



Internews

The *Rooted in Trust* project aims to disrupt and mitigate the flow of misleading, inaccurate or malignant information to vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Mali, the *Rooted In Trust* project focuses on listening to and collecting rumors about the virus and the COVID-19 response among displaced populations in the District of Bamako and the regions of Sikasso, Segou, Mopti, and Timbuktu.

The rumors discussed in this rumor bulletin are meant to inform communities and field workers. The rumors are collected through social media content among the local population and the press. This regular collection of information aims at improving communities' understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing them with more accurate information to effectively dispel rumors and helping stem the spread of the disease.

## COVID-19 SITUATION IN MALI

The Coronavirus pandemic broke out in Mali on March 25, 2020. As of October 28, 2020, health authorities in Mali reported **3,515 cases** of coronavirus, **136 deaths** and **2,665 cases cured**. **Nine (09) regions** and **thirty-eight (38) health districts** have been affected, including the intervention regions of the *Rooted In Trust* project with **Bamako (50.6%)**, **Segou (0.7%)**, **Sikasso (3.5%)**, **Mopti (7.6%)** and **Timbuktu (16.9%)**.

\*Regional coronavirus cases' statistics are as of October 18, 2020.

### RUMOR #1

*"Prolonged use of face masks causes suffocation. Breathing constantly the exhaled air turns into carbon dioxide, causing dizziness. This intoxicates the user and even more so when moving around, performing actions."*

According to a new study published in October 2020 in the *Annals of the American Thoracic Society*, the risks of carbon dioxide poisoning are unfounded. The WHO specifies that *"prolonged use of masks can be uncomfortable, but it does not lead to carbon dioxide intoxication or lack of oxygen. When wearing a mask, it is suggested to properly fit and tight it enough to allow you to breathe normally. It is also recommended to not reuse a single-use mask and to change it as soon as it gets wet."* In addition, for reusable fabric masks, a good advice is to make sure that they are washed regularly.

#### Sources

- ATS Journals. Effect of Face Masks on Gas Exchange in Healthy Persons and Patients with COPD. 28 Oct 2020
- WHO. Mythbusters. 28 Oct 2020

PREVENTIVE

### RUMOR #2

*"Patients suffering from COVID-19 are treated with contempt by the nursing staff of the regional hospital in Timbuktu. For fear of contracting COVID-19, the staff put food in bags and throw it on the patients."*

ANSWER

After verification, it appears that the health care staff at the Timbuktu hospital treat patients in a respectful manner. The application of barrier measures and the establishment of consistent health protocols are sufficient to ensure adequate treatment of patients and to avoid the spread of the virus among patients, medical staff and the community (visitors, relatives, etc.). You can go to a hospital or clinic for treatment if you have symptoms.

HEALTHCARE

#### RISK LEVELS



## RUMOR #3

"The temperature or even the way of life could also play in favor of the African continent in view of the low number of positive cases of COVID-19." - Excerpt from a [press article](#) on the RFI website

ANSWER

According to [WHO](#), "you can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose."

[Source](#)  
• WHO. Mythbusters. 28 Oct 2020

TRANSMISSION



## RUMOR #5

"Ablutions (a purification gesture in Islam) disinfect the hands and protect against COVID-19." - Message circulating on Whatsapp

ANSWER

While ablutions are a constantly observed hygiene practice in the Muslim community, they are not sufficient to disinfect hands against COVID-19. The WHO recommends the [use of soap and hydroalcoholic gel for hand disinfection](#). These precautions help to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

[Source](#)  
• WHO. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) advice for the public. 28 Oct 2020

PREVENTIVE

## RUMOR #4

"Artemisia, baobab ... These African plants could help fight against the coronavirus" - Excerpt from a [press article](#)

ANSWER

[WHO](#) recognizes that traditional, complementary and alternative medicine has many benefits and Africa has a long history of traditional medicine and practitioners that play an important role in providing care to populations. Medicinal plants such as Artemisia annua are being considered as possible treatments for COVID-19 and should be tested for efficacy and adverse side effect

[Source](#)  
• WHO. Mythbusters. 28 Oct 2020

TREATMENT