



Internews

The Sudan the Rooted in Trust (RiT) project aims to address COVID-19 misinformation by collecting and analyzing rumors found on Sudanese social media and through face-to-face discussions with community members. This bulletin is based on an analysis of 120 rumors on COVID-19 vaccines collected in Arabic between 13 December 2020 and 18 January 2021, from Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp.

In this week's bulletin we shed light on a variety of vaccine related rumors, such as taking the vaccine would make you ill, if there is any reservations about taking it for pregnant women, the efficacy of the vaccine, side effects for people with genetic or chronic diseases. This regular collection of community insights aims to address questions and common misperceptions about COVID-19 found across Sudan. It aims to help volunteers, field staff and community leaders to provide fact-based answers to their communities' questions and concerns.

COVID-19 VACCINE

On 14 December 2020, Sudan's Prime Minister Abdallah Hamadok announced the country will be receiving 8.4 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, clarifying that at-risk groups, such as healthcare workers will be prioritized for vaccinations. The Ministry of Health will acquire the vaccines through COVAX—a global initiative aiming at securing COVID-19 vaccines for middle and lower-income countries—and expects their arrival in April 2021.

In a statement to Ayin Network, University of Ahfad Professor Dr Magdy Sabah Al-Zein revealed that the vaccines will cover about 20 percent of the population, and that the government will need to acquire additional vaccines for the rest of the population - a serious challenge for any country emerging from the shadows of armed conflict coupled with brutal economic conditions. Some social media users questioned whether Sudan will be able to store the vaccines as they need to be stored at cool temperatures, which is a major task with recurring power cuts and increasing temperatures in April. In addition, anti-vaccine sentiments circulating on social media, adds another layer of challenges.

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH

COVID-19 HOTLINE - SERVING ALL

AREAS OF SUDAN: 9090

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SUDAN HEALTH OBSERVATORY

WWW.SHO.GOV.SD/CONTROLLER

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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 ELEMENT OF TRUTH IN THEM!

RUMOR RISK LEVEL



HIGH



MEDIUM



LOW

RUMOUR #1

VACCINE

"The vaccine is not preventative nor is it a treatment. Even after you get vaccinated you're obligated to wear a mask, practice physical distance and wash your hands."
Male - Twitter

COVID-19 can have serious complications that could lead to loss of life. Anyone can contract the virus if they come in contact with a sick person, which may leave you, your family and your community at risk.

Those that have recovered from the virus develop antibodies. But more studies are needed to know how long these antibodies last to prevent further COVID-19 infections. Therefore, the best course of action is to get vaccinated to help protect yourself and others from the virus.

According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention, people who get vaccinated should still wear their masks while in public or in contact with others, as masks help reduce your chance of being infected or spreading the virus to others. No vaccine protects 100% of the time, so you will still need to minimize risk.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #2

VACCINE

"Why should the vaccine be rejected? Without any guarantees to bear responsibility for the possible results, as it is an untried vaccine that does not have documented safety certificates. Also because the vaccine, regardless of its composition, will prevent the formation of natural antibodies in the body and will deprive the body in the future of its own immunity, and thus any disease, no matter how trivial, will be a reason to kill its owner" Female -Facebook

Vaccines help our bodies fight harmful viruses and bacteria that could be life-threatening. Throughout history, vaccines have helped save millions of lives, they undergo rigorous testing for safety before being authorized for public use.

The COVID-19 virus is a zoonotic virus, meaning it comes from animals. We have also experienced SARS and MERS which are from the same family of the COVID-19 virus. Both SARS and MERS have been linked to wild bats, so there is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 is a manmade virus.

We should keep in mind that spreading false information can have a negative effect on our communities specially during a pandemic. We should make it our responsibility to refrain from spreading misinformation, always follow trusted sources to keep up-to-date on COVID-19 related news.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #3

VACCINE

“The...vaccine is ineffective” Male -Facebook

ANSWER

Vaccines are very important in keeping millions of lives safe and healthy from deadly viruses and bacteria. Vaccines help our bodies' immune system to recognize and fight off the virus. When you get vaccinated your body is ready to destroy the virus as soon as it enters your system.

According to the World Health Organization there are more than 50 vaccine candidates in trials. Vaccines go through rigorous testing and clinical trials to ensure their safety. The current authorized COVID-19 vaccines have undergone the meticulous testing and have been found to be safe for public use.

