Nigeria Centre for Disease Control

Protecting the health of Nigerians

Infodemic Management: Nigeria Experience during COVID-19 Response

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COVID-19 infodemic response overview for Nigeria

Coordination, resourcing and strategy

- Integrated rumour management strategy is a component of National risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy for COVID-19 containment
- There is a multidisciplinary rumour management team with a focal lead supervised by Head of National Risk Communication and Community engagement pillar in COVID-19 Emergency Operation Centre of Nigeria Centre (NCDC) for Disease control
- Thre is a budget for some of the activities including facebook but most activities have no dedicated budget
- Dedicated team for tracking and adressing misinformation
- The Infodemic management functions are integrated across response areas and partners

Working relationships across society

- The NCDC started relationships with factchecking organizations during COVID-19 pandemic but has existing relationship with Facebook on health information related issues.
- Ministry of Health through NCDC fosters active relationships with stakeholders across whole of society, including media, journalists and civil society, religious organizations and other Ministries departments and agencies that can amplify messages within their constituencies and help codevelop messaging and strategies.

Integrated measurement, research and data analysis

- There is SOPs exist on how to track and address misinformation, using an agreed terminilogy
- No Indicators for tracking misinformation and how it affects target and vulnerable populations are defined and regularly tracked.
- Questions related to infodemic management are integrated into ongoing KAP surveys
- Tools used for social listening and analysis are customized for the local social listening needs.
- Data sources and research methods that are being used include helpline data, online media scan, social media scan, weekly opinion polls and perception survey
- Indicators and analytical methods used for monitoring include reach on social and online media, and level of compliance by opinion polls

Reporting and integration into decision-making

- Feedback from from social listening, survey and epidemiological surveillance are incorporated to inform response strategies and policies.
- Social listening, infodemic preparedness and response activities are conducted daily but analysis done weekly

Evidence-based interventions and implementation research

- Specific interventions based on insights include formation of survivors network to fight stigma and engagement of religious leaders and healthcare workers as trusted sources of information
- A guidance for vulnerable populations was developed.
- There is poor evidence of subnational use of infodemic management tools and principles

**What did infodemic management and response look like before the COVID-19 infodemic in your country?**

- Prior to COVID-19: Infodemic management response leveraged on Event Based Surveillance System tools and structures including use search engine for getting data
- An officer was dedicated to filter the data for analysis
- In addition there was an officer dedicated to do media scan
- Rumour debunking was slow

What has changed in infodemic management and health misinformation response since start of COVID-19

- Since COVID-19 pandemic commenced in China, a crisis management platform with team composed from response areas was established to facilitate quick response to public information needs

- A full multidisciplinary rumour management team with process flow established at the start of COVID-19 pandemic

  - Includes partnership with fact checkers(Africa check/ Dubawa, UNICEF U-report) and data managers (MS Corona)
  - Terminologies for classification and impact assessment
  - Analyze data from helpline, media, new media, polls and survey

- Training of over 300 reporters and editors on infodemic management
- Engagement of the community networks for incorporation to form integrated rumour management system
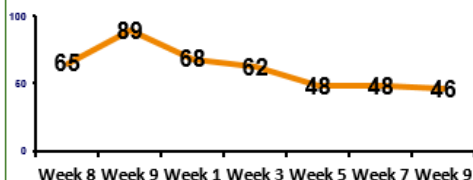
Response model

