



The *Rooted in Trust* project aims to disrupt and mitigate the flow of misleading, inaccurate or malignant information to vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project is designed to help reduce the flow of misleading, inaccurate or malignant information to vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian crises during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Mali, the *Rooted In Trust* project focuses on listening to and collecting rumors about the virus and the COVID-19 response among displaced populations in the District of Bamako and the regions of Sikasso, Segou, Mopti and Timbuktu.

Data collection is conducted in the field with AMSODE's outreach workers and volunteers, through community radio stations and by monitoring various information platforms and sites (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, publications, commentaries, stories, etc.).

During the period from December 20, 2020 to January 19, 2021, 425 rumors about the COVID-19 pandemic were collected from IDPs in the project's intervention regions and 41 rumors collected on social media.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN MALI

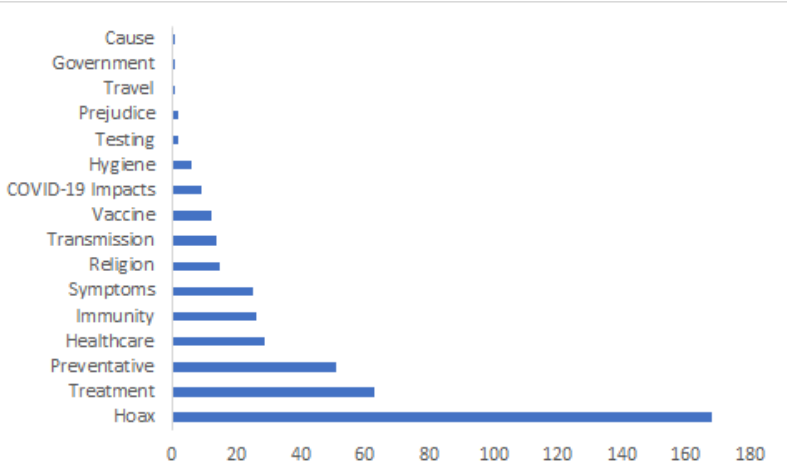
During the period from January 11 to 17, 2021, 239 cases of COVID-19 and 12 deaths were recorded in Mali. A total of 10 regions and 49 health districts were affected by the pandemic.

The cumulative number of confirmed cases since the beginning of the epidemic is 7,839 including 161 imported cases. The cumulative number of cured is 5,562 or a cure rate of 70.9%. 310 deaths were recorded out of the 7,839 cases, i.e. an overall lethality rate of 3.9%.

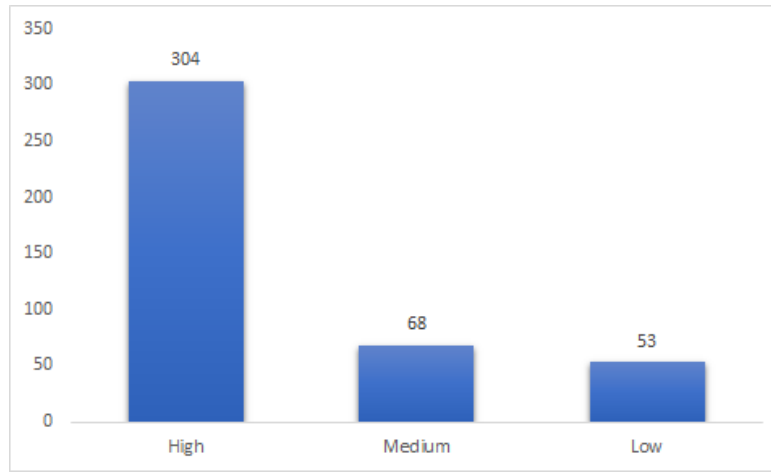
A total of 1,959 confirmed cases are currently being treated in the various care centers. It should be noted that 8 patients have benefited from a medical transfer abroad on request, including 7 in France and 1 in Italy.

In addition, 8,025 samples were tested during the period. The cumulative situation since the beginning of the epidemic is 161,153 samples analyzed.

