



Evidence intermediary, Julia Belluz

Respected journalist bringing rigour to reporting about what the best available science does and doesn't tell us about the major challenges of our time

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging and disorienting time in many ways, including for all of us who are trying to make sense of, and communicate, what the latest evidence can tell us about the virus and how to keep our families, communities, and countries safe. In a fast-moving information environment, where we're constantly challenging and updating assumptions, understanding the implications of new studies or policies has been more difficult than ever. But the good news is that COVID-19 has also accelerated a global push to develop and refine tools that can help people think critically about evidence and contextualize it. I'm thinking in particular of evidence synthesis, and living evidence products, which the report addresses in **sections 4.4** and **4.7**. Their very raison d'être is bringing together the latest and best evidence on important social, policy, and clinical questions to come to more fully supported conclusions. For example, the COVID-END inventory collates high-quality evidence on everything from how the various vaccines stack up against new coronavirus variants, to what impact school closures have on minimizing the risk of outbreaks (see **section 4.12** for additional examples). These tools should be an essential resource for journalists reporting on this pandemic, the next pandemic, and the many other societal challenges to come. For those on the receiving end of decisions by clinicians, public servants, and elected officials, these tools are also potentially life-saving. I just hope this pandemic will finally help more people appreciate, and make use of, them.

