

VACCINES, ANTI-VAX, AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION

PARTICIPANTS

- **Gerardo D'Amico**, scientific writer and journalist, vice editor-in-chief, RaiNews24, Rome
- **Elena Fattori**, vice-president of the Standing Committee Food and Agriculture of the Italian Senate, Rome
- **Alberto Garcia**, UNESCO Chair on Bioethics and Human Rights, Rome
- **Donato Greco**, past-Director of the Laboratory of Epidemiology and Biostatistics of the Italian National Institute of Health, Roma
- **Guido Lucchini**, Chairman of the Medical Association of Pordenone, Pordenone
- **Alessandra Martini**, European Commission. Research & Innovation DG, Unit RTD.E.3. Fighting infectious diseases and emerging epidemics
- **Emilio Mordini**, COMPARE Risk Communication, Responsible Technology, Paris
- **Giorgio Mustacchi**, Professor Emeritus of Medical Oncology, University of Trieste, Trieste
- **Andrea Rubin**, Sociologist, "Observa Science in Society", University of Salerno, Salerno
- **Giorgio Simon**, Managing Director, Local Health Authority of Pordenone, Pordenone
- **Fabrizio Turolto**, Professor of Moral Philosophy, University Ca' Foscari, Venice

Under the sponsorship of

ITALIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH

FRIULI REGION

Participation in the internal session is only by invitation, participation in the open session is restricted to health professionals. There are no participation fees. Advance registration is necessary.

Send an email to compare@responsibletechnology.eu providing your name, main qualification and affiliation.

Venue: **L'ULTIMO MULINO**
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Working language: Italian

COMPARE RISK COMMUNICATION

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WORKSHOP VACCINES, ANTI-VAX, AND HEALTH COMMUNICATION

26-27 ottobre 2018

Vaccines, Anti-Vax, and Health Communication

L'ULTIMO MULINO

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Rationale of the workshop and agenda

COMPARE is a multidisciplinary research network that has the common vision to become the enabling analytical framework and globally linked data and information sharing platform for the rapid identification, containment and mitigation of emerging infectious diseases and foodborne outbreaks. **COMPARE** also addresses health risk communication in new and emerging epidemics. The notion of risk in medicine has been often misunderstood, and modern data science makes health risk communication still more complex. Today we speak of *data storytelling*, meaning that in the big data era effective communication is increasingly relying on narratives and storytelling rather than on neutral scientific reports. Borders between truth and pseudo-truth, science and fiction, are thus becoming dangerously blurred.

Vaccine and vaccination offer meaningful examples of such a difficult communication dynamic. Since Jenner, vaccination has generated controversies, however the extraordinary success of vaccination campaigns in the second half of 1900s seemed to have dispelled most doubts among people. Surprisingly enough, in the beginning of 2000s, vaccine hesitancy and refusal are instead increasing again, *infecting* significant sectors of the public opinion, media (notably new media), and policy makers.



Vaccine hesitancy and refusal are complex phenomena, indubitably due also to disinformation, scientific illiteracy, medical quackery. Yet, medical education, correct information, prosecution of charlatanism are not enough, although essential. Why so many educated people, even apparently scientific literate, distrust vaccination and believe in unbelievable conspiracy theories concerning vaccines? The crisis of trust, involving scientific expertise and health communication, demands a more in-depth analysis.

Preparatory Activity Background Document on “Vaccines and fake news”

15 September: circulating background document (in Italian) on “Vaccines and Fake News”

15 October deadline to comment the background document

Friday 26 October How to talk to patients, journalists and policy makers

Friday session is devoted to the internal discussion among workshop participants, prompted by the background document. Participation is only by invitation.

- 14:00 - Opening
- 14:15 - Informal presentations
- 15:30 - Short break
- 16:00 - Roundtable on the background document
- 18:00 - Consensus points
- 19:00 - Adjourn
- 19:30 - Business dinner
- 21:00 - Fireplace talks

Saturday 27 October Vaccination and autism: what makes a hoax successful?

Saturday session is open to the participation of health professionals and GPs. The starting point is one of the most diffused and dangerous hoax surrounding vaccination, the alleged responsibility of vaccines in causing autism spectrum disorders. This hoax is twofold serious, because it contributes to feed vaccine hesitancy, and because it provides an alibi for totally ineffective treatments of autistic disorders and even explicit charlatanism.

The “vaccination and autism case” will be used as a starting point for a more in-depth investigation of communication in needs of patients and families, unmet gaps, difficulties in institutional communication



- 09:00 - Introductory remarks
- 09:30 - Roundtable moderated by Gerardo D'Amico
- 10:30 - Coffee break
- 11:00 - Questions and comments
- 12:30 - Concluding remarks
- 12:45 - Informal talks and refreshment
- 13:30 - End of the workshop

Follow-up Activity Discussion Document on “Vaccines and fake news”

November: finalising a discussion document on “Vaccine and Fake News” (in English)

December 2018- February 2019: online public consultation on the discussion document

March 2019: the discussion document is submitted to the COMPARE General Assembly and circulated among relevant EC services.