Before the pandemic, HIV self-test kits were distributed free of charge at urban hotspots and in crowded places such as taxi ranks and at workplaces with large workforces. As the novel coronavirus began to spread and governments limited the size of gatherings, organisations like PSI have turned to virtual online ordering and home delivery of HIV testing kits. With every self-test kit, clients are given the opportunity to access additional medical information through WhatsApp for Business. A chatbot shares information on self-testing and diagnostics, walking the client through every step as they test themselves, read their results and decide on their next steps. The chatbot then links users to confirmative testing and treatment, if needed, and offers advice on when to test again if their result is negative. They are also asked if they would like to receive a follow-up after they are done testing. Throughout the process, the client is asked if they will consent to sharing their results, reminding them that the data they provide will remain anonymous.

Source: PSI; Public Services International

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**REGIONAL INDICATORS**

**SOUTH AFRICA**
- **CONFIRMED**: 618,286
- **RECOVERED**: 531,338
- **DEATHS**: 13,628

**ZAMBA**
- **CONFIRMED**: 11,601
- **RECOVERED**: 10,840
- **DEATHS**: 282

**IVORY COAST**
- **CONFIRMED**: 17,702
- **RECOVERED**: 16,139
- **DEATHS**: 115

**TANZANIA**
- **CONFIRMED**: 509
- **RECOVERED**: 183
- **DEATHS**: 21

**THAMSANOA MIKE GWALA (VIBE FM) - SOUTH AFRICA**

**RUMOUR**: “The rumour I’ve heard is that there are 1 million plus graves that have been dug in Gauteng for people who will die from COVID-19.”

**RESPONSE**: There was much information shared on news platforms about this particular headline: “The Gauteng Department of Health is refuting claims that there are 1.5 million graves in the province prepared for COVID-19 related deaths. Gauteng Health Department Spokesperson Kware Kekana says ensuring that there is adequate burial space is a reality that the provincial government has to contend with. The province does not have over a million already open dug graves. The over a million graves refers to the collective capacity municipalities can take in Gauteng. Gauteng Health MEC Dr Bandile Masuku visited one of the graves in Tshwane and the Gravesite visited has the capacity for 24,000.”

Source: SABC News

**THANDEKILE THUSINI (UMGUNGUNDLOVU FM) - SOUTH AFRICA**

**RUMOUR**: “The rumour I have heard is that Bill Gates want to use the coronavirus vaccine to install microchips in people’s immune systems.”

**RESPONSE**: We decided to include this rumour because so many of you have reported it. The information found on many reliable news sites and platforms have labeled this idea as a conspiracy theory. It is believed that these rumours took hold in March 2020, when Mr Gates said in an interview that eventually, “we will have some digital certificates” which would be used to show who has recovered, been tested and ultimately who receives a vaccine. There has been no evidence where Bill Gates made mention of microchips. The above response led to one widely shared article, under the headline: “Bill Gates will use microchip implants to fight coronavirus”. And the article makes reference to a study, funded by The Gates Foundation, into a technology that could store someone’s vaccine records in a special ink administered at the same time as an injection.

However, the technology is not a microchip and has not yet been rolled out. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation says: “The reference to ‘digital certificates’ relates to efforts to create an open-source digital platform with the goal of expanding access to safe, home-based testing.”

Source: BBC News

**PHUMZILE CYNTHIA MOLULI (DREAM ACHIEVERS GWAGWA) - SOUTH AFRICA**

**RUMOUR**: “I heard that the COVID-19 vaccine will be a treatment which people will go and collect at clinics, just like ARVs.”

**RESPONSE**: A final and certified COVID-19 vaccine has not yet become available, but countries like South Africa have agreed to be involved in COVID-19 vaccine trials. In SA, participation in the trial is completely voluntary, and will enrol 2000 people. The fact that they are embarking on a clinical trial doesn’t mean that they’re going to have a vaccine that’s going to protect against COVID-19. Only about 10% of vaccines that go into clinical trials are eventually licensed for use. Right now there are approximately 200 vaccines that are being developed for COVID-19 worldwide. Anyone living in South Africa who is interested in participating in the study can email vidcov19@minster. co.za for more information.

Source: WITS University; Meningeal Pathogens Research Unit

**PROMISE NDALA (MCRS) - SOUTH AFRICA**

**RUMOUR**: “The latest rumour about COVID-19 is that this pandemic was a demonic thing that has been brought about by Satan and it does not exist!”

**RESPONSE**: There have been many claims saying that COVID-19 is satanic and will not affect religious people or congregants who have faith. It is not easy to dispute people’s beliefs, however, it is another reason to explain precautions when churches reopen next week. Global Reconciliation Church Pastor Mohau Ramilelile tested positive in March 2020.” SABC News

“A popular Cameroonian pastor has died less than a week after being diagnosed with Covid-19, leaving hundreds of his supporters panicked as the man had laid hands on them in an effort to ‘cure’ them of the infection. Medical staff have urged all the people who came in contact with the pastor to report to hospitals to be tested for the virus.” CNN News

**DID YOU KNOW?**

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Source: PSI; Public Services International

**YOUTH VOICES**

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**CASIMIRO SITHOLE (ALEX FM) - SOUTH AFRICA**

**RUMOUR**: “The latest rumour I heard is that when you go to the toilet you must go with a mask because when you flush, a lot of pathogens come up, and chances of them being COVID-19 are very high.”

**RESPONSE**: The risk of catching COVID-19 from the faeces of an infected person appears to be low.

**RECOVERED**: 10,840

**DEATHS**: 282

**CONFIRMED**: 1115

**Source**: Zohopeo.co.za

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