Source:
 • COVID-19 Situational Report - 11-17 January 2021 / N°137



Distribution of rumors collected from IDP communities from December 20, 2020 to January 19, 2021 according to their themes



Distribution of rumors collected from IDP communities from December 20, 2020 to January 19, 2021 according to their level of risk

The Malian authorities help poor households that are vulnerable to the economic and social impacts of COVID-19

With the aim of mitigating the economic and social impacts of the pandemic on poor and vulnerable households, the Government of Mali has launched payment operations under the Government Emergency Cash Transfer Program. As part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, this operation consists in providing financial assistance in the amount of 90,000 FCFA to each household deemed vulnerable.

This government measure, the first phase of which will reach 352,900 households out of a million targeted households throughout the country, is the largest social assistance program implemented in Mali. It will mobilize the sum of CFAF 100 billion, entirely financed by the national budget.

Source:
 • FinancialAfrik. Mali/Covid-19: Launch of a government emergency cash transfer program. January 19, 2021

RISK LEVELS



HIGH



MEDIUM



LOW

RUMOUR #1

"We've heard that if we wash our hands several times, it can kill the virus. But according to our traditions, washing our hands at all times with soap can make little money." - Male, 45-60 years old, IDP site in Sénou, Bamako.

Traditional beliefs in Mali suggest that scrubbed hand washing is likely to lead to poverty. As a result, communities are reluctant to wash their hands for fear of poverty. In the context of the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Mali and elsewhere in the world, it is important for communities to strengthen observation of barrier behaviors including handwashing.

The CDC reminds that to prevent the spread of germs during the COVID-19 pandemic, you must wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol to clean your hands BEFORE and AFTER touching your eyes, nose or mouth ; touching your mask; entering and leaving a public place; touching an object or surface that may be frequently touched by others, such as doorknobs, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts or electronic cash registers/monitors.

In addition, limited access to soap and water is a major handwashing challenge in disadvantaged communities. Unicef points out that in sub-Saharan Africa, 63% of the urban population (258 million people) is unable to wash their hands. Faced with this situation, communities are encouraged to adopt other protective measures such as wearing masks, avoiding shaking hands, observing physical distancing and coughing into the crook of the elbow to reduce the risk of contamination with COVID-19.

Thus, WHO and UNICEF recommend that "in the absence of soap and water or hydroalcoholic solution in households, the use of ashes may be considered. Ash, in particular, can inactivate pathogens by increasing pH. Finally, washing with water alone, although the least effective of the four options, may reduce fecal contamination of hands and reduce diarrhea. Regardless of the type of product used, hand washing and hand rubbing, including the amount of rinse water used, are key factors in reducing pathogen contamination of hands."

Sources :

- CDC. When and How to Wash Your Hands. January 14, 2021
- Unicef. Billions of people do not have the opportunity to wash their hands with soap, a measure that is essential in the fight against coronavirus. January 14, 2021
- Unicef. Washing your hands can save your life and protect your loved ones. January 14, 2021

HYGIENE

RUMOUR #2

"An acquaintance told me that inhaling the smoke produced by sugar poured over embers of fire was an effective remedy." - Male, Mopti IDP site

In the absence of official treatment for COVID-19, remedies are being offered here and there by communities to supposedly cure the disease.

WHO reminds us that "even when treatments are derived from traditional practice and nature, it is essential to establish their efficacy and safety through rigorous clinical trials."

To date, there is no formal evidence that smoke from molten sugar would have any medicinal value against COVID-19.

To protect against COVID-19, health authorities recommend strict adherence to barrier measures including mask use, hand washing, and social distancing.

Sources :

- WHO. Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Advice for the general public. January 14, 2021
- WHO. WHO supports traditional medicine based on scientific evidence. January 14, 2021

TREATMENT

RUMOUR #3

"I have learned that there are hydroalcoholic hand sanitizers that cause skin problems when used. We are also wary of masks" - radio listener in Goundam

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world, several brands of hydroalcoholic gels and masks from various backgrounds have been introduced to meet the growing consumer demand for COVID-19 prevention.

ANSWER Although studies have shown that certain hydroalcoholic gels are not effective and pose a health hazard to the population due to the presence of two toxic components - triclosan and triclocarban - we have no information to date from the Malian health authorities warning against the presence of the hydroalcoholic gels in question on the national territory.

