



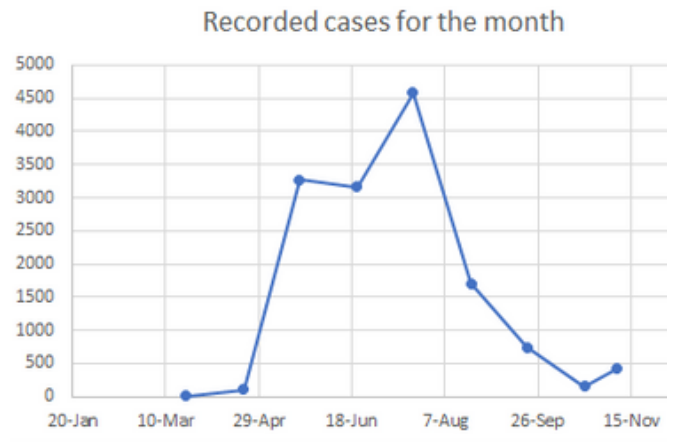
In Sudan the Rooted in Trust (RiT) project aims to mitigate and disrupt misinformation about COVID-19 by collecting and analyzing rumors on the Sudanese social media space. This second bulletin edition is based on an analysis of 75 posts collected in Arabic between October 23 to November 5, 2020, on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram.

In this week's bulletin we shed light on rumors that COVID-19 comes only to people from a certain socioeconomic background, Aspirin as a cure to COVID-19, antibodies from Malaria medication, differences between seasonal flu and COVID-19, herd immunity, testing centers and COVID-19 as a hoax. This regular collection of community insights aims to address questions and common misperceptions about COVID-19 found across Sudan. It aims to help volunteers and field staff with fact-based answers to their communities' questions and concerns.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN SUDAN

Since the start of November, Sudan has seen an almost six-fold increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases. Between 1 and 10 November 2020, Sudan recorded 527 COVID-19 cases, compared to 91 between 21 to 30 October 2020.

MONTHLY COVID-19 CASES IN SUDAN



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MINISTRY OF HEALTH
COVID-19 HOTLINE - SERVING ALL
AREAS OF SUDAN: 9090

“

SUDAN HEALTH OBSERVATORY
WWW.SHO.GOV.SD/CONTROLLER

“

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
WWW.EMRO.WHO.INT/AR

**COVID-19 IS REAL AND THERE ARE NEW CASES DIAGNOSED ALL THE TIME!
BE SAFE: MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCE, WASH HANDS, WEAR A MASK**

WHAT ARE RUMORS?
RUMORS ARE CURRENTLY CIRCULATING STORIES OR UNVERIFIED REPORTS OF UNCERTAIN OR DOUBTFUL INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM FIRST-HAND SOURCES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY WHICH COULD TAKE THE SHAPE OF A QUESTION, CRITICISM, OR GENERAL COMMENTS ON A SITUATION OR TOPIC. RUMORS CAN BE TRICKY BECAUSE THEY MIGHT HAVE SOME TRUTH IN THEM!



RUMOUR #1

“From the Ministry of Health
Anyone who feels symptoms of infection with the Coronavirus should quarantine himself at home and not reach any government or community hospital and take the following treatment :
1- Panadol 1000mg twice a day
2- Azithromycin 500 mg once for five days.
3- Vitamin C 1000mg once daily
4- Zinc tab 50 mg once daily
5- Vitamin D 50000 mg, once per week
6- Strepis three times a day
Gargle with warm water + salt for 5 minutes daily
Drink plenty of water.
You sharing this post is evidence of your awareness,,, humanitarian condition
May God protect you all 🙏” Female -Facebook

The intake of Panadol has been reported between COVID-19 patients of all ages, including babies, to treat the symptoms of COVID-19 such as headache and fever. However, it is recommended that you do not take unsolicited advice from uncertified personnel on social media and always consult your doctor before taking any type of medication to avoid adverse consequences.

It is also worth noting that vitamins are very helpful for our bodies to maintain a well-functioning immune system. However, there is no evidence suggesting that these vitamins can help cure or prevent COVID-19. In fact, taking a large number of supplements, such as Vitamin C can cause unpleasant symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea and nausea.

Always remember to seek advice from your healthcare professional and not from social media, as many rumors can be spread easily and likely to be believed amongst a large number of people who can take part in sharing this misleading information, especially since COVID-19 is a new virus and healthcare professionals are still conducting research trying to find a treatment for COVID-19, and identify how the virus affects our bodies.

RUMOUR #2

“Federal Health sources reveal that the ministry has no intention of a lockdown, and that it is adopting an approach that enables it to reach herd immunity” News page -Twitter

The Ministry of Health did not state that it will adopt a herd immunity approach to contain COVID-19 in Sudan.

WHAT IS THE HERD IMMUNITY APPROACH?

Simply to continue living normally, so that most members of society are infected with COVID-19, and thus their immune systems recognize the virus and fights it off. As COVID-19 does not have a vaccine yet, herd immunity can only be achieved by exposing the population to the disease which can lead to unnecessary loss of life.

According to the World Health Organization it has not been proven that herd immunity is the best practice to help find a cure nor prevent the outbreak as some countries have recorded only 10% of COVID-19 cases. Herd immunity would increase the number of people unnecessarily exposed to the virus. According to Johns Hopkins University, for a country to develop herd immunity, between 50 to 90 percent of the population would need to become infected with COVID-19. For Sudan, achieving herd immunity would require millions of people to be unnecessarily exposed to the virus and threaten their health and well-being. Moreover, it is possible to become reinfected with COVID-19, so there is no immunity from the virus to date. Countries like the Netherlands, UK and Sweden tried the herd immunity approach and abandoned it as it was only causing more suffering and loss of human life.






ANSWER

ANSWER

RUMOUR #3

There is no COVID-19 testing available for suspected cases, but only for those planning to travel. -Female, Facebook

We asked the Federal Ministry of Health for a list of COVID-19 testing Centers. Below is a list of testing centers:

STATE	COVID-19 TESTING LOCATIONS
Khartoum State 	National Public Health Laboratory, Khartoum Al-Shahid Abd-al-Muiz Ataya Molecular Biology Laboratory, Khartoum Central Laboratory for Higher Education, Khartoum The Institute of Endemic Diseases Laboratory, Faculty of Medicine, University of Khartoum Fidail Private Hospital Laboratory, Khartoum Royal Care Hospital Laboratory, Khartoum Test Laboratory, Khartoum Al-Borg Medical Laboratories, Khartoum Al-Shahida Dr Salma Laboratory for Kidney Diseases, Khartoum Aliaa Hospital Laboratory, Omdurman Central Laboratory for Medical Corps, Omdurman
Red Sea State 	Central Laboratory, Port Sudan
Kassala State 	Public Health Laboratory, Kassala Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory, Kassala
Al-Gedaref State 	Al-Gedaref Regional Laboratory for Endemic Diseases, Gedref
Al-Jazira State 	Laboratory of the Blue Nile Institute for Communicable Diseases, Wad-Madani
River Nile State 	Public Health Laboratory, Atbara Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory, Atbara
South Darfur State 	Public Health Laboratory, Nyala
North Darfur State	Tuberculosis Reference Laboratory, Al-Fashir

ANSWER

CONSIDERATION FOR WHO SHOULD GET TESTED

- People who have symptoms of COVID-19.
- People who have had close contact (within one meter for 15 minutes or more) with someone who has COVID-19.
- People who have been asked or referred to get tested by their healthcare provider

Not everyone needs to be tested. If you do get tested, you should self-quarantine/isolate at home pending test results and follow the advice of your healthcare provider.

RESULTS

- If you test positive, follow the protective steps to prevent others from getting infected (wear a medical mask, self-quarantine for 14 days, cover your sneeze and coughs, avoid sharing household items, clean your hands often).
- If you test negative, it means that you do not have COVID-19. Keep following the protective measures set by the Ministry of Health.

ANSWER

RUMOUR #4

“The results came out very quickly, and how come we haven’t contracted COVID-19? Our lives are never empty of crowds of people and [bread and gas] queues, or is it only high-level personalities that become infected with COVID-19?” Female -Facebook

COVID-19 does not discriminate. It comes to the poor and rich, young and old, men and women, and regardless of your socioeconomic status. Since the pandemic started in China, there are more than 49.9 million cases worldwide. We should be aware that COVID-19 is a public health threat that should not be politicized, and the effective way to address it is by protecting ourselves and our communities. We can keep our communities safe by ignoring such rumors and not taking part in sharing misconceptions about the pandemic, as it could expose people we care about to protracted sickness, hospitalization, or worse. Always remember to check reliable sources of information about COVID-19, such as the [Ministry of Health](#). Community members may also verify information on COVID-19 with trusted health practitioners within their communities.

ANSWER

RUMOUR #5

“99% of Sudanese people have taken Malaria medicine so they have anti-corona” Male -Twitter

Until now there is no cure for COVID-19. According to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), Malaria medicine could cause more harm than good when used for non-Malaria related symptoms.

Malaria drugs have potentially dangerous side effects, especially when taken in large doses or given alongside other drugs. Malaria drugs should not be used without a prescription and the supervision of a doctor.

ANSWER

RUMOUR #6

"Another thing to note, is that more than 65% of the population of Sudan is 25 or under, so a spread of COVID-19 in Sudan is not as disastrous as let's say a spread in Italy, which has a much higher elderly percentage" Male - Twitter

It is worth noting that the population of Sudan is much younger than those in other parts of the world. According to [UNFPA](#), 40 percent of Sudan's population is between ages 0 and 14. These population statistic may show that there is a lower risk of deaths during a pandemic such as COVID-19 pandemic in young countries, where the elderly appear to be the most vulnerable. However, Sudan is characterized by its high relative rates of other diseases that can increase the death rate from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as heart diseases, blood pressure diseases and diabetes.

We should always keep in mind the safety of others in our communities. According to the [Center for Disease and Prevention Control](#) anyone can contract COVID-19, young or old. WHO have also stressed that young people are not "invincible" they can get infected and transmit the virus warning of growing evidence that patients with mild COVID-19 can have long-term health issues. It is advised to follow the precautions set by the ministry of health and the World Health Organization to keep our elderly safe and protect our loved ones.

ANSWER

RUMOUR #7

"There was nothing at all, but tomorrow God willing we will announce a few cases so we can implement a lock-down over the people." Male -Twitter

Since there is no cure for COVID-19 the Federal Ministry of Health and World Health Organization (WHO) recommend preventative measures we can take to reduce the risk of becoming infected with the virus such as washing our hands with soap and water, keeping at least a two-meter distance from others, and wearing a mask when outside or feeling ill. The [WHO](#) shows that these measures, when applied properly, can be very effective in containing the spread of the virus.

COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease and can easily spread in public and crowded spaces. Always remember to distance yourself and self-isolate when you feel any of the COVID-19 symptoms to help protect yourself and others.

Given that there is no treatment or vaccine yet, we need to practice COVID-19 precautions issued by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization such as physical distancing and wearing a mask when in public or ill, as these measure have showed major success in containing the outbreak in China. We need to work with our health professionals and make it easier for them to do their jobs in finding a cure by staying healthy.

ANSWER

RUMOUR #8

“Corona is a lie not only in Sudan but in the whole wide world. I conducted a research, and it turns out that it’s fake even the Italians and Spaniards have said so” Male -Twitter

ANSWER

Neither Spain nor Italy have said that COVID-19 is fake and both countries have recorded more than 2.3 million cases collectively. Coronavirus is very real and it has been declared as a global pandemic, not only in European countries but countries all over the world have recorded cases of COVID-19, including Sudan.

We should keep in mind that spreading such rumors in our communities can backfire as such misinformation is likely to be believed amongst vulnerable communities who do not have access to multiple sources of information, which can affect their lives immensely. It is our responsibility to protect ourselves by seeking information from credible sources, such as the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health.

RUMOUR #10

“This is COVID-19, you have to take Aspirin 100 a day, it helps against blood clots. Drink warm things. If you have elderly people, they should take aspirin daily, and God protects the worshippers.” Female - Facebook

ANSWER

Aspirin is not a cure for COVID-19, despite current research suggesting that Aspirin may help reduce the risk of blood clots in COVID-19 patients. We should always seek a doctor’s advice before taking any medication.

Aspirin as a blood thinner can increase the risk of internal bleeding. Taking too much Aspirin has been linked with causing kidney failure. The use of this drug without medical supervision may expose us to many risks, including the risk of severe bleeding, sudden severe back pain and shortness of breath or chest pain.

RUMOUR #9

“Are you sure this is Corona? For as long as we've existed in October and November, we catch viral infections that dry our throats, we cannot even see let alone smell and taste” Female -Instagram

ANSWER

The cold, flu and COVID-19 are infectious viruses that affect the respiratory system, and they are transmitted in the same ways, whether through direct contact with an infected person or touching a surface that carries the virus. Differences and similarities between the flu, cold and COVID-19 based on WHO:

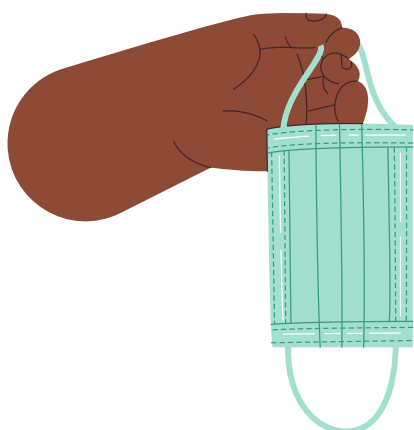
Symptoms		COVID-19	FLU	COLD
	Fever- 37.8C or above	Common	Common	Rare
	Cough	Common (dry)	Common	Mild
	Loss of taste/ smell	Common	Rare	Sometimes
	Fatigue	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
	Headaches	Sometimes	Common	Rare
	Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
	Runny/ stuffy nose	Rare	Sometimes	Common
	Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
	Sneezing	No	No	Common
	Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No
	Diarrhea	Sometimes in children	Sometimes in children	No

We welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions. Please contact: Mustafa Omer - Humanitarian Data Analyst - momer@internews.org
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Take Care! The best way to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19 is to follow the preventive measures!



HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE COVID-19?

Have you been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed positive with COVID-19?

Yes

NO

Do you have any symptoms such as fever, cough, or a sore throat?

Keep following the basic biosecurity recommendations

Yes

NO

Request a PCR test. Did the test show a positive result?

Follow a 14-day strict quarantine and be vigilant of symptoms

Yes

NO

Follow a 14-day strict quarantine or the recommended treatment by a licensed doctor based on the severity of the symptoms

Follow a 14-day strict quarantine and be vigilant of symptoms

