

cogiito.com

A French website that translates articles about alternative medicine from unreliable websites, including false claims regarding Covid-19 and vaccine safety.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic standards of credibility and transparency.

Score: 12.5/100

Ownership and Financing

Cogiito.com does not disclose its ownership. The site appears to be owned by its founder and editor-in-chief, Philippe Alexandre Jandrok, a Strasbourg resident who previously worked in marketing and communications. Jandrok has also written nonfiction books on alternative medicine as well as novels.










The site derives revenue from advertising and donations.

Content

Cogiito.com describes itself on its homepage as “The free media outlet of citizens who think for themselves!” (“Le média libre des citoyens qui s'autorisent à penser !”). According to the site’s Terms of Use page, Cogiito is run by “a small team of volunteers who wants to provide users with an alternative news and communication tool.” (“une petite équipe de bénévoles qui souhaite proposer aux internautes un outil alternatif d’information et de communication.”)

The site’s coverage focuses on natural medicine, healthcare, and spirituality. Content often voices criticism of conventional medicine and the pharmaceutical industry. Many stories are drawn from other sources, with commentary added by the site. Jandrok, the site’s founder and editor-in-chief, produces a video series, “Jandrokeries,” in which he comments on news and health topics.

Typical articles have run under headlines including “Drying and preserving wild plants...” (“Séchage et conservation des plantes sauvages...”); “Coping with coronavirus anxiety, isolation and loneliness” (“Faire face à l’anxiété, à l’isolement et à la solitude du coronavirus”); and “The best pets for children...” (“Les meilleurs animaux de compagnie pour les enfants...”).

-  Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
-  Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
-  Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
-  Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
-  Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
-  Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
-  Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
-  Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
-  The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

Cogiito.com often shares stories translated from U.S. websites that NewsGuard has found to be unreliable, including NaturalNews.com, Mercola.com, VacTruth.com, and ChildrensHealthDefense.org. Many of these articles promote health misinformation, including unsubstantiated claims about the Covid-19 disease.

For example, in March 2020, the site published the translation of an article from medical news site OrthoMolecular.org, titled “Shanghai government officially recommends vitamin C for COVID-19” (“Le gouvernement de Shanghai recommande officiellement la vitamine C pour soigner le COVID-19”). The article claimed that “The government of Shanghai, China has announced its official recommendation that COVID-19 should be treated with high amounts of intravenous vitamin C.” (“Le gouvernement de Shanghai, en Chine, a annoncé sa recommandation officielle selon laquelle COVID-19 devrait être traité avec de grandes quantités de vitamine C par voie intraveineuse.”)

In fact, the government of Shanghai did not urge Vitamin C therapy for the treatment of COVID-19. The Cogiito.com story cites an article in the Chinese Journal of Infectious Diseases and a post on the website of a hospital in Northwestern China. However, neither of those articles stated that Shanghai recommended the use of Vitamin C to treat COVID-19.

As of early 2020, Vitamin C was being studied as a treatment of COVID-19 in several clinical trials. However, fact-checking organizations including French newspaper 20 Minutes’ fact-checking unit, Factcheck.org, and HealthFeedback.org have said that there is currently no credible evidence that high doses of Vitamin C can slow or stop the disease. The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have said that there is no specific treatment recommended for the coronavirus strain responsible for the 2020 outbreak.

A February 2020 article, titled “Was the coronavirus modified with AIDS genes?” (“Le coronavirus modifié avec des gènes du SIDA ?”), claimed that the virus was

“genetically modified” and “contaminated with AIDS genes” (“génétiqnement modifié... contaminé avec des gènes du SIDA”). The article cited a study that argued that certain protein segments of Covid-19 are similar to those found in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) proteins, suggesting that the virus was manipulated in a laboratory.

The claim that COVID-19 is linked to HIV or AIDS is false. It was attributed to a study posted on the website BioRxiv, which publishes studies before they have undergone peer review. According to a February 2020 article on HealthFeedback.org, the study’s finding that there is a similarity between COVID-19 virus and HIV “was detected using extremely short protein sequences, a practice that often gives rise to false positive results.” The authors of the study withdrew it from BioRxiv just two days after it was published.

Cogiito.com has also spread discredited claims and false information about the safety of vaccines. For example, a December 2019 article, translated from NaturalNews.com, was headlined “Japan has NO vaccine mandates, yet achieves the HEALTHIEST children in the world” (“Le Japon a les enfants les plus sains du monde sans la moindre obligation vaccinale”). The article claimed that Japan has “the healthiest children on the planet... and at the very same time, Japan also has the lowest vaccination rate in the entire world, which suggests that getting vaccinated actually makes a person unhealthier in the long run.” (“Les enfants les plus sains de la planète... Et en même temps, le Japon a également le taux de vaccination le plus bas du monde, ce qui suggère que se faire vacciner rend en fait une personne malsaine à long terme.”)

