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Social media and proliferation of fake news, dodgy health advice and fake ‘cures.of Covid 19

During the current pandemic it is not strange that people will not only spread fake news but also some may also believe them. With the wide spread of social media it is really difficult to tell when something is legit or fake. In some cases this has included what seems like it comes from valid advice from medical professionals but turns out to be wrong and in some cases dangerously bad. In some cases these fake accounts closely resemble legitimate accounts from trusted sources but that is only part of the problem. In many cases bots are responding to actual legitimate accounts as a way to discredit them. In other words, it isn’t just misinformation but fake accounts that are making actual commentary seem illegitimate. Before one ends up getting fake news they should cross check the source.

Along with these fake news there is also another problem which is fake news regarding the cure for covid 19. As the new coronavirus that has killed more than 100,000 people causes markets to crash and sets scientists scrambling for a solution, rumors and false claims are fueling confusion and deepening the economic misery. These fakes cured range from drinking lemon and ginger water to taking several tablets of hard and dangerous drugs. The use of fake products and medicines, moreover without medical supervision, means a major risk to the health and safety of patients. These products are potentially dangerous and could increase resistance to real treatments and lead to new diseases, disability or even death. The list goes on.

A fear of the unknown and a flood of information in the digital space creates fertile ground for fake news. Nigerians may be particularly vulnerable not because they are very gullible, but because of weak communications between the government and the people, high reverence for miracle healing and a worn out health care system.

In conclusion people should not only be wary of this virus but also of the people who go around spreading false news about the virus and cures and everyone should also remember to be safe.