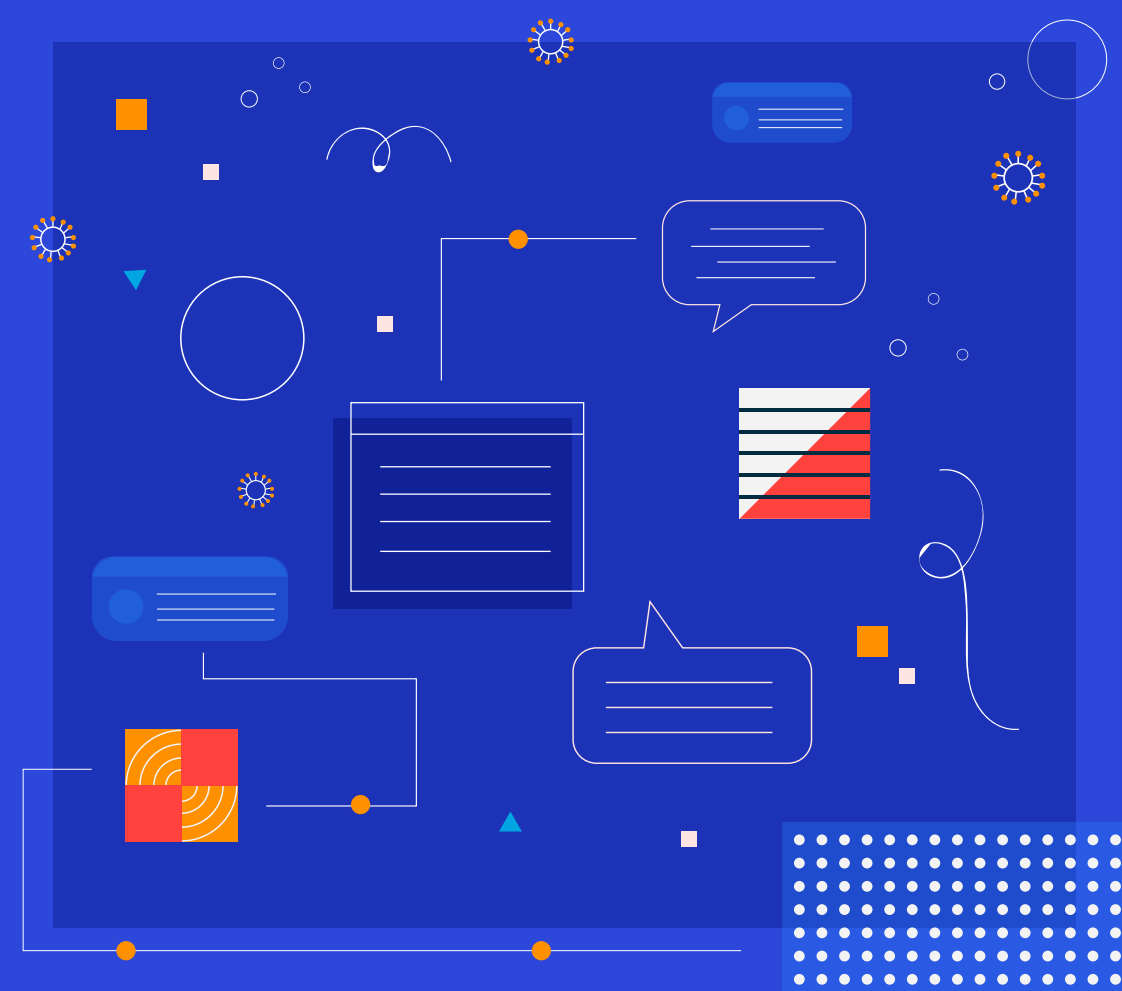




# Hello

► Humanitarian Rumor Bulletin  
#7 | AUGUST 2022



If you have questions, suggestions, or information, please contact us: **Isadora Starling** (istarling@internews.org), Project Manager, or **Samilly Valadares** (svaladaressoares@internews.org), Community Engagement and Accountability Officer.

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## Rooted in Trust

Internews' **Rooted in Trust 2.0 (RIT)** project seeks to strengthen the information ecosystems and carry out activities to listen to and engage with communities in the themes of means of information, rumor analysis, COVID-19 and vaccination. Rooted in Trust works with **Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian (Quilimbola) communities in the states of Amapá, Pará and Roraima** in a process of responding to 'infodemic', seeking to enhance existing communication networks so that they become safer and healthier.

