



The Rooted in Trust project at Internews seeks to respond to misinformation 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 the reality of COVID-19: treatments, cures, vaccines, corruption, xenophobia, and the "new normal". 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.

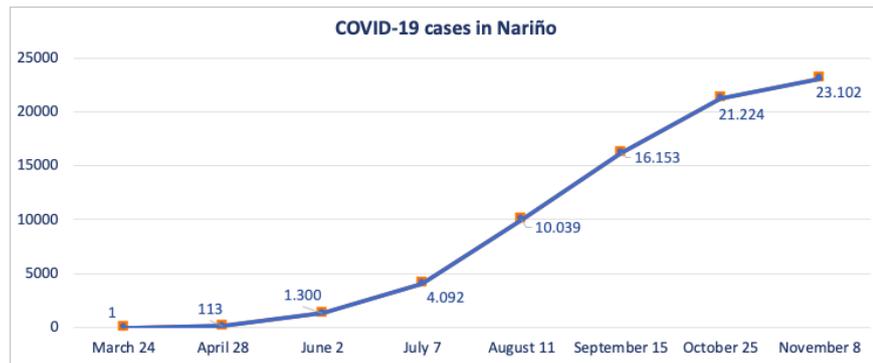
THE SITUATION OF COVID-19 IN NARIÑO

Nariño	
Date	11/8/2020
New Cases	109
Total Cases	23,102
Recovered	17,810
Deaths	780
Hospitalized	39

Source (Left): Departmental Institute of Health in Nariño (IDSN)
 * On November 12, the IDNS made a clarification and added 2,865 cases to the number of recovered
 Source (Right): Original chart created from IDSN data

In the last two weeks, Nariño has registered a total of 1,878 new cases of COVID-19. While the situation is controlled, the cities of Pasto, Tumaco and Ipiales make up 73.54% of the cases in Nariño, with 23,102 cases.

The mortality rate in the department of Nariño is 3.37%, which alarming compared to the global rate of 2.5%.



THE REALITY OF COVID-19

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Departmental Institute of Health (Nariño)
 +57 (2) 7235428
<http://www.idsn.gov.co>

“
Colombian Red Cross, Nariño Branch
 (2) 7237448
www.facebook.com/cruzroja.seccionalnariño/

“
Médecins du Monde
 320 4721283
 Cl. 26a #6 B 88, Ipiales

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 in the month of October 2020.

TREATMENT, CURES AND VACCINES

RUMOR #1 MANDATORY VACCINE

Rumors have circulated on Facebook and Whatsapp that the national government mandated the population to test a vaccine against COVID-19 that has harmful side effects. These comments have gone viral particularly among the Venezuelan migrant population in Nariño.

- Though it is not explicitly noted, this rumor originated in Venezuela and is making reference to the situation in that country alone.
- On October 2nd, the President of Venezuela announced that Venezuela would test out the Russian vaccine Sputnik V.
- On October 14th, the Ministry of Health in Colombia informed the public that as of now, a fully developed vaccine does not exist. Additionally there have been advancements in the clinical trials of the vaccine AD26 from the pharmaceutical company Janssen.

Vaccines are designed to ensure that people do not develop the disease. To stay informed about the development of a COVID-19 vaccine in Nariño, Colombia and the world, you can access the websites of the following institutions: Departmental Institute of Health, the Ministry of Health, and the WHO.

Source: Health Ministry, Colombia's preparation for the COVID-19 vaccine, October 2020

HIGH RISK

RUMOR #2 MORINGA

Since the beginning of the lockdown and again in October, there was evidence of rumors on Whatsapp with respect to moringa being a cure for COVID-19. Several people ensure that moringa has been used successfully in the prisons of Colombia.

- As stated by a scientific study, Moringa is an herbal plant with various medicinal uses, such as anti-inflammatory and antioxidant.
- There are no scientific studies to date that prove that moringa cures COVID-19. The World Health Organization (WHO), states that at this time there is no evidence of a cure for COVID-19.
- The excessive use of moringa might cause allergic reactions, acid reflux, diarrhea and other issues.