Process flow for infodemic management
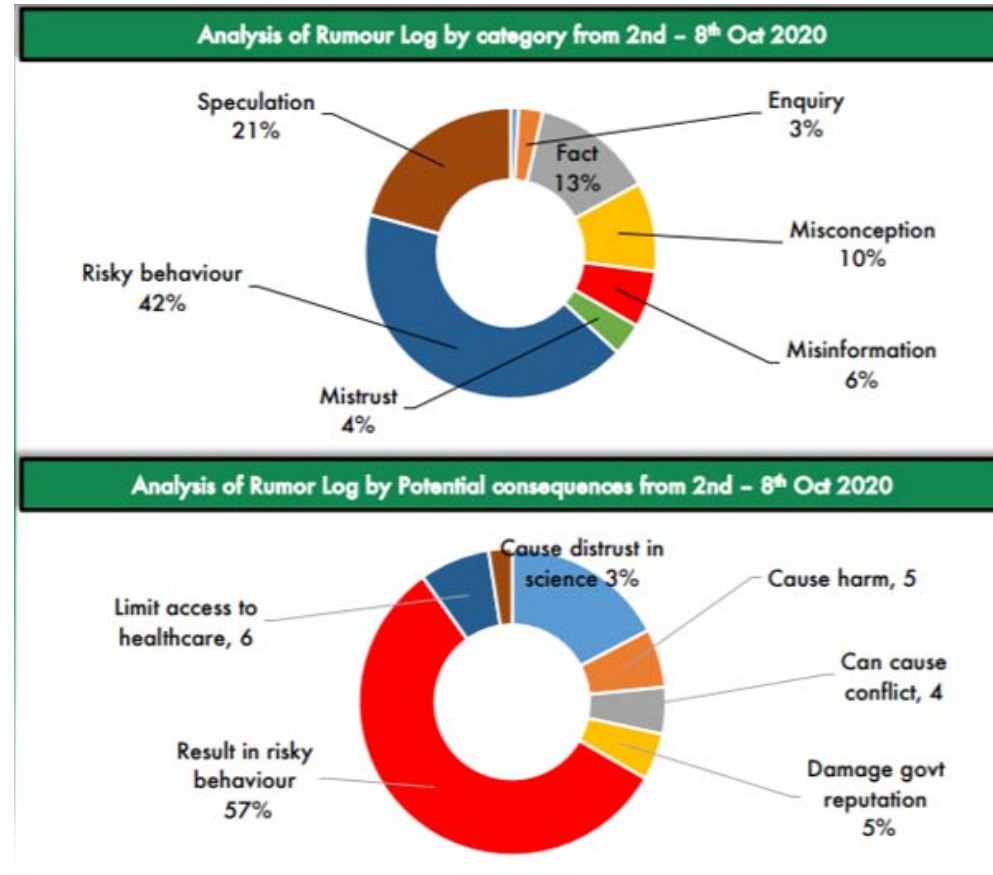
COVID-19 Weekly Polling Dashboard 9/10/2020

Recall
% seen advertising, publicity or other information about Covid-19 from FG or NCDC

65 89 68 62 48 48 46

Week 8 Week 9 Week 1 Week 3 Week 5 Week 7 Week 9
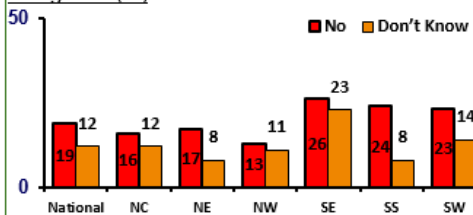
Source of Information
Most common source of information is TV (42%), Radio (37%) and NCDC Text message (33%)
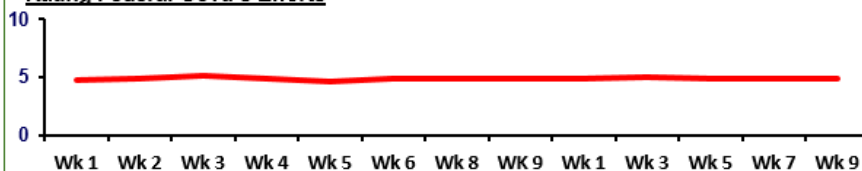
Nigeria cases
59,841	103	1,113
Total	New	Deaths

In your opinion, do you think Coronavirus is real in Nigeria? (%)

Legend: ■ No ■ Don't Know

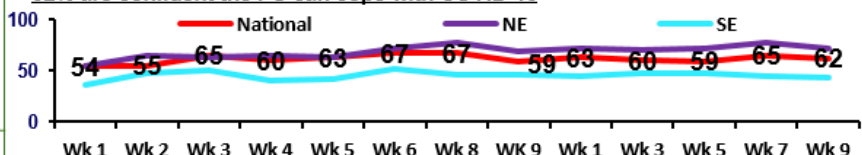|	National	NC	NE	NW	SE	SS	SW
No	19	16	17	13	26	24	23
Don't Know	12	12	8	11	23	8	14

- Varies with age: 22% among 18-35yrs, 16% among 36-60 and 14% among 60+ do not think the outbreak is real
- Most (72%) can't say why they think it is not real
- 31% of those who do no think the virus is a risk to their health and potentially fatal do so because they believe their immune system is strong
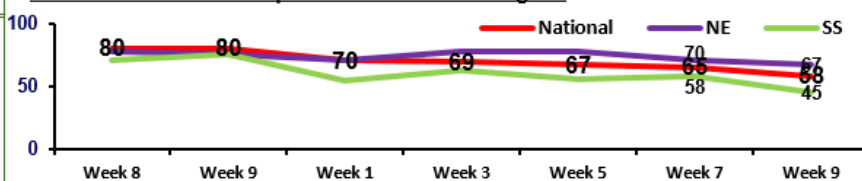
Trust and Concern
Rating Federal Govt.'s Efforts
Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 8 WK 9 Wk 1 Wk 3 Wk 5 Wk 7 Wk 9

62% are confident the FG can cope with COVID-19
Legend: National, NE, SE

54 55 65 60 63 67 67 59 63 60 59 65 62

Wk 1 Wk 2 Wk 3 Wk 4 Wk 5 Wk 6 Wk 8 WK 9 Wk 1 Wk 3 Wk 5 Wk 7 Wk 9

65% worried about the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria
Legend: National, NE, SS

80 80 70 69 67 70 67
               58 66 58
                    45

Week 8 Week 9 Week 1 Week 3 Week 5 Week 7 Week 9

- Top reasons among those who are not worried about the spread of the virus are; "Cases have reduced" and "Virus is not real".