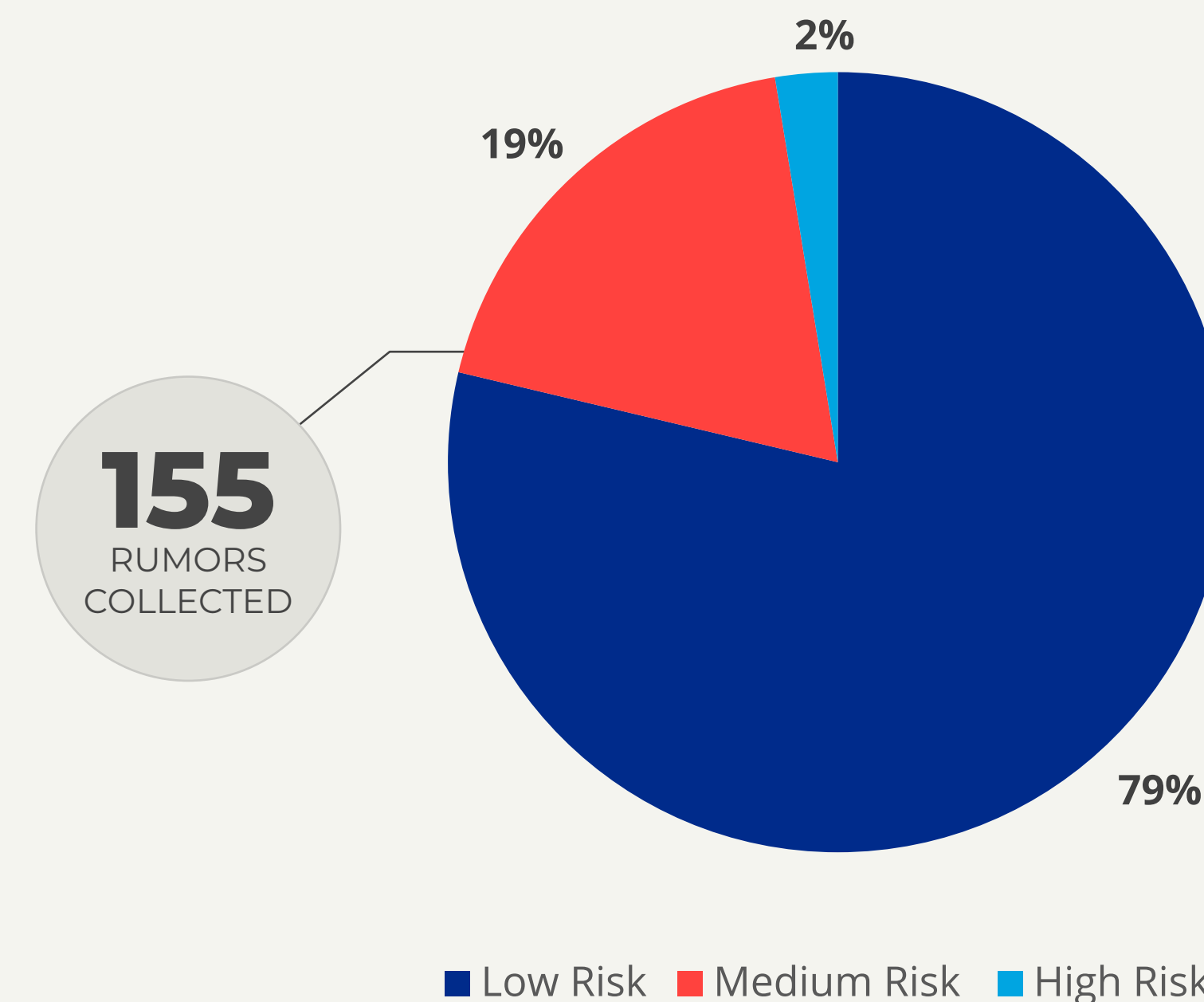
## About this bulletin

This bulletin presents rumors identified among Indigenous communities in the states of Roraima, Amapá and Pará and Quilombola communities in the states of Amapá and Pará, with the **objective of guiding and informing about the risks and possible actions to address them.** Two rumors were selected in a total of 187 collected between June 25 and July 22. The following is an analysis of the impact of the rumors.

## Rumor Risk

In order to detect whether the content in circulation poses a risk to the health and well-being of individuals and communities, Rooted in Trust also has a process of risk analysis of rumors.

Rumors can be classified as High, Medium or Low Risk, according to their ability to gain traction between the communities analyzed, bring risk of immediate damage to individuals and groups or be part of campaigns to intentionally lead people to error.



# OVERVIEW OF THE COVID-19 SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

• **34.096.935** CASES

• **680.786** DEATHS

Data on COVID-19 in Brazil shows **30,935 new cases** and **143 new deaths**, since the last record on 08/10/2022. Mortality is **324 per 100,000 inhabitants**.

According to the **Consórcio de veículos de imprensa**, in the last 14 days the moving average of COVID-19 deaths is **-5% and indicates a stable trend**.

• **180.138.644** 1ST DOSE

• **169.318.225** 2ND DOSE+ SINGLE DOSE

• **101.823.074** BOOSTER DOSE

## SOURCES:

Ministry of Health (11/08/22) | Consórcio de veículos de imprensa (28/07 - 10 e 11/08/22)

## PARÁ

• **821.444** KNOWN CASES

• **18.582** DEATHS

In the last 14 days, the moving average of deaths is -13% and indicates a stable trend.

