

THE HUMANITARIAN SNAPSHOT

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

“Akanwa chikozodo
chakawandisa asina
kudya akafa.”

(Shona; Masvingo)

TRANSLATION:

“He died after consuming Chikozodo
drug in excess without taking food.”

Background

The rumor emanates from Masvingo where a popular public transport tout from Mucheke Rank was found dead after allegedly overdosing on an illicit brew known as *Chikozodo* without taking food. This is important as it comes at a time where there is an upsurge of drug and substance abuse cases in Zimbabwe. A [study](#) has revealed that approximately 57% of youths in the country are involved in drug abuse, with annual increases despite measures implemented by various stakeholders to fight the problem.

Facts

- According to Knowledge Mpembe, Programs Lead for Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network (ZCLDN), “*Chikozodo* is street lingo used by Masvingo residents referring to an illicit alcohol/brew. The exact contents of the brew are unknown, but it is believed food must be taken prior to ingesting the strong brew to avoid adverse health consequences.”
- Dr Nyasha Masuka, a Physician, posits that illicit brews are very dangerous as their contents are unknown and can lead to instant liver toxicity and kidney damage as well as stomach ulcers due to high alcohol content and possibly death. Other names of illicit brews prevalent in Zimbabwe include *Ntshengu* and *Musombodiya*.
- The Centre for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) highlights that over 70% of drug related deaths result from overdosing drugs such as opioids, fentanyl, cocaine, crystal meth, heroine, synthetic drugs. Taking drugs on an empty stomach can cause stomach irritation, indigestion, inflammation and possibly death.

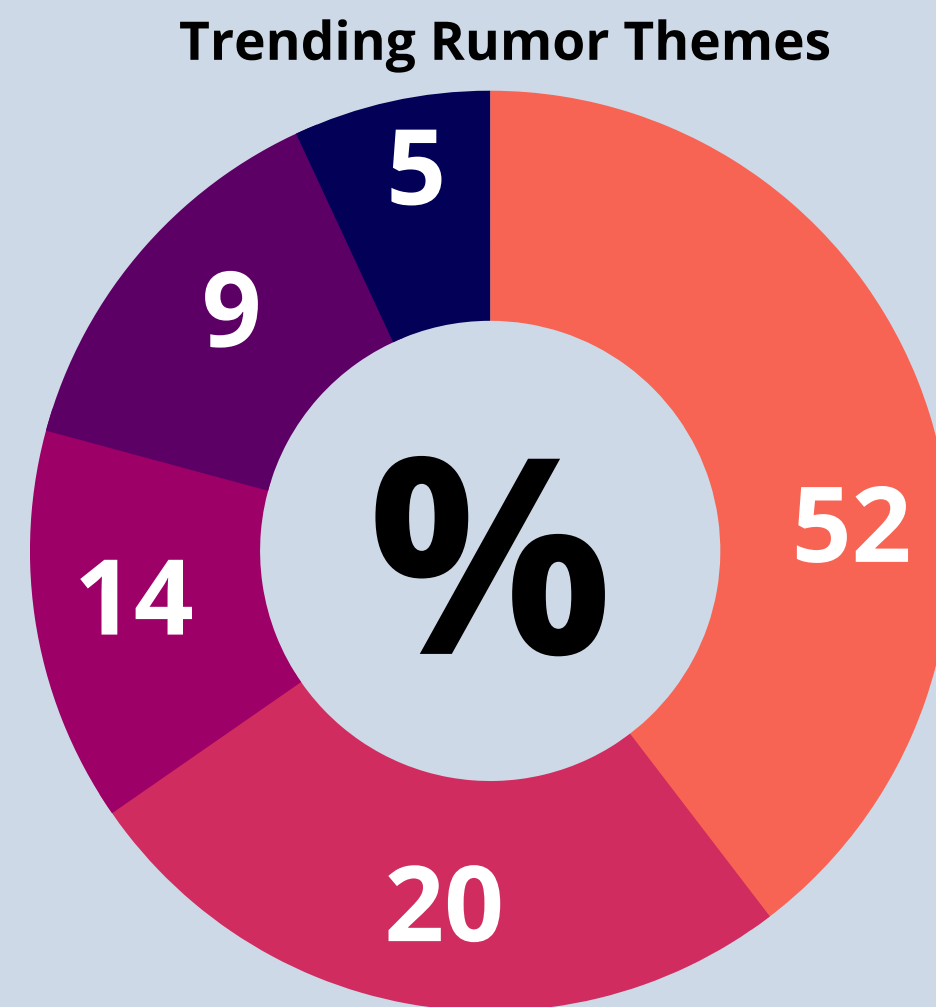
What can we do as humanitarian actors?

