

S Syracuse University
Newhouse School of
Public Communications

The 2021 Fluency Report: Health Literacy

Real Chemistry Emerging
Insights Lab



Our Approach

Research Focus, Methodology



Research Focus

Our goal was to explore that evolving nature of health discussions on the web and across social media platforms. To that end, we focused on three interrelated aspects of online conversations within the health communication space.

- Key topics
- Sentiment toward topics
- Important actors and organizations



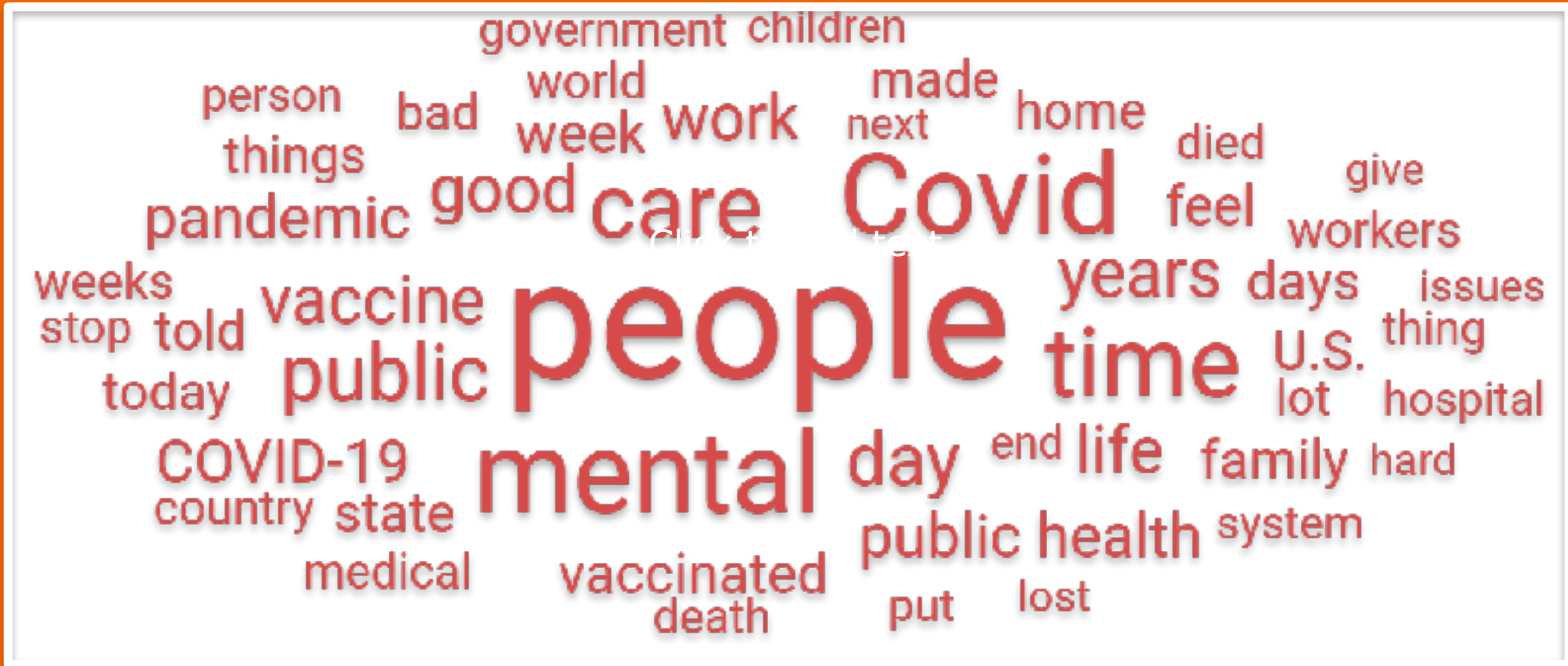
Methodology

We used quantitative and qualitative analysis to study health related discussions at scale. Our methods included:

- Social listening
- Topic clustering
- Audience segmentation
- Sentiment analysis



Key Findings



Audience Fragmentation

Audience fragmentation continues to grow as users gravitate toward individuals and politicians who aggressively use social media to disseminate their views on topics. Influence is not based on subject matter expertise, instead on social media expertise. Major topics will persist year over year but will fade as new issues and concerns arise. Close attention must be paid to intergenerational differences in trusted sources and topics of interest..

