



Internews

The Rooted in Trust project at Internews seeks to respond to disinformation about COVID-19 that deepens discrimination and affects access to basic services and assistance for vulnerable communities in Nariño. It is directed in particular towards the migrant and LGBTQI + population of Ipiales and Tumaco.

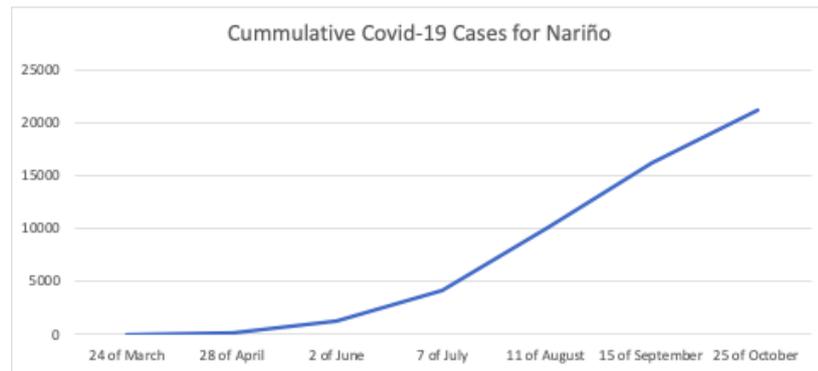
This rumor bulletin collects the rumors that circulate in Nariño about COVID-19. Here you will find answers about treatments and cures, immunity, discrimination and the reality of COVID-19. The rumors discussed here were selected after an analysis of the risk that their dissemination could imply for the communities. With this information, we can better take care of ourselves as a community during these difficult times.

THE SITUATION OF COVID-19 IN NARIÑO

Nariño	
Date	10/26/2020
New cases	61
Total cases	21,286
Recovered	16,711
Deaths	748
Hospitalized	168

Departmental Institute of Health in Nariño

According to the Departmental Institute of Health in Nariño, as of October 26, 21,286 cases of COVID-19 were registered in Nariño. The three most important cities of the department, Pasto, Tumaco and Ipiales, are the most affected by the pandemic. 54.31% of the cases registered were concentrated in Pasto, with 11,561 infected people; Ipiales, 10.77% (2,292); and Tumaco 9.41% (2,003).



THE REALITY OF COVID-19

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Departmental Institute of Health (Nariño)

 +57 (2) 7235428
<http://www.idsn.gov.co>

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Colombian Red Cross, Nariño Branch

 (2) 7237448
www.facebook.com/cruzroja.seccionalnarino/

“
Organization of Migrants for Integration and Prevention

www.facebook.com/OMIP-Colombia-100163598273204

For more details on where you can access health care, or to inquire about any COVID-19 concerns, please contact the above organizations and institutions.

COVID-19 and the pandemic are not gone! Let's not lower our guard. Let's stay informed about the virus and maintain self-care.

This rumor bulletin features common, high-risk rumors analyzed by the Internews Rooted In Trust Colombia team. These rumors were posted by individuals on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp between April and October 2020.

RUMOR RISK LEVEL: ■ HIGH ■ MEDIUM ■ LOW

Treatments and Cures

The World Health Organization (WHO) says "Although some solutions from Western or traditional medicine or home remedies can be comforting and alleviate mild symptoms of COVID-19, so far no drugs have been shown to prevent or cure this disease. "

RUMOR #1 MATARRATON

For several months now, a rumor has circulated on social media in Nariño that COVID-19 is cured using an infusion of Matarraton. A recent article from Informativo del Sur, which contains an audio by a doctor and former governor José Rosero Ruano in which he mentions the benefits of Matarraton, became viral in the region.

