

# SALIG BANGSAMORO

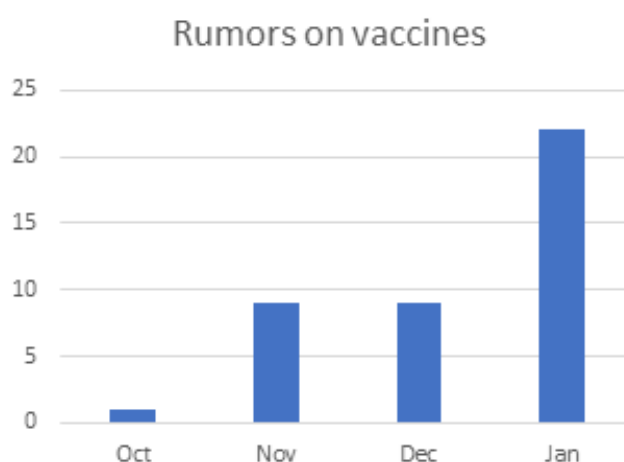
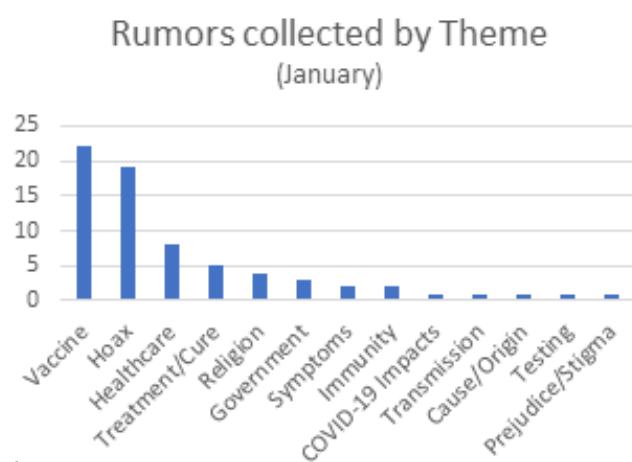
MEDIA BULLETIN # 7 | FEBRUARY 2021



(Trust Bangsamoro) is Rooted in Trust Philippines' biweekly rumor bulletin for media. Rooted in Trust is a global and local humanitarian response run by Internews to address the spread of rumors on COVID-19. In the Philippines, the focus is on the island of Mindanao, specifically in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). This week's bulletin answers three rumors related to community concerns on the new COVID-19 variants, vaccine safety, and vaccine components.

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDING RUMORS IN BARMM?

Rumors on vaccines rose in January by 144% from December and the highest in the month alone among other topics. It ranked fourth among the other topics since September, comprising 8% of the total rumors. Almost a third of these rumors say that vaccines are deadly and will decrease the population. 8% are related to the vaccine campaign and/or about vaccines not being safe to children. Other rumors are saying vaccines have microchips; vaccines are not real; and declaring that they will not get any vaccine due to false information. Unique rumors say vaccine can cause infertility and mixed with pork.



Data as of January 26 and based on collected data online and offline.

## WANT MORE?

- **COVID-19 Glossary.** This glossary is intended for journalists, content creators, and health communicators to use to report on the COVID-19 pandemic and related issues. The information is based on rigorous science and is a useful tool for countering misinformation. The glossary terms can be accessed alphabetically, by category or cross-reference, or by search.
- **AP Stylebook tips on the coronavirus.** Poynter's compilation of AP Stylebook tips on reporting the pandemic.
- **The critical role that Philippine media play in covering COVID-19.** A dialogue about reporting on COVID-19 in the Philippines within a broader context that covers other social issues with the Department of Health, journalists, communication specialists, and health experts.
- **COVID-19: An Informative Guide Advice for Journalists.** Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) guidance document to help journalists practice responsible coverage of the pandemic using evidence-based information.
- **Rooted in Trust Mailing List the locals in BARMM – Rumor Bulletins:** <https://bit.ly/SaligMailList>



What are people saying

## RUMOR #1 COVID-19 NEW VARIANT IS SENSATIONALIZED

*“The new COVID strain in Europe and USA is more contagious but less fatal. Here in Cotabato City, those who are commonly infected seem not to feel anything at all. We get some positive results since we do the RT-PCR test and surprisingly, most recovered even with COVID. Sometimes we don’t mind anymore about the infection and just manage the symptoms. Those who died here with COVID-19 complications are those with severe diseases. They are going to die anyway even without the virus. COVID-19, you are nothing, but sensationalized by people who wants to earn money.”*  
(Male Doctor, 60+ years old)

Rumor risk level: Medium

Platform: Facebook Reactions: 72 Comments: 11 Shares: 43

The new variants of COVID-19 have caused concerns from the community. This post from a doctor in Cotabato City claimed that COVID-19 in relation to the new variants is only sensationalized. How do we report on them?

