



Internews

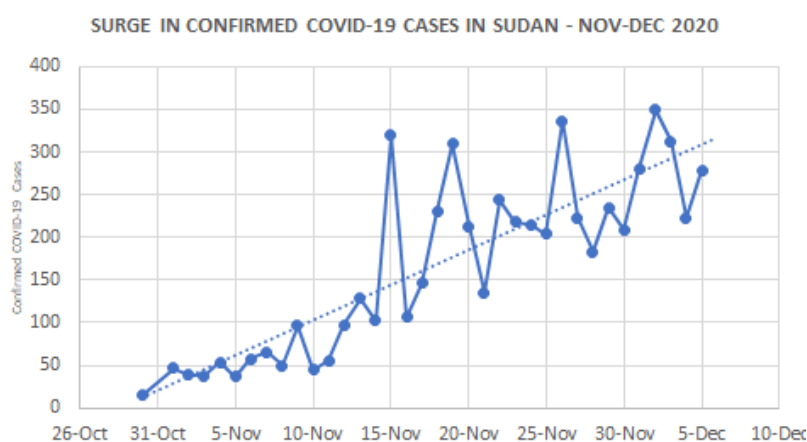
**In Sudan the Rooted in Trust (RiT) project** aims to mitigate and disrupt misinformation about COVID-19 by collecting and analyzing rumors on the Sudanese social media space. This bulletin is based on an analysis of 277 posts collected in Arabic between 19 November and 1 December 2020, on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram.

In this week's bulletin we shed light on a variety of rumors, such as Africans are immune to COVID-19, masks are not effective, vitamins for the elderly, acquired immunity for infected people, mental health impact of COVID-19, and reinfection. This regular collection of community insights aims to address questions and common misperceptions about COVID-19 found across Sudan. It aims to help volunteers and field staff provide fact-based answers to their communities' questions and concerns.

## COVID-19 SITUATION IN SUDAN

Since November, we have witnessed a spike in COVID-19 cases in the country. As of 30 November 2020, the official number rose to 18,245 confirmed COVID-19 cases, compared to 13,804 cases on October 30. Also, in October, Sudan recorded an average of 50 cases per week, while between 29 November and 5 December, it recorded over 2,000 COVID-19 cases. Most cases identified have been in the capital Khartoum and surrounding areas.

## SURGE IN COVID-19 CASES IN SUDAN



Source: Figures provided by the Sudanese Health Ministry

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**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**COVID-19 HOTLINE - SERVING ALL**

**AREAS OF SUDAN: 9090**

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**SUDAN HEALTH OBSERVATORY**

**[WWW.SHO.GOV.SD/CONTROLLER](http://WWW.SHO.GOV.SD/CONTROLLER)**

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**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

**[WWW.EMRO.WHO.INT/AR](http://WWW.EMRO.WHO.INT/AR)**



**COVID-19 IS REAL AND THERE ARE NEW CASES DIAGNOSED ALL THE TIME!  
BE SAFE: MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCE, WASH HANDS, WEAR A MASK**

### WHAT ARE RUMORS?

**RUMORS ARE CURRENTLY CIRCULATING STORIES OR UNVERIFIED REPORTS OF UNCERTAIN OR DOUBTFUL INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM FIRST-HAND SOURCES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY WHICH COULD TAKE THE SHAPE OF A QUESTION, CRITICISM, OR GENERAL COMMENTS ON A SITUATION OR TOPIC. RUMORS CAN BE TRICKY BECAUSE THEY MIGHT HAVE SOME TRUTH IN THEM!**

RUMOUR

ANSWER

**RUMOR RISK LEVEL**

**HIGH**

**MEDIUM**

**LOW**

## RUMOUR #1

"Does the previously infected person acquire permanent immunity or is it just lies?" Male - Facebook

Reinfection means a person who has previously recovered from the virus, later becomes infected again. According to World Health Organization there is no immunity from COVID-19 and cases of reinfection have been recorded.

Research on those reinfected with COVID-19 shows that sometimes the second infection can be less severe, but it can also be much more serious. So, while we wait for a vaccine and learn more about COVID-19, we have to continue practicing the protective measures, including washing our hands with soap and water for 40 seconds, wearing a mask when in public or feeling sick, and maintaining a distance of at least one-meter from others.