## AMAPÁ

• **177.576** KNOWN CASES

• **2.153** DEATHS

## RORAIMA

• **173.827** KNOWN CASES

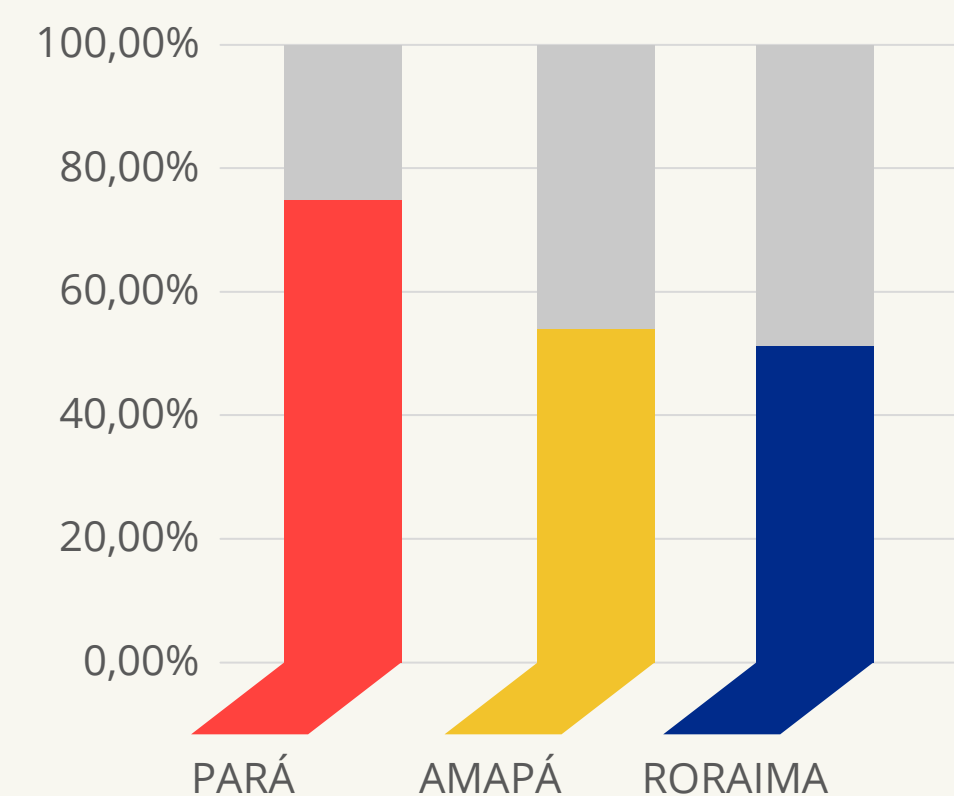
• **2.165** DEATHS

In the last 14 days, the moving average of deaths is 0% and indicates a stable trend.

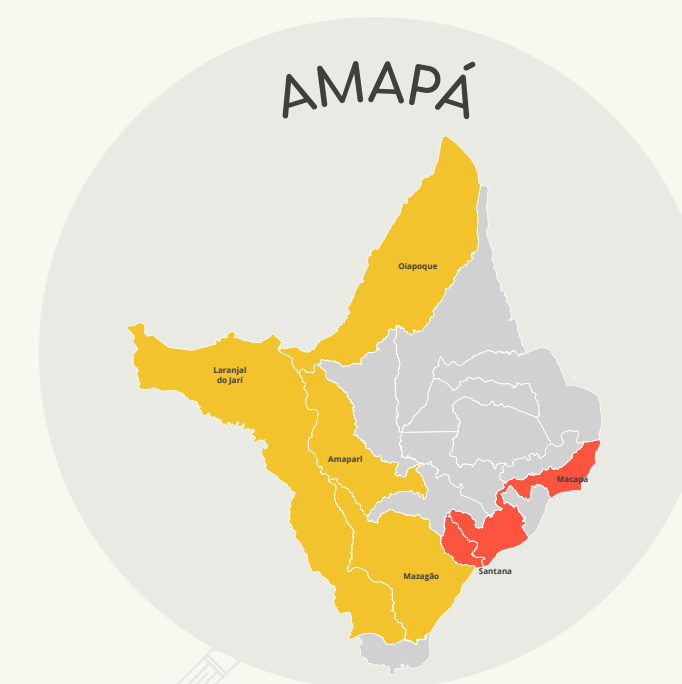
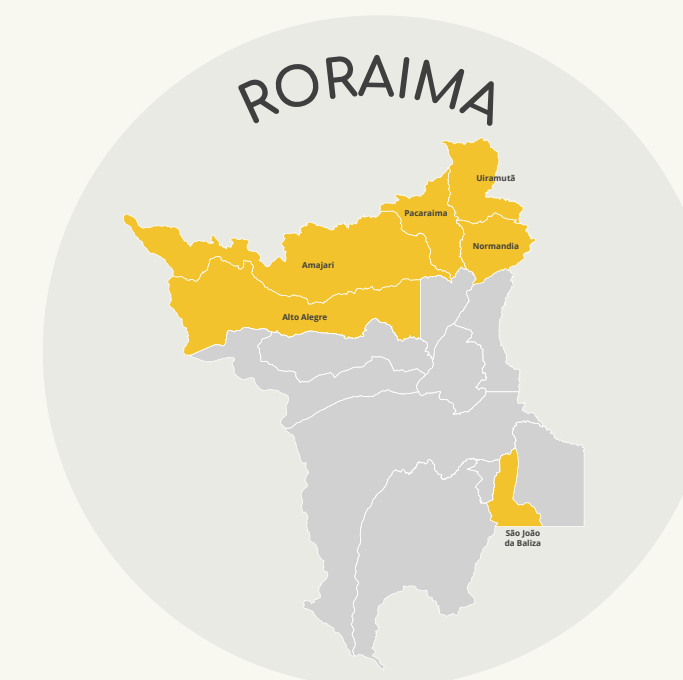
## RORAIMA AND AMAPÁ CONTINUE TO HAVE THE WORST VACCINATION RATES AMONG BRAZILIAN STATES

