

Press Release
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HKNE hosts online talk “Fact Check During the Epidemic”

The COVID-19 epidemic remains as unpredictable as ever. The number of new cases in some regions has gone up again while virus variants have found their way into the Hong Kong community. People may find it difficult to tell which of the wave of information circulating around is accurate or not.

The Hong Kong News-Expo (HKNE) today (23 May) held an online talk “Fact Check During the Epidemic” and invited experts to share their professional advice on vaccination and virus variants, and skills to fact check and analyse the information overload.

The online talk was joined by Professor Ivan Hung Fan-ngai, member of the Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines, Mr Raymond Li, Co-Director, HKBU FactCheck Service, and Ms May Chan Suk-mei, Vice-Chairperson of HKNE.

Professor Hung explained the possible side effects of the vaccines and their effectiveness against the virus variants. He said the Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines has been monitoring any possible adverse effects from vaccines. So far, he pointed out, the panel considered that there has been no direct link between vaccination and the death cases.

Professor Hung said vaccination would provide certain protection against virus variants. He urged residents to get vaccinated as quickly as possible if there is any hope for community immunity. “Outside travel can only happen if we are able to keep our infection rate to zero and if we are able to reach a vaccination rate of 70 per cent or above in the community,” he said.

Mr Raymond Li shared the problems of infodemic caused by online misinformation and the skills used by his fellow academics to help the public distinguish accurate information from the false. He called for caution against the fake news spread by some social media. He noted that residents should remain sceptical and must check the sources and compare the information from different media before starting to forward messages to others.

He said the academics have developed a mobile app for the public to take part in the process of fact checking by reporting suspicious information or providing evidence against inaccurate information.

Ms May Chan said the public should listen to the advice of experts, obtain accurate information about the epidemic, discard false rumours and build up their media and information literacy skills.

地址: 中環必列者士街二號 | 電話 Tel: 2205 2233 | 傳真: 2566 2022

Address: No. 2, Bridges Street, Central, Hong Kong | Tel: 2205 2233 | Fax: 2566 2022

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Captions:

Photo 1: Professor Hung Fan-ngai talks about the protection given by vaccines against virus variants.

Photo 2: Mr Raymond Li shared how to distinguish accurate information.

Photo 3: Ms May Chan Suk-mei said the public should build up their media and information literacy skills.

Photo 4: (From left) Professor Hung Fan-ngai, Mr Raymond Li and Ms May Chan Suk-mei at the “Fact Check During the Epidemic” online talk.