The Impact of Misinformation on Health and Science

Eric M. Meslin, PhD, Council of Canadian Academies, Ontario

“Misinformation can cause significant harm to individuals, communities, and societies. It damages our community well-being through otherwise preventable illnesses, deaths, and economic losses, and our social well-being through polarization and the erosion of public trust.” These conclusions follow from a recent report of the Council of Canadian Academies, which will be discussed by the CCA President, along with broader reflections on the topic.

Dr. Meslin is the President and CEO of the Council of Canadian Academies, a non-profit organization providing assessments of evidence on leading policy issues to the government of Canada. He joined the CCA in 2016 after 25 years in university and government settings, including the previous 15 years at Indiana University where he was Founding Director of the IU Center for Bioethics, Associate Dean for Bioethics in the IU School of Medicine, and Professor of Medicine, of Philosophy, of Medical & Molecular Genetics, of Bioethics & Law, and of Public Health.

His policy experience includes Bioethics Research Director in the Ethical, Legal and Social Implications (ELSI) program at the National Human Genome Research Institute, and Executive Director of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission appointed by President Clinton. He has been a member of advisory committees to the World Health Organization, OECD, UNESCO, UK Biobank, CDC, and Genome Canada. He is an elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (2020), the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (2015), and The Hastings Center (2020). In 2007 he was appointed Chevalier de L’Ordre National du Mérite by the Government of France.