

Peer Review

Review of: "Epistemic Humility vs. Credentialism: The Educational Paradox in Modern Healthcare"

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This commentary offers an insightful and highly relevant exploration of the interplay between credentialism and epistemic humility in healthcare contexts, specifically addressing vaccine hesitancy. As a behavioural scientist, I appreciate the rigorous integration of psychological theories—particularly those relating to cognitive biases, narcissism, and tribal identity—with practical examples from contemporary public health discourse.

The "educational paradox" concept is particularly compelling, effectively demonstrating how advanced education, when entwined with narcissistic traits and overconfidence, can paradoxically exacerbate susceptibility to misinformation. This notion challenges traditional behavioural science and public health assumptions that higher education uniformly enhances scientific literacy and critical thinking.

The case studies presented are illuminating, illustrating precisely how credentials can be weaponised to perpetuate misinformation. The nuanced discussions around "credentialed arrogance" provide essential insights for developing interventions to enhance critical thinking and epistemic humility.

Moreover, the commentary's emphasis on media literacy and interdisciplinary educational reforms is timely and offers actionable implications for education systems and public health initiatives. The recommendations for systemic reforms—such as mandated continuing education and explicit expertise disclaimers during legislative testimonies—demonstrate a keen understanding of the behavioural mechanisms underpinning misinformation acceptance and spread.

Furthermore, this paper effectively complements existing behavioural science concepts such as confirmation bias, motivated reasoning, and the Dunning-Kruger effect, enriching our understanding of how psychological and social dynamics interact to influence public health perceptions and decisions. By

explicitly linking these concepts to credential misuse, the commentary engages with contemporary debates on the evolving role of trust and expertise in public decision-making (e.g., Lewandowsky et al., 2017). This integration provides a clearer theoretical framework for understanding resistance to evidence-based information in highly educated populations.

Overall, this paper significantly contributes to behavioural science by highlighting the psychological underpinnings of credential misuse and provides clear guidance for fostering greater epistemic humility, thereby enhancing public trust in scientific expertise.

References:

Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K., & Cook, J. (2017). Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the “Post-Truth” Era. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 6(4), 353–369. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2017.07.008>

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.