



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. The project is designed to help reduce 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.

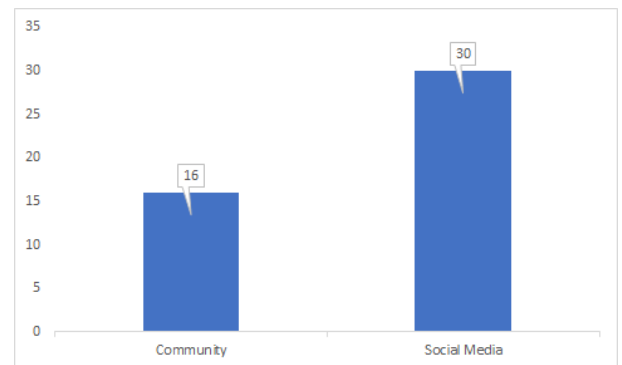
The purpose of this special bulletin is to mitigate the spread of rumors and misinformation about vaccines against COVID-19. Since there is still no cure for coronavirus disease, vaccines are an interesting alternative to protect people and stop the spread of the pandemic. This bulletin is based on the analysis of 46 rumors related to vaccination against COVID-19 out of a total of 1229 rumors collected on social media and from IDPs communities in the regions of Segou, Sikasso, Mopti, Timbuktu and the District of Bamako.

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINATION?

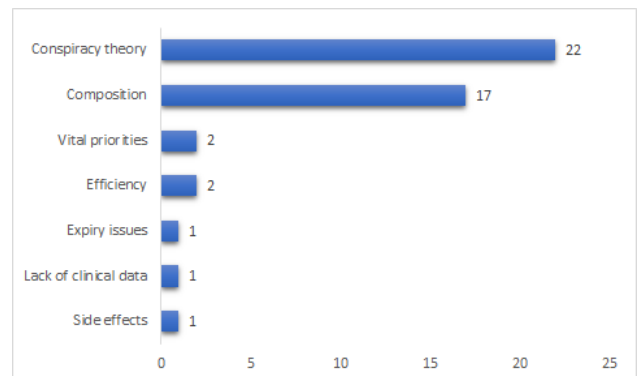
In a context where Africa in general and Mali in particular are facing a resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic marked by a spectacular increase in the number of daily contaminations, governments and the scientific community around the world are increasingly considering vaccination as the last resort to protect populations from coronavirus disease.

This special edition of the newsletter focuses on community perceptions of COVID-19 vaccines in Mali.

Of the **46 rumors** about vaccination against COVID-19 that have been examined, **22** relate to a **conspiracy theory** of governments and big pharmaceutical companies to inoculate populations with the COVID-19 virus in order to exterminate them or strengthen the financial power of vaccine manufacturers. **17 rumors** concern community mistrust in the **composition** of vaccines. Other feedback data collected are related to **vaccine efficiency (2 rumors)**, the **vital priorities** (livelihood) of communities (**2 rumors**), the risks of **side effects (1 rumor)** and **early expiry (1 rumor)** of vaccines, and the **lack of data on clinical trials (1 rumor)**.



Distribution of rumors about vaccines according to their sources



Distribution of rumors about vaccines according to their contents

COVID-19 SITUATION IN MALI

Over the period from December 18, 2020 to January 3, 2021, the Malian health authorities identified 624 cases of COVID-19 and 25 deaths. The milestone of 7,000 confirmed cases was reached on December 31, 2020. The cumulative number of confirmed cases since the beginning of the epidemic is 7,253 including 160 imported cases. The cumulative number of cured is 4,913, a cure rate of 67.7%. However, the number of deaths is 278 deaths out of the 7,253 cases, i.e. an overall lethality rate of 3.8%.

In the face of the worrying resurgence of COVID-19 cases, the Malian authorities have taken measures to break the chain of contamination. In the same vein, they announced the establishment of a commission responsible for the development and implementation of a National Vaccination Plan against COVID-19.

Sources:

- COVID-19 situation report in Mali, n°135. 4 January 2021
- Journaldumali.com. Covid19: Mali is preparing its vaccination plan. January 4, 2021

RISK LEVELS



RUMOUR #1

"Currently many parents are afraid because of rumors about a possible vaccine that have been developed to administer COVID-19 to children. Children who already understand such things are refusing to be vaccinated," - Male, Bougouni IDP site.

This misperception may be due to the fact that vaccines contain suspensions of inactivated or attenuated microorganisms, or products or derivatives of virus microorganisms. In other words, they contain tiny fragments of the disease-causing organism. However, it should be noted that vaccines also contain other components that ensure the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. These are present in most vaccines and have been used for decades in billions of vaccine doses.