Percentage of the population vaccinated with the first full vaccination cycle (two doses of the Pfizer, Astrazeneca or Coronavac vaccines, or one dose of the Janssen vaccine) on 11/08/2022:

## VACCINATION



## Target Audience



● INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES ● QUILOMBOLAS

## REACTION OF THE VACCINE



The breast milk of a doubly vaccinated mother was tested after the baby was not developing and showed that it was 80% inorganic and had 8/10 toxicity levels



## O QUE ESTÁ POR TRÁS DO RUMOR?

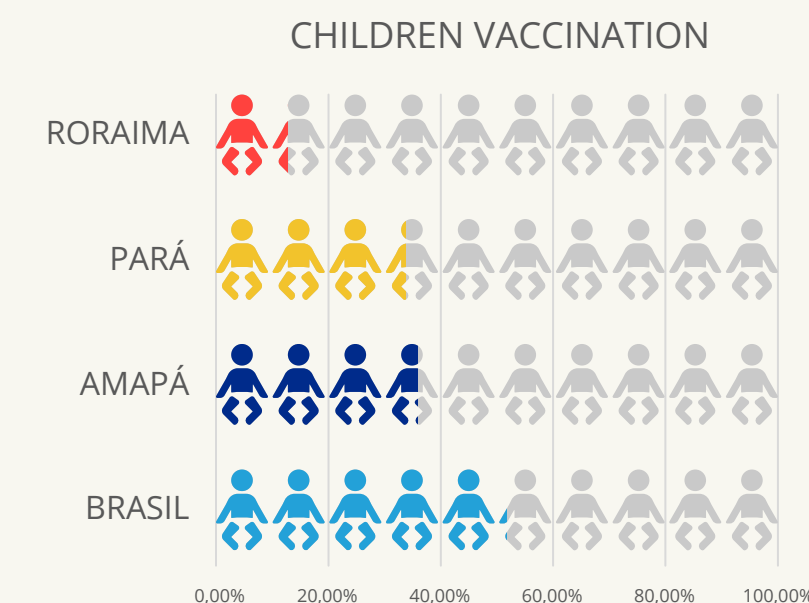
- Rumors that use **mothers' feelings** of guilt to leverage anti-vaccine content are not exclusive events of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a study by the University of London, mothers have always been key targets of this type of campaign, as they tend to be the main caregivers of children.
- Researchers claim that anti-vaccination campaigns have used the **"maternal instinct"** to increase the spread of anti-vaccine content. This phenomenon has become more common during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on social media.
- One of the main promoters of scientific information in Brazil and president of the Instituto Questão de Ciência, Natalia Pasternak, explains that the so-called 'doubt merchants' build narratives that benefit from the feeling of uncertainty that cloud risk analysis and explore the idea that mothers are solely responsible for the good health of children.

- Going to get vaccinated, the researcher explains, requires a decision from the mother. To not vaccinate is always an easier choice, because if the vaccine causes any problems or side effects, whoever had it applied feels guilty.

