**Name: EHWEHWE ONASIVWE ABIGAIL**

**Matric no: 18/SMS04/021**

**Course: Cms204- Specialized Reporting**

**FIGHTING “INFODEMIC”: THE NEW FRONT IN THE COVID-19 BATTLE**

**Ehwehwe Abigail**

Internet users are at once again targeted by the purveyors of false information The World Health Organization(WHO) asserts that rumors contribute to triggering unnecessary panic. Fighting an epidemic also involves tackling an infodemic.

Tuesday, 14 April, 2020.

As the Coronavirus epidemic reaches African continents, false information is spreading faster than the virus itself. The WHO asserts that rumors contribute to triggering unnecessary panic. Fighting an epidemic also involves tackling an infodemic. The WHO is warned against the consequences of a pernicious “infodemic”.

Social media sites shoulder the huge responsibility of stemming the spread of counterproductive rumors. Facing pressure from the WHO, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube confirmed that they have taken measures to counter disinformation about the coronavirus. Some fake news stories on the coronavirus has already been debunked.

Transmission via mosquito bite. Although it’s always appropriate to keep a safe distance from the insect that spreads malaria and dengue fever, respiratory viruses don’t seem, at this stage, to be transmitted by mosquito bites, but by droplets of saliva or nasal secretions expelled by an infected person when coughing or sneezing. Speaking of animals, no house pets seem to have been infected by the new coronavirus. Also some plausible, but useless remedies like Antibiotics. Antibiotics work against bacteria, not viruses. Taking antibiotics to treat or prevent coronavirus could prove harmful by reducing a person’s vigilance. Vaccines against pneumonia don’t provide protection against COVID-19 either. The potential efficacy of chloroquine is currently being studied but doesn’t look particularly promising. Some far-fetched remedies that are said to cure the CoViD-19, which is false, like some wrongly maintain that people can protect themselves against COVID-19 by washing their hands with children’s urine, applying sesame oil all over their body or consuming cannabis. These are simply examples of false advertising and/or click bait. Although people joke that consuming too much garlic will keep away potentially infected individuals due to extremely bad breath, this edible plant doesn’t boost the body’s immune system.

Also, Bioweapon rumors going around. Based mainly on the fact that the 5G network was rolled out in the Chinese city of Wuhan just a few weeks before the coronavirus came on the scene, and that infected passengers on the Diamond Princess cruise ship had been using the technology, chat groups have been fueling suspicion towards the electromagnetic fields (EMF) emitted by wireless communications networks. A viral Facebook post claimed a Saline Solution of warm water and salt or vinegar is a remedy to Coronavirus, a claim that has not been corroborated by any health institution. However, a fact check debunked this. NHS recommends gargling with warm saline water for adults suffering from sore throats but not a solution to cure COVID-19. Also, the WHO in its Q&A about coronavirus on twitter debunked a similar question of whether gargling mouthwash can protect one from COVID-19.

Fighting this fake news is another battle because with the fake news going round, it causes more panics and may increase illness due to ignorance.

###