

LUGARA

COMMUNITY FACTSHEET



**Rooted
in Trust**

This Community Factsheet has been reviewed by the Ministry of Health, South Sudan

ABOUT THIS FACTSHEET

This Factsheet is meant for all stakeholders working with the communities like Community Health Workers, Health Care Workers, Outreach Workers, Community Leaders, Religious Leaders, Community Based Associations, and the community. RiT 2.0 Internews in South Sudan periodically collects feedback from the community, shares citizen's concerns on COVID19 and works to serve communities by collecting rumors and misinformation to understand and address communities' concerns and information needs to strengthen information ecosystem, the vaccine, and other complex health topics. We respond by increasing the flow of accurate, timely, trusted, and contextualized information between local media, public health and humanitarian agencies, and communities.

WHAT IS A RUMOR?

A rumor is a currently circulating story or report of unverified information collected from firsthand sources within the community which could take the shape of a question, criticism, concern or a general comment on a situation or topic. A rumor can be tricky because it might have some element of truth in it.

WHY RUMORS?

In the absence of information that responds to the concerns and reality of communities rumors thrive and become believable by the communities in which they are circulating. Rumors shape public perception and can be harmful if not countered in a timely and consistent manner. Rumors thrive because of lack of relevant and contextualized information that is rooted in our target communities and can tell us a lot about where the community is at and what they need. Community health workers, local community leaders and associations should provide the community with information as well as recommendations and credible and reliable sources that can help them navigate the risks of misinformation.

RISK MEASUREMENT

RISK RATING: Risk is measured based on a range of factors including a) cultural relevancy, b) timing, c) online engagement, d) the believability of a rumor, and most importantly, e) the potential negative impact a rumor may have on the health, well-being, and safety of local communities or service providers.

HIGH RISK

HIGH RISK: A rumor that is very likely be believed among the larger community with potentially severe negative impacts resulting in serious harm to an individual or group including inciting violence or creating widespread fear/panic. High risk rumors may encourage widespread avoidance of testing/treatment or harm towards health workers and other service providers.

MEDIUM RISK

A rumor that has the potential to be believed among the larger community with potentially moderate negative impacts to a community or individual's health wellbeing, or safety. Medium risk rumors may have a moderate impact on health seeking behaviors.

LOW RISK

A rumor that is either unlikely to be believed among the community or with limited negative impacts to a community or individual's health, well-being, or safety or to the pandemic response.



WHAT PEOPLE SAY

Feedback #1

Theme: HIV/AIDS
Risk Rating: High Risk

“If you have HIV/AIDS, you just need to go to the fishing islands. The mosquitoes feast on your blood and while you eat fish on daily basis, the virus will eventually go”

Rumor heard from Jonglei State, South Sudan.

FACT FILE

According to World Health Organization (WHO), the above rumor and claim are false. “The community needs continuous awareness on HIV/AIDS among other health conditions. Six common means of HIV transmission in South Sudan is heterosexual (male-female or female-male) contact, prenatal (mother to child) transmission and other includes blood transfusions, male-male contact, or injection drug use. Eating fish doesn’t in any way protect you from acquiring HIV nor providing treatment for HIV,” said **Dr Moses Mutebi NGANDA, World Health Organization (WHO) Medical Officer, HIV and Hepatitis, Republic of South Sudan.**

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) targets an infected person’s immune system and weakens a person’s ability to fight off infections and some types of cancers. There is no cure for HIV, however, antiretroviral therapy (ART) suppresses the virus in people infected and reduces the risk of spreading/shedding the virus. People who have HIV and are taking ART cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners. HIV can be diagnosed through rapid diagnostic tests and home tests and confirmed through laboratory testing at a health center. It is important to be tested if you have been exposed through one of the key transmission routes.

Source: WHO. 2022. “HIV.” November 9, 2022. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hiv-aids>.

Feedback #2

Theme: COVID-19
Risk Rating: Medium

“COVID-19 is a replacement for HIV/AIDS because HIV/AIDS is obsolete and there’s a need by scientists to mess up the world with a new scary disease than HIV.”

Rumor heard from Juba, Central Equatoria State, South Sudan.