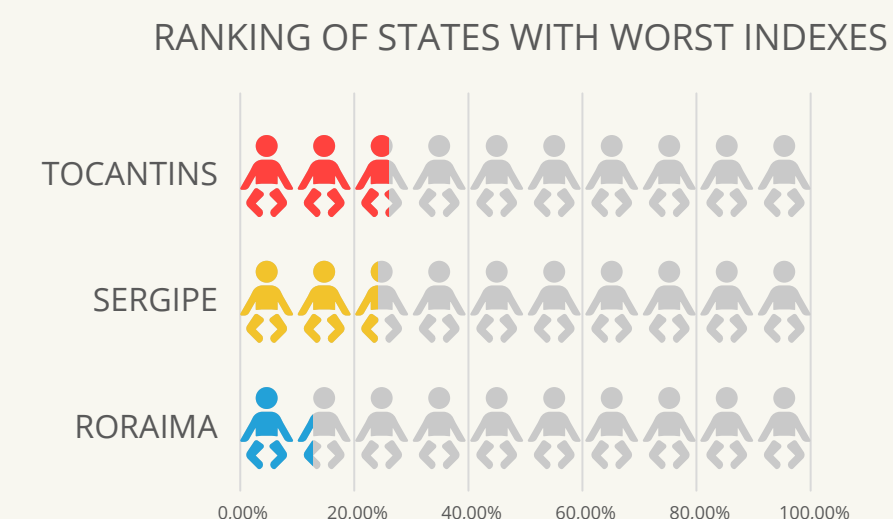
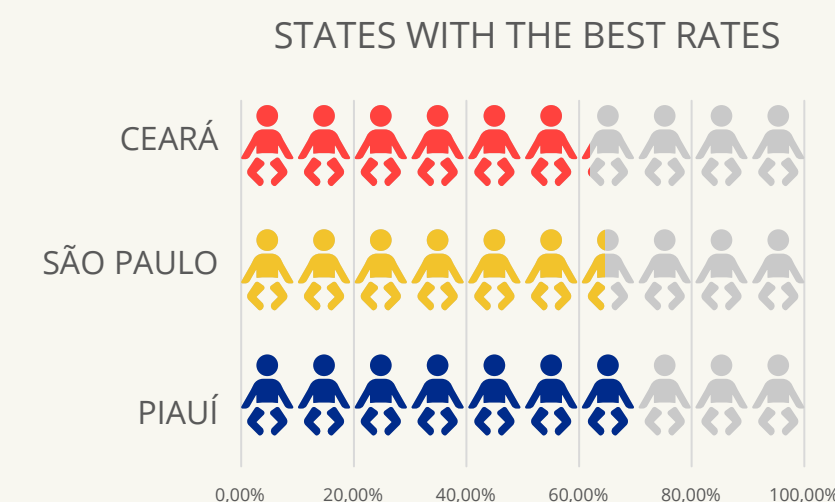
"These merchants sell a false certainty that the vaccine brings dangers, that if you have a healthy life you don't have to worry. And if anything goes wrong, it's just the natural order of things. So you exempt me from guilt", **Pasternak said in an interview with Folha de São Paulo.**

- In this case, the rumor states that the two doses of COVID-19 vaccination are responsible for the toxicity of breast milk, blaming the immunized infants for the non-development of babies. This is simply not true.

### PERCENTAGE OF THE CHILD POPULATION AGED 5 TO 11 VACCINATED WITH A FIRST DOSE (PFIZER OR CORONAVAC) ON 11/08/2022:



### RANKING OF STATES IN CHILDHOOD VACCINATION:



SOURCE:

Consórcio de veículos de imprensa



# FACT-CHECKING

✓ The rumor is based on a video by Carrie Madej, an osteopath and author of several false alarms about vaccination, which states that the milk of mothers vaccinated with two doses is toxic and inorganic.

✓ The statement made by the osteopath, however, is false and appropriates the repercussion of a research that identified the presence of chemical materials that come from food packaging in the breast milk of Americans.

✓ The Brazilian **Society of Pediatrics (SBP)** recommends vaccination against COVID-19 in women who are breastfeeding, regardless of their child's age, without the need to interrupt breastfeeding. The institution also states that vaccines are safe and do not present any harm to infants or newborns.

✓ **E-lactancia**, a platform for research on the compatibility or not of drugs and substances used by infants, confirms that there is little biological plausibility that the vaccine causes harm to newborns.



✓ A study conducted by the **Hospital das Clínicas of the School of Medicine of the University of São Paulo** points out that lactating mothers presented antibodies against COVID-19 in breast milk, also capable of protecting babies up to four months after their mothers receive the vaccine.

✓ According to the study, immunization of breastfeeding mothers offers protection with antibodies in two ways: to infants not yet born, through the placenta, and through breast milk, to newborns.

