

# THE HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT

*A product which provides a quick snapshot, on health rumor data, analysis and recommendations in Zimbabwe.*

“Ungalala lomfana kumbe  
inkazana engakaze ilale  
lomuntu, uyelapheka  
igcikwane leHIV.”

(Shona; Masvingo)

## TRANSLATION:

“If you sleep with a female or male  
virgin you will be cured of HIV.”

## Background

This rumour emanates from Mangwe, a district in Matabeleland South. Matabeleland South Province has the highest Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevalence in the country. National Aids Council ([NAC](#)) Monitoring and Evaluation Director, Mr Amon Mpofu, asserts that this could be attributed to the sharing of borders with South Africa and Botswana who equally have high HIV prevalence.

## Facts

- It is also important to address this rumour as there has been a resurgence of HIV in the country with Zimbabwe's HIV prevalence rate at 11.9% and is ranked the fifth highest in the world with 1.3 million people living with the virus. The rumour if believed can aggravate sexual violence among minors and increase their susceptibility to HIV transmission. In Zimbabwe this myth is perpetuated by traditional healers advising HIV-positive men to cure the disease by having sexual intercourse with virgin girls. Some also believe that the blood produced by raping a virgin will cleanse the infected person's blood of the disease
- Mr Malvern Munjoma, Evaluation and Research Manager, from the Population Services International (PSI), says that “HIV prevention methods include abstinence, correct use of condoms, being faithful to one sexual partner and taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) which could be in form of Oral pills, Dapivirine ring, Prep injectable (CAB LA) and post- exposure prophylaxis (PEP)”.
- According to the World Health Organisation ([WHO](#)), there is no cure for HIV. It has; however, become a manageable chronic health condition, enabling people living with the virus to lead long and healthy lives due to increased access to effective prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care.

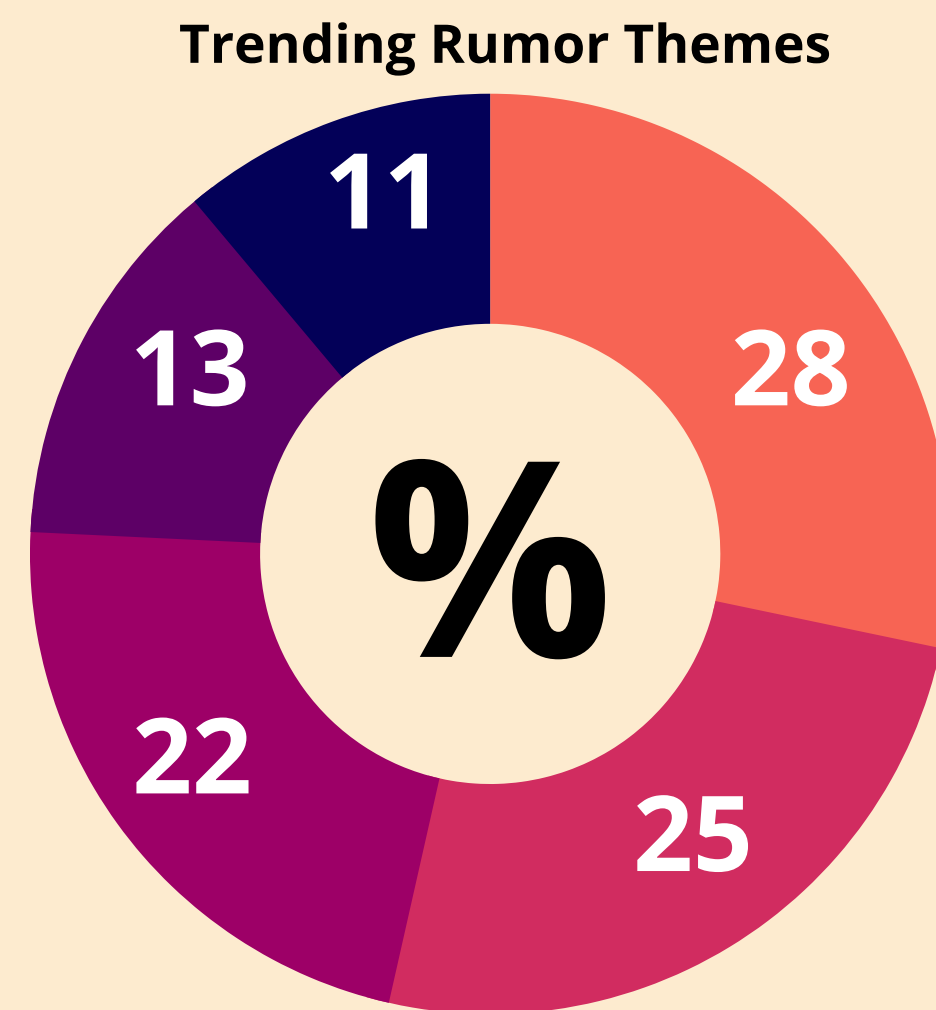
## What can we do as humanitarian actors?

