

Lugara Community Factsheet

ABOUT THIS FACTSHEET

This Factsheet is meant for all stakeholders working with the communities like Community Health Workers, Health Care Workers, Outreach Workers, Community Leaders, Religious Leaders, Community Based Associations, and the community. RIT 2.0 Internews in South Sudan periodically collects feedback from the community, shares citizen's concerns on COVID-19 and works to serve communities by collecting rumors and misinformation to understand and address communities' concerns and information needs in order to strengthen information ecosystem, the vaccine, and other complex health topics. We respond by increasing the flow of accurate, timely, trusted, and contextualized information between local media, public health and humanitarian agencies, and communities.

WHAT IS A RUMOR?

A rumor is a currently circulating story or report of unverified information collected from first-hand sources within the community which could take the shape of a question, criticism, concern or a general comment on a situation or topic. A rumor can be tricky because it might have some element of truth in it.

WHY RUMORS?

In the absence of facts, rumors thrive and become believable by the communities in which they are circulating. Rumors shape public perception and can be harmful if not countered in a timely and consistent manner [AB1] [AB2] [P(3)]. Rumors thrive because of lack of relevant and contextualized information that is rooted in our target communities and can tell us a lot about where the community is at and what they need. Most Community health workers, local community leaders and associations should provide the community with information from credible and reliable sources to help debunk the rumors using community-based education and during outreach work.



COVID-19 Situation Update

On 31 March 2022 there are a total of 17,262 positive cases in South Sudan, 13,507 patients recovered from COVID-19 and a total of 138 people died from getting infected with the COVID-19 virus, reports the Ministry of Health in South Sudan.

Cumulative Summary of Statistics for March 2022



Cases
17,222



Samples Tested
360,609



Fully Vaccinated
509,856



Deaths
138

Total Number of Cases for the Month of March 2022



Week 1 - 42
Week 2 - 49
Week 3 - 73
Week 4 - 85
Total = 249

Source: Ministry of Health, South Sudan

Risk Rating: Risk is measured based on a range of factors including a) cultural relevancy, b) timing, c) online engagement, d) the believability of a rumor, and most importantly, e) the potential negative impact a rumor may have on the health, well-being, and safety of local communities or service providers.

- **HIGH RISK:** A rumor that is very likely to be believed among the larger community with potentially severe negative impacts resulting in serious harm to an individual or group including inciting violence or creating widespread fear/panic. High risk rumors may encourage widespread avoidance of testing/treatment or harm towards health workers and other service providers.
- **MEDIUM RISK:** A rumor that has the potential to be believed among the larger community with potentially moderate negative impacts to a community or individual's health well-being, or safety. Medium risk rumors may have a moderate impact on health seeking behaviors.
- **LOW RISK:** A rumor that is either unlikely to be believed among the community or with limited negative impacts to a community or individual's health, well-being, or safety or to the pandemic response.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING?

RUMOR #1:

Theme:

COVID-19 General

Risk Rating:

Medium



Focus Group Discussions,
Jonglei State, South Sudan

"COVID-19 is a disease of urban people which affects people living in towns and cities"

South Sudan Ministry of Health weekly data indicates that COVID-19 cases are reported consistently from both urban and rural areas. For instance, 4,936 persons were tested in Juba between March 13th to 20th 2022 and 54 were confirmed positive cases. In the same period, 297 people tested for COVID-19 in other states around South Sudan and 43 were confirmed positive. According to the COVID-19 weekly report, the COVID-19 positivity rate in the states from March 2-30, 2022 ranged between 4.6% to 50% while it was between 0.8% to 8.6% in Juba. **Source:** Covid-19 (moh.gov.ss)

RECOMMENDATION

COVID-19 is real and there is ongoing community transmission in both urban and rural areas of South Sudan. In South Sudan, there are 4 public and 11 private facilities providing COVID-10 PCR testing and 36 facilities in the states undertaking GXP testing. In addition, 23 health facilities provide rapid antigen diagnostic (Ag-RDT) tests. Most of the private facility tests done for travelers who pay for services while public & NGO health facilities in the Juba & states provide free services focusing on targeted testing of patients presenting with flu like symptoms. For more information, you can call **6666** for more details or visit the National Ministry of Health's website for more details http://moh.gov.ss/weekly_updates.php

FACT CHECKING:

According to WHO (World Health Organization), "There is no scientific basis for the rumor that COVID-19 is only for town people. COVID-19 affects people in towns and villages. While the disease may spread less rapidly in the less crowded rural areas, it eventually spreads to all parts of the country. Hence, all eligible persons, irrespective of where they live should get vaccinated." Dr. Phionah Atuhebwe, the Regional New Vaccines Introduction Officer, WHO Regional Office for Africa.

