

Vaccinate against COVID-19 or not ? Source of Information and the influence of misinformation on the COVID-19 vaccine uptake hesitancy among frontline workers in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, Tanzania

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Since the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an abundance of information, with nearly every media channel covering the latest developments (Kraus et al., 2020). While this abundance supported by internet and Web 2.0 forms the most amazing resources for information the world has yet seen, there is clearly so much misinformation one can expect (Anderson and Rainie, 2017; Barua, 2016; Barua et al., 2020). The world's first social media pandemic COVID-19 (Guynn, 2020), a massive disaster in the 21st century, is not immune to the proliferation of misinformation (Rosenberg et al., 2020; Cuan-Baltazar, 2020). Evidences (Barua et al., 2020; Rajkumar, 2020; Xiao and Torok, 2020; Zandifar & Badrfam, 2020) indicate that misinformation can have a death-and-life threatening effect amid a pandemic. Despite widespread recognition that COVID-19 is a critical issue to people all around the globe, and that getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalizations, and death (Sakay (2021) many remain unwilling to be vaccinated or are choosing to delay vaccination (OECD, 2021). A similar trend is manifested in other parts of the world including Africa; African continent being the lowest in terms of Covid-19 vaccinated populations globally, the countries are also facing increased vaccine hesitancy with the few available doses having no takers in some countries (ALL Global Union, 2021). This study thereof seeks to examine the role of misinformation on COVID-19 vaccine uptake hesitancy among frontline workers in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, Tanzania. Specifically, the study seeks to assess the sources of COVID 19 misinformation; to assess forms of misinformation and their influence on COVID 19 vaccine uptake hesitancy among frontline workers.

The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, Tanzania. A standardized questionnaire developed through Google Form and the link containing it was distributed conveniently through WhatsApp to frontline workers residing in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma cities. Till the end of data collection, 164 respondents had successfully responded and submitted the questionnaire with 86 respondents being from Dar es Salaam and other 78 from Dodoma. After data collection data was extracted through Excel, small adjustment done then exported to SPSS Version 22. Frequency and percentage and pie charts were used to present descriptive analysis results. The inferential statistical analysis was done using binary logistic regression. The binary logistic regression entailed to determine the effect of COVID-19 Vaccine misinformation for Frontline workers on COVID-19 Vaccine uptake hesitancy.

The findings indicate that although both formal and informal sources were used to inform on COVID 19 related issues, the extent of misinformation relating COVID 19 was not a function of formality of the information sources. It was found that the sources of information (formal and informal) had neither significant influence on- nor relationship with COVID-19 vaccine uptake hesitancy among frontline workers. Impliedly is to say, it was not the source that mattered for one to be hesitancy or not, but the extent to which the information channeled by that source

was manipulated or false.