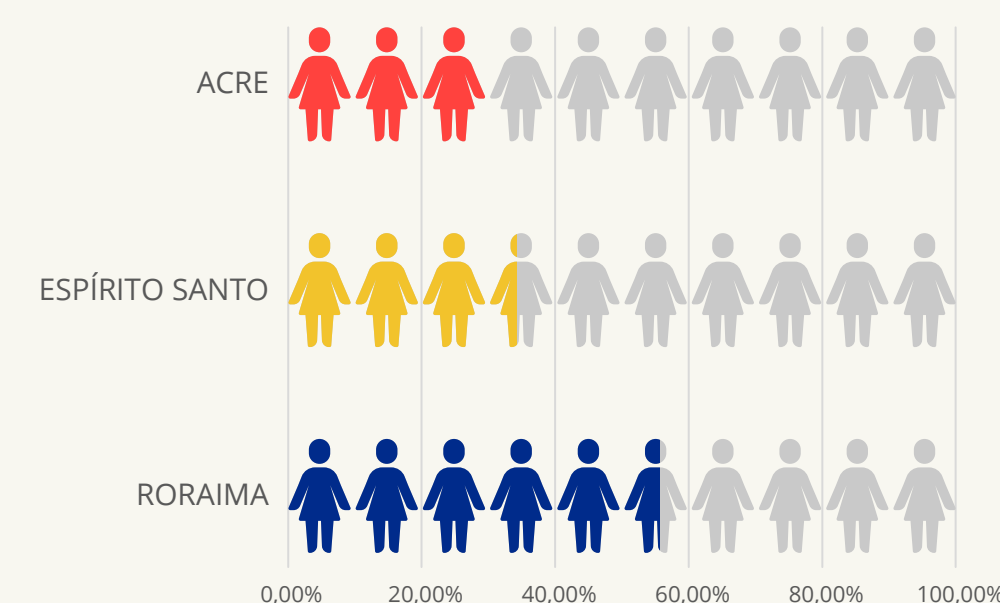
## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- By associating immunization against COVID-19 with toxicity present in breast milk, the rumor can discourage vaccination of pregnant women and puerperal women, considered a risk group. In addition to that, the rumor may also stimulate the interruption of breastfeeding in cases of mothers who have already been vaccinated.

- Pregnant and women in the postpartum period (which extends up to 60 days after birth) **were declared a priority vaccination group in April 2021.**

- Specialists explain that, due to hormonal issues, pregnant and puerperal women have changes in the immune system and, because of this, they may have a more severe condition in case of infection due to the disease.

- Data from a survey carried out by the **Brazilian Obstetric Observatory** of COVID-19 indicate a mortality rate of 11.7% for pregnant and puerperal women with the disease, while the rate for the general population was 2.8%.

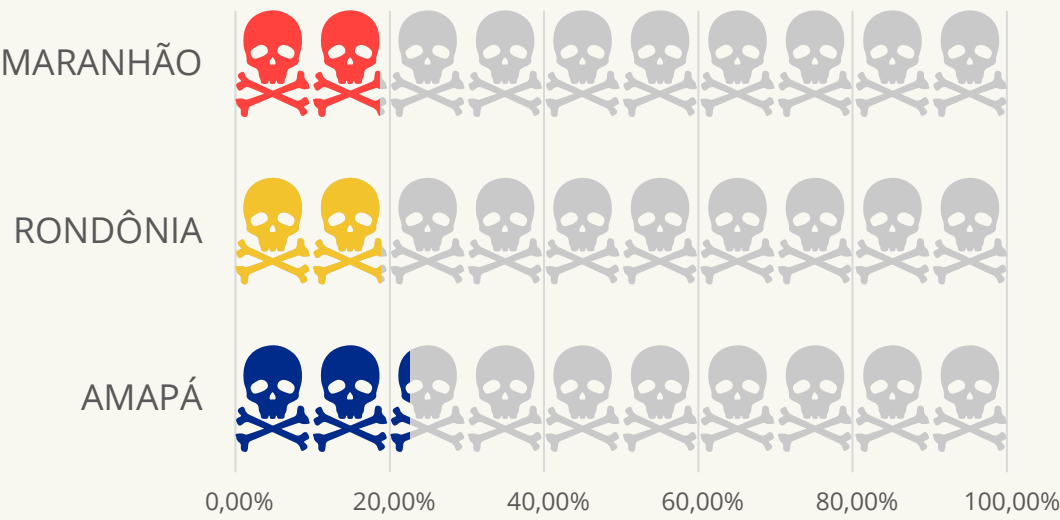


**RORAIMA IS THE STATE WITH THE HIGHEST MORTALITY RATE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND PUERPERAL WOMEN**

(Survey conducted between March 2020 and October 2021).

- According to the **Ministry of Health and the WHO**, breast milk is the most complete food for the needs of children and the main responsible for reducing neonatal mortality.
- According to figures from the **Mortality Table of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)**, the North region has the highest infant mortality rates in the country per 100,000 inhabitants.

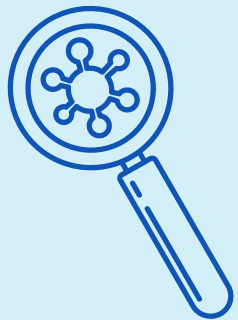
**RANKING:**



The nurse Veridiana Nascimento, who works in the Quilombola communities in Pará, explains that the maternal protection discourse needs to take into account that a vaccinated mother is also protecting her own child and not putting them at risk.

“This protection goes from an individual axis to a dual axis between mother and child, and consequently to a collective axis. In other words, taking the vaccine goes beyond just taking care of your health, it is important to think about protecting everyone”.

