

LEBANON SITUATION REPORT

A monthly situation report aimed at tackling COVID-19 rumors to debunk the "infodemic"

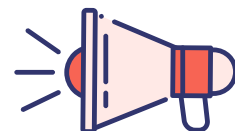
April 2022 | #2

About RiT

Rooted in Trust is collecting, analyzing and responding to rumors in 10 countries with generous support from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA). We focus on equipping journalists and humanitarian communicators with the tools they need in the languages they prefer, to combat rumors and misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How we do it

We identify and analyze rumors to help humanitarian actors and health workers better inform their Risk Communication & Community Engagement (RCCE) strategies.



Situation by the Numbers (WHO)

- Covid-19 cases reported during April 2022: **4148**
- Latest reported cases per day: **115**

Introduction

According to WHO, Lebanon has now transitioned to a Level 2 of community transmission -- down from Level 3 last month.

With the ongoing economic crisis in the country -- in addition to upcoming elections -- people's concerns have been drawn away from the COVID-19 situation. However, high vigilance continues to be recommended with a focus on social distancing measures and increased vaccine coverage particularly among already vulnerable population groups.



Data Overview

With a total of 54 unique rumors collected for April 2022, we have noticed that misinformation trends are revolving around the top subtheme of "Long-COVID" including the risk of blood clots after having contracted the disease. Rumors surrounding home treatments and remedies for the virus, as well as new variants, also continue to circulate.

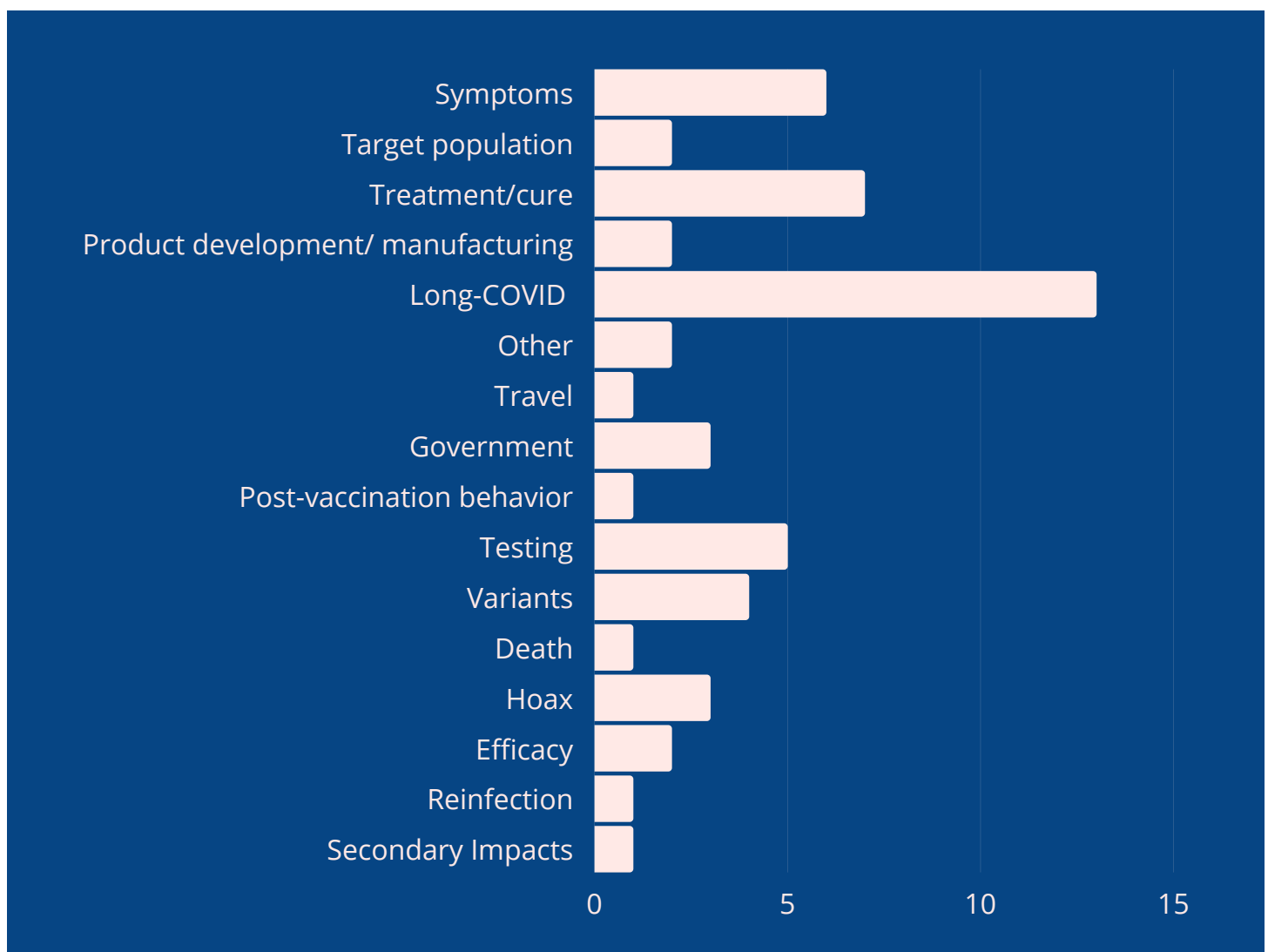
A false statement by a former minister of health regarding expired vaccine shipments from the US resulted in renewed circulation of anti-vaccine rumors. Offline rumors collected by partners among the Syrian refugee