**LOW RISK**

## RUMOUR #3

"I would like to know if this virus is an epidemic or manufactured" Male -Twitter

COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease. That means it first infects animals, who then spread it to humans. There are lots of zoonotic diseases you might have heard of before, like rabies or dengue.

Throughout human history, new diseases have emerged. We have experienced SARS and MERS which are from the same family of the COVID-19 virus. Both SARS and MERS have been linked to wild bats, so there is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 is a manmade virus.

**LOW RISK**

## RUMOUR #2

"Within a few minutes the acidity of the blood changes due to the carbon dioxide accumulation which we're supposed to flush out. Bad ventilation starts from here, and as the time spent wearing a mask increases, the greater the risk" Female -Twitter

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that spreads through coughing, sneezing and touching infected surfaces. The World Health Organization recommends you wear a face mask to protect yourself and your community, especially in public and crowded places like mosques, markets and schools. Although it might feel a bit hot or uncomfortable to wear masks for a long periods of time, wearing face masks does not lead to carbon dioxide intoxication or low oxygen levels in our bodies. Surgeons often wear masks for hours at a time and have not reported suffering any problems.

Masks decrease the severity of viral infections when combined with precautions recommended by the WHO and Ministry of Health like physical distancing and washing our hands frequently.

We should remember that spreading misinformation in our communities can have negative effects as it causes people to become dismissive of health precautions that we should all follow to keep ourselves and our communities safe.

**LOW RISK**

## RUMOUR #4

"As the symptoms differ from person to person, what are the symptoms that appear more often in the second wave??" Female -Facebook

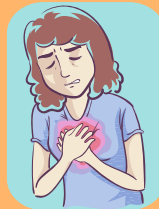
Some people are concerned by reports of new and more severe COVID-19 symptoms observed during the second wave. However, no studies have proven that COVID-19 symptoms have been any different during the second wave, compared to during the first wave. According to the World Health Organization COVID-19 symptoms are as follows:

## COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

### Severe Symptoms



Loss of speech or movement



Chest pain or pressure



Difficulty breathing/ shortness of breath

### Most Common Symptoms



Fever



Dry cough



Tiredness

### Less Common Symptoms



Diarrhea



Aches and pains



Conjunctivitis



Loss of Smell



Sore throat



Headache

Skin rash, or discoloration of fingers or toes

**Seek medical help if you develop COVID-19 symptoms, self-isolate and get tested.**

**LOW RISK**

## RUMOUR #5

“Can we use vitamins as a preventative measure for the elderly?” Female -Facebook