ANSWER

Matarraton is considered the plant with the second highest number of diverse uses in the world. In Colombia it is traditionally used for the treatment of dengue, feverish symptoms and skin conditions, as well as a pesticide against small rodents. Like other traditional products, Matarraton can contribute to the management of mild symptoms of COVID-19, especially those associated with fever. However it CANNOT be considered a "cure" against COVID-19, and it should not be used as the sole treatment in severe cases of the disease. In addition, the study cited by Governor Rosero was published in 2010 and has no relationship whatsoever with the effects of Matarraton on COVID-19.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOR #2 INTERFERON

The use of Interferon as a cure for COVID-19 has become viral on social media. This treatment is promoted by local doctor Julio Klinger. The use of Interferon for COVID-19 has received the support of local politicians such as the mayor of Barbacoa Adam Rincón and the governor of Nariño Jhon Alexander Rojas. However, on August 7, the National Institute for Food and Drug Surveillance (Invima) ordered the suspension of the activities of the Klinger foundation in charge of providing the treatment.

ANSWER

Interferon is a medicine of natural origin, which is also produced in scientific laboratories, used in the treatment of cancer and some infections. However, there is no scientific study to prove its effectiveness against COVID-19. So far NO medication has been shown to be effective in curing or preventing the disease. It is highly risky to give credit to treatments that have not been approved by the scientific community. That is why the WHO insists on the importance of social distancing and biosecurity measures to prevent contagion.

HIGH RISK

RUMOR #3 SUPAL 20

In social media, the existence of a syrup known as Supal 20 has been reported, which according to its promoters can combat and prevent COVID-19. The syrup, originally from Ecuador, is also being distributed in the southern part of Colombia. Facebook pages promoting the syrup ensure that there are health records and "microbiological" studies on its effectiveness against COVID-19.

ANSWER

Supal 20 is a syrup created and marketed by the Ecuadorian doctor Mauricio Núñez Arista that is being distributed in southern Colombia. Contrary to what the official page of the drug says on Facebook, a recent search (October 2020) in the National Agency for Regulation, Control and Sanitary Surveillance of Ecuador, contradicts that statement and shows that it is a product without sanitary registration and, therefore, fraudulent in nature.

According to its label, Supal-20 contains garlic, white onion, leek, parsley, Vitamin C and wild garlic. While some of these ingredients may help treat symptoms of other diseases, so far there is NO scientific proof of their use to treat and prevent COVID-19.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOR #4 CLORO

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic there have been testimonies on social media of people who claim to be cured by ingesting chlorine dioxide diluted in water. Some of the comments and posts also include quotes and testimonials from doctors who substantiate such belief and deny the toxicity of the product. A chemical engineer from Nariño went viral for stating that the chlorine dioxide, that he produces under the name "Oxyvirus", can exterminate 100% of the presence of COVID-19 in the body.

ANSWER

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) warns that there is no evidence that the oral use of chlorine dioxide-based products serves as a treatment or cure for COVID-19.

According to PAHO, the intake of these products can have serious side effects in people.

Therefore, it is NOT recommended to use chlorine dioxide to prevent or treat the symptoms of the disease.

HIGH RISK

Immunity

RUMOR #5 VACCINE

During the months of August and September, a message was disseminated on Twitter and Facebook in which a person claimed to be "making my own vaccine". It is a mixture of totumo, elderberry, eucalyptus, honey and propolis." The publication also reached Nariño. Although the post was viralized by the Colombian comedian Ricardo Quevedo, there is a possibility that part of the audience has taken it as true information.

ANSWER

To date there is no vaccine against COVID-19. It is important to emphasize that vaccines are designed to prevent a person from developing a disease. WHO is currently coordinating the necessary research for the development of a vaccine against COVID-19 with several countries. To date, there are more than 100 possible vaccines in development. When any of these are deemed successful, WHO's COVAX (Collaboration for Global Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines) Initiative will ensure its distribution in all countries of the world. Like other traditional and natural treatments, totumo, elderberry, eucalyptus, honey, and propolis can help relieve mild symptoms of COVID-19, but cannot be considered "vaccines."