Government agencies, appointed health officials, and corporate organizations are not the dominant voices in online discussions. Online discussions can be shaped by what official organizations are not saying, as well as questions of legitimacy of those same organizations. The short feedback cycle in social media leads to rapidly evolving conversations requiring constant monitoring to stay relevant.

Key Highlights

- Overall mention volume around health topics **decreased 31%** from 2020
- *Health* related discussions still account for the majority of discussion volume, with *fitness* and *healthcare* taking second and third positions, respectively
- Discussions around COVID still dominated social media but those conversations captured a smaller percentage of the overall discourse
- Emerging topics of interest included *public health*, *healthcare workers*, and *wellness (staying healthy)*

Top Twitter Hashtags

2021

COVID19

health

Healthcare

fitness

cancer

mentalhealth

2020

covid19

coronavirus

covid

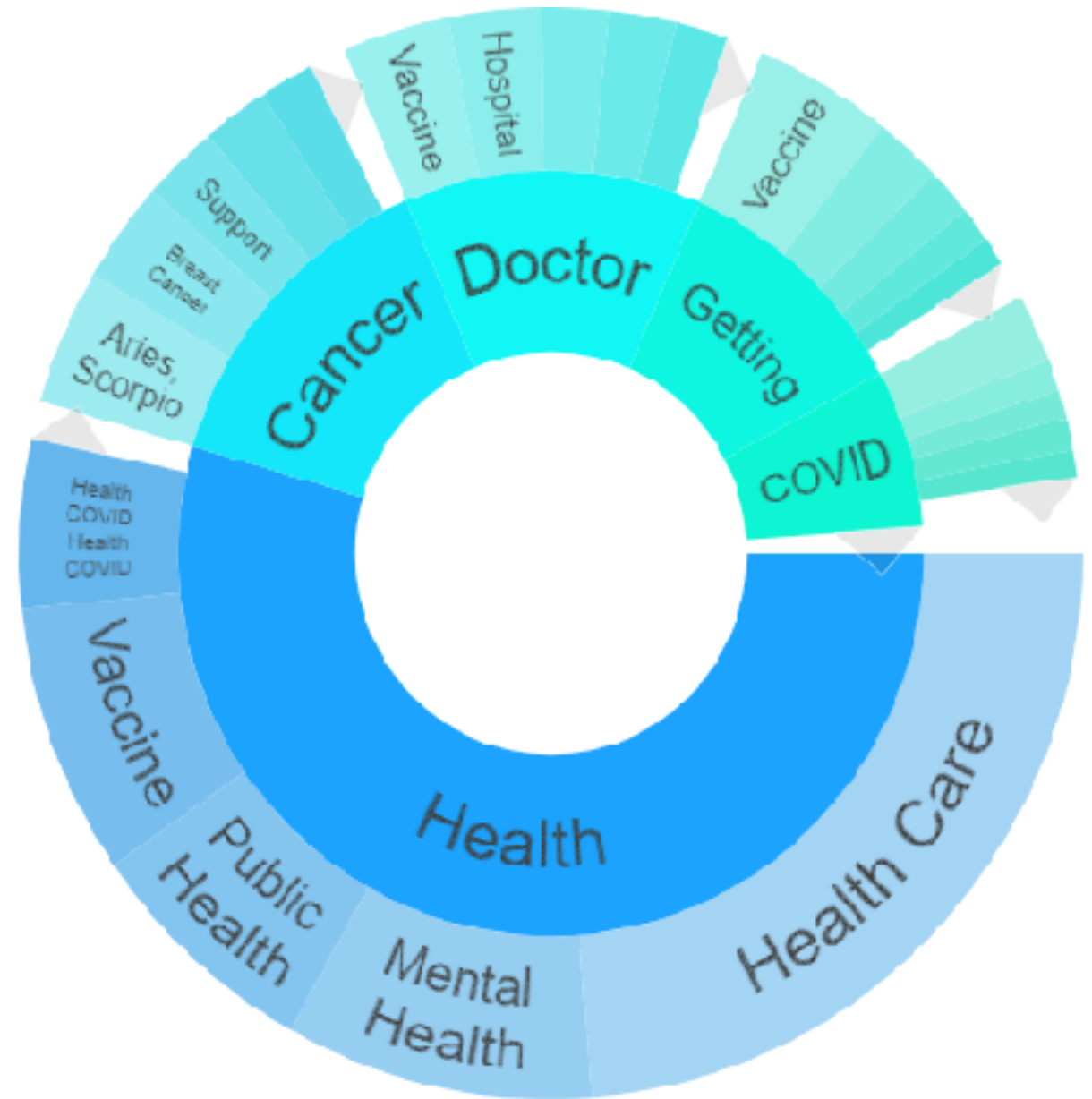
covid_19

cancer

mentalhealth

Important sub-topics

- COVID influenced cancer, vaccine, and health-care related discussions
- Mental health and the need for support continued to be important issues for many people
- People were less concerned about getting healthcare and more worried about the healthcare system as a whole