- Humanitarian and community health workers can share** Information, Education and Communication material (IEC) containing referral pathways available for people struggling with substance and alcohol abuse.
- Partners working in communities can share Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) factsheets** in local languages (Tonga, Sotho, Ndebele, Shona, Kalanga and Venda) indicating the negative effects of taking illicit alcohol and drugs such as mental health disorders, crime and death.





# Rumor Trends Analysis



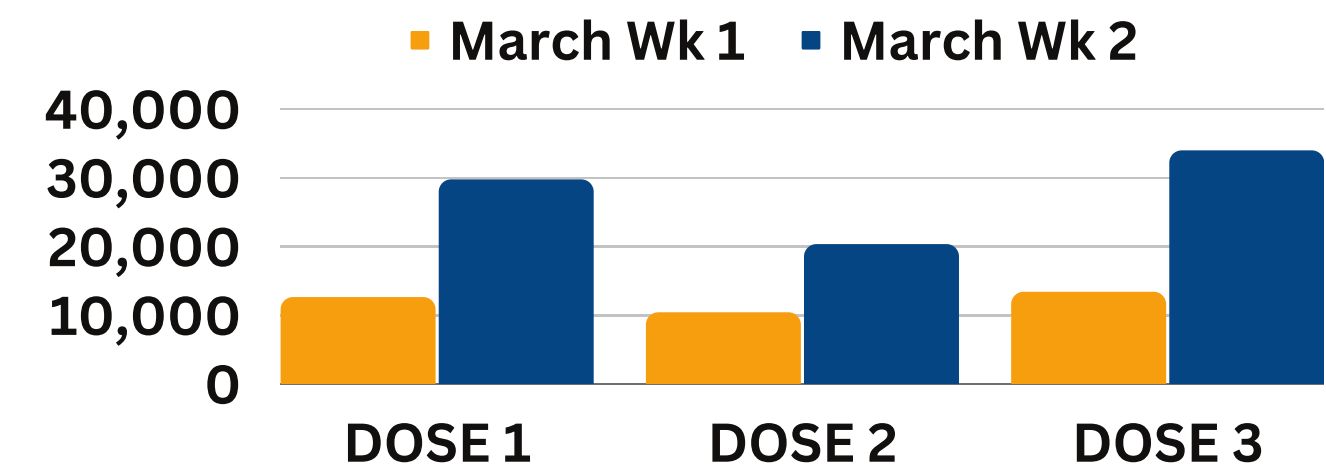
- COVID-19 is a hoax.
- COVID-19 vaccines are experimental.
- COVID-19 vaccines affect sexual reproductive health.
- PrEP has adverse side effects.
- Drug abuse is causing mental health problems.

Source: Infographic by Internews: Data by RiT 2.0 Global Rumours Dashboard

Between March 8 and 14, 2023, Internews in Zimbabwe collected 245 COVID-19 and other health related rumours. Of the total, 34 rumours were collected online (Facebook: 21 and Twitter: 23) and 211 through in-person interactions. Trending rumour themes were, "COVID-19 is a hoax" (28%), "COVID-19 vaccines are experimental" (25%), "COVID-19 vaccines affect sexual reproductive health" (22%), "PrEP has adverse side effects" (13%) and "Drug abuse is causing mental health problems" (4%).

## COVID-19 context

### Week-on-Week Vaccination Comparison



Source: Visualisation by Internews: Data by Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC)

- First vaccine dose uptake in Zimbabwe increased by 135% from 12,612 doses administered in week one of March 2023 to 29,675 doses administered in week two.
- There was a 94% and 153% increase in the uptake of second and third vaccine doses, respectively. Second vaccine dose uptake increased from 10,387 to 20,254 doses, while third vaccine dose uptake increased from 13,384 to 33,894 doses.
- As of March 14, 2023, there were 2,164 active COVID-19 cases with 182 being hospitalised. Of the total, 106 of the hospitalised cases were vaccinated and 76 were unvaccinated. Three COVID-19 related deaths were recorded during week three.
- Current trends may be due to increasing complacency in communities with poor adherence to mask-wearing indoors as stipulated by gazetted COVID-19 safety regulations. A marked increase in cases has particularly been noted in Matabeleland South and Matabeleland North provinces during the reporting week.
- Cumulatively, Zimbabwe has vaccinated 6,876,257 people with the first vaccine dose and 5,098,503 with the second vaccine dose, translating to 50,9% of the 10 million herd immunity target initially set for end December 2022. A total of 1,649,545 people has received the third vaccine dose to date.