



The Dangerous Impacts of Conspiracy Beliefs: What Research Reveals

Research shows that conspiracy beliefs are not just odd or fringe—they have real and damaging consequences for individuals and society.

⚠️ Health Impacts

- ▶ Lower vaccine uptake
- ▶ Resistance to health interventions (from COVID-19 to HIV prevention)
- ▶ Reduced trust in medical authorities

⚠️ Democratic Risks

- ▶ Decreased voter participation and institutional trust
- ▶ Increased non-normative behaviors like tax refusal or political violence

⚠️ Social and Psychological Harms

- ▶ Increased prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup hostility
- ▶ Heightened feelings of alienation, anxiety, and loss of control
- ▶ Amplified extremist tendencies and support for violence

What makes it worse? These beliefs often cluster together, fueled by cognitive biases, emotional needs, and social forces.

Once embedded, they reinforce each other and resist correction.



Sources:

- 1) Jolley, D., Marques, M. D. & Cookson, D. (2022). Shining a spotlight on the dangerous consequences of conspiracy theories. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 47, 101363. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101363>
- 2) Pilch, I., Turska-Kawa, A., Wardawy, P., Olszanecka-Marmola, A. & Smolkowska-Jędo, W. (2023). Contemporary trends in psychological research on conspiracy beliefs. A systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1075779>