



## Media Relations Update

May 7, 2020

As the world faces a changing political, economic, and social landscape, ALZA Strategies is committed to keeping you in the loop on how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting public affairs. We hope you remain healthy and safe during these trying times.

### Good news / bad news: COVID-19 misinformation and who is responsible

The current crisis emphasizes our need for access to information to keep up with COVID-19-related health news and resources. Many media platforms offer news coverage in an accurate and timely manner, however, a new [study published in the Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review](#) finds that **consumers of mainstream media are better informed** about coronavirus than those who consume conservative media and social media.

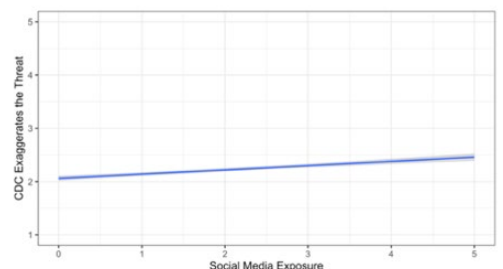
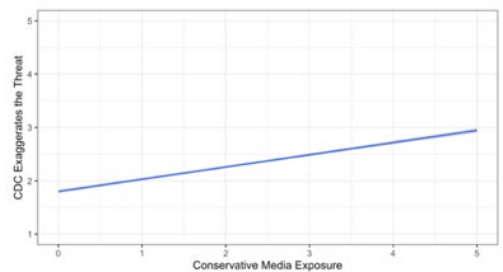
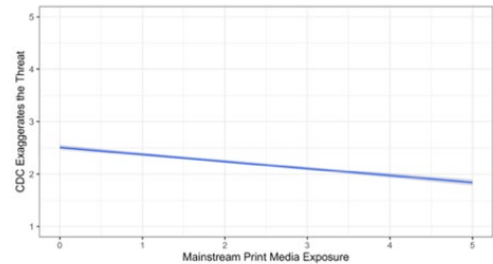
Overall, the study found that “followers of conservative media were more likely to hold inaccurate opinions about SARS-CoV-2 and to believe conspiracy theories,” similar to that of social media consumers.

Not surprisingly, divergence in beliefs among media consumers falls largely upon partisan lines when asked about COVID-19, except that both parties demonstrated equal understanding of handwashing efforts as crucial to preventing the virus.

But, when it came to questions about the “lethality” of COVID-19, Democrats reported a greater understanding of the deadliness of the virus compared to the seasonal flu than Republicans did.

Mainstream media and conservative media consumers also differed in their opinions about the CDC’s characterization of COVID-19 and the political motives behind its characterization. Conservative media and social media consumers reported feeling as though the CDC was “exaggerating the threat” of coronavirus in order to harm President Trump.

The study provided recommendations to address these issues and proposed greater standards and monitoring of social media misinformation, fact-checking efforts across media platforms, offering more accurate resources to conservative outlets, and removing paywalls on mainstream news websites to broaden access to accurate information.



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