

*These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest 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](mailto:research@iom.int).*

## Xenophobic racism

COVID-19 itself “does not discriminate”, however, extensive [research](#) and [reporting](#) is showing that the pandemic is exacerbating pre-existing inequality, with migrants among the groups facing the [additional burden](#) of discrimination. See [Analytical Snapshots #6](#) and [#29](#) for earlier analysis.

While not new in crisis situations, there has been high visibility of [coronaracism](#) on display during the pandemic, especially on social media platforms. Social media shines a light on discriminatory behaviours, and can also be used as a medium to [promote tolerance](#). [#Tolerance](#)

### New research articles on COVID-19 and racism

[Racism and discrimination in COVID-19 responses](#) by Delan Devakumar, Geordan Shannon, Sunil Bhopal & Ibrahim Abubakar

[Covid-19 and the rise of racism](#) by Melanie Coates

[The pandemic of social media panic travels faster than the COVID-19 outbreak](#) by Anneliese Depoux, Sam Martin, Emilie Karafillakis, Raman Preet, Annelies Wilder-Smith & Heidi Larson

[First COVID-19 suicide case in Bangladesh due to fear of COVID-19 and xenophobia: Possible suicide prevention strategies](#) by Mohammed Mamun and Mark Griffiths

[The Pandemic of Hate Is Giving Novel Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) a Helping Hand](#) by Edmond Ng

### IOM Director General speaks about the critical need to address xenophobia

IOM Director General António Vitorino held an online press conference on 7 May with media from the United Nations Geneva press corps and others from all over the world. In a wide-ranging session, DG Vitorino outlined the challenges facing the Organization and migrants in the COVID-19 era. Amongst other things, the Director General outlined the danger to our societies posed by the misinformation feeding xenophobia and the stigmatization of migrants and other vulnerable groups.

Watch the video [here](#).



## “What can I do?”

Leaders who maximize trust and minimize fear are critical to [reduced anxiety](#) and more effective responses during times of uncertainty and crises. This relates to political leaders, private sectors leaders as well as leaders in civil society. However, it does not stop with leaders and there a lot that [individuals](#) can do on a day-to-day basis, such as:

- ⇒ Spread facts
- ⇒ Engage social influencers
- ⇒ Amplify voices of those with lived experience
- ⇒ Promote ethical journalism
- ⇒ Actively portray ethnic diversity
- ⇒ Correct myths and stereotypes
- ⇒ Challenge those who portray bias.

With more and more people able to self-publish through social media, it is more important than ever to act responsibly.

## Biggest social media influencer?

For the week of 20 April, the biggest social media influencer on COVID-19 was Lady Gaga at [81.2 million interactions](#) due to her online concert [Together at home](#), which raised USD 128 million for the WHO’s Covid-19 Solidarity Response Fund.



## Communications in the media

Misinformation and hate speech are spreading with devastating consequences for migrants, refugees and other vulnerable groups. IOM has issued [guidance](#) on producing communication campaigns during the pandemic and other migration contexts. A new bulletin by the European Union Agency for the Fundamental Rights includes a section on [disinformation, privacy and data protection](#), as it relates to the xenophobia in the media on COVID-19.

## Organic mentions of COVID-19

Countering xenophobia in online media is a challenge. For the week commencing 9 March, [Synthesio](#) reported that there had been **39.2 million** organic mentions of COVID-19 on social media, while [Sprinklr](#) detected **20 million** mentions across social media, blogs and news sites in a single 24-hour period.

## Advice for parents and caregivers



Children can be particularly vulnerable to the effects of xenophobic racism. The US National Association of School Psychologists has issued [guidance](#) for parents and caregivers of children who experience COVID-19-related racism during the pandemic. Designed to minimize children’s anxiety, the guidance highlights (amongst other things) the need to display acceptance and compassion toward others.

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by [IOM Research](#) ([research@iom.int](mailto:research@iom.int)).

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