community stated that "the second vaccine dose could result in death, while checking in to hospital for treatment from side effects could also increase one's chances of death." This could result in slower vaccine uptake among the general population, particularly when it comes to the second and third doses.

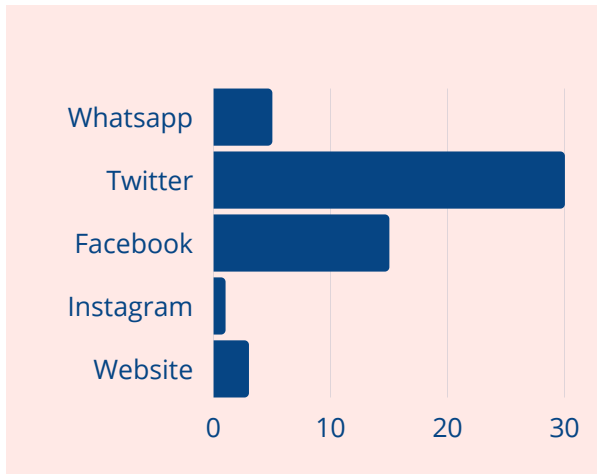
Lower vaccine rates could become problematic ahead of large political gatherings during the elections period, particularly as trust in public health facilities continues to decrease due to lasting socio-economic and political challenges.

KEY THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

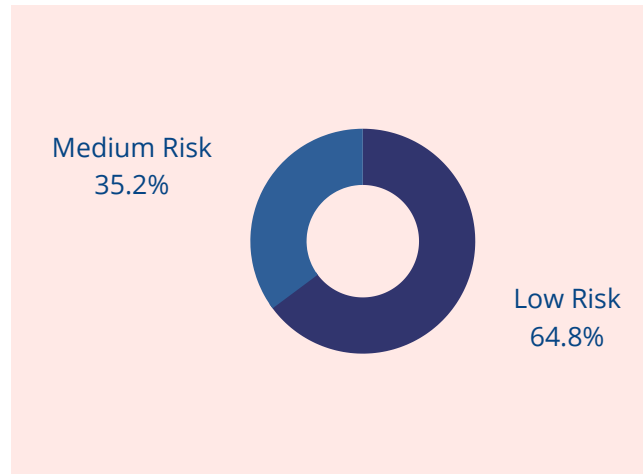
Total Number of Rumors Online for April 2022: 54



Channels



Risk Levels



Total Number of Rumors Offline for April 2022: 224

Analysis

Two events affected the spread of COVID-19 rumors: (1) the conflict situation in Ukraine and (2) the pre-election phase in Lebanon which have both induced a heavy flow of information, misinformation and disinformation.

Although COVID-19 is no longer a top discussion topic due to more pressing socio-economic and political concerns, rumors about finding new cures and home remedies are still most common. A larger number of rumors about long term symptoms linked to long-COVID and new ways in which the virus has been spreading have also been collected.

Moreover, as the war in Ukraine dominates international headlines, rumors regarding COVID-19 being a hoax or being created in a lab have been circulating again for the past two months. This could be linked to the decrease in testing and lower positive cases in general.

Lastly, vaccine hesitancy is also on the rise as political candidates take advantage of the election period to criticize the COVID-19 response or vaccination efforts in order to gain attention or votes from the public. Vulnerable population groups are particularly vulnerable to this rhetoric which might result in slower uptake of second and third doses.

Contact

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For more information on the project, visit

<https://internews.org/resource/rooted-trust-rumor-bulletins-lebanon/>