

**\* Required Information**

# Experiences in public communication of medical science & health

This survey is part of a research project that aims to better understand the experiences of medical professionals, scientific researchers, patients advocates, health journalists, & policy makers in communicating health issues to the public. It consists of 20 short questions, & should take 5-10 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous, and their content will be used for research purposes only. If you might be willing to contribute more about your experiences we invite you to inform us of this on the final page of the survey. For any questions, please e-mail [d.r.grimes@qub.ac.uk](mailto:d.r.grimes@qub.ac.uk)

**\* 1. Please select that which best describes your primary role (Select one option)**

- ☐ Medical Professional    ☐ Scientific Communications  
☐ Scientist / Researcher    ☐ Health Journalism  
☐ Patient Advocate    ☐ Health Policy  
☐ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**\* 2. Please specify your gender (Select one option)**

- ☐ Female    ☐ Non-Binary  
☐ Male    ☐ Prefer not to say

**\* 3. Please indicate which of the following organisations you are professionally affiliated with that are directly relevant to your outreach efforts.**

- ☐ University / research institute    ☐ Media outlet  
☐ Medical institute    ☐ Political grouping  
☐ NGO / Charity    ☐ Non-affiliated (Patient Advocate / independent)  
☐ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**\* 4. Please select the topic or topics you frequently communicate about with the public. Please note that this includes topics you might debunk or criticize. Select all that apply.**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vaccination                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Medicine  | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine in media          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dietary Science              | <input type="checkbox"/> Pseudoscience / scams | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical science            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic illness       | <input type="checkbox"/> Bioethics                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Policy                | <input type="checkbox"/> Infectious diseases   | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpretation of research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reproductive / Sexual Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacology / drugs  | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender issues              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patient Advocacy             | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological issues  | <input type="checkbox"/> Genetics                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ |  |   |

**\* 5. What media do you use for public engagement? Select all that apply.**

- |  |   |                                    |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television (appearances)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers / Magazines (advising / quoted) | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television (advising / quoted)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Books (Author)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio (appearances)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Books (Advising / quoted)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio (advising / quoted)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Public talks                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Youtube   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers / Magazines (Author) | <input type="checkbox"/> Podcasts                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Blogging  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____    |   |                                    |

**\* 6. Approximately how long have you been communicating medical issues to the public? Please round to the nearest whole year**

(Enter a value between 0 and 120)

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**\* 7. Please select what best describes the extent of your public engagement (Select one option)**

- ☐ I am heavily involved in public outreach      ☐ I am lightly involved in public outreach
- ☐ I am considerably involved in public outreach      ☐ My vocation is media or outreach centred
- ☐ I am involved in public outreach
- ☐ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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## Part II: Engagement experiences

### 8. In your opinion, how frequently do the following sentiments apply to your experiences of public engagement?

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Infrequently	Never	Unsure
*(a) I feel my efforts contribute to public understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(b) I find engagement prompts constructive and respectful discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(c) Engagement is mutually informative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(d) My contributions are welcomed & appreciated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(e) Engagement increases my personal understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(f) I feel I correct some misconceptions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(g) I find my engagement changes minds & informs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(h) I consider outreach personally rewarding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(i) My efforts feel futile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(j) Engagement takes a toll on my mental health & well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
*(k) I find my efforts are taken in good faith by others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### \* 9. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following negative experiences during your engagement efforts. Select all that apply. Note that for the purposes of this survey, vexatious complaints are defined as those raised chiefly to harass or intimidate.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal abuse                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexist or gender-specific abuse             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal smears                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Racist or ethnic-specific abuse             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional smears                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation attempts                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical threats                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Vexatious legal threats                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threats of sexual violence                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vexatious complaints to employers           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment from individuals                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Vexatious complaints to professional bodies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinated harassment from specific groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent unwanted communication           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Questioning of one's motivations            | <input type="checkbox"/> No negative experiences                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____                |  |