### Communicate with clarity.

It is important for media to explain the differences of these variants and to monitor the developments as they come. The terms “strain” and “variant” are often used interchangeably. But the distinctions are important. In general, if a virus has enough mutations to make its biology significantly **different** it may be considered a “**new strain**”. If the biology of the virus broadly **remains the same**, despite the mutations, the term “**variant**” may be more scientifically accurate. The B.1.1.7 in the UK (and not around the world) is a variant of COVID, meaning it is like the original virus.

### Vet research findings and deal carefully with uncertainty when reporting on them.

Decide which information you must include when reporting research studies to give credibility to your story and verify these to other resources. When you come across research findings, ask yourself these three questions:

- How much certainty is there over the results?
- How does it compare to the wider body of evidence?
- To what degree are scientists sure about the findings?
- Don’t rush if you’re not sure.

For more tips, you may check the Internews Guidance Document in this link: [COVID-19 Variants and How to Report on them.](#)

Reporting  
Tips on  
Covid-19  
Variants





What are people saying

**RUMOR #2  
COVID-19  
VACCINES  
KILL PEOPLE**

*"We are miserable. I won't really get vaccinated if it will just cause me death."*

[with social media card by local media organization Brigada News with screaming head saying: 23 people died of vaccines; and subtext saying: 23 nursing home patients allegedly died after they got Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines in Norway and the those who died were elderly and had existing diseases.]

**Rumor risk level: High**

Platform: Facebook Reactions: 825  
Comments: 2,200 Shares: 937

## Reporting Tips on Vaccine Safety

### Watch your headlines.

Headlines at a glance can mislead readers. Given the fast pace of information in social media, people usually get their information from the headlines or the statement from the social cards that might not give them the entire picture of the story. Choose to be reflective in writing headlines and don't sacrifice facts for the sake of high engagements.

### Quote specialists who can clarify public concern.

As emphasized in previous Salig Bangsamoro bulletins, vaccines are the single most, lifesaving and cost-effective medical intervention that reduces the risk of getting a disease. The story of Tiffany Dover, a nurse manager from the United States who fainted after receiving Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine was used to claim that the vaccine is not safe. You may get a local expert to highlight the science behind the story and explain the side effects of the vaccines.

For more tips, you may check the *Internews Guidance Document* in this link: [How to report accurately on COVID-19 vaccines](#)

What are people saying

**RUMOR #3  
COVID-19  
VACCINE HAS  
PORK GELATIN  
COMPONENTS**

*"Will you agree to be vaccinated against COVID-19 if it is mixed with pork? COVID-19 vaccine has pork gelatin components."*

[posted with a link to an article on [UAE Islamic body issuing fatwa approving COVID-19 vaccine even with pork](#)]

**Rumor risk level: Low**

Platform: Facebook Reactions: 2  
Comments: 10 Shares: 7

## Reporting Tips on Vaccines with Pork

### Tell updates on Halal certification of COVID-19 Vaccines.

Pfizer BioNTech, Oxford-Astrazeneca, and Moderna have already release full product specifications wherein vaccine components are laid out. From these reports, the companies have already confirmed that their vaccines do not contain pork-derived gelatin stabilizers. Further information is yet to be release by other companies who will be manufacturing and distributing COVID-19 vaccines.

### Get the side of the religious leaders to balance off report.

Muslim leaders have also stated that vaccines with gelatin components do not break religious dietary laws, because it undergoes a purification process. Further, most of these vaccines are injected or inhaled rather than ingested. Thus, vaccines are allowed under religious laws, and more harm will be incurred if vaccines were not used. For instance, in 2018, a measles outbreak occurred in Indonesia after the Indonesian Ulema Council decreed that the measles and rubella vaccines were "haram" or forbidden under Islam because of the gelatin. A spike in the number of measles cases in the country was observed, placing it in the 3rd spot with the highest numbers. Be on standby for further information, guidance from the remaining vaccine companies to ensure that the vaccines that we will be getting against COVID-19 is halal-certified.