FACT FILE

According to WHO South Sudan, HIV is a major problem in South Sudan. “About 11,000 South Sudanese acquire HIV every year, so it’s not obsolete,” said **Dr NGANDA.** HIV continues to be a major global health issue. In 2021, 650,000 people died from HIV-related causes and 1.5 million people acquired HIV. Globally, an estimated 38.4 million people are living with HIV, and 25.6 million or a third of the total population are in the WHO African region.

While Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) drastically reduces the chances of transmission of HIV, it depends on taking ART consistently/regularly stopping the spread of HIV. Advanced HIV disease remains a persistent problem in the HIV response. “People continue to present or re-present for care with advanced immune suppression, putting them at a higher risk of developing opportunistic infections.”

Source: WHO. 2022. “HIV.” November 9, 2022. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hiv-aids>.

Feedback #3

Theme: Hepatitis B
Risk Rating: Low

“Does Hepatitis B infect children only?”

Rumor heard from communities in Bentiu, Unity State, South Sudan.

FACT FILE

According to WHO South Sudan expert, hepatitis infects all groups. “Hepatitis B just like HIV is acquired mainly through mother to child (90-95%), and others that include heterosexual transmission, blood transfusions, male-male contact, or injection drug use. So, Hepatitis B infects all age groups but mainly from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth, and breast-feeding period,” said **Dr NGANDA**.

Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver and can cause acute or chronic liver disease. There is no treatment for Hepatitis B. To stop the spread of the virus, WHO recommends that all children receive the hepatitis B vaccine and the use of antiviral prophylaxis for the prevention of hepatitis B transmission from mother-to-child.

Source: WHO. 2022. “Hepatitis B.” June 24, 2022. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hiv-aids>.

FACTS ABOUT HEPATITIS

Community, health workers and social mobilizers should know the basics about hepatitis and inform community members about the disease, its transmission and prevention.

Hepatitis B Affects Millions of People Around the World

- Hepatitis B affects approximately 296 million people, including over 6 million children under the age of 5.
- Hepatitis B contributes to an estimated 820,000 deaths every year.
- 25% of chronic hepatitis B infections progress to liver cancer.

Hepatitis B Causes Serious, Lifelong Health Problems

- Hepatitis B is the leading cause of liver cancer globally. It can also cause:
 - Liver damage
 - Cirrhosis (scarring of the liver)
 - Liver failure
 - Death

Hepatitis B Is Preventable

- Safe and effective vaccines to prevent hepatitis B have been available since the 1980s.
- Vaccination within 24 hours of birth followed by 2 to 3 additional doses provides life-long protection against hepatitis B infection.

Hepatitis B Vaccination Within 24 Hours of Birth Prevents Mother-to-Child Transmission (MTCT) of the Virus

- Women who are living with hepatitis B can transmit the virus to their newborns during birth (mother-to-child transmission).
- MTCT of the hepatitis B virus (HBV) is the primary source of chronic infections worldwide.
- If not vaccinated, 9 out of 10 infants infected with HBV at birth will progress to chronic HBV infections.
- In 2021, over half of all newborns worldwide were not protected by a universal hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth.

Hepatitis B Vaccines Save Lives and Money

- The hepatitis B vaccine is estimated to prevent 38 million deaths over the lifetime of persons born between 2000 and 2030 in 98 low- and middle-income countries
- Between 2001 and 2020, hepatitis B vaccines saved an estimated \$49 billion in cost of illness and \$81 billion in total economic and societal values in 73 low- and middle income countries.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/immunization/diseases/hepatitis-b/data/fast-facts.html>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call the toll-free number: 2222

Visit: <https://moh.gov.ss/>

The Rooted in Trust 2.0 project works to combat COVID-19 rumors and misinformation, responds to the information challenges faced by vulnerable groups, encourages open dialogue between citizens and stronger collaborative partnerships between information

USAID-BHA Rooted in Trust 2.0 South Sudan If you want to contribute to or provide feedback on this Lugara Community Factsheet or have information to share, please contact: Peter Sokaom Daniel Atem (datem@INTERNEWS.ORG), Tusiime Wilfred Romeo (Akiiki)(atusiime@internews.org) or Dr. Michael Gubay (mgubay@internews.org)

