



FAKE NEWS & RUMOURS

Weekly Bulletin |September 28–October 3, 2020



**INSTITUTION FOR DISASTERS,
EMERGENCY & ACCIDENTS**



**World Health
Organization**
India

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COVID-19

Overview

The COVID-19 cases in the country have been increasing at a burgeoning rate. Even after 9 months of the first COVID-19 confirmed case being reported in Kerala, India, the COVID-19 situation is worsening day by day. About 63, 31,861 confirmed cases and 98, 970 deaths have been reported till October 1, 2020 in India. However, an overall recovery rate of 83.5% is a positive sign.

Although the lock down has been lifted up yet it seems it would be impossible to revive the normal lifestyle unless the COVID-19 vaccine comes into the market. There have been an increasing number of queries regarding the development of COVID-19 Vaccine. In light of this, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has launched a portal to disseminate the vaccine related information like vaccine development, on-going clinical trials and regular progress made in this field nationally and globally. This will also help in collecting good quality real-time clinical data to help in research, formulating guidelines and policy making. It is a crucial step in spreading awareness among the public about the development of COVID-19 vaccine. Besides this, UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, urged the countries to draw funding from their own response and recovery programmes to gear up the global COVID-19 vaccine efforts and ensure that everyone gets protection from the virus.

Apart from COVID-19, the current Farmers' protest on Farm Bill, 2020 and the Hathras Rape case have become the focal points of the Social Media. Gruesome acts like rape and domestic violence have exacerbated amidst COVID-19. COVID-19 had posed several challenges on all the spheres of life and hence we have to be prepared for its repercussions.

There goes an old adage, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind". Surely, this phase shall end soon. COVID-19 has provided us with an opportunity to thoroughly introspect and assess the resilience of our health-care system with a major focus on the preparedness and mitigation measures to build a more 'Resilient India'.

Misleading Information

The social media platforms are continuously working on sharing credible coronavirus updates and have launched sections collating all the latest facts for the widest possible audience. False claim and misleading information for the September 28 to October 3, 2020 duration is as follows:

Fake News 1: COVID-19 Vaccine: A way to inject humans with Microchips

Amidst this pandemic, when the people are enthusiastically looking forward towards the COVID-19 Vaccine, there are many people who are very sceptical regarding this. It is claimed there are many rumours and theories that the COVID-19 Vaccine with inbuilt microchips would be a way to track the citizens. This information has been circulated massively over Whatsapp forwards and other social media platform (Figure 1). According to a research about 40% of the Americans are still hesitant about COVID-19 Vaccine despite the high infection rates.

According to the NEWS agency, the video that was circulated dated back to 2002 and was irrelevant to COVID-19. According to the International Health Agency, the claims of microchips and tracking of the humans are illogical (Figure 2).



Figure 1

Not only is the video in question absolutely FALSE, it is also unrelated to Covid. A news agency reported that the video dates back to 2002 when there was no evidence of Covid-19 infecting humans, or a vaccine was being developed.

Secondly, the claim about microchips holds no ground. Vaccines are developed with strong doses of medicines which offer a preventive shield against the virus, blocking its entry. A conspiracy theory about microchips was also proven false by an international health agency.

Figure 2

Browsing

Fake News 2: Steam as a treatment for COVID-19

An observational study claimed that steam can be used as an adjuvant treatment in COVID-19 patients. They divided the people into two groups. The first group consisted of 25 Health Care Workers. The other group consisted of 80 patients and Health care workers. According to them, inhalation of steam helped in reducing the COVID-19 Symptoms and further transmission (Figure 3)

However, the World Health Organization (WHO) did clarify that inhalation of steam neither prevents one from getting infected by COVID-19 nor does it help reduce its transmission. Extreme heat can be harmful to the human body. The Public Interest Bureau (PIB) posted a tweet stating that there is no evidence to prove that inhaling steam kills coronavirus (Figure 4).