MEDIUM RISK



RUMOUR #4

VACCINE

“asking about the vaccine for pregnant women, is there any reservations about taking it? is it better to take it after giving birth?” Female -Facebook

ANSWER

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is currently limited data on the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines on pregnant and lactating women. Pregnant women should consult with their doctor regarding a COVID-19 vaccination. Pregnant women that fall under the recommended groups for a COVID-19 vaccination—such as healthcare workers and those with chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension—may choose to get vaccinated. However, pregnant woman should follow the recommended measures to protect themselves and their baby: Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, try not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth a lot, stay away from sick people, avoid crowded areas as much as possible, and always maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from others, wear a face mask when in public, clean and disinfect things that people touch a lot, like phones, tables, and doorknobs. Stay posted on the latest updates regarding vaccines from trusted sources such as the Ministry of Health, World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #5

VACCINE

Does the vaccine have side effects, and can anyone take this vaccine, even those those that have genetic or chronic diseases? Male -Twitter

The COVID-19 vaccines are intended to provide protection against the virus and teach our bodies to fight the virus that comes with a COVID-19 infection. Essential workers, such as public health workers, supermarket employees and teachers, as well as older people and those suffering from chronic diseases and other serious illnesses will be prioritized for a COVID-19 vaccination.

It is natural for our bodies to have a temporary mild reaction to the vaccines. According to the University of Oxford, there are a number of temporary side effects associated with the COVID-19 vaccines. The most common side effects are fatigue, headache, muscle pain and chills. Less common are joint pain, fever, diarrhea and vomiting. The majority of the symptoms are mild and moderate, and will fade within a few days.

In rare cases, some people have severe allergies due to one or more ingredients in the vaccine. People who have severe allergies to an ingredient in the COVID-19 vaccine or have had an allergic reaction to one dose of the vaccine, should refrain from taking the COVID-19 vaccine. It is important to consult with a certified doctor before taking the vaccination. As with all medicines, side effects can occur after getting a COVID-19 vaccination. However, these side effects are temporary (24-48 hours), and serious side effects (allergic reactions) are exceedingly rare.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #6

VACCINE

"If a lactating woman took the vaccine it can affect the baby through breastfeeding, given that the child is 8-months-old. Is there a study clarifying the impact on babies?" Woman - Facebook

Since COVID-19 vaccines are new, there is limited data on the safety of the vaccine on lactating women. However, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to a breastfeeding infant. Remember to always consult your doctor or healthcare professional to provide you with the necessary information to make an informed decision about whether you would like to take the vaccine.

It is important to know:

- There is no virus in the mRNA vaccines.

You cannot get COVID-19 or pass the virus to your baby by being vaccinated. The components of the vaccine are not known to harm breastfed infants.

When you receive the vaccine, the small mRNA vaccine particles are used up by your muscle cells at the injection site and thus are unlikely to get into breast milk. Any small mRNA particles that reach the breast milk would likely be digested.

When a person gets vaccinated while breastfeeding, their immune system develops antibodies that protect them against COVID-19. These antibodies can be passed through breast milk to the baby. Newborns of vaccinated mothers who breastfeed can benefit from these antibodies against COVID-19.

LOW RISK

ANSWER

ANSWER

RUMOUR #7

VACCINE

How do these vaccines work with those who have had organ transplants? Male - Facebook

The National Kidney Foundation recommends that kidney patients, including people with kidney transplants, get vaccinated as they are at a high risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms that could be life-threatening.

Always consult with your health provider for any questions about the COVID-19 virus and the available vaccinations. Stay up-to-date with new information about the vaccine from trusted sources, such as World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Ministry of Health.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #8

VACCINE

Do you advise a diabetic patient that takes Insulin and has heart stents to get vaccinated? Male - Facebook

Since people with certain underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk of being severely ill from the COVID-19 virus, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends they get vaccinated as they are at higher risk of developing severe symptoms from the virus.

Although the vaccine helps our bodies fight the virus we should remember to follow the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization even after receiving the vaccine. We should wear a mask in public, maintain a distance of at least two meters from each other, avoid crowded places as much as possible and wash our hands with soap and water for 40 seconds.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #9

VACCINE

Is the vaccine beneficial or harmful to those that have recovered from a COVID-19 infection? Male - Twitter

Since cases of reinfection with COVID-19 have been reported, it is important to consider getting vaccinated even if you have contracted the virus before. According to the World Health Organization, people who recover from COVID-19 develop temporary immunity against the virus for a short period of time but they can still contract the virus again.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, experts do not have a definitive answer on how long or how strong the immunity is for people who recover from COVID-19.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #10

VACCINE

Does the vaccine have any side effects, and can anyone take the vaccine, even those with chronic and genetic diseases? - Man - Twitter

ANSWER

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the most common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine is fever, pain, tenderness and redness on the injection site. If any of the mentioned side effects are worrying you or do not seem to go away, please contact your healthcare provider.

