



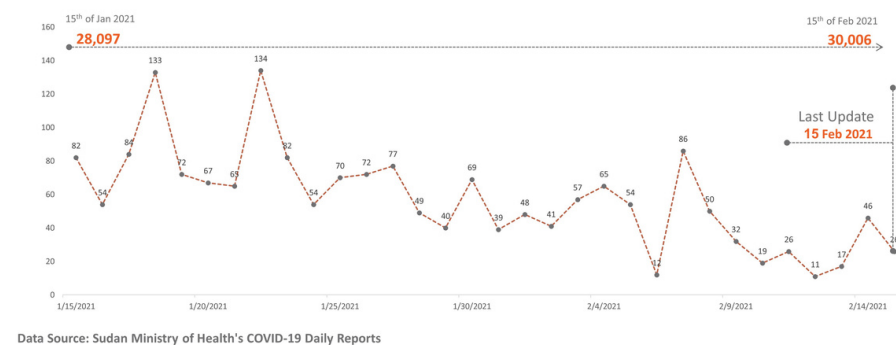
The Sudan the Rooted in Trust (RiT) project aims to address COVID-19 misinformation by collecting and analyzing rumors. This bulletin is based on an analysis of 308 rumors collected in Arabic between 13 and 26 January 2021, from Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, and through face-to-face discussions with community members in Kassala, Khartoum, West Darfur, South Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan States.

In this week's bulletin we shed light on a variety of rumors, such as COVID-19 does not come to Muslims, masks can become deadly, discouraging people from seeking healthcare, burning of clothes and sand protect against the virus.

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 provide fact-based answers to their communities' questions and concerns.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN SUDAN

Sudan COVID-19 Confirmed Cases
(15 Jan to 15 Feb 2021)



As of 15 February 2021, the official number rose to 30,006 confirmed COVID-19 cases, compared to 28,097 cases on 15 January 2021. Most cases identified have been in the capital Khartoum and Al-Gezira State.



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 YOUR HANDS, WEAR A MASK

WHAT ARE RUMORS?

Rumors are currently circulating stories or UNVERIFIED content 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!



RUMOUR #1

TESTING

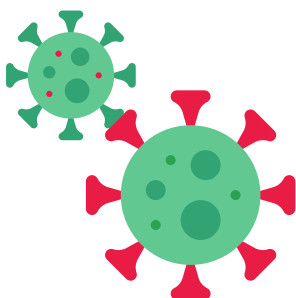
“Peopleif your results came out positive, you can pay and they can change it to negative so you can leave this country”

Female -Facebook

We should refrain from such fraudulent acts as they may have catastrophic consequences and may complicate the health situation in our country even further. The precautions set by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization should be followed, as they minimize the risk of spreading the virus to others, which can have fatal results for older people and those with chronic diseases.

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you should self-quarantine at home for 14 days and until your symptoms subside. This way you're protecting your family and others.

Within our communities, it is our role to help lower the risk of spreading the virus to other communities by renouncing such acts and by practicing and promoting the health measures that can protect our families and loved ones.



HIGH RISK

RUMOUR #2

PREVENTATIVE

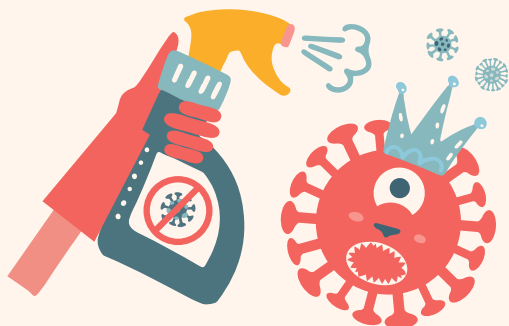
“(((The mask after four hours becomes fatal)))” Male -Facebook

Masks are not fatal after four hours. Healthcare workers often wear masks for long hours to protect themselves and others from a COVID-19 infection. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can be transmitted when an infected person coughs or sneezes, which allows droplets to travel between one person to another. Therefore, masks are our only defense mechanism when combined with the precautions set by the Ministry of Health, such as washing our hands regularly with soap and water for 40 seconds, maintaining a physical distance of 2 meters from others, and avoiding crowded public places as much as possible, such as markets or weddings.

Although masks can be uncomfortable to wear for long periods of time, especially in Sudan because of the hot weather, they are a necessary preventative measure against COVID-19. According to the World Health Organization, the prolonged use of masks does not lead to CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency.

Make sure your mask fits properly, and do not reuse disposable masks. Also, change your mask as soon as it gets damp. Wash your mask daily, if you are using a cloth mask.