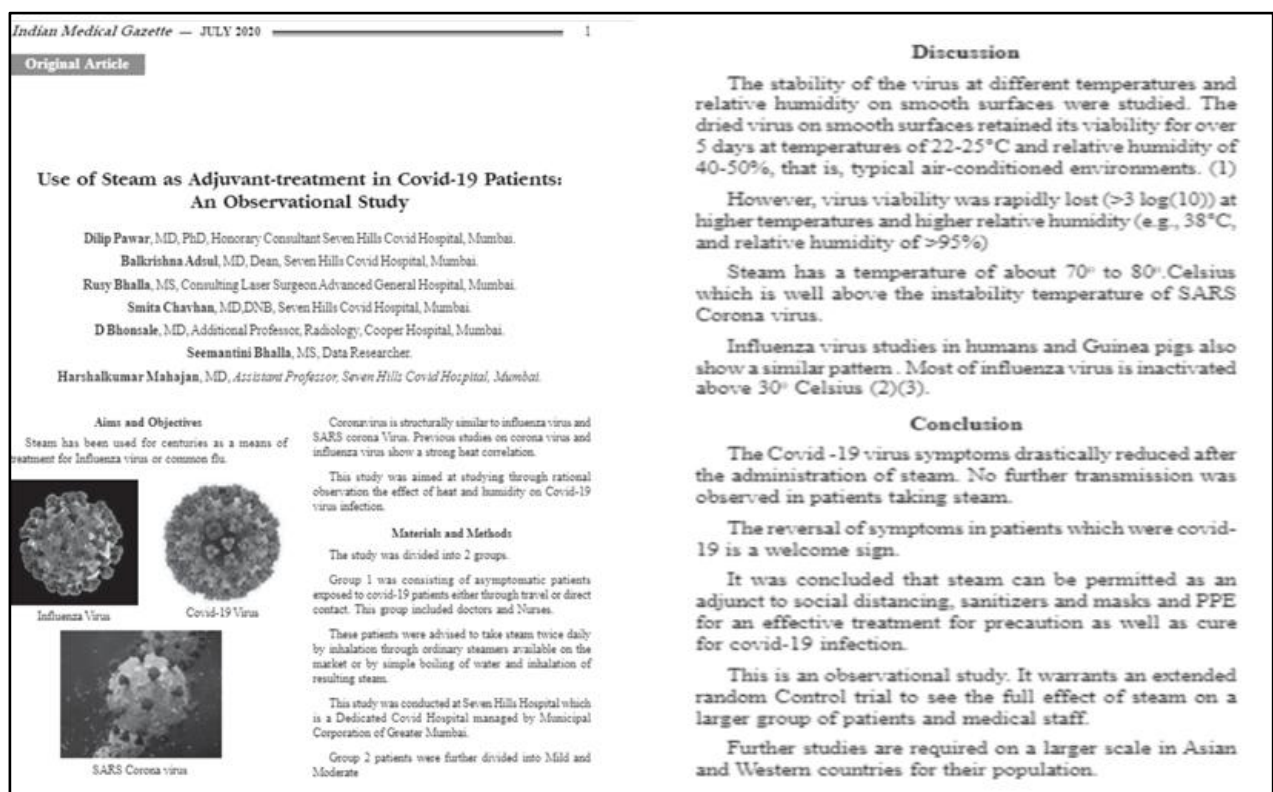


Figure 3



Figure 4

Other Category

Fake news 3: COVID-19 deaths covered under PMJJBY & PMSBY

A WhatsApp Forward is being circulated with the claim that insurance benefits for COVID-19 deaths can be claimed under two of the PM's Suraksha Yojana Schemes, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) (Figure 5).

Although, Press Information Bureau (PIB) has debunked that claim stating that PMSBY doesn't cover COVID-19 related deaths, while PMJJBY covers COVID-19 deaths with certain conditions (Figure 6).

A viral message claims that two insurance schemes launched by the Narendra Modi government can be claimed for deaths related to COVID-19.