Tips for reducing pain and discomfort when getting the shot:

- Exercise your arm
- Apply a cool and cool wet washcloth over the area.

If you develop a fever after getting vaccinated, you will need to drink a lot of fluids to reduce the fever.

People with high-risk medical conditions are recommended to get vaccinated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as they are more likely to develop severe COVID-19 symptoms which could be life threatening. Always consult with your doctor about questions you might have about the COVID-19 vaccines.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #11

VACCINE

"This disease's threat increases everyday - can the vaccine treat the new COVID-19 variant?" Woman- Facebook

ANSWER

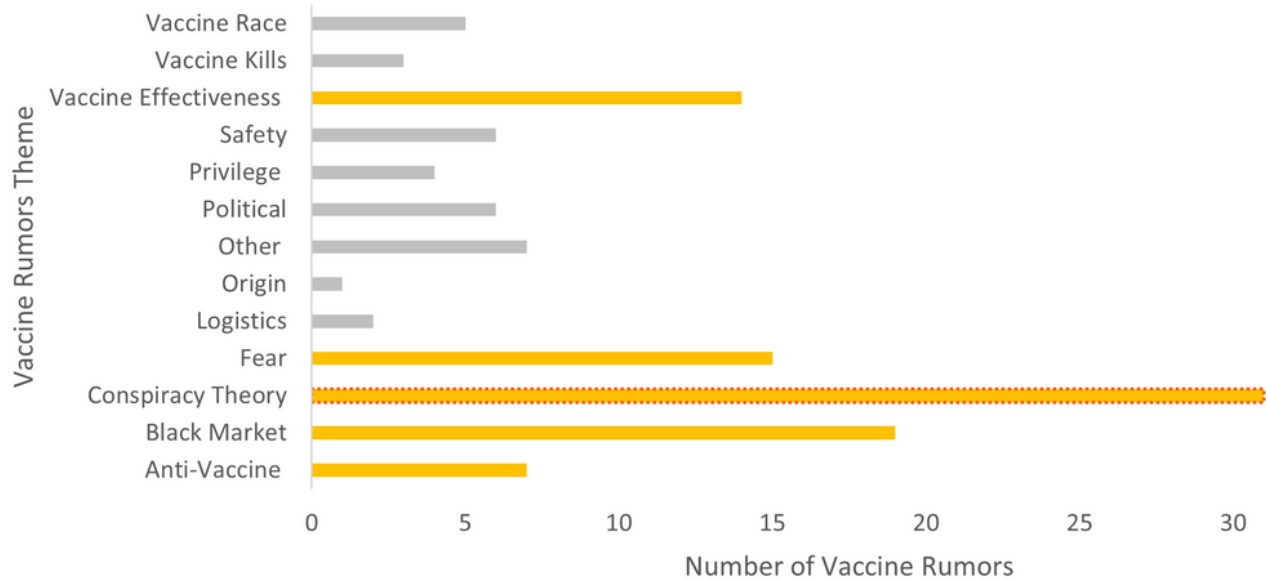
The COVID-19 virus is from the Coronavirus family, and every virus undergoes various mutations, some of these mutations last and some disappear. New variants have been recorded in the UK, South Africa, Brazil, and Japan. Although the new COVID-19 variants can spread very quickly, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no evidence that these variants which carry mutations cause more severe COVID-19 illness or an increased risk of death.

There is ongoing research on the effect of the variant on current COVID-19 vaccines. A preliminary study published on 7 January 2021, found that the new COVID-19 variants did not affect the antibodies produced by people who received the mRNA Pfizer vaccine. This means the Pfizer vaccine is effective against at least some mutations. AstraZeneca viral vector vaccine has been found effective in fighting the new COVID-19 variants. Vaccines can also be tweaked to accommodate mutations if necessary.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccination in addition to following the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health, such as maintaining a physical distance of two meters, washing our hands with soap and water for 40 seconds and wearing your mask in public, will protect you from getting infected and help limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

LOW RISK

Vaccine Rumors Thematic Breakdown



Analysis of 120 COVID-19 vaccine rumors collected in Arabic between 13 December 2020 and 18 January 2021

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE COVID-19?

