

LEBANON SITUATION REPORT

A monthly situation report aimed at tackling COVID-19 rumors to debunk the "infodemic"

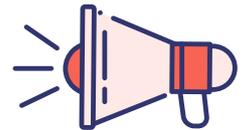
November 2022 | #9

About RiT

Rooted in Trust is collecting, analyzing and responding to rumors in 13 countries with generous support from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA). We focus on equipping journalists and humanitarian communicators with the tools they need in the languages they prefer, to combat rumors and misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How we do it

We identify and analyze rumors to help humanitarian actors and health workers better inform their Risk Communication & Community Engagement (RCCE) strategies.



Situation by the Numbers (WHO)

- Covid-19 cases reported during November 2022: **1,163**
- Total number of deaths: **10,735**
- Latest reported cases per day: **39**
- Vaccine doses during November: **6,591**
- First dose: **2,396**
- Second dose: **1,449**
- Third dose: **2,103**
- Fourth dose: **643**

Introduction

The total number of COVID-19 cases reported in November (1,163) continues to significantly decrease compared to October (1,343) and September (5,839). The total number of COVID-19 cases are likely underreported as many people have stopped taking PCR tests, which have been reported as being too costly and inaccessible to many given Lebanon's compounding crises. High vigilance continues to be recommended in order to avoid overwhelming the health services. People have recently shifted their focus to Lebanon's current Cholera outbreak, likely linked to people drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food. The WHO is supporting the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) with its cholera response.