As for the possible contamination of masks by the COVID-19 virus, a study published in the medical journal The Lancet reveals that traces of coronavirus - at a detectable level - can be detected up to 7 days on the outside of a surgical mask after contamination and up to 4 days on the inside of a mask after contamination. This allows us to say that masks, even contaminated, do not retain the virus beyond 7 days, making the risk of contamination of populations unlikely.

Nevertheless, we remind you that wearing masks and washing hands with soap and water remain essential measures in the fight against COVID-19. Ongoing outreach work with internally displaced persons and other vulnerable populations is essential in order to learn about their concerns on these issues and thus better adapt responses and prevention actions.

Sources :

- Environmental Health Perspective. The Florence Statement on Triclosan and Triclocarban. January 14, 2021.
- The Lancet. Stability of SARS-CoV-2 in different environmental conditions. January 14, 2021

HYGIENE

RUMOUR #4

"Greetings with a handshake does not spread the COVID-19 virus" - Male, 26-35 years old, Mopti IDP site

One of the modes of transmission of COVID-19 is physical contact with an infected person or object. Shaking hands can spread the virus. Therefore, regular hand washing, wearing masks, and social distancing are necessary to protect against COVID-19.

ANSWER

Sources :

- WHO. How does COVID-19 spread between people?. January 14, 2021
- WHO. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): advice to the general public. January 14, 2021

PREVENTATIVE

RUMOUR #5

"When you do hard work, like field work, you're protected from COVID-19" - Resident of Bandiagara Community, Mopti

As this rumour suggests, many people believe that intense physical activity can remove viruses from the body and thus avoid contracting COVID-19 or other diseases.

While physical activity is generally good for your health, there is no verified and confirmed evidence that it can help prevent COVID-19. WHO prevention measures against COVID-19 include mask use, hand washing, and social distancing.

Source :

- WHO. Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Advice for the general public. January 14, 2021

IMMUNITY

RUMOUR #6

"COVID-19 was created against Muslims. Because of it, the pilgrimage to Mecca has been cancelled" - Male, PDI site of Macina, Segou

ANSWER

COVID-19 has impacted every country in the world that has been forced to close their borders and cancel all events requiring large gatherings that could spread the pandemic. As such, in June 2020, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah declared that the annual pilgrimage would be limited to a very small number of pilgrims of all nationalities already residing in the country.

This statement asserts that *"this decision is taken to ensure that Hajj is conducted in complete safety while committing to take all preventive measures to protect Muslims and to strictly adhere to the teachings of Islam in safeguarding our health and safety"*.

It appears therefore that the pilgrimage has not been cancelled but limited to a reduced number of pilgrims until the COVID-19 pandemic is contained. The restrictions on religious practice do not target any particular religion or cult but limit the spread of the virus through large groups of people.

Source :

- CNN. Saudi Arabia says Hajj pilgrimage is on -- with limited numbers. January 14, 2021

RELIGION

RUMOUR #7

"Chloroquine is the drug that treats COVID-19" - Male, 15-18 years old, Mopti IDP site

ANSWER

At the IDP site in Mopti, several people claim that chloroquine, aspirin or doliprane treat COVID-19. The use of chloroquine, aspirin or doliprane is a not a cure for COVID-19. WHO recalls that no pharmaceutical product has yet been proven safe and effective for the treatment of COVID-19. However, a number of drugs have been proposed as potential investigational therapies, many of which are currently or will soon be studied in clinical trials, including the SOLIDARITY trial co-funded by WHO and participating countries.

Therefore, WHO does not recommend self-medication with drugs, including antibiotics, as a means of prevention or treatment of COVID-19.

If you feel ill, please go to a health center immediately. In addition, WHO recommends rest, drinking plenty of fluids and eating nutritious food. In addition, you should stay in a separate room from other family members, and clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Sources :

- WHO. Off-label use of medicines for COVID-19. January 14, 2021
- WHO. Are there treatments for COVID-19?. January 14, 2021
- WHO. How can we protect others and ourselves if we don't know who is infected?. 14 January 2021

TREATMENT



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