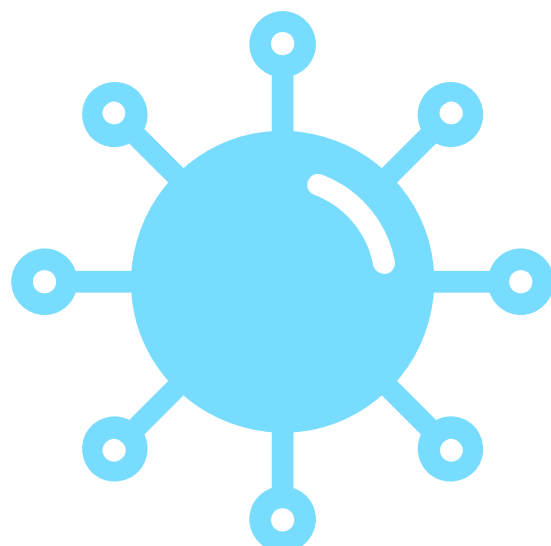
WHO reminds us that vaccines save millions of lives every year. Their mode of action is to train and prepare the immune system (the body's natural defenses) to recognize and fight the viruses and bacteria they target. If the body is subsequently exposed to these same pathogens, it is immediately ready to destroy them, thereby preventing disease.

Every year, vaccination prevents 2 to 3 million deaths from diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza and measles. Vaccines are now available to prevent more than 20 life-threatening diseases, and work is underway at an unprecedented pace to also make VID19 a vaccine-preventable disease. So it's important to get your children vaccinated.

Sources:

- WHO. COVID-19 Vaccines. January 4, 2021
- WHO. How are vaccines developed?. January 4, 2021

CONSPIRACY THEORY



RUMOUR #2

"Before any vaccination campaign, I hope that they will really tell us the components of this vaccine, I remain doubtful for the moment." - Female, Facebook

All vaccines against COVID-19 are designed to teach the body's immune system to safely recognize and block the virus that causes COVID-19. According to WHO, several different types of potential vaccines for COVID-19 are under development, including :

- Inactivated or weakened virus vaccines, which use a form of the virus that has been inactivated or weakened so that it does not cause disease, but still generates an immune response.
- Protein-based vaccines, which use harmless protein fragments or protein envelopes that mimic the COVID-19 virus to safely generate an immune response.
- Viral vector vaccines, which use a virus that has been genetically modified so that it does not cause disease, but produces coronavirus proteins to generate a safe immune response.
- RNA-DNA vaccines, a leading-edge approach that uses genetically modified RNA or DNA to generate a protein that itself triggers a safe immune response.

Source:

- WHO. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Vaccines. January 4, 2021

SAFETY

RUMOUR#3

"DON'T GET VACCINATED !!!! Vaccines are not safe (many serious side effects) and besides they are useless, the epidemic is ENDED, it is the leaders who maintain it because they RECEIVE COMMISSIONS on vaccines !!!! Wake up !!!!!" - Man, Facebook

The priority of laboratories is to provide safe vaccines. But many of the vaccines are based on as yet unproven techniques. Serious effects from vaccination remain extremely rare (less than one case per 100,000 people vaccinated). As with all drugs, a risk/benefit ratio must be established.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic is not over. According to Harouna Mahamadou Toureh, spokesperson for the Malian government at a press briefing on December 9, 2020, *"we are now seeing an almost exponential growth of the pandemic throughout the country. The Ministry of Health estimates, based on the cases recorded in the last three weeks, foresee 1,829 cases for the month of December, including 274 serious cases and 91 critical cases. These data suggest that the country is facing a new wave, larger and more dangerous than the one already observed in recent weeks"*.

Hence the need to ensure strict adherence to the barrier measures that have been proven effective in combating the spread of the virus.

Source:
• Jeuneafrique.com. Le Mali face à la deuxième vague de Covid : " Les structures sont saturées ". December 15, 2020

SAFETY

RUMOUR #4

"This is just a masquerade. Convincing people to get vaccinated requires convincing epidemiological data, not getting vaccinated in front of everyone. That's the way I see it." - Man, Facebook

According to WHO, each vaccine under development must first be tested and evaluated to determine which antigen should be used to elicit an immune response. This preclinical phase is done without testing in humans. An experimental vaccine is first tested on animals to assess its safety and disease prevention potential.

If the vaccine triggers an immune response, it is then tested in three-phase human clinical trials.

When the results of all of these clinical trials are available, a series of steps are required, including the review of efficacy and safety for regulatory and public health policy approval.

Once a vaccine is used, it must be continuously monitored to ensure its continued safety.

Source:
• WHO. How are vaccines developed?. January 4, 2021

SAFETY





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT VACCINES

What is a vaccine?

Vaccines contain weakened or inactive components of a particular organism (antigen) that trigger an immune response in the body. Newer vaccines contain the pattern of producing the antigen rather than the antigen itself.