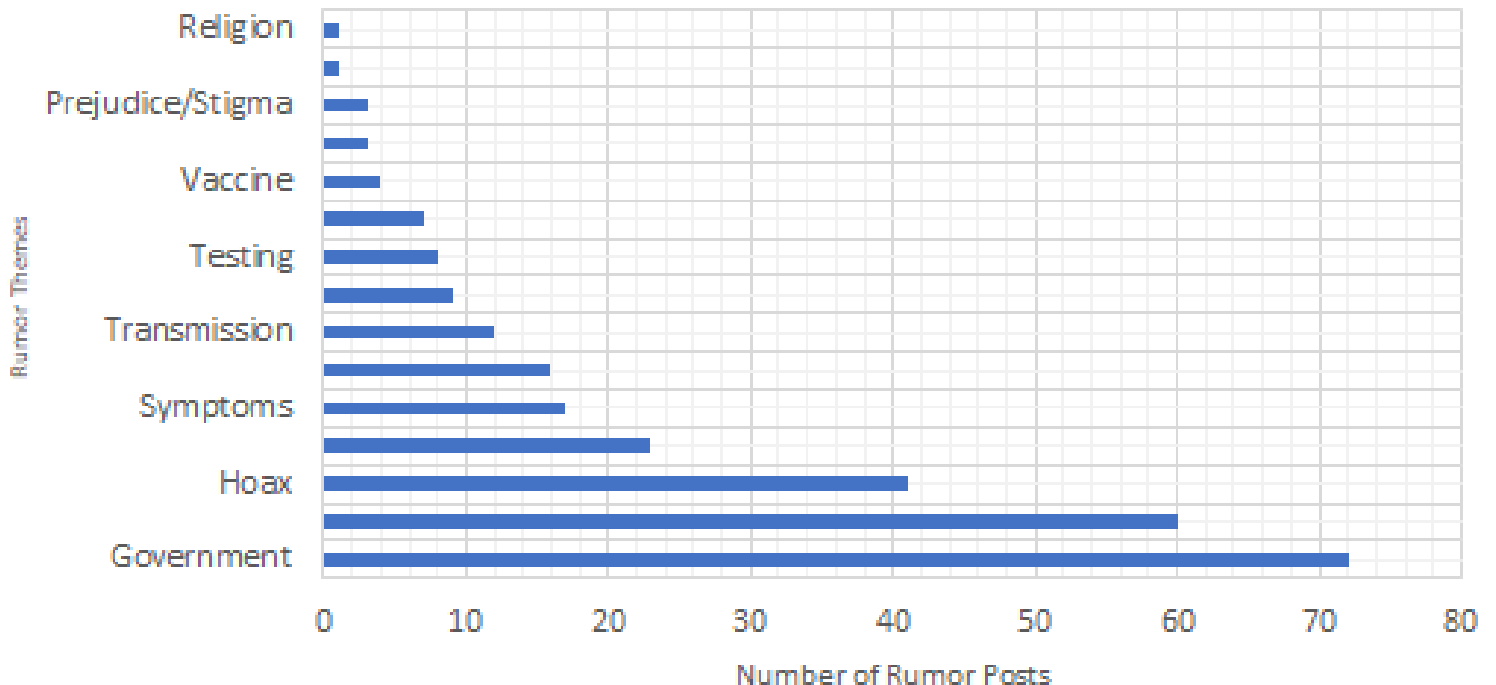
ANSWER

Vitamins play an essential role in promoting a healthy immune system, but they cannot prevent us from contracting COVID-19. The best way to get essential nutrients and vitamins is through a balanced diet, rich in fruits and vegetables. There is currently no guidance on using of vitamin supplements as a preventative for COVID-19. In fact, taking a lot of supplements, such as Vitamin C, can cause unpleasant symptoms like vomiting, diarrhea and nausea.

We should protect the elderly within our community and families. Younger, stronger members of the family can volunteer to buy groceries and other essentials, such as medicines. Family members who go out on a regular basis should maintain a distance of one meter from older people in their homes, as they are at risk of developing more severe symptoms.

LOW RISK

## Rumour Posts by Theme



## RUMOUR #6

"The secret behind the disease not spreading widely in Africa is still ambiguous. Don't you think that some endemic diseases in Africa played a role in acquiring immunity for Africans, and this observation is consistent within Africa as the severity of the epidemic decreases and increases in African countries according to the spread of endemic diseases. Likewise, some childhood vaccinations have reduced the severity of the epidemic in Africa. I think that is the reason" Male -Facebook

While many people develop immunity to seasonal flu, COVID-19 is a new virus so no one has immunity. This means that people from different ethnicities and backgrounds, regardless of their age and gender, can become infected with COVID-19. According to Statista more than 2 million COVID-19 cases have been reported across Africa. To date, the Sudanese Ministry of Health has reported more than 18,000 cases in Sudan, which proves that Africans can contract the virus just like anyone else and do not have special immunity to COVID-19.

Africa may have registered a lower number of cases, compared to the rest of the world, for various reasons, including: limited commuting between areas, isolated villages across the continent and limited testing capacity due to poorly funded health systems. COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease and can easily spread in public and crowded spaces. Always remember to follow the preventative measures set by the World Health Organization.

**MEDIUM RISK**

## RUMOUR #7

"Does the protocol (medicines and vitamins) for COVID-19 protect and strengthen immunity against the disease? The protocol:

- 1- Panadol 1000 mg twice a day
- 2- Azithromycin 500 mg once for 5 days
- 3- Vitamin C 1000 mg one pill daily
- 4- Zinc tab 50 mg one pill daily
- 5- Vitamin D 50000 mg one pill every week"

Female -Facebook

There is no globally approved cure for COVID-19. We should not seek unsolicited medical advice from non-professionals on social media. We should always consult a certified doctor before taking any type of medication to avoid adverse consequences.