Most Mentioned Twitter Handles

2021

@potus

@thehill

@cancerterms

@cdcgov

@healthyblcklove

@govrondesantis

2020

@realdonaldtrump

@joebiden

@Reuters

@berniesanders

@cdcgov

@who

Impactful Authors



marcorubio

[@marcorubio](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 0 | Neutral: 20 | Impact: 99.9



RepBoebert

[@RepBoebert](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 0 | Neutral: 20 | Impact: 99.8



sweizy

[@sweizy](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 20 | Neutral: 0 | Impact: 99.8



AOC

[@AOC](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 0 | Neutral: 20 | Impact: 99.7



biannagolodryga

[@biannagolodryga](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 20 | Neutral: 0 | Impact: 99.7



carlosruizM

[@carlosruizM](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 20 | Negative: 0 | Neutral: 0 | Impact: 99.7



kenklippenstein

[@kenklippenstein](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 0 | Neutral: 20 | Impact: 99.7



Surgeon_General

[@Surgeon_General](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 0 | Neutral: 20 | Impact: 99.6



andrewrsorkin

[@andrewrsorkin](#)

Mentions: 20 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 20 | Neutral: 0 | Impact: 99.6



BarackObama

[@BarackObama](#)

Mentions: 40 | Positive: 0 | Negative: 0 | Neutral: 40 | Impact: 99.5

Demographic Subsets



Changes in Who Baby Boomers Tweet About

2020

@realdonaldtrump
@joebiden
@kamalaharris
@maddow
@amymcgrathky
@projectlincoln

2021

@thewomenofeden
@potus
@healthline
@gopleader
@gregabbot_tx
@thehill

Changes in Who Gen X Tweets About

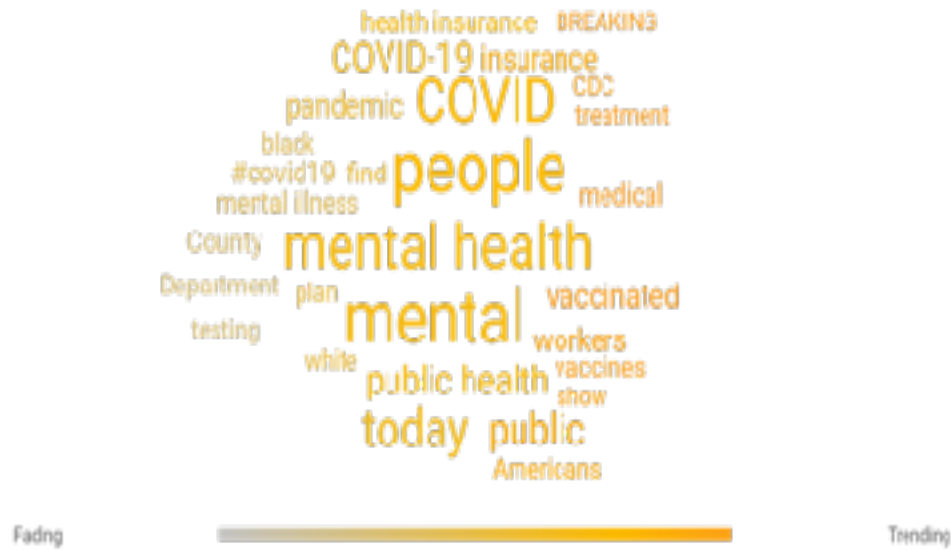
2020

@realdonaldtrump
@joebiden
@kamalaharris
@gop
@washingtonpost
@projectlincoln

2021

@potus
@govrondesantis
@foxnews
@nytimes
@rbreich
@thehill

Gen Y



- The Gen Y cohort was heavily focused on COVID, the election, mental health, and racism in 2020
- Throughout 2021, the focus shifted to vaccination, insurance, and mental health
- Gen Y had strong negative sentiment toward the healthcare system, as well as police interactions with the mentally ill
- Top hashtags for Gen Y include #medicareforall, #mentalhealth, and @selfcareforsidehustlers

