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**18/SMS04/023**

**Social Media and proliferation of fake news, dodgy health advice and fake cures of Covid-19.**

The whole world is fighting a common enemy on all fronts, and this time surprisingly not with military might as many would have predicted or opined instead it is a biological threat which has already claimed lots of lives globally, rendering well armoured artillery and arsenals useless.

What is a coronavirus?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).
These viruses were originally transmitted from animals to people. SARS, for instance, was transmitted from civet cats to humans while MERS moved to humans from a type of camel.
Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans.
The name coronavirus comes from the Latin word corona, meaning crown or halo. Under an electron microscope, the virus looks like it is surrounded by a solar corona.
The novel coronavirus, identified by Chinese authorities on January 7 and since named SARS-CoV-2, is a new strain that had not been previously identified in humans. Little is known about it, although human-to-human transmission has been confirmed.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment.  Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

In the light of this development, the social media has played a pivotal role in the proliferation of fake news, dodgy health advices and fake cures as it relates to the the novel coronavirus disease, the extent to which it has done this cannot be over over emphasized as it forms basis for what people put into every day practice which might on the contrary be very detrimental to their health.

These fake news, dodgy health advices and fake cures will be taken one after the other and may not be exhaustive. The world health organisation has stated that there is an excessive amount of information concerning the issue such that the solution has been made more difficult and this best explains what an INFODEMIC is; be that as it may the International health body has reiterated that rumours contribute to triggering unnecessary panic, thus, fighting an epidemic also involves tackling an infodemic.

First of all, it should be worthy of note that till this day, there hasn't been any internationally recognised cure for the treatment of Covid-19 which is generally acceptable by the WHO. 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.

Temperature as a cure
The belief that the Coronavirus doesn't survive in Africa given the fact that it's a tropical terrain and that it would be too hot for the virus is treacherous, because statistically speaking Africa already has over 2500 confirmed cases with Countries in North Africa topping the charts. Also, it is believed that the skin of blacks especially Africans is immune to the virus due to it's thickness and inert adaptive nature, but this has since been proved wrong as celebrities like Idris Elba were among the first persons to get infected with the Virus in the states and it goes on and on to other blacks- the list is endless. According to the WHO, on their official website, (www.who.int). From the evidence so far, the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted in ALL AREAS, including areas with hot and humid areas. You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.  There is no reason to believe that cold weather can kill the new coronavirus or other diseases. The normal human body temperature remains around 36.5°C to 37°C, regardless of the external temperature or weather. The most effective way to protect yourself against the new coronavirus is by frequently cleaning your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water.

Far fetched Remedies
Some persons are amazing saying that drinking alcohol helps in boosting the immune system given the fact that if alcohol based sanitizers work, then, the regular alcohol drink will certainly serve the same purpose. In Central and East Africa, 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 some Africans believe that drinking 'Fennel Tea' or 'Congo Bololo' helps to prevent the virus and strengthen the immune system. There is no proven medication to prevent one from being infected with the virus. Culled from The Africa Report.

Transmission via parcels from China
They were series of voice notes and warnings especially through WhatsApp warning particularly Africans not to buy the newly acquired face masks from China as they have intentionally sprayed these kits with droplets of the virus which would be unsafe for anyone intending to use them, although their lifespan varies depending on the environment and temperature, pathogenic germs can only survive on objects such as parcels, coins and credit cards for a few hours. Products imported from China to Africa have been travelling for too long to transmit the virus.

All these debunked myths, fake news and dodgy health advices below are culled from the website of the World Health Organisation ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

## **Being able to hold your breath for 10 seconds or more without coughing or feeling discomfort DOES NOT mean you are free from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or any other lung disease.**

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are dry cough, tiredness and fever. Some people may develop more severe forms of the disease, such as pneumonia. The best way to confirm if you have  the virus producing COVID-19 disease is with a laboratory test.  You cannot confirm it with this breathing exercise, which can even be dangerous.

## **5G mobile networks DO NOT spread COVID-19**

Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks.COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks.

COVID-19 is spread through respiratoatry droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.

## **The new coronavirus CANNOT be transmitted through mosquito bites**.

To date there has been no information nor evidence to suggest that the new coronavirus could be transmitted by mosquitoes. The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus which spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

### **Bioweapon rumours**

This is from The Africa Report ([www.africareport.com](http://www.africareport.com)). Just as conspiracy theories proliferated about HIV, theories surrounding the coronavirus posit that the disease is a bioweapon engineered by the Chinese government, the US government or Bill Gates’s foundation and that it was either deliberately or accidentally released. These rumours overlap with tall tales of former Soviet bloc countries supposedly carrying out secret geopolitical operations to weaken democracies via massive viral propaganda campaigns.