HIGH RISK

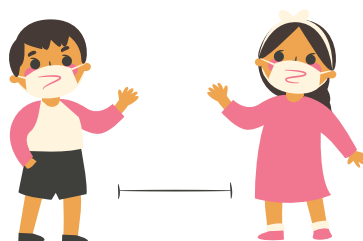


Clean everything

Disinfect surfaces using soap and water



HOW CAN WE KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE AS THEY RETURN TO SCHOOL?



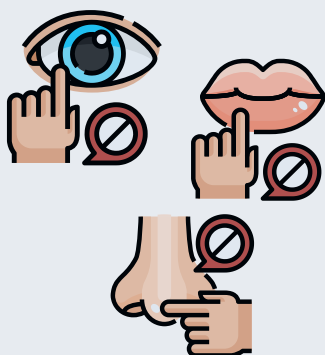
Physical Distancing

Keep a distance of one meter



Stay at home

Stay at home if you feel sick



Don't touch your face

Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth



Wash your hands

Wash your hands with soap and water for 40 seconds

The best way to avoid catching and spreading Covid-19 is to follow the preventive measures!

RUMOUR #3

HEALTHCARE

"The isolation center has people infected with Coronavirus for real, and you may not have Corona. It is better to isolate yourself at home, save your money, just take vitamins C ... D ... zinc acacia and natural juices, Baobab, and Tamarind" Male -Facebook

When experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, seek testing and professional medical care in order to protect yourself, your family and community from the virus. When visiting a healthcare facility, you should practice the COVID-19 preventative measures, such as wearing your mask, keeping your distance from others and by using an alcohol-based sanitizer to disinfect your hands (wash your hands with soap and water frequently if hand sanitizers are not available).

Even though vitamin D, C and zinc are critical for a well-functioning immune system and play a vital role in promoting health and nutritional well-being, according to the World Health Organization, vitamins are not a treatment for COVID-19.

Misinformation on COVID-19 spreads easily and is likely to be believed by many people, who may also pass on these rumors to others. We should refrain from sharing unconfirmed comments and stories about the virus with others, and rely on the World Health Organization for reliable and factual information about COVID-19.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #4

IMMUNITY

"BTW, corona will infect everyone no matter how cautious we are and even if we stay home it will infect everyone, and everyone has to rely on their immunity, and may God save us all, are you ready?????" Female - Facebook

COVID-19 has not infected everyone. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2019, more than 110 million people worldwide have contracted the virus, out of a global population of 7.7 billion. This means that communities practicing the recommended preventative measures all over the world have helped reduce the global infection rates. By wearing a mask when in public or feeling ill, washing our hands regularly with soap and water, and maintaining a physical distance of two meters from others we can protect our families and communities from contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Also avoid the 3Cs: spaces that are closed, crowded or involve close contact. Why? The risks of getting COVID-19 are higher in crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where people spend long periods of time together in close proximity. In these environments the virus appears to spread by respiratory droplets or aerosols more efficiently, so taking precautions is even more important.

While we wait for the vaccine to arrive in Sudan, we should follow the COVID-19 precautionary measures set by the Sudanese Ministry of Health, as they can significantly lower the risk of contracting the virus, and can help keep our communities safe. By following the preventative steps—such as wearing a mask when in public or feeling ill, and washing our hands regularly with soap and water—we can help protect the people most at risk, such as older adults, conflicted-affected people, low-income families and those with chronic diseases.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOUR #5

TRANSMISSION

“Corona is only in wedding halls, schools and universities or what, or is the exhibition sterilized?”

Male -Facebook

COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus, meaning that it spreads quickly in the ideal circumstances. Public events, such as festivals, can create the perfect breeding ground since hundreds or thousands of people are gathered in one area which can lead to a high increase in COVID-19 cases, further burdening the health system in responding to the pandemic.

As an event planner it is your role to post signs promoting everyday protective measures, making sure that you have accessible restrooms for attendees to wash their hands frequently, proper ventilation and maintaining a healthy environment by cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, such as tabletops and doorknobs. If you plan to attend any public or family events, you should keep a distance of 2 meters from others, wear a mask, refrain from touching your nose, eyes and mouth, and disinfect your hands regularly by using a hand sanitizer or washing your hands with soap and water. By following these preventative measures, you are protecting yourself and others from contracting COVID-19.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #6

IMMUNITY

“Our area has sandstorms, and sand takes away diseases and pandemics. This is why Corona does not come to us”

Female -Kassala

COVID-19 cases have been reported all over the world and in countries with different climates. Even countries where sandstorms are common, such as the Arabian Gulf countries, have reported more than one million confirmed COVID-19 cases.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, currently there are not enough studies to understand the impact of sandstorms and dust on the transmission of diseases through dust particles.