While the scientific community finds a cure for COVID-19, it is important to strengthen the immune system, for this the responsible use of natural products such as moringa could be key. Additionally, the best way to continue taking care of ourselves is with biosecurity measures.

Source: Colombiacheck, there is still no proof that moringa cures COVID-19, August 2020

MEDIUM RISK

ANSWER

ANSWER

RUMOR #3 MOUTHWASH

A few weeks ago, a rumor circulated on Twitter and Facebook about the ability of mouthwash to deactivate COVID-19 in humans. The comment was based on an article, that also went viral internationally, citing a September study by a researcher from Pennsylvania State University.

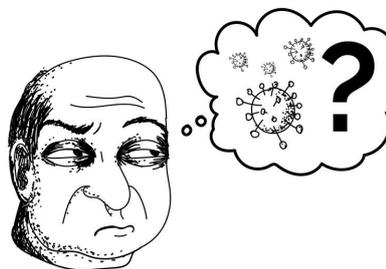
- This scientific study was based on a more common and less severe form of the coronavirus than the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19.
- The study does not include tests on human subjects.
- The virus is not only located in the mouth. It also reaches the trachea and lungs, and therefore the mouthwash could not attack it in its entirety.

Listerine ensures that their products combat bad breath, plaque and gingivitis. However, they are NOT proven to combat COVID-19. To protect ourselves and those around us, the most effective strategy is to maintain self-protection measures, such as hand washing, social distancing, and the use of masks.

Source: Listerine, Response to COVID-19, October 2020

MEDIUM RISK

ANSWER



It's normal that the COVID-19 pandemic makes us afraid and anxious to find a cure, treatment, or vaccine. However, at the moment, the only effective way to avoid getting infected is to follow self-protection and physical distancing measures such as the ones seen on the image below.



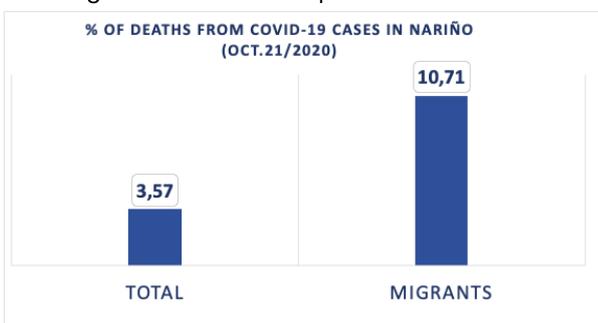
XENOPHOBIA

RUMOR #4 MIGRANTS IMMUNITY

Local organizations that work with the migrant population in Nariño warn of a rumor that suggests that migrants are "immune" to COVID-19.

- According to the WHO, as of October 15 it is estimated that only 10% of COVID-19 cases studied have been positive, which means that the majority of the world's population is still vulnerable to the virus.
- No specific community is immune to COVID-19. Vulnerable populations, including migrants, face the pandemic without having access to massive testing, and in many cases they cannot even access decent housing conditions or adequate health services.

ANSWER



According to the IDSN, as of October 21, only 28 migrants had contracted the virus. Although the figure could be skewed due to the lack of access to mass tests or health services, it is alarming to see that the death rate of the migrant population is three times that of the rest of the people affected by the pandemic in Nariño. If you are an immigrant in Colombia and require medical help, you can contact Medecins du Monde (Phone # 320 4721283).

Source: WHO, herd immunity, confinement and COVID-19, October 2020

HIGH RISK

"The fight against xenophobia is key to an effective recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic"

International Organization for Migration

RUMOR #5 REVENGE

A video of a supposedly Venezuelan woman wiping her nose with the masks she sells was viral on Facebook during the month of October. The post hinted that the pandemic is being spread by Venezuelans in a vengeful crusade against Colombians.