It is true that Japanese children fare well in many measures of health, but an AFP fact-check found that the country in fact has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world. Indeed, vaccination rates in Japan are close to 100 percent for many diseases, according to the Japanese Ministry of Health. Moreover, multiple

studies have shown the effectiveness of vaccines in decreasing the incidence of the diseases that they are intended to prevent.

In October 2019, a Cogiito.com article claimed a causal link between autism and vaccines and also claimed that vaccines are not tested for safety. The article, written by anti-vaccine activist Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., was originally published on the U.S. site ChildrensHealthDefense.org. According to the article, the CDC “has never performed a study to support CDC’s claim that DTaP does not cause autism. The same is true for Hep B, Hib, PCV 13, and IPV.”

No major health organization has found a causal link between autism and vaccines. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has declared that “there is no link between vaccines and autism,” a conclusion backed by an abundance of scientific evidence. A 2013 CDC study found that vaccines — including the five vaccines that Kennedy noted in his article — do not cause autism spectrum disorders.

Because Cogiito.com often publishes false and misleading health claims, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false information, does not gather and present information responsibly, and fails to avoid deceptive headlines.

The site has a dedicated Opinion section. However, opinion content advancing anti-vaccine and anti-mainstream medicine perspectives, which the site does not disclose, often appears outside the opinion section.

For example, an October 2019 article about human papillomavirus vaccines that was labeled Front Page News (À la une), among other tags, stated: "We have to follow science, the true one, not the government and industry science, not the science of labs, which is curtailed to create false science in the service of those who become wealthier at the expense of health." ("Nous devons suivre la science, la vraie, pas la science du gouvernement et de l'industrie, pas la science des laboratoires qui est tronquée pour créer une fausse science au service de ceux qui s'enrichissent au détriment de la santé.")

A January 2020 article that is a translation of a NaturalNews.com story was also labeled Front Page News, was headlined “As of January 1, 2020, the cancer industry has now killed 20 million people around the world since the year 2000” (“Depuis le 1er janvier 2020, l’industrie du cancer a tué 20 millions de personnes dans le monde depuis l’an 2000”). The article called the pharmaceutical industry “the number-one killer in our modern world today” and claimed that “if people really care about others’ well-being, then the first thing we need to eliminate from our streets are CVS and Walgreens stores on every corner, and hospital compounds in every city.” (“tueur numéro un de notre monde moderne aujourd’hui” ... “si les gens se soucient vraiment du bien-être des autres, la première chose que nous devons éliminer de nos rues sont les magasins CVS et Walgreens à chaque coin de rue et les complexes hospitaliers dans chaque ville”).

Because Cogiito.com does not disclose its perspective and features unlabeled opinion articles in its news section, NewsGuard has determined that the site does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

Cogiito.com does not publish a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find corrections on the site.

Asked about the articles and headlines cited above, the site’s approach to corrections, and its handling of opinion, an unidentified representative for the site did not directly address NewsGuard’s questions. Instead that person wrote: “Your questions match contrary opinions published by media that give absolutely zero proof that our sources are false, and if you were doing a real investigation work, you would notice on your own that these articles against our site confirm information we publish and that are translations of works from American journalists that were not attacked in the US for fake news, since their articles are still available.” (“Vos questions correspondent à des opinions contraires publiées par une presse qui ne donnent absolument aucune preuve que nos sources sont fausses et si vous faisiez véritablement un travail d’investigation, vous constateriez par vous-même que

ces articles contre notre site confirment des points des informations que nous publions et qui sont des traductions de journalistes américains qui n'ont pas été attaqué (sic) pour Fake News aux USA, puisque leurs articles sont toujours disponibles”).

Transparency

Although Philippe Jandrok is listed on the homepage as the founder of Cogiito, the site does not name an owner. Some articles identify Jandrok as Cogiito’s editor-in-chief.

The site does not provide contact or biographical information for its content creators. Some writers are identified with their first name and the first letter of their last name, such as “Karolina B.” and “Pascale B.”

Cogiito.com provides a general email address and an online contact form.

Advertising is distinguished from editorial content.

Cogiito.com did not respond to NewsGuard’s specific questions sent via email regarding the site’s lack of information regarding its ownership and content creators.

History

Cogiito.com was registered in 2019.

Correction: An earlier version of this Nutrition Label mistakenly said that the website had not responded to two emails seeking comment on its credibility and transparency practices. In fact, the website had responded to NewsGuard in an email, which NewsGuard missed. NewsGuard apologizes for the error.

Editor’s Note: This Nutrition Label was updated on May 4, 2020, to add comments from the site.

Written by: [Sophia Tewa](#)

Edited by: [Eric Efron](#), [Chine Labbe](#), [Yves Clarisse](#)

Send feedback to NewsGuard:[Click Here](#)

Sources

Ownership and
Financing

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Content

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Credibility

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