Misinformation on COVID-19 spreads easily and is likely to be believed by many people, who may also pass on these rumors to others. Since COVID-19 is a relatively new virus, doctors are still learning more about the disease. To reduce the negative impacts of the virus, we should refrain from sharing unconfirmed comments and stories about COVID-19 with others, and rely on the World Health Organization for reliable and factual information on the virus.

LOW RISK

ANSWER

ANSWER

RUMOUR #7

RELIGION

"Corona does not come to people who do Wudu [before] every prayer"

Female -Kassala

"Muslim countries do not get Corona"

Male -Damazine

Wudu is a healthy Muslim practice that cleanses the body with just water for at least five times a day. However, COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that can only be removed effectively from our hands with soap and water. To cleanse our hands from the COVID-19 virus, we should follow the Ministry of Health's advice and wash our hands with soap and water for 40 seconds.

COVID-19 is a global pandemic that can affect anyone regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, or religion. According to the World Health Organization, there are currently more than 110 million cases of COVID-19 around the world. In Sudan, the Ministry of Health recorded so far more than 30,000 cases.

Since COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus, we should follow the preventative measure set by the Sudanese Ministry of health, such as social distancing, washing our hands with soap and water for 40 seconds, and avoiding public gatherings as much as possible as they could be suitable places for the spread of the virus.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #8

TREATMENT/CURE

"Lemon steam brings back the sense of smell, this is what I heard"

Female -Damazine

"I heard that tea with salt is the cure to COVID-19" Male -Damazine

Even though tea and lemon are beneficial to our health, there is no evidence that either of the two can help with the loss of smell or treat a COVID-19 infection. Most herbs and plant-based foods are beneficial for our bodies and are great sources of vitamins and essential nutrients. However, there is no evidence that herbal remedies can cure or prevent COVID-19. In fact, there is no cure for the virus.

Many people have been relying on herbal remedies, and other remedies readily available at home, falsely believing that they could prevent or treat a COVID-19 infection. If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please talk to a professional health provider—such as your doctor—for best practices on reducing the symptoms.

We should also follow the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health, while we wait for the vaccine rollout in Sudan. The COVID-19 vaccines will help reduce the risk of experiencing severe symptoms from the virus. According to the World Health Organization, the best way to protect yourself from contracting the virus is by keeping a distance of two meters from others, washing your hands frequently and thoroughly, and wearing a mask when in public or feeling ill. To stay healthy, maintain a balanced diet, stay well hydrated, exercise regularly and sleep well.

LOW RISK

RUMOUR #9

IMMUNITY

“Corona is the same as (Umhawah) but Europeans’ immunity is weak, this is why they cannot resist COVID-19”

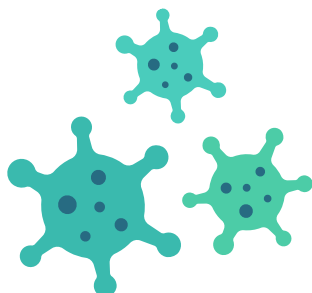
Female -Elgenina

“Corona does not come to Sudanese because we’re strong”

Male- Karari

COVID-19 cases have been reported across all countries, including Sudan, and as of 15 February 2021, according to the Sudanese Ministry of Health more than 30,000 COVID-19 cases have been reported in the country. Sudanese are not immune to the virus and can catch it just like anyone else, regardless of the strength or weakness of their immune system.

We should remember that spreading misinformation in our communities can have negative effects as it causes people to become dismissive of health precautions that we should all follow to keep ourselves and our communities safe.



LOW RISK

RUMOUR #10

PREVENTATIVE

“Burning Corona patient clothes”

Female -Kassala

COVID-19 patients and individuals with close contact to patients should self-isolate and follow the precautions set by the Ministry of Health until the risk of secondary transmission to others is low.

COVID-19 patients’ clothes can be cleaned and disinfected without the need to burn them.

Please follow these tips when doing laundry at home:

- Clean bed sheets, towels and clothes regularly.
- Wash items with soap or detergent, using warm water and dry items completely – both steps help to kill the virus.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately afterwards.
- Wash or disinfect your laundry bag and hamper as well.
- Consider storing laundry in disposable bags.