Neither the Sudanese Ministry of Health nor the World Health Organization have issued any "protocol" on treating COVID-19 at home. People who have contracted COVID-19 or other diseases should not self-medicate but should consult with a certified healthcare professional.

Always seek advice from your healthcare professional and not from social media. Misinformation on COVID-19 spreads easily and is likely to be believed by many people who may also pass on this misleading information, especially since COVID-19 is a new virus and doctors are still learning more about it.

**MEDIUM RISK**

ANSWER

ANSWER



## RUMOUR #8

"Is it possible to diagnose COVID-19 based on symptoms even if the laboratory result is negative?" Male -Facebook

ANSWER

COVID-19 tests are highly accurate, but sometimes a false negative can happen. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, if you have COVID-19 symptoms and test negative you probably were not infected at the time of testing, and so you should self-isolate from others as a precaution. If symptoms persist then you should repeat the test and continue following the precautionary measures set by the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health to protect yourself and your loved ones, including:

- Keeping a distance of at least one meter from others
- Washing your hands regularly with soap and water for 40 seconds
- Wearing a mask when in public, and at home when feeling ill
- Avoid crowded public spaces
- Regularly disinfect surfaces at home

LOW RISK

## RUMOUR #9

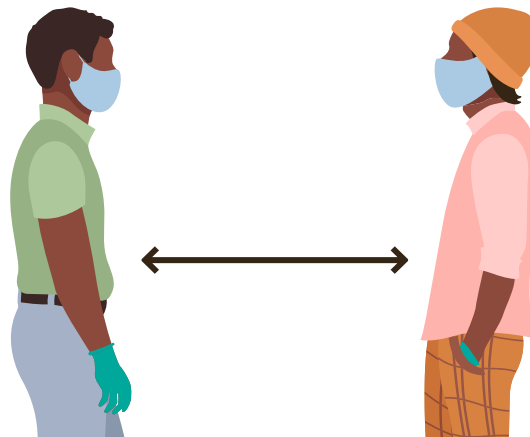
"Is it possible to add anxiety, tension and aggressive behavior as a symptom of COVID-19, especially in the period before recovery" Female -Facebook

ANSWER

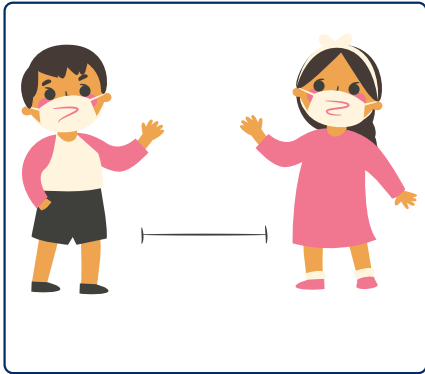
COVID-19 has been spreading for more than a year now and scientists are still trying to understand how this disease affects our wellbeing and mental health. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 may be stressful for people and the fear of a new disease and what could happen can cause strong feelings of anxiety and tension. Also, potentially life-saving preventative measures to contain the virus, such as physical distancing, can make people feel isolated, lonely and increase stress and anxiety levels. However, these measures are necessary to protect ourselves and our communities from COVID-19.

There are various ways of looking after your mental health and coping with stress, such as connecting with others, keeping a healthy routine, exercising regularly, and reaching out for support when needed

LOW RISK



**Say hello from a distance of 1 meter!**



**Keep a distance of one meter**



**Wear your mask in public spaces or if you feel sick**



**Wash your hands with soap and water for 40 seconds**

**The best way to avoid catching and spreading Covid-19 is to follow the preventive measures!**

## 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**

Do you have any symptoms such as fever, cough, or a sore throat?

**Yes**

Request a PCR test. Did the test show a positive result?

**Yes**

Follow a 14-day strict quarantine or the recommended treatment by a licensed doctor based on the severity of the symptoms

**NO**

Follow a 14-day strict quarantine and be vigilant of symptoms

**NO**

Follow a 14-day strict quarantine and be vigilant of symptoms

**NO**

Please note if you experience any symptoms, seek testing. Otherwise, follow the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health

**Please follow the preventative measures set by the Ministry of Health**