**\* 10. How would you best describe your feelings about your outreach experiences to date? (Select one option)**

- ☐ Largely rewarding
- ☐ Rewarding
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Not very rewarding
- ☐ Not at all rewarding
- ☐ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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**\* 11. If you have been the recipient of abuse or personal / professional smears stemming from your engagement, please indicate which of the following you've experienced (check all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive or intimidating comments  | <input type="checkbox"/> Assertions that you are dishonest or deliberately misleading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insults based on appearance, race, or gender   | <input type="checkbox"/> Insults about your professional competence or intelligence   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malicious comments about one's motivations / allegations of 'corruption' or 'shilling' | <input type="checkbox"/> I have not experienced any of the above                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malicious comments about one's personal or sexual conduct                              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____   |   |

**\* 12. Please indicate whether you have been subjected to any of the following (check all that apply)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Threats or implications of physical violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent trolling / harassment by an individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical violence or intimidation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistent trolling / harassment by a group       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spreading of malicious rumours               | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repeated unwanted communications             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____                 |  |

**\* 13. If you have been the victim of targeted abuse for your outreach work by a group or community, what best describes that grouping? Choose all that apply if relevant**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-vaccine groups                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious groupings            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dietary advocates                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative medicine advocates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic illness groups                        | <input type="checkbox"/> "Wellness" groups              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-fluoride groups                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Autism-focused groups          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electromagnetic hypersensitivity groups       | <input type="checkbox"/> I have not encountered this    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please elaborate as appropriate) _____ |   |

**\* 14. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following. Note that for the purposes of this survey, vexatious complaints are defined as those raised chiefly to harass or intimidate.**

- ☐ Vexatious complaint to employer or institution - complaint dismissed without investigation
- ☐ Vexatious complaint to employer or institution - required investigation
- ☐ Vexatious complaint to a professional body - complaint dismissed without investigation
- ☐ Vexatious complaint to a professional body - required investigation
- ☐ Vexatious legal complaint - complaint dismissed without investigation
- ☐ Vexatious legal complaint - complaint required investigation
- ☐ None of the above

**\* 15. If you have experienced a vexatious complaint, did you feel supported by your institution or professional body? (Select one option)**

- ☐ Highly supported   ☐ Not well supported  
☐ Supported   ☐ Entirely unsupported  
☐ Neutral   ☐ Not applicable

**\* 16. If you have experienced abusive or diminishing comments, in which fora are these typically delivered or shared? (check all that apply)**

- ☐ E-mail   ☐ Youtube  
☐ Post   ☐ Other social media  
☐ Phone calls   ☐ Blogs  
☐ Texts   ☐ Websites  
☐ Twitter   ☐ Public television  
☐ Facebook   ☐ Public radio  
☐ Instagram   ☐ Not applicable  
☐ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**\* 17. Have you ever had to take legal action or consult law-enforcement officials regarding malicious communications, threats, or claims? (Select one option)**

- ☐ Yes   ☐ Not applicable  
☐ No   ☐ Prefer not to say

**\* 18. Have negative reactions to public engagement ever caused you mental health problems (depression, anxiety, stress, etc) or otherwise impeded your functioning? (Select one option)**

- ☐ Yes - severely   ☐ Unsure  
☐ Yes - considerably   ☐ No  
☐ Yes - to a minor degree   ☐ Prefer not to say

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- ☐ Increased support from professional bodies
- ☐ Increased support from academic institutions
- ☐ Increased support from advocacy / healthcare bodies
- ☐ Clearer guidelines and better training on public engagement
- ☐ Improved emotional support services
- ☐ Other (Please specify)
- ☐ Practical legal advice
- ☐ More proactive stances from institutions and bodies
- ☐ Dedicated funding for outreach
- ☐ Better protective mechanisms from internet / social media companies
- ☐ None of the above

## Experiences in public communication of medical science & health

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Thank you for taking part in this survey. Results will be treated anonymously, but if you are happy for us to contact you and perhaps quote from your experiences if appropriate, please indicate this below.

21. If you would like to be kept up to date on results and follow-up, please enter your e-mail address below.

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22. We'd be grateful if you'd also supply your twitter handle. This will not be shared without your consent, and is entirely optional, but may prove useful in future work estimating network reach of health information.

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