

U-Report Action Brief

UNICEF ESARO

COVID19 Myth-busters Quiz – 24 March 2020

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and recognized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020 following its spread to all regions of the world. As of 23 March, all but five (Botswana, Burundi, Lesotho, Malawi and South Sudan) of the 21 Eastern and Southern Africa countries had reported a confirmed case.

While a lot is still unknown about the virus that causes COVID-19, we do know that it is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing) Individuals can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth). While COVID-19 continues to spread it is important that communities understand correct facts, how the disease is transmitted, recognize myths and wrong information being disseminated particularly through social media, take action to prevent further transmission, support control measures and contribute to reducing the impacts of the outbreak.

According to technical experts, data from affected countries shows that most (around 81%) of cases are mild, around 14-17 per cent are severe, some requiring hospitalization, and 5 per cent are critical, with complications requiring intensive care, of which roughly half are likely to die. Severe and complicated cases are predominantly among the elderly and people with pre-existing health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, hepatitis B, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic kidney diseases, immunodeficiency and cancer, while children and young people don't seem to be at risk of complications although they can contract and spread the disease.

UNICEF is supporting the government preparedness and response efforts in ESAR countries by engaging with the MoH or other government body leading the response, WHO, partners and donors to develop multi-sector country preparedness and response plans; implement readiness and response operations on the ground; ensure programme continuity during possible outbreaks and put in place mitigating measures for unintended consequences of the response on children.

UNICEF is expected to lead in five thematic areas, as agreed with partners at the regional WHO-led COVID-19 preparedness meeting on 2–3 March:

- **Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE), through C4D;**
- Non-clinical infection prevention and control in health facilities and schools (WASH, with WHO);
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support - MHPSS (Child protection, with WHO);
- Procurement and logistics (Supply);
- Continuity of essential services (Health in collaboration with other UNICEF sections – nutrition, education, supply...with WHO).

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) is an essential component of all national and COs COVID-19 preparedness and response plans. Among key RCCE interventions UNICEF is supporting the governments to provide citizens with correct information, address myths and wrong information and adopt preventive measures.

The importance and urgency of access to timely, relevant trusted information in this pandemic cannot be overemphasized as it offers a threat to correct information and can be a matter of life and death. A rumour is defined as unverified information that is transmitted from one person to others¹. There are two sub-groups of rumours, which are defined by the intent of the people spreading them. Misinformation is incorrect information spread by people without the intent to deceive, while Disinformation is spread to deceive or manipulate others².

UNICEF ESARO has developed a short guidance note for COVID-19 Social Media Listening & Rumour Tracking in ESAR, under which one channel to be used to assess the level of diffusion of rumours and de-mystify. One critical two-way communication channel that UNICEF COs have activated to respond to the COVID19 emergency is U-Report, either through the launch of U-Report COVID-19 bots and/or through the design of polls and campaigns focusing different aspects.

Objective

This U-Report COVID19 myth-busters quiz is designed to assess the level of knowledge of U-Reporters and clarify wrong beliefs around the disease.

Timing: 25 MARCH – 03 APRIL

(II) Issue addressed:

UNICEF ESARO is therefore aiming to launch a coordinated U-Report poll across as many ESAR countries as possible³, as well as to link with HQ to engage other countries if useful. The poll can be launched by any COs in other regions, in coordination with HQ.

(III) Target Group:

Age: All U-Reporters, with sub-categories classified when data are analysed (10-14, 15-19-20-24, >25)

Gender: Male and Females

Geography: ESAR countries with U-Report: Botswana, Burundi, Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. COs with U-Report in other regions are invited to adapt the poll as well.

(IV) Data:

What data do we wish to collect? Quantitative True-False poll focusing on assessing correct knowledge and de-mystify wrong beliefs and fake news.

¹ DiFonzo and Bordia, *Rumor Psychology: Social and Organizational Approaches*, 2007

² CDAC Network, *Rumor Has It*, 2017

The same poll should be re-launched after 30 days to assess if U-Reporters have improved the level of their understanding on COVID19 frequent myths.

(V) Draft Questions: COs can/should adapt the questions to the local context.

a) Intro: Why you are asking the question:

Hey, Government and partners wants to know your views on the new Coronavirus disease and the knowledge level of U-Reporters in Africa around this epidemic.

b): core questions:

- 1. My country in Africa won't be affected as the new coronavirus cannot be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates. True or False**
 - a. **If true: NOT CORRECT!** Many African countries have already registered some cases. The best prevention is washing frequently your hands with water and soap or alcohol products.
 - b. **If false: CORRECT!** Many African countries have already registered some cases. The best prevention is washing frequently your hands with water and soap or alcohol products.

- 2. Only people with symptoms (fever, cough, sneezing, etc) can transmit the virus. True or False**
 - a. **If true: NOT CORRECT!** People with NO symptoms, including children, can transmit the virus. For this reason, it is important to reduce contacts and wash your hands frequently.
 - b. **If false: CORRECT!** People with NO symptoms, including children, can transmit the virus. For this reason, it is important to reduce contacts and wash your hands frequently.

- 3. The coronavirus cannot be transmitted through mosquito bites. True of False**
 - a. **If true: CORRECT.** To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes.
 - b. **If false: NOT CORRECT.** To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes.

- 4. Hand dryers are effective in killing the new coronavirus. True or False.**
 - a. **If true: NOT CORRECT.** Hand dryers are not effective in killing the virus. Wash your hands frequently with water and soap or alcohol-based products.
 - b. **If false: CORRECT.** Hand dryers are not effective in killing the virus. Wash your hands frequently with water and soap or alcohol-based products.

- 5. Vaccines against pneumonia protect you against the new coronavirus. True or False**
 - a. **If true: NOT CORRECT.** There is no vaccine yet that can prevent coronavirus nor medicine to treat it. If you have any symptoms such as fever, cough, difficulty to breath, call XXXX. (each country to include its hotline)

- b. **If false: CORRECT.** There is no vaccine yet that can prevent coronavirus nor medicine to treat it. If you have any symptoms such as fever, cough, difficulty to breath, call XXXX. (each country to include its hotline)
6. **Antibiotics are effective in preventing and treating the new coronavirus. True or False**
- a. **If true: NOT CORRECT.** Antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria. Different treatments are used to manage the symptoms.
- b. **If false: CORRECT.** Antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria. Different treatments are used to manage the symptoms.
7. **I am not concerned because the new coronavirus affects only older people. True or False.**
- a. **If true: NOT CORRECT.** Everyone can contract the virus. Elders and people with pre-existing conditions (such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease) are more vulnerable.
- b. **If false: CORRECT.** Everyone can contract the virus. Elders and people with pre-existing conditions (such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease) are more vulnerable.
- a) Outro: how the results will be used: Thanks for participating. For more information, visit <https://www.internetofgoodthings.org/section/emergency-information/coronavirus/myths/> *

*COs can replace the link with the number of national hotlines