- **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



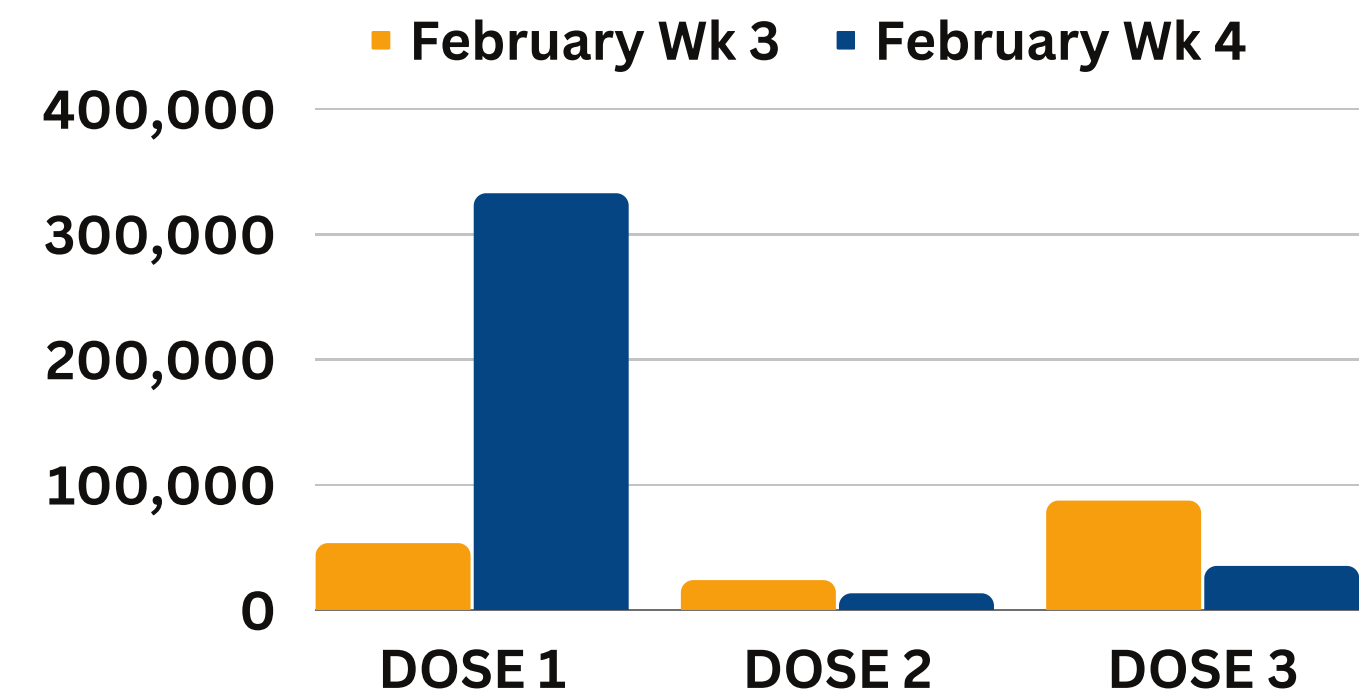
- COVID-19 vaccines have serious side effects.
- Drug abuse is escalating among youths.
- COVID-19 is a hoax.
- COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility.
- COVID-19 is endemic.

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

Between February 22 and 28, 2023, Internews in Zimbabwe collected 190 rumours on COVID-19, and other health topics. Sixty-four (64) rumours were collected online (Facebook: 22 and Twitter: 42) and 126 through in-person interaction. Trending rumour themes on COVID-19 and other health related rumours were, "COVID-19 vaccines have serious side effects" (52%), "Drug abuse is escalating among the youths" (20%), "COVID-19 is a hoax" (14%), "COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility" (9%) and "COVID-19 is endemic".

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 decreased by 39% from 53,484 doses administered in week three of February 2023 to 32,276 doses in week four.
- There was a 43% and 59% decrease in the uptake of second and third vaccine doses, respectively. Second vaccine dose uptake decreased from 23,426 to 13,177 doses, while third vaccine dose uptake decreased from 86,910 to 35,135 doses.
- As of February 28, 2023, there were 537 active COVID-19 cases with 19 being hospitalised. Eleven (11) of the hospitalised cases were vaccinated while eight were unvaccinated. Six COVID-19 related deaths were recorded during week four.
- Cumulatively, Zimbabwe has vaccinated 6,828,867 people with the first vaccine dose and 5,065,099 with the second dose, translating to 50,4% of the 10 million herd immunity target initially set for end of December 2022. A total of 1,597,346 people have received the third vaccine dose to date.