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOR #6 DENGUE

In September, a message circulated on Twitter suggesting that in the municipality of Tumaco (Nariño), COVID-19 cases had "stagnated" due to an immunity provided by antibodies generated by the human body when in places previously affected by dengue. The publication cites a study by Miguel Nicolelis, a professor at Duke University.

ANSWER

While Nariño does have instances of municipalities with a history of dengue and where no cases of COVID-19 have been reported, the Ministry of Health concluded that this is due to those municipalities' ability to delay the arrival of the virus and its spread. The explanation follows that this is likely the result of the strict preventative and isolation measures since the beginning of the pandemic rather than antibodies resulting from dengue. This is evident in Tumaco and in general for Nariño, since the dengue outbreaks did not affect the COVID-19 contagion statistics. According to the National Institute of Health, as of October 2020, 398 cases of dengue had been presented in Nariño, which means that for each case of dengue, 51 cases of COVID-19 have been registered.

HIGH RISK

Conspiracy vs. Reality

RUMOR #7 HOAX

Since the beginning of the pandemic, several social media users have expressed that COVID-19 is a huge sham. Several of these rumors suggest that COVID-19 deaths and numbers are also false. For example, someone posted on Facebook: "FALSE CRP PANDEMIC, FALSE CORONAVIRUS DISEASES AND FALSE DEATHS FROM COVID-19 #INTERNATIONAL"

According to the National Institute of Health in Colombia there have been 30,348 deaths from COVID-19 and a total of 68,310 active cases in Colombia (as of 26 October). At a global level, the figures are also alarming, as shown in the following graph:

Global Data from the 26th of October

43,775,738	1,164,248	32,178,205
Cases	Deaths	Recovered

Source: worldometer

ANSWER

It is truly risky for communities not to believe the reality of the pandemic, as this could lead to some people not complying with the basic biosecurity recommendations and thus contributing to increasing infection rates. In addition, claiming the falsity of the figures is disrespectful to all those individuals and families who have suffered from COVID-19.

HIGH RISK

Xenophobia and Discrimination

RUMOR #8 XENOPHOBIA

Since the beginning of the pandemic and as a result of the migratory passage that the department of Nariño represents, several rumors have been documented on social media against the migrant population. In particular, one of the most common rumors is the idea that Venezuelan, Haitian and Ecuadorian migrants are responsible for the spread of COVID-19 in the region.

ANSWER

There is no evidence to verify that the cases of COVID-19 in Nariño increased with the arrival of migrants. It is very important to remember that the closure of the border left hundreds of migrants "trapped" in Colombia and that according to Migración Colombia, about 14 thousand migrants are settled in Nariño. Many of them continue to be victims of human trafficking, forced labor and sexual exploitation.

Despite the rumors that have circulated, and even direct attacks, according to the Departmental Health Institute of Nariño, the number of migrants with COVID-19 is only 28. The organization Médecins du Monde is in charge of the care of migrants with symptoms of the disease.

MEDIUM RISK

RUMOR #9 + CASES

During the pandemic, users of social media have published and expressed the opinion that it is preferable not to get tested for COVID-19 or to go to the hospital if they have symptoms. According to them, they fear social rejection or even a violent attack for being suspected of carrying the virus. Some of them even spoke of death threats against people who tested positive for COVID-19.

ANSWER

Discrimination against people that tested positive for COVID-19 has negative implications for the entire community. If citizens are afraid to take the test and go to the hospital, the number of infections may rise since there will be no control of positive cases. As explained by the Harvard University School of Medicine, after 10 days most COVID-19 patients are no longer contagious. Still, it is suggested to adhere to the strict 14-day quarantine to completely prevent infecting someone else. Once a COVID-19 patient overcomes the disease, they are fully able to reintegrate into society.

HIGH RISK

"COVID-19 does not discriminate, and neither should our response, if it is to be successful."

UNICEF 2020

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?

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

Keep following the basic biosecurity recommendations