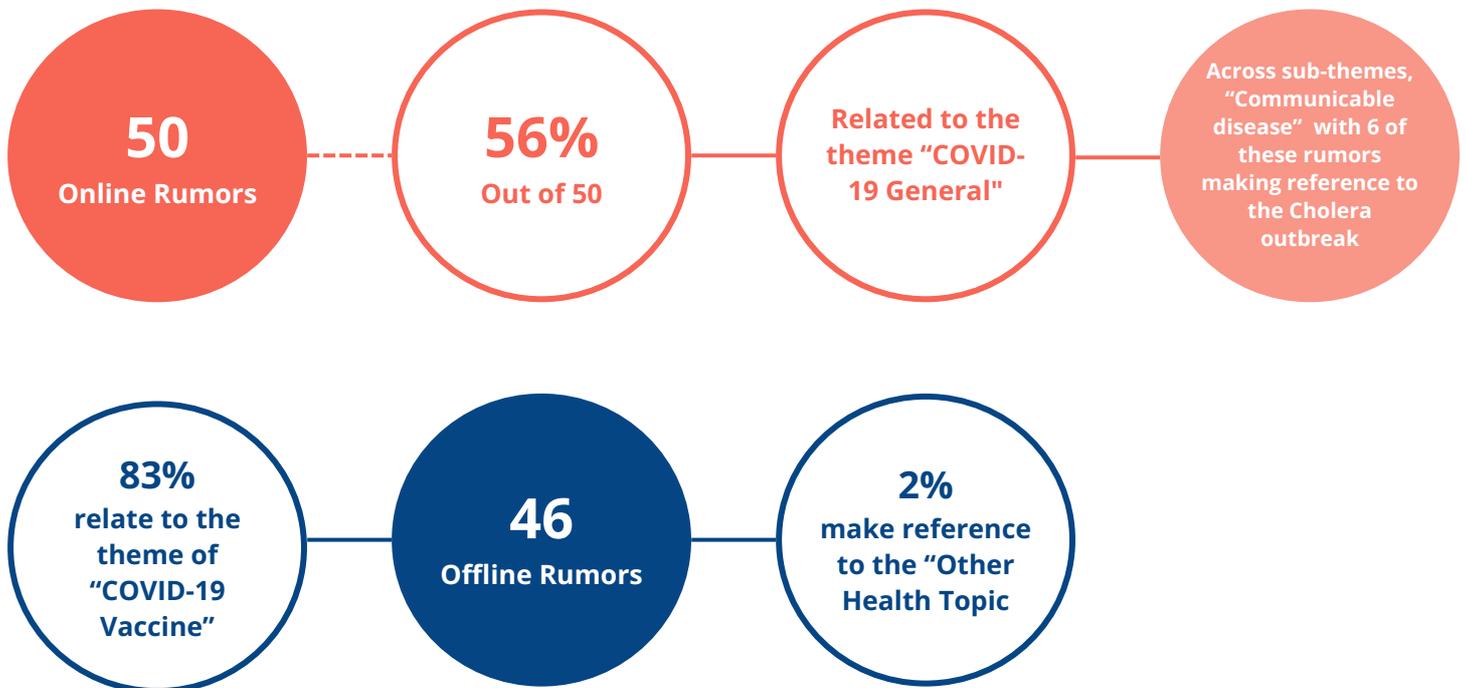
Data Overview

In the month of November 2022, misinformation rumors significantly decreased on both online and offline mediums with a total of 50 online rumors and 46 offline rumors. Social Media Monitors, struggled to find online COVID-19 specific health rumors, where 56% of these rumors were on "COVID-19 General" theme, 10% specifically on "COVID-19 Vaccine" theme, and 34% on "Other Health Topic" theme. In November, similar to other months, 62% of the misinformation came from so-called Healthcare professionals and 44% of the rumors expressed sentiments of fear. Across sub-themes, "Communicable disease" continues to have the highest mention (14) with 6 of these rumors making reference to the Cholera outbreak and prevention methods in Lebanon, and other new viruses spreading across the world.

Compared to the month of October, offline misinformation decreased by half, with only 46 offline rumors collected in the Bekaa region

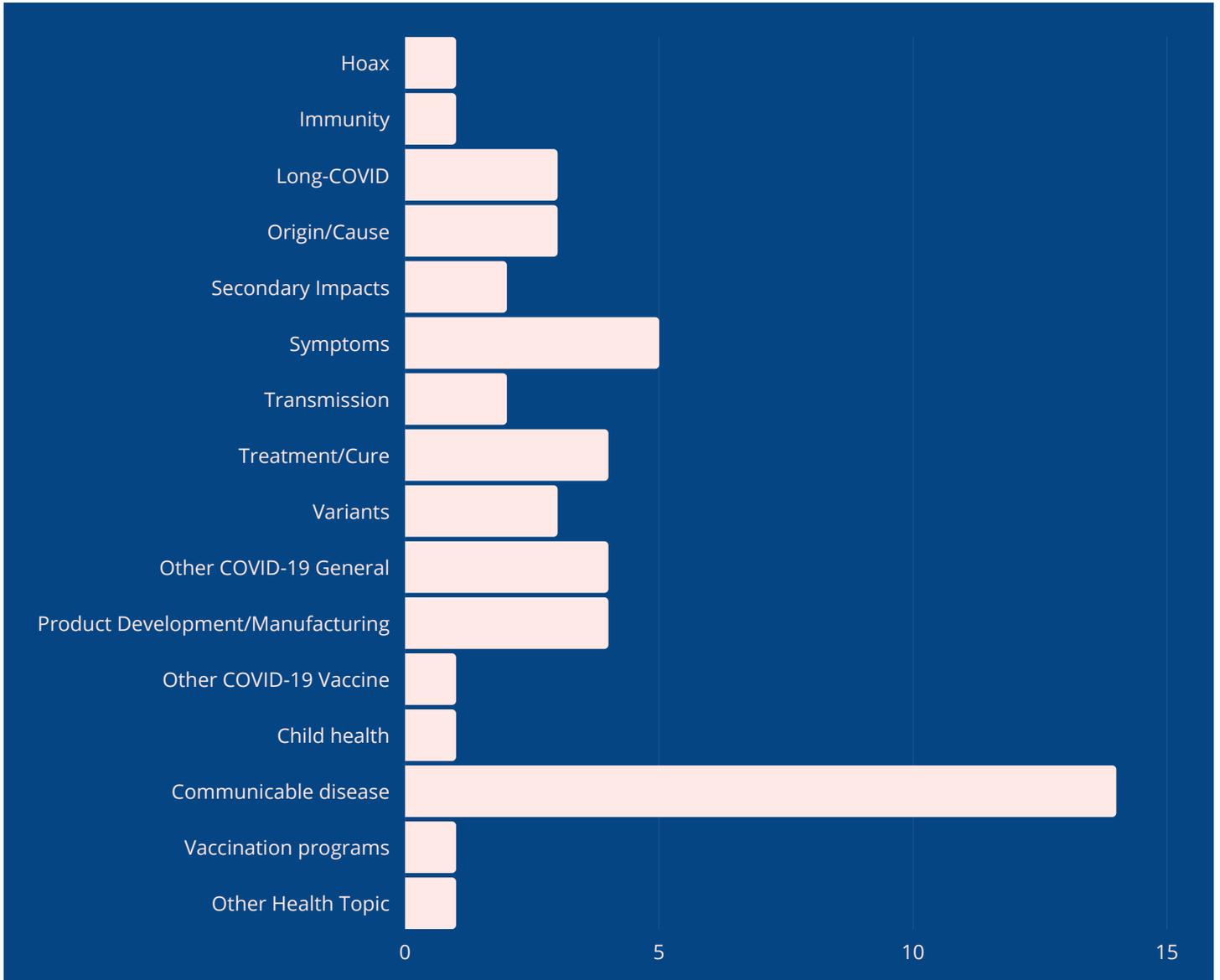
through Listening Groups. As seen in October, most offline rumors relate to the theme of "COVID-19 Vaccine" (83%), whereas only 2% make reference to the "Other Health Topic" and only one mentions Cholera.

