

SPEAKERS BIOSKETCHES

“Managing Vaccine Misinformation in the Midst of a Pandemic”

Webinars Session 3 & Session 4 - April 15, 2021

The Mérieux Foundation Vaccine Acceptance Initiative



Dr. Angus Thomson
Director,
Irimi Company, France

Angus Thomson is Director of Irimi Company, which specializes in public health social and behavior change programs.

He was recently Senior Social Scientist: Demand for Immunization, Health Section, UNICEF, NY.

He is also Adjunct Clinical Professor, Department of Communication Studies & Global Health Communication Center, Indiana University School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI, USA.

He is currently developing the Vaccination Demand Observatory, a global collaboration aiming to provide countries with a full capacity strengthening package for social listening and engagement, initially focused on vaccine misinformation. He previously developed a global program of research, development and implementation into adherence to vaccination and vaccine uptake.

Through collaborations with experts in the social, behavioural and communication sciences, his team developed a suite of instruments to understand & measure attitudes to vaccination. He has also developed the AIMS mixedlearning behavior-centered IPC training program for Healthcare Professionals with Prof. John Parrish-Sprowl. He proposed a new framework for vaccination advocacy¹ which identified the need for more interdisciplinary collaboration², more evidence, and engagement in the public conversation.

Having developed the 5As taxonomy of determinants³ of vaccination uptake, Angus has run national multi-stakeholder projects in Europe, Africa and Latin America that aim to improve vaccination uptake.

He has published over 20 peer-reviewed opinion pieces, research papers, and book chapters on vaccine confidence and coverage, and co-edited an 18-paper Special Issue on Vaccine Confidence in Vaccine⁷.

Dr. Thomson has appeared on CNN and BBC World to discuss vaccine confidence in the context of COVID-19. He also lectures on Vaccination Perception at the Institute Pasteur, Paris, and the VaxinLive Masters Program in Lyon.



Dr. John Cook
Postdoctoral research fellow, Climate Change Communication Research Hub, Monash University, Australia

John is a postdoctoral research fellow with the Monash Climate Change Communication Research Hub.

His research focus is understanding and countering misinformation about climate change, with an emphasis on using critical thinking to build resilience.

In 2007, he founded [Skeptical Science](#), a website that won the 2011 Australia Museum Eureka Prize for the Advancement of Climate Change Knowledge.

In 2020, he published the book [Cranky Uncle vs. Climate Change](#) applying critical thinking, inoculation research, and cartoons to engage and educate readers about climate misinformation. He also developed the [Cranky Uncle](#) game with the U.S. creative agency Autonomy, combining critical thinking, cartoons, and gamification to build players' resilience against misinformation.



Dr. Joe Smyser
CEO,
The Public Good Projects, USA

Dr. Joe Smyser is CEO of the Public Good Projects (PGP), a public health nonprofit specialized in large-scale media monitoring programs, behavior change interventions, & cross sector-initiatives whose mission is “to revolutionize public health communication, so that business and public sector programs have greater impact, and communities are healthier.”

For the past two years, Dr. Smyser and PGP have been deeply involved in vaccine promotion efforts, leading the nation's largest vaccine communications monitoring program, focused on vaccine hesitancy and opposition.

Recently, UNICEF partnered with PGP to create the Vaccine Demand Observatory, to track and respond to vaccine misinformation, supporting UNICEF country offices and their community partners.

Dr. Smyser holds a PhD and masters in public health, and did his postdoctoral training at the CDC.



Ms. Sarah Christie
Program Manager,
Yale Institute for Global Health, USA

Sarah Christie, MPH is a Program Manager for the Yale Institute for Global Health, and is currently leading a robust program to evaluate evidence-based messaging to amplify vaccine acceptance and address hesitancy through a five-country partnership with Facebook and UNICEF.

Previously at Yale, she managed the multi-country evaluation for Project Last Mile, a \$20M global health partnership which shares private sector expertise from

The Coca-Cola Company with the public health sector to strengthen availability of life-saving medicines and improve demand for critical health services throughout Africa.

Since 2000, she has implemented and evaluated both clinic-based interventions and community-based, peer-led outreach activities to influence behavior change and promote demand for services, including HIV testing - both in the US and abroad.

Her prior work focused primarily in South Africa working with adolescents and youth; mine workers; people living with HIV; and the LGBTIQ+ community She earned her Master's in Public Health from New York University in 2000, and is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of the Western Cape School of Public Health.



Dr. Saad B. Omer
Director,
Yale Institute for Global Health, USA

Saad B. Omer is the Director of the Yale Institute for Global Health, and a Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at Yale University, Schools of Medicine and Public Health.

He has conducted studies in the United States, Guatemala, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and South Africa.

Dr Omer's research portfolio includes epidemiology of respiratory viruses such as influenza, RSV, and - more recently - SARS-Cov-2 (COVID-19); clinical trials to estimate efficacy of maternal and/or infant influenza, pertussis, polio, measles and pneumococcal vaccines; and trials to evaluate drug regimens to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

He has published over 340 papers in peer reviewed journals and has mentored over 100 junior faculty, clinical, and research post-doctoral fellows and PhD and other graduate students.