# MOBILIZATION & POSSIBLE ACTIONS



*In addition to analyzing rumors, Internews considers it relevant to reflect on possible actions in response to the “infodemic”. Here we suggest some possible responses, such as:*

► It is necessary to create strategies that facilitate access to secure information, as well as to enhance the dissemination of materials that answer the main questions of this audience.

We have some recommendations that can help:

► **Frequently Asked Questions:** Breastfeeding and COVID-19, produced by the Ministry of Health. The document clarifies the main doubts about breastfeeding during the pandemic, with hygiene recommendations for mothers infected with the disease who need to

breastfeed their child.

► Document: **Vaccination Against COVID-19 in Infants**, prepared by the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics (SBP). The text presents arguments and sources that attest that vaccines against the coronavirus do not pose a risk to mothers or children during the breastfeeding period.

► **E-Lactancia** website, developed by the Spanish Association for the Promotion and Support of Maternal Lactation, is a platform with information on the compatibility of medicines, vaccines and other products used by women during breastfeeding.



## WHAT'S BEHIND THE RUMOR

### TREATMENT AND DEATH

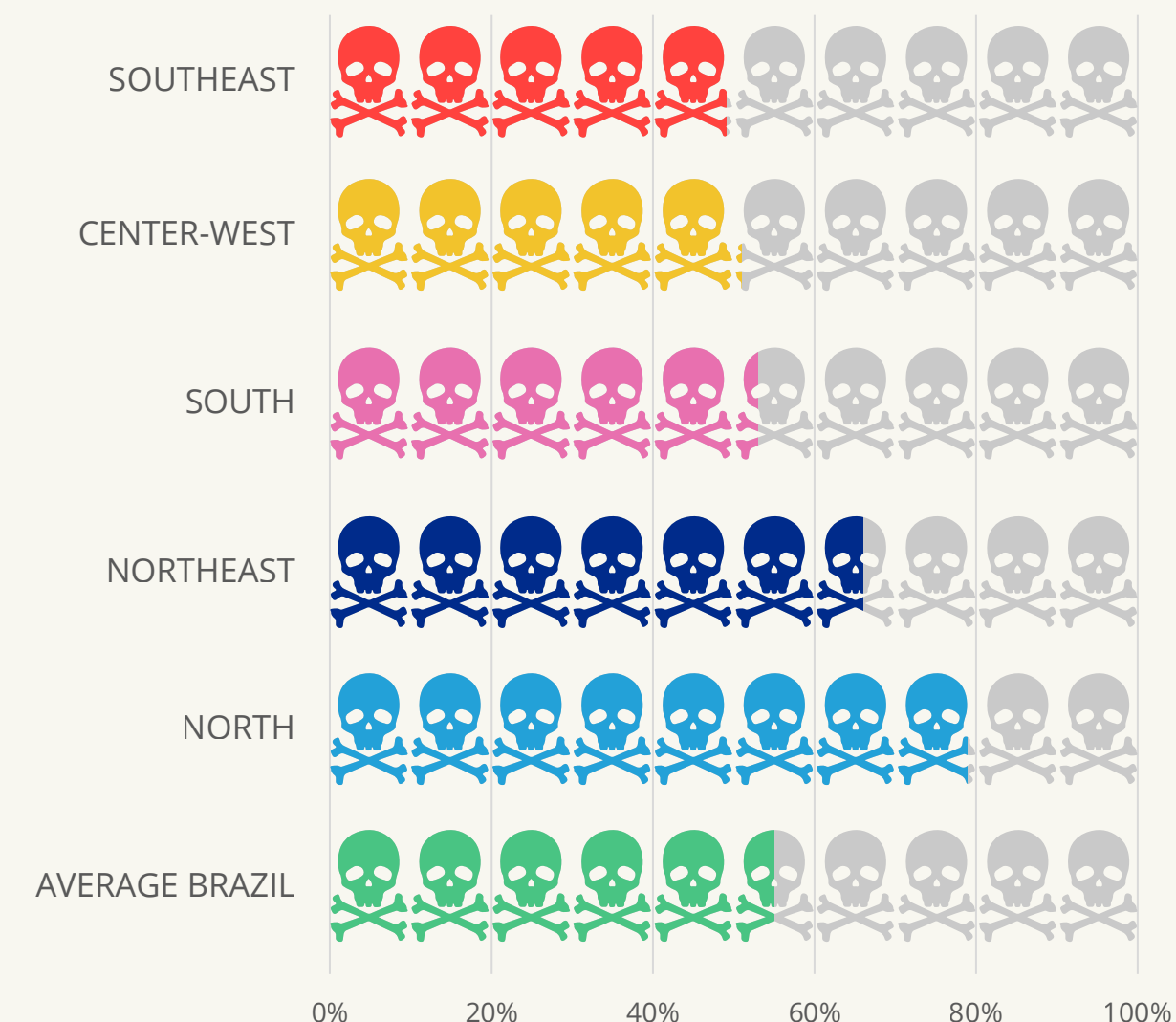
People were distressed that if they were hospitalized, they would not come back alive. That there was no medicine for this new disease in the hospital. That's why they didn't want to go to health units or the hospital.