For the offline rumors, the top sub-theme shifted after several months from "Death" (24%) to "Safety/Side Effects" (57%) where people mentioned they were scared that the COVID-19 vaccine would be bad for their health, especially if they have other pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes or allergies. One high-risk rumor was identified, which was an SMS sent to a person telling them that "the vaccine you took was not good. Come again to take the efficient one", which is now under observation.

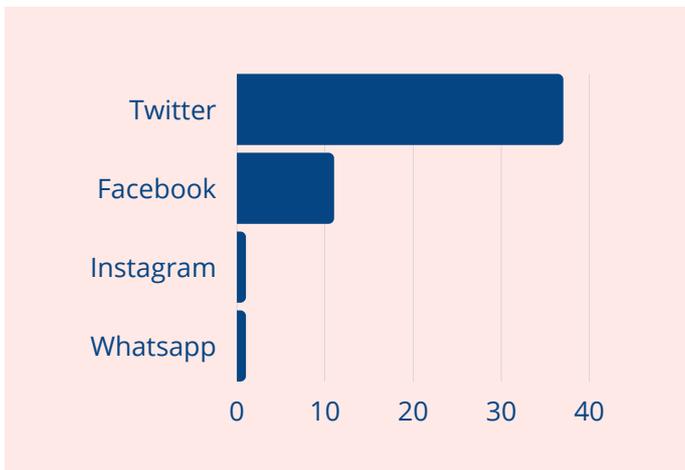


KEY THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Total Number of Rumors Online for November 2022: **50**



Channels



Risk Levels



Analysis

This November, social media platforms in Lebanon were mostly preoccupied with the presidential election in Lebanon and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Thus, despite the detection of high and medium risk rumors (such as a false “announcement of a fake cholera vaccine”), the reach of such rumors was limited and it did not go viral.

Similarly, previous rumors on “Cholera virus’ ability to change into another virus in water” cannot be detected anymore. This disparity in the latest numbers of rumors and reach can be attributed to the fact that the public is relatively familiar with the Cholera virus, unlike other communicable diseases previously detected such as Monkeypox.

The first reported cases of Cholera came to prominence in the 19th century as opposed to the recent emergence of COVID-19 which provided a more conducive environment for misinformation. Accordingly, informational access and provision of medical studies on Cholera in a simple online search is ample. This has resulted in low numbers of misinformation on Cholera despite its rising

sentiments of fear among the public. The outbreak of Cholera in Lebanon did put people at fear after 4,192 cumulative cases were reported. However, by the end of November, online and offline mentions of Cholera decreased, especially after the “Oral Cholera Vaccination door-to-door Campaign” which covered host communities and refugees. An additional 2 million doses have been requested through ICRG.

While the “COVID-19 General” theme increased to 56% this month, it is important to note that overall reported COVID-19 cases in Lebanon have decreased over the last month to 1,163 cases. People are still focusing on symptoms and treatments. Notably, the number of vaccinations in November decreased from 11,761 to 6,591 doses.

In December, we recommend some awareness about H1N1 and how it is different from COVID-19 and other viruses before spreading any misinformation that might affect people's health or treatments such as the misuse of antibiotics during COVID-19 pandemic.

Contact

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For more information on the project, visit

- <https://internews.org/resource/rooted-trust-rumor-bulletins-lebanon/>
- <https://rootedintrust.org/countries/lebanon/>