the right strategy is. But scientists need to focus on what the data tells us, including the uncertainties.

 **Marc Lipsitch**  @mlipsitch · Mar 27  
[washingtonpost.com/health/2020/03...](http://washingtonpost.com/health/2020/03...) Washington Post cuts through the nonsense coming from politically motivated camps @natalieydean weighs in talking common sense.

216 253 902

Fig. 48. Neil Ferguson tweets about focusing on uncertainties as scientists

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 **Jessica Malaty Rivera, MS**  @jessicamalaty · Jun 21  
Replying to @nataliedean  
The lack of disclaimers and nuance when journalists decide to cover preprint data. It's caused so many unnecessary #scicomm fires.  
  
 **Darren Busing** @darrenbusing · Jun 21  
And no synopsis of the numbers. X may make Y go up, but by how much? A trifle? A landslide? I never get a feel for these things from scientific journalism. I can't speak to the writing of scientific papers themselves, I will admit.  
  
 **Christopher Blanar** @ChrisBlanar · Jun 22  
Agree. Authors spend so much effort communicating statistical significance... but often neglect effect size  
  
▼

Fig. 49. Jessica Malaty Rivera tweets about the coverage of preprints

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 **Roberto Rocha**  @robroc  
Every day there is a new study on COVID-19 that contradicts a previous one.  
  
Example: Does smoking protect against it or make it worse?  
  
Here's a story in favour of smoking (French): [lemonde.fr/planete/article...](http://lemonde.fr/planete/article...)  
  
And one against: [ctvnews.ca/health/coronav...](http://ctvnews.ca/health/coronav...)  
  
1/5  
  
COVID-19 seems to be hitting smokers more severely, scien...  
Scientists are warning smokers that they should quit before COVID-19 attacks their lungs, as research shows that the ...  
[ctvnews.ca](http://ctvnews.ca)  
10:41 AM · Apr 22, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Fig. 50. Roberto Rocha has a twitter thread on the conversation between scientists on finding a consensus about COVID-19

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**Dr. Saskia Popescu**   
@SaskiaPopescu

Now is a great time for us all to remember that we're in a novel situation w/evolving data. Recommendations and guidance change...bc they must. Calling scientists hypocritical bc we've evolved w/ the new info does us all a disservice. We've got to lean into the changes to improve

6:26 PM · Jul 10, 2020 · Twitter for Mac

330 Retweets 21 Quote Tweets 1.2K Likes

Fig. 51. Dr.Saskia Popescu tweets about evolving data



**Dr. Saskia Popescu**   
@SaskiaPopescu

A few thoughts on the "airborne" conversations right now...First, I ultimately think this comes down more to scicomm & our ability to communicate nuanced situations & data. How we approach airborne vs droplet is antiquated & even more so in how we communicate it... (1/x)

9:41 PM · Jul 6, 2020 · Twitter for Mac

132 Retweets 37 Quote Tweets 448 Likes

Fig. 52. Dr.Saskia Popescu tweets about how the term “airborne” is communicated by scientists



**Dr. Saskia Popescu**   
@SaskiaPopescu

This conversation has emphasized a lot of the differences in how epidemiologists/infection preventionists/physicians approach this topic vs aerobiologists/engineers. The siloing actually does more damage and I think we should try & work towards better terms/scicomm (5/x)

9:49 PM · Jul 6, 2020 · Twitter for Mac

16 Retweets 2 Quote Tweets 109 Likes

Fig. 53. Dr.Saskia Popescu tweets about how the term “airborne” is communicated by scientists

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2176 Fig. 54. Soragni:Lab tweets their thoughts on experts from unrelated fields with no relevant expertise contributing to COVID-19 research  
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 A screenshot of a Twitter thread. The first tweet is from Soragni:Lab (@soragnilab) on April 7, 2020. They say: "This may be unpopular but here it goes. I am seeing a whole lot of places and people from disparate, unrelated fields with no relevant expertise trying to put together COVID-related proposals. I don't think this is a good way forward." It has 46 replies, 369 retweets, and 1.6K likes. The second tweet is from Rune Linding (@RuneLinding) on April 7, 2020. They say: "Disagree people from different fields cannot contribute. It is the lack of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research that got us to where we are at." It has 2 replies, 2 retweets, and 24 likes. The third tweet is from Dr Emma Hodcroft (@firefoxx66) replying to @RuneLinding and @soragnilab. She says: "She isn't arguing against interdisciplinary & multidisciplinary research - she is warning about "disparate, unrelated fields with no relevant expertise." Multidisciplinary proposals are key! But should have experience & be relevant to COVID efforts, not doing it "just to apply"." It was posted at 5:21 PM on April 8, 2020, via Twitter for Android. The tweet has 2 retweets, 1 quote tweet, and 18 likes.

Fig. 54. Soragni:Lab tweets their thoughts on experts from unrelated fields with no relevant expertise contributing to COVID-19 research

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2183 Fig. 55. Steven Ñoño tweets about the lack of science communication among COVID-19 researchers  
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 A screenshot of a tweet from Steven Ñoño (@Nono MPH) on May 21, 2020. He says: "This pandemic has proven to me that researchers have to spend less time in lab and more engagement in #SciComm. Great COVID-19 research is happening but it's being lost in the sea of journal publication. We need more front-facing researchers communicating results + implications." It has 0 replies, 1 retweet, 1 like, and 0 favorites.

Fig. 55. Steven Ñoño tweets about the lack of science communication among COVID-19 researchers

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2195 Fig. 56. Trevor Bedford tweets about a Twitter space whose function is no longer about hosting conversations  
2196 but is now about outreach


 A screenshot of a tweet from Trevor Bedford (@trvrb) on Feb 3, 2020. He says: "I'm glad #nCoV2019 exists as a separate hashtag, but things have seemed to have flipped from mostly scientists talking to each other to scientists doing public outreach." It was posted at 10:18 AM on Feb 3, 2020, via Tweetbot for iOS. The tweet has 24 likes.

Fig. 56. Trevor Bedford tweets about a Twitter space whose function is no longer about hosting conversations but is now about outreach