COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #47: Misinformation UPDATE
Understanding the migration & mobility implications of COVID-19

This snapshot updates #19. These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest research, information and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as analysis develops. If you have an item to include, please email us at research@iom.int.

New research & analysis on misinformation & Covid-19

Immigrants are not to blame for global epidemics: Insights from past and present, by T. Shams
Types, sources, and claims of COVID-19 misinformation, by J.S. Brennen et al.
Battling the pandemic of misinformation, by C. Pazzanese
Fake news swamping interpersonal communication in the times of coronavirus, by K. Patel and H. Binjola
The challenge of real-time analysis: Making sense of the migration and mobility implications of COVID-19, by M. McAuliffe, C. Bauloz and A. Kitimbo

The human cost of misinformation

As presented in snapshot #19, misinformation on COVID-19, including conspiracy theories, continue to invade the digital landscape. The human toll of coronavirus misinformation has resulted in poisoning, critical illnesses, racial tensions and violent attacks. As with previous disease outbreaks, misinformation has been circulating on the alleged role of migrants in spreading COVID-19 globally.

"One crucial but overlooked point dismantles these fears about immigrants being active vectors: while human mobility transforms region human-to-human transmission into global outbreaks, immigrants and refugees are relatively static compared to seasonal travelers. Unlike tourists and business travelers, who travel back and forth across borders on a temporary but regular basis, immigrants and refugees have settled in their adopted countries fairly permanently. Their often-limited resources prohibit frequent travel. — T. Shams"

The UN verified campaign “Good communication saves lives”

The United Nations has launched “Verified”, a new initiative to combat the growing scourge of COVID-19 misinformation. “As we contain the virus, we must also contain misinformation.”
Preventive practices taken by countries and social media platforms

Social media platforms and countries have all ramped up efforts to identify and take down COVID-19 misinformation.

⇒ The European Digital Media Observatory project (EDMO): The project collaborates with media organizations and experts to better limit the phenomenon of disinformation and increase societal resilience to it.

⇒ Twitter COVID-19 Stream: Twitter announced that they are introducing “new labels and warning messages that will provide context and information on some Tweets containing disputed or misleading information related to COVID-19”

⇒ Facebook Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior Report: The report included networks that have been taken down due to their violation of Facebook’s policies against harmful health misinformation.

IOM’s Migrants as Messengers initiative

IOM’s Migrants as Messengers initiative has proved to be helpful in combatting misinformation and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Volunteers from West African countries produced and shared videos to raise awareness within their own communities.

In Guinea, returned migrants have participated in training sessions that were organized by IOM that focused on awareness-raising around COVID-19 especially with female community members.

5 measures to prevent the spread of misinformation

⇒ Be critical when you look at social media

⇒ Challenge false information by politely asking the person who shared it to remove it.

⇒ Report the false information to the platform administrators

⇒ When in doubt, take the time to verify the shared information

⇒ Make more noise than people who share false information

Source: Nadia Naffi also available at The Conversation

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by IOM Research (research@iom.int).

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