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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

270 health experts to Spotify: Joe Rogan's Covid misinformation is 'a sociological issue of devastating proportions'

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Megan Sauer
@MEGGSAUER

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Michael S. Schwartz

Hundreds of professors, scientists, doctors and health care workers called out Spotify this week, accusing the streamer's most popular podcast, The Joe Rogan

Experience, of spreading Covid misinformation.

In an [open letter](#) addressed to Spotify, 270 science and health professionals said the podcast was "broadcasting misinformation, particularly regarding the Covid-19 pandemic." The letter then asked Spotify to "take action against mass-misinformation events" on its platform. Notably, it didn't recommend any specific actions for the the streaming platform to take.

The letter specifically highlighted a December 31 [episode](#) featuring Dr. Robert Malone, a virologist who was recently banned from [Twitter](#) for spreading vaccine falsehoods. On the episode, Malone told host Joe Rogan that there had recently been an "explosion of vaccine-associated deaths," and that hospitals are financially incentivized to label Covid as a cause of patient deaths. He also said leaders are using "free-floating anxiety" to "hypnotize" the public.

All three theories were quickly identified as false, as reported by [AP News](#) and nonprofit fact-checking outlet [PolitiFact](#). [YouTube](#) removed a video of the interview soon after it was posted, [citing](#) violated community guidelines.

Yet Malone's comments were likely heard and potentially internalized by millions of listeners. Rogan has [claimed](#) his show is downloaded over 200 million times each month, and his is certainly one of the [most popular podcasts](#) in the world, topping Spotify's global rankings for 2021.

"Dr. Malone's interview has reached many tens of millions of listeners vulnerable to predatory medical misinformation," the letter said. "This is not only a scientific or medical concern; it is a sociological issue of devastating proportions and Spotify is responsible for allowing this activity to thrive on its platform."

Rogan's popularity makes the potential for spreading misinformation especially concerning, the letter's backers wrote. Over the course of the pandemic, Rogan has received backlash for repeatedly spreading Covid misinformation: He previously [discouraged](#) young people from getting vaccinated and promoted [ivermectin](#) to treat the virus, despite numerous experts [discrediting the drug](#) as a

Covid treatment.

In response, the coalition wrote they want Spotify to “immediately establish a clear and public policy to moderate misinformation on its platform.”

“By allowing the propagation of false and societally harmful assertions, Spotify is enabling its hosted media to damage public trust in scientific research and sow doubt in the credibility of data-driven guidance offered by medical professionals,” the letter said.

While Spotify doesn’t currently have any concrete policies to combat misinformation, the platform has previously [removed](#) episodes of other podcasts for spreading falsehoods. Spotify, Rogan and Malone did not immediately return CNBC Make It’s requests for comment.

Update: This story has been updated to include CNBC Make It’s request for comment from Dr. Robert Malone.

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