- The person who appears in the video has already been sanctioned by the Police, and their nationality has not been confirmed. Even if it were true that she is Venezuelan, generalizing from a case can have serious implications against the migrant population and conceals attitudes of xenophobia and discrimination.

ANSWER

As the International Organization for Migrants (IOM) has indicated, the fear and stigmatization produced by the pandemic can hinder the response and put vulnerable populations at risk. According to UNICEF's guide, to reduce stigmatization "what does work is to build trust in formal health services and advice, show empathy towards those affected, and understand the disease itself."

Source: UNICEF, the associated social stigma with COVID-19, November 2020

HIGH RISK

Why does COVID-19 cause so much stigma?

<p>1</p> <p>It is a new disease around which there are still many unknowns.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>We are often afraid of the unknown.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>It is easy to project this fear onto others.</p>
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Stigma can:

<p>Lead people to hide the disease to avoid discrimination.</p>	<p>Prevent people from seeking immediate medical attention.</p>	<p>Prevent people from adopting healthy behaviors.</p>
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RUMOR #6 FAKE FATALITIES

CORRUPTION

At the end of October, a video went viral on Facebook denouncing the existence of an alleged "COVID-19 cartel" that was burying COVID-19 patients alive. It is part of a larger rumor according to which there is a mafia between some health providers, doctors and nurses in order to steal government money by inflating the COVID-19 fatality numbers. On social media it is also rumored that there are millionaire contracts with funeral homes to cremate the skeletal remains of all patients, making it impossible to tell if their death was caused by the virus.

ANSWER

- Medical institutions must follow the guidelines of the authorities on the management of COVID-19 patients and follow the protocols for handling cadavers (which state that all cadavers must be cremated and funeral services must be restricted).
- On March 12, the government declared a state of social and economic emergency in order to implement measures to cope with the crisis generated by COVID-19.
- Currently, the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation has opened 837 investigations for corruption in contracts carried out in the framework of the pandemic. Those being investigated include 417 mayors, 26 governors and 32 municipal councils.



For more information on guidelines for clinical management of COVID-19 patients, see external circular 012 of the Superintendent of Health.

Source: Office of the Comptroller General. Corruption: the other pandemic that affects the country, October 2020

HIGH RISK

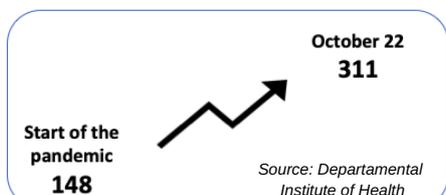
ECONOMIC REOPENING

RUMOR #7 LOCKDOWN

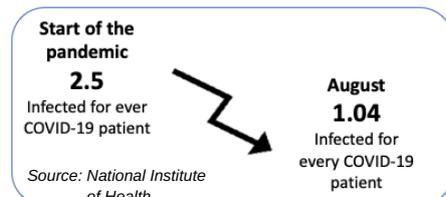
Since October, rumors have spread on Facebook suggesting that the end of mandatory confinement is proof that the lockdown was of no use.

The lockdown was key for the country to be able to expand the services of the health system and reduce the speed of infections. During this time there was an:

Increase in the number of Intensive care units in Nariño



Slowdown of the contagion rate in Colombia



MEDIUM RISK

RUMOR #8 END OF THE PANDEMIC

Rumors have also been reported that the economic reopening marks the end of the pandemic.

The end of the lockdown was necessary to curb the economic effects of the pandemic. According to Fenalco, by September 4,560 companies canceled their commercial registration, 44% of merchants suffered losses of up to 50% during the last 7 months, and the informality index was 47.6%. These factors made the reopening necessary, but since the virus is still a reality, we must maintain biosafety measures such as hand washing and the use of masks.

The last week of October in Colombia Oct 25 – Oct 31

66,473 Cases
1,224 Deaths

Source: Original diagram based on data from the Ministry of Health

MEDIUM RISK