- In the last two years, family members and patients infected compared to with COVID-19 have had to live with the **fear of hospitalizations**. The concern, according to experts, concerns people's knowledge of the high mortality rate of patients with the disease in **Intensive Care Units (ICUs)**.
- In the north of the country, the behavior is justified by the lack of infrastructure in health facilities, which undermines patients' confidence in hospitals. According to a **research published** in January 2021, at the beginning of the pandemic, the Southeast region of Brazil had about twice as many ICU beds

per person the North.

- There is also the fear that, in case of death due to the disease, relatives and friends could not say goodbye due to sanitary protocols that prevented the performance of **funeral rituals**.
- In Roraima, for example, a **Yanomami youth was buried** in the cemetery of the capital without his parents knowledge. For the Yanomami, as for other indigenous peoples, burying a loved one is incomprehensible. The bodies of the members of this people are cremated and there is a long ritual of farewell to the dead in the community.

#### MORTALITY RATE DUE TO COVID-19 AMONG ICU PATIENTS



## FACT-CHECKING

- ✓ The **Brazilian Association of Intensive Care Medicine (AMIB)** explains that the treatment of patients in moderate and severe forms of COVID-19 requires hospitalization due to the potential risk of their clinical state worsening.
- ✓ In these cases, patients may require intercalated use of respiratory support techniques, such as the need for oxygen administration, intubation and use of mechanical ventilation.
- ✓ According to the physician and director of the Hospital de Amor in Barretos, Cristina Amendola, although intubation in ICU beds is associated with a higher mortality rate, it is the severity of the disease that is responsible for the deaths and not the procedure.
- ✓ **AMIB** emphasizes that intubation is a safe procedure and the only supportive strategy to keep patients with severe acute respiratory syndrome alive.

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

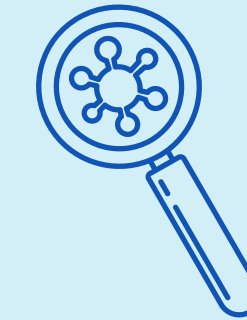
- Pulmonologist Patrícia Ribeir (Fiocruz National School of Public Health and the Brazilian Society of Pulmonology and Phthisiology) said in an interview with the **BBC** that early care and diagnosis of COVID-19 are essential for the monitoring of the disease.
- Monitoring since the onset of symptoms allows the health professional to assess whether the patient has risk factors that might require hospitalization.
- According to a note released by **AMIB**, the number of patients arriving at hospitals with advanced respiratory failure is alarming.
- In addition, there are cases where patients **interrupt treatments for other diseases**, which may need urgent care, for fear of becoming infected with COVID-19 and being hospitalized.
- In this scenario, rumors that associate hospitalizations of patients with the death of loved

ones can provoke fear in people and prevent them from seeking medical attention at the beginning of COVID-19 symptoms.

- Professor at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA) and member of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Amazonian Societies (SACACA), Luciana Gonçalves, reports that the rumor that related hospitalizations to death was very present in the communities at the beginning of the pandemic and that it is necessary to show the population that this is not the current scenario.

“Today we see that the number of people going to a hospital is much lower than it was a year ago. Perhaps it would be interesting to show, not only in Pará, but in other states, that a very large percentage of those who end up hospitalized are people who have not been vaccinated”, she said.

# MOBILIZATION & POSSIBLE ACTIONS



*In addition to analyzing rumors, Internews considers it relevant to reflect on possible actions in response to the “infodemic”. Here we suggest some possible responses, such as:*

The COVID-19 pandemic has put the entire population on alert. The imminence of contamination by the virus and possible hospitalization or death caused individuals to feel afraid and develop traumas related to hospitals and other health topics.

▶ Thus, it is necessary to develop communication and information initiatives to explain to the public the need for early diagnosis and medical monitoring.

▶ It is also necessary to clearly explain the importance of hospitalization of patients in severe cases of COVID-19 and that medical procedures are used as a way to help the patient and not the cause of their possible death or illness.

Here, we list some materials that can help with this:

▶ **Video: How a Respirator Works**, produced by the scientific dissemination Youtube channel Manual do Mundo. The audiovisual answers, in a clear way, the main questions and fears about the importance of the process of intubation and mechanical ventilation performed in health units in Brazil.

▶ A **conversation** between doctor in microbiology Atila Iamarino and Dr. Carlos Pompilio, intensivist at the Hospital das Clínicas de São Paulo, on the distribution of ICU beds for COVID-19, collapse of the public health system in northern Brazil and mortality rate of victims of the disease hospitalized in hospitals.





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