

Centenario de la Gripe Española de 1918. La peor pandemia en la historia contemporánea mundial: lecciones para el futuro

Centenary of the 1918 Spanish Influenza, the Worst Pandemic in the Recent History of the World: Lessons for the future

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ABSTRACT

Influenza, populism and post truth

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The rise of populism worldwide is challenging science and its tenants and is fueling the rise of anti-science movements. The latter attack scientific discoveries or science – based policy or scientific activity by amplifying wrong messages and generating and disseminating fake news. Inevitably, this will affect policy makers and funding agency's areas of interest and funding schemes. It is essential that we do not leave a void and that our perspective heard is clear and loud. As a call to responsibility, many scientists worldwide are ready to take a public stand in defense of the principles that we share as a community.

Taking a public stand can come with slanderous personal and institutional attacks as an attempt to shake institutional scientific credibility. The virology community as a whole - and the influenza community in particular are at risk of similar misrepresentation: we use verbiage in which we refer to “animal experiments”, “cloning”, “reverse genetics” and which include words and concepts that are now being questioned. Defending the credibility of the influenza research community in response to populist attacks should become one of our most urgent priorities. Leaders of the scientific community worldwide should promote a reflection on this topic to improve vigilance and preparedness to limit the damage that such “viral” attacks may cause.