

GENETICS, PHILOSOPHY

DEBUNKING MYTHS

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It is a big question in science how to identify and debunk myths. John Cook and Stephan Lewandowsky gives a free download of [their debunking handbook](#)

Debunking myths is problematic. Unless great care is taken, any effort to debunk misinformation can inadvertently reinforce the very myths one seeks to correct. To avoid these “back re effects”, an effective debunking requires three major elements. First, the refutation must focus on core facts rather than the myth to avoid the misinformation becoming more familiar. Second, any mention of a myth should be preceded by explicit warnings to notify the reader that the upcoming information is false. Finally, the refutation should include an alternative explanation that accounts for important qualities in the original misinformation.

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