Preventive Measures
Legend: ■ HW ■ FM ■ PD

| Location	HW	FM	PD
Nationwide Week 1	84	70	54
Lagos	91	85	61
Edo	83	82	56
Nationwide Week 3	84	62	46
Ogun	87	62	55
Bayelsa	83	58	41
Nationwide Week 5	86	71	57
Oyo	90	61	58
Plateau	86	71	56
Nationwide Week 7	89	71	61
Ondo	88	79	54
Cross River	91	74	56
Nationwide Week 9	89	73	59
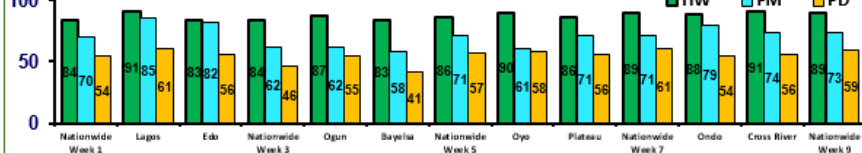
- Physical distancing is the most challenging preventive measure with 16% saying they rarely or never practice it as well as 36% that say it is difficult to practice when compared to handwashing and wearing facemasks. The Market was the most difficult place to practice physical distancing

Misinformation (in the past 7 days)
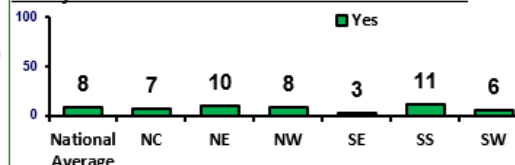- Level of misinformation has reduced.

Yes, I have seen or heard that malaria drugs can cure Coronavirus within the past 7 days?

Legend: National Average

37 21 15 11 9

Week 1 Week 3 Week 5 Week 7 Week 9
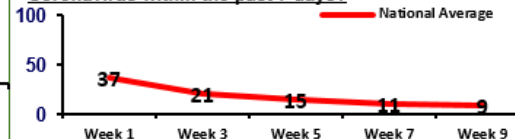
Similar trend seen with other types of misinformation

Testing
Have you taken/tried to take a test for Coronavirus?

Legend: ■ Yes

National Average	NC	NE	NW	SE	SS	SW
8	7	10	8	3	11	6

- 78% rated their experience from okay to very good.
- 43% of respondents are willing to be tested out of these, 51% are willing but don't know how

Education
Think reopening of schools and learning centers now will increase the spread of the virus in Nigeria

National Average	NC	NE	NW	SE	SS	SW
24	24	29	22	23	28	18
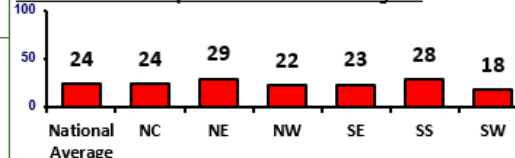
- More people aged 18 - 35yrs think reopening schools will increase the spread than the older age group
- 53% think schools have adequate preventative measures in place to prevent the spread of Coronavirus
- 30% think life will be more difficult for parents with schools reopening

Lessons learned from the experience of infodemic and infodemic response in COVID-19

- Establishement and activation of crisis communication platform, communication networks and stakeholders coordination platforms made communication and coordination very easy
- Development of RCCE strategy for COVID-19 containment, communication toolkits, guidance and materials facilitated development and implementation infodemic management
- Launching communication campaign themes on March 22, 2020: "Take responsibility" and "Covid-19 stops with me" provided a frame for national orientation on the need to take responsibilities
- Building of capacity for RCCE: National, Subnational, media, security, correctional facility

Best practices

- Established M&E framework, process flow and conduct surveys, weekly polls, FGDs, social data analysis etc
- Develop and share update information, key messages and materials for adaptation to local needs
- Established network of survivors

Challenges: Mistrust for government, poor multisectoral communication and coordination at subnational level, reaching the vulnerables and the hard to reach populations

Advice to other countries developing their own infodemic response plans

- Establishment multidisciplinary infodemic management system as part of preparedness exercise
- Whole of society with emphasis on bottom up approach should be embraced
- The need to build trust and resilience among individuals and community

Plans for future infodemic management work in your country

- Expand the current infodemic management team to include more relevant stakeholders
- Commence strategy for building individual, community and society resilience for misinformation
- Assess the effectiveness of infodemic management interventions
- Embark on innovative researches to have more insights on how misinformation influence behavior and strategies for combatting misinformation
- Advocate infodemic management in all policies of government