Whether the vaccine consists of the antigen itself or the pattern that the body uses to produce it, this weakened version will not cause disease in the person receiving the vaccine, but it will cause the immune system to respond as it would have done when it first reacted to the actual pathogen.

Source:

- WHO. How do vaccines work?. January 6, 2021

How do vaccines work?

As a means of disease prevention, vaccines train and prepare the immune system (the body's natural defenses) to recognize and fight the viruses and bacteria they target. This means that if the body is subsequently exposed to these same pathogens, it is immediately ready to destroy them, thereby preventing disease.

Source:

- WHO. Vaccines against COVID-19. January 6, 2021

Are there vaccines against COVID-19?

To date, more than 169 candidate vaccines against COVID-19 are under development, including 26 in human trials according to WHO. A press review of vaccine news has identified three vaccines considered to be the most advanced in their development because they have published the results of their clinical studies: mRNA-1273 and BNT162b2 from US firms Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech, and Astrazeneca from Oxford University. Other countries such as China and Russia have also developed vaccines that are being administered domestically and abroad.

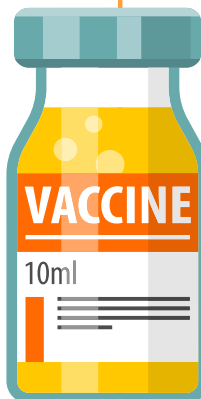
In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) granted Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine its first emergency user validation since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic on Thursday, December 31, 2021. This is a procedure to facilitate the way for countries wishing to use it quickly. "*This is a very positive step towards ensuring universal access to COVID-19 vaccines,*" said Mariangela Simao, WHO's Assistant Director-General for Drug Access, Vaccines and Pharmaceuticals, quoted in the statement.

One of the advantages of this procedure, which WHO can use in the event of a health emergency, is that it allows countries that may not have the means to quickly determine the efficacy and safety of a drug on their own, to have faster access to therapies.

The procedure also allows UNICEF, the UN agency in charge of a large part of the logistics of distributing the vaccines worldwide, the statement added.

Sources:

- WHO. Vaccines against COVID-19. January 4, 2021
- The New England Journal of Medicine. Efficacy and Safety of the mRNA-1273 SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine. January 4, 2021
- FDA.gov. Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 VRBPAC Vaccine Briefing Document. January 4, 2021
- TheLancet.com. Safety and efficacy of the ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine (AZD1222) against SARS-CoV-2: an interim analysis of four randomised controlled trials in Brazil, South Africa, and the UK. 4 January 2021
- Huffingtonpost.co.uk Why Pfizer's vaccine was licensed by WHO on an emergency basis. January 4, 2021



What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccines?

Vaccine manufacturers have reported side effects that include pain at the injection site, fever, muscle aches, fatigue, and headaches, which usually last a day or two. If symptoms persist, you should visit a health center.

Source:

- JohnHopkinsmedicine.org. Is the COVID-19 Vaccine Safe?. January 4, 2021

Will we still have to observe the barrier measures after we are vaccinated?

Yes, everyone still has to maintain these barrier measures in the near future. If you are one of the 5-10% of people for whom the vaccine is not effective, you could still catch and spread coronavirus. Studies are underway to determine whether the vaccine, while effective in preventing the disease, prevents a person from harboring the virus and spreading it to others.

Source:

- JohnHopkinsmedicine.org. Is the COVID-19 Vaccine Safe?. January 4, 2021

Do other vaccines help protect against COVID-19?

While there are currently several vaccines against other diseases, there is no information or studies to show that these vaccines can help protect against COVID-19. Nevertheless, according to WHO, scientists are trying to determine whether some existing vaccines-such as the vaccine prepared from the bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG), which is used to prevent tuberculosis-are also effective against COVID-19.

Also, the influenza vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, but it can prevent getting the flu at the same time as COVID-19. This can prevent you from getting a more serious illness. This is why it is important to get the flu shot, especially during this cool and dusty season in the Sahel region.

Source:

- WHO. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Vaccines. January 4, 2021

Who is most at risk for COVID-19?

COVID-19 is often more severe in people over 60 years of age or with diseases such as lung or heart disease, diabetes or conditions that affect their immune system.

Source:

- CDC.gov. Older people at greater risk of requiring hospitalization or dying if diagnosed with COVID-19. January 4, 2021

Will vaccines provide long-term protection?

Since vaccines have only recently been introduced to the market, their long-term protective capacity has not yet been proven. However, available data suggest that cases of reinfection with COVID-19 are possible but rare. Studies are underway to further understand this phenomenon.

Source:

- Futura-sciences.com. Covid-19: Inserm provides an update on coronavirus reinfection. January 4, 2021