Social Media Monitoring
1 Apr - 23 May 2022

Focus on misinformation shared by ordinary Afghan social media users

- Total Rumors Collected: 195
- Facebook
- English, 1%
- Pashto, 35%
- Dari, 64%
What are the rumors about?

- COVID-19 General: 59%
- COVID-19 Vaccines: 9%
- General Health: 31%
Sub-themes Distribution
Sub-themes Distribution

Post-vaccination Infection
Efficacy
Vaccine Agenda
Safety/Side Effects
Political Agenda
Distribution
Death

COVID-19 Vaccines
Sub-themes Distribution

- Non-COVID-19 Vaccines: 80%
- Ministry of Health: 10%
- Access to healthcare: 10%
- Other: 0%
COVID-19: Recent weeks’ trends
Hoax, Endemic, Disease Severity

What’s behind it?

• Lack of trust in international community
• Higher concerns in the country than COVID-19 and less emphasis by authorities?
• Cases and deaths reported much higher than Afghanistan
• True numbers of cases not captured or reported

Doctors say that cure of Corona is possible up to 80%. So, I think it is not that dangerous disease.
COVID-19 Vaccines: Recent weeks’ trends:
Efficacy, Business/Political Agenda

What’s behind it?
• Campaign including J&J: vaccine side effects and preventing serious illness not understood
• Restrictions for some demographics of J&J vaccine in some countries due to adverse effects
• General distrust and anti-American sentiment
• Not only J&J vaccine but also which country donates vaccines

Last year, we got the American vaccine at the university. It made us suffer a lot [pain]. It had zero result [effect]. Don't get it.

Ones again, the United States wants to spread rumours about Corona, so the people get the 'generation killer' vaccine.

Hey people, do not get the Corona vaccine, they [Taliban] are trying to kill you.
**Health: Recent weeks’ trends**

**Measles Outbreak and Vaccination**

Hey people, the quality of vaccine is very low. Those who have taken measles vaccine are now suffering from the most severe measles.

No one dies because of measles.

**What’s behind it?**

- Measles outbreak in many provinces and continuing vaccination campaign
- Suspicion of international community and vaccines – intermittent routine vaccine campaigns in Afghanistan due to various factors; lack of follow up on success of previous campaigns
- Lack of understanding of the severity of the measles?
Why it matters

- Infectious diseases pose a serious risk to Afghans in the current crisis; reduce child mortality.
- Measle case numbers are dropping though still occurring; importance of current campaign.
- Continued cases and outbreaks of vaccine preventable illnesses: polio, AWD/cholera and rotavirus.
- Burden on healthcare system

How should humanitarians respond?

- Understand what is behind the rumors - beliefs, traditions, as well as current issues: access to healthcare teams; information channels; need to improve AAP and funding transparency

- Risk communications and prioritizing face to face information sharing: address perceptions, answer questions about how vaccines work, debunk rumors and share information about risks posed by COVID-19, measles et al

- Outreach and information through: community and religious leaders; healthcare workers; pharmacies; local media; other?

- Low literacy and vulnerable groups – using diverse methods and not discounting public perceptions: eg hotlines, illustrations.
**Discussion**

- Diversifying and improving information channels
- Linking to vaccine campaign
- Rebuilding Trust with Institutions: Accountability to Affected Populations; transparency about funding; communicating with people despite education barriers
- Health/illnesses and aid will continue to appear in social discourse: preparing for future.

**We’d love to talk to you and get your inputs!**

**Social Media Research - request for key informants**

- Research considering social media (SM) use by ordinary Afghans, media, the authorities and the humanitarian community
- To provide insights and recommendations for the humanitarian community to utilize SM for engaging with community
- Organizations who utilize SM platforms and who may engage with Afghan communities via social media platforms and messaging apps
Any questions or you wish to share community engagement feedback and rumor data or to collaborate in other ways please contact Mary Menis – mmenis@internews.org

Thank you