RUMOR #2:

Theme:

COVID-19 Vaccines

Risk Rating:

Medium



Rumor heard from various sections
of the community in South Sudan

"COVID-19 vaccine created to slowly kill people between 3 to 7 years"

FACT CHECKING:

This rumor has been debunked according to WHO (World Health Organization). Dr. Phionah Atuhebwe, the Regional New Vaccines Introduction Officer, WHO Regional Office for Africa said, "There is no theoretical reason why the vaccine would kill anyone after some years. All the COVID-19 vaccines that have received WHO Emergency Use Listing are known to be safe and there is no scientific basis for the rumor that the vaccine will kill people after some years".

According to South Sudan Ministry of Health, 551 health facilities are conducting COVID-19 vaccination in 80 counties of

South Sudan. A total of 481,958 persons were fully vaccinated in South Sudan as of March 22, 2022. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, and the vaccines can help in:

- Reducing your risk of getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19
- Reducing your risk of infection or spreading COVID-19
- Protecting against COVID-19 variants

RECOMMENDATION

COVID-19 vaccines can cause side effects, most of which are mild or moderate and go away within a few days on their own. Typical side effects include pain at the injection site, fever, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, chills, and diarrhea. Getting infected with or sickness of COVID-19 has higher risk infection has higher risk of or potentially more profound consequences such as serious illness, hospitalization, or death than the potential side effects of the vaccine. he COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 infect. Serious adverse events after COVID-19 vaccination are rare but may occur.

Source: CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/adverse-events.html>

RUMOR #3:

Theme:

COVID-19 Vaccines

Risk Rating:

Medium



Rumor Heard From Various Sections of the Community in South Sudan

"COVID-19 vaccine reduces sexual performance"

FACT CHECKING:

This is false rumor that was addressed by South Sudan Ministry of Health. *"COVID-19 vaccine doesn't affect sexual desire or sexual performance. There is no record that COVID-19 vaccines affect sexual reproductive health or have caused infertility in women or men. Hence, there is no reason to think the vaccine would affect sexual performance,"* Mabiir Kiir Kudior, Chief of Planning and Information at Public Health Emergency Operation Centre, Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan.

According to Dr. Phionah Atuhebwe, Regional New Vaccines Introduction Officer

"Billions of doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been administered globally, and there are no reports that sexual performance is affected. The data on the safety of all WHO Emergency Use Listed vaccines is carefully reviewed and continuously monitored. Thus, there is no scientific evidence to prove this claim".

Currently no evidence shows that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility sexual performance problems (problems trying to get pregnant) in women or men. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for people who are pregnant, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future, as well as their partners.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>;
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/planning-for-pregnancy.html>

Vaccines help protect against COVID-19 infection. *"Having COVID-19 can impact sexual health ... even more of a reason for couples interested in getting pregnant or concerned about fertility issues to consider getting the COVID vaccine,"* said Dr. Jason Bowling, University Hospital's epidemiologist.

Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8444928/>

RECOMMENDATION

In South Sudan, 596 health facilities are now conducting COVID-19 vaccination in 80 counties of South Sudan targeting population groups aged 18 years and above.[AB1] Having COVID-19 infection can impact sexual health and vaccines protect against COVID-19 infection. It is important for citizens to consult health care teams to make informed and healthy decisions. Furthermore, it is valuable for community health workers to provide information on the basic science behind vaccines and how vaccines work.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can the COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

None of the authorized and recommended vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19. This means that a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19. All the vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

Can pregnant and breastfeeding mothers be vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding women. You can get vaccinated whilst you are pregnant. During pregnancy, you are at higher risk of serious illness caused by COVID-19. You are also at higher risk of delivering your baby prematurely if you contract COVID-19. No safety concerns have been identified for pregnant women. If you are breastfeeding, you should get vaccinated against COVID-19 as required. None of the current COVID-19 vaccines have live viruses in them. This means there is no risk of you transmitting COVID-19 to your baby through breastmilk. In fact, the antibodies you get after vaccination may go through your breast milk and help to protect your baby.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

BE SAFE



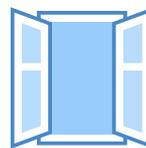
Vaccinate



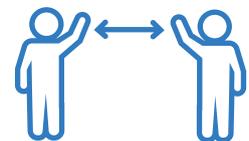
Wear A Mask



Wash Hands



Keep Windows Open



Physical Distancing

For more information call the toll-free number **6666**. For more information, visit <https://moh.gov.ss/>

The Rooted in Trust 2.0 project works to combat COVID-19 rumors and misinformation, responds to the information challenges faced by vulnerable groups, encourages open dialogue between citizens and stronger collaborative partnerships between information providers.



USAID-BHA Rooted in Trust 2.0 South Sudan
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