

From scientists to young leaders: Thousands honour pandemic 'influencers' through COVID-19 social media awards

London, 30 March 2023 – In a global display of appreciation, thousands of people are recognizing social media influencers who used their online platforms to advance understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023 COVID-19 Social Media Awards have united people from over 60 countries worldwide to celebrate the instrumental role of social media in addressing the pandemic.

"The interest in this year's awards is remarkable," says Professor Jeffrey Lazarus, a health researcher at the Barcelona Institute of Global Health and co-founder of the awards. "It demonstrates how people in every corner of the world relied on getting credible information – and tackling frequent misinformation about COVID-19 – through their social media networks."

With over 5000 votes cast to date, the awards have exceeded expectations. Countries with the highest levels of engagement include Mexico, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Canada, Thailand, and Spain, partly reflecting the popularity of online networks in these regions.

The 2023 awards spotlight new influencers who emerged during the pandemic, and help showcase their contributions to bigger audiences across different social media platforms. Nominees so far include government officials, scientists, community workers, doctors, nurses, journalists, and other national figures.

Throughout the pandemic social media provided a vital lifeline for many people, enabling them to connect despite social distancing and to share important information quickly. It also mobilized people around local actions and community initiatives supporting vulnerable groups, such as people living with other underlying health conditions, homeless people and other typically marginalized communities.

More than a simple competition, the awards not only recognize the efforts of COVID-19 influencers – they also enhance global readiness for future outbreaks. Beatrice Spadacini, Health Media Manager at the Internews Health Journalism Network states: "By tracking health conversations across social media platforms, listening to people and understanding their concerns, we hope to learn valuable lessons for responding to future public health crises."

The COVID-19 Social Media Awards cover seven categories, ranging from technical areas of pandemic policy to understanding the virus, and COVID-19 vaccines. There is also a 'Young Leader' category to recognize the contributions of social media users and influencers under the age of 30.

Nominations and voting for the awards remain open until the end of April 2023, and the winners will be announced by global health leaders and officials in Geneva in May. There is still time to take part by nominating and voting for valued social media users who made an impact on the pandemic in your country. More information: www.socmedawards.com/2023

The 2023 awards are jointly co-hosted by eight renowned organizations whose international work touches on varied aspects of global health.



2023 COVID-19 Social Media Awards
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