Changes in Who Gen Y Tweets About

2020

@realdonaldtrump
@joebiden
@allthoseblogs
@bbloglove
@reuters
@nbcnews

2021

@allthoseblogs
@bbloglove
@potus
@thehill
@idph
@cancerterms

Gen Z



- In 2020, Gen Z was focused heavily on COVID, mental health, racism, and insurance
- Mental health issues moved to the forefront in 2021, along with vaccinations
- Like Gen Y, Gen Z had negative views on relationships between the police and mentally ill
- Gen Z also had negative perceptions regarding being forced to work during the pandemic
- Gen Z was, and continues to be, the most focused on fitness. Top hashtags include #homeworkout, #exercise, and #gym

Changes in Who Gen Z Tweets About

2020

@menshealthmag
@mjfit
@realdonaldtrump
@joe Biden
@fitnesshacks101
@matthewcherry

2021

@menshealthmag
@mjfit
@fitnesshacks101
@mikequindazzi
@potus
@thinkers360

Student Centered Research

Led by Dr. Hua Jiang, Associate Professor

Overview and Research Topic Focus

Research that examines multicultural communities' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic can inform health promotion campaigns about how to use communication channels that targeted audiences can access, tailor campaign messages to community values, leverage key resources and trusted spokespersons, and engage affected communities in developing strategies. In this premise, multiple student projects were conducted with participants from multicultural communities in fall 2020 and fall 2021—COVID-19 risk communications with the Hispanic community, vaccine hesitancy of American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) and Hispanic parents with children younger than 12 years old, social media use in making vaccine decisions among Hispanic Generation Z, and medical racism and vaccine hesitancy among the Black community. In addition to race and ethnicity, students were encouraged to explore the intersectionality of other demographics in their research, including age, gender, educational background, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.

In-Depth Studies

- COVID and vaccinations continue to dominate social media discussion volume but are fading in importance
- The analysis in this report focused solely on discussions on social media
- There are clear generational differences in terms of who people are following and what they are talking about
- In order to develop a richer understanding of health literacy, the Real Chemistry Emerging Insights Lab published several related studies
- Those studies explored views on vaccinations and social media use in specific subsets of the U.S. population

To Vaccinate or Not To Vaccinate?

- This report outlines the behavioral and social factors that influenced the decision-making process of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) parents of children ages 5 to 11 to vaccinate their children against COVID-19
- The report delivers insight into the current perceptions and concerns of the COVID-19 vaccine among the AIAN population. *Access the full report [here](#)*
- The report discusses:
 - The vaccination status of the parents and their children
 - The parents' attitudes and concerns regarding vaccines for children
 - What the parents' trusted sources of information about the COVID-19 vaccine are and how these sources influence parents' attitudes
 - What motivates the AIAN community to get their children vaccinated

Vaccine Confidence in Parents with Children During the Pandemic

- This report outlines the factors that influenced the decision-making process of Latinx parents of children aged 7-12 to vaccinate their children against COVID-19
- The report delivers insight into the current perceptions and concerns of the COVID-19 vaccine among the Latinx parent population. *Access the full report [here](#)*
- The report discusses:
 - The vaccination status of the parents and their children
 - The parents' attitudes and concerns regarding vaccines for children
 - What the parents' trusted sources of information about the COVID-19 vaccine are and how these sources influence parents' attitudes
 - What motivates the Latinx community to get their children vaccinated

Social Media & Covid-19 Among Hispanic Generation Z

- This report outlines the factors that influenced vaccine hesitancy in the Hispanic Gen Z population
- The report delivers insight into the current perceptions and concerns of the COVID-19 vaccine among the target population. *Access the full report [here](#)*
- The report discusses:
 - The effects social media information had on their perceptions of the vaccine
 - What approaches or interventions would help the target population address their vaccine concerns
 - How to better foster trust toward the vaccine and government in the target population

Trust in Medical Providers & Vaccines Among Black Americans During COVID-19

- This report outlines the factors that influenced vaccine hesitancy in the Black community
- The report delivers insight into the current perceptions and concerns of the COVID-19 vaccine among members of the community that are in the 20- to 24-year-old age range. Access the full report [here](#)
- The report discusses:
 - The current sentiment about healthcare among Black social media users
 - Themes of conversation regarding medical racism
 - Factors influencing trust in healthcare professionals by Black Americans