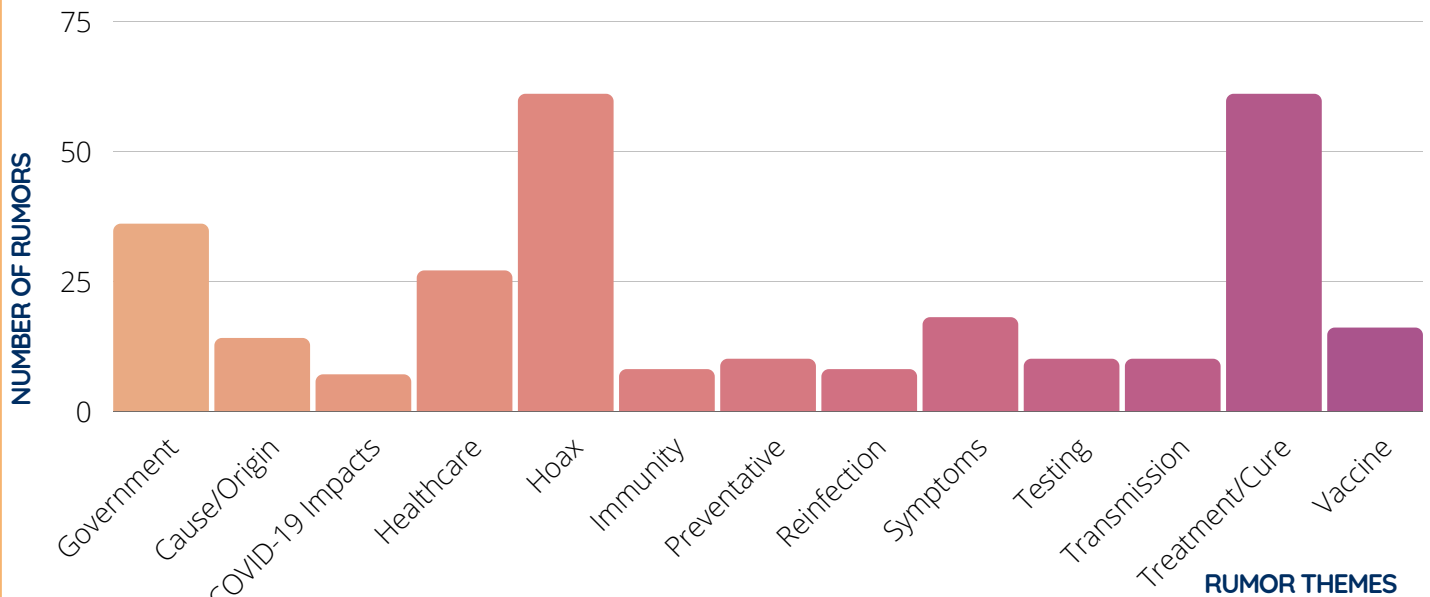
For more information, please visit: Center for Disease Control and Prevention page on how to clean and disinfect your home and personal belongings.

LOW RISK

ANSWER

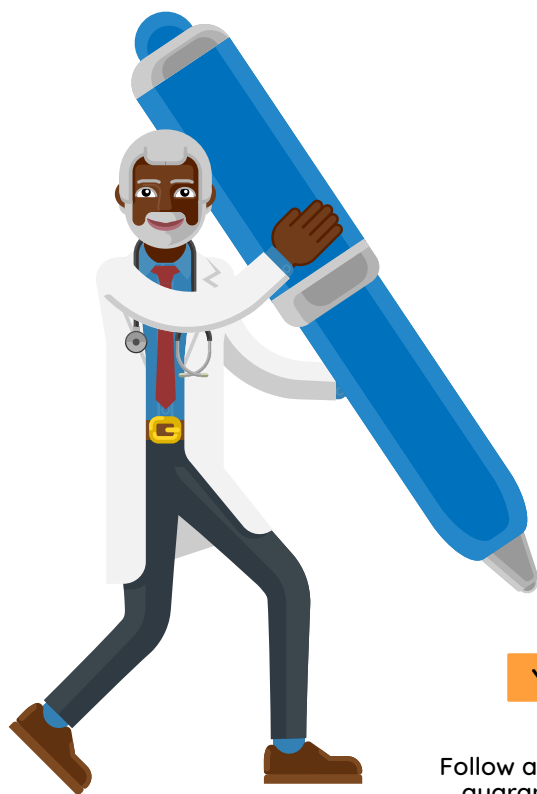
ANSWER

TOP RUMOR THEMES



Analysis of 308 rumors collected in Arabic between 13 to 26 January 2021

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?

Yes

NO

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

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

Please note if you experience any symptoms, seek testing. Otherwise, follow the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health

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