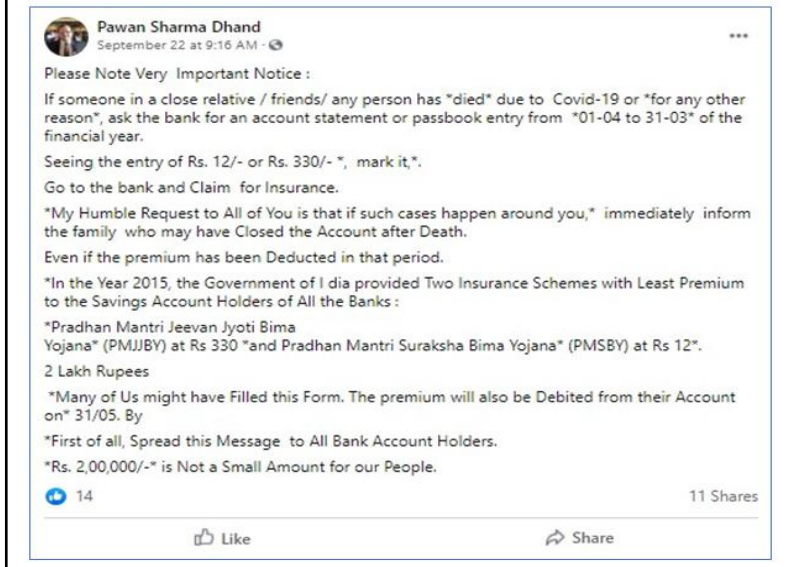


Figure 5

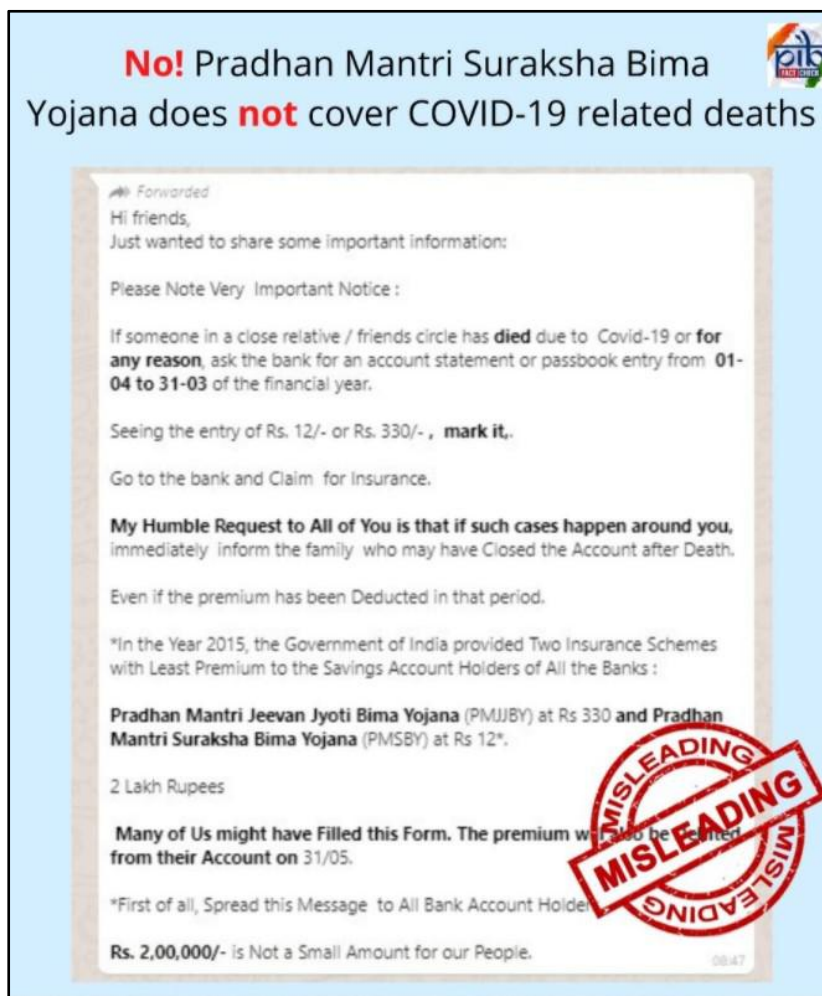


Figure 6

Conclusion

During these challenging times, the power of our resilience at personal and Society level will be tested, we need to assure ourselves and our family members of a brighter tomorrow. But we need to control the ongoing menace of misinformation by making it a practice to check facts before relying on rumors.

The Society has to jointly put in efforts to push the economy up globally, work hard with precautionary social behaviour. Social evils like rape and domestic violence needs to be kept at bay, so that the Society can recover in a healthy manner.

Citation

S. No	Link: Fake Claim	Link: Fact Check
1	https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/coronavirus-vaccine-will-be-a-way-of-injecting-people-with-microchips-dont-fall-for-this-facebook-hoax/78405356	Same link
2	http://www.dypatil.edu/schools/nursing/use-of-steam-as-adjuvant-treatment-in-covid-19-patients-an-observational-study/	https://twitter.com/PIBFactCheck/status/1244548792990367745?s=20
3	https://www.thequint.com/news/webqoof/covid-deaths-are-covered-under-pmjby-insurance-scheme-not-pmsby	https://twitter.com/PIBFactCheck/status/1309371515922649088?s=20



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