

Situations like the coronavirus pandemic can quickly become a catalyst for social conflict due to misinformation, rumours, and fake news, as observed in Pakistan during recent national catastrophes caused by dengue fever, floods, and earthquakes. The situation is no different with COVID-19 as stories emerge on how fake news is being used to manipulate response efforts, spread rumours and misinformation leading to behaviours that are undermining community cohesion, and causing citizens to be unaware of the role they can play in the pandemic response.

With that in mind, The Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP), with the financial support from the European Union and technical support from The Asia Foundation (TAF) Pakistan, has officially launched the Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC). This campaign debunks rumours, conducts regular fact-checking, synthesizes data, and convenes virtual forums to produce informative bulletins each week. These bulletins include important government decisions, visual materials, community feedback, debunked rumours with verified information, valid concerns, and other questions from the ground around health and other issues. The goal is to support enhanced awareness among the most vulnerable groups in Pakistan (including ethnic minorities, religious minorities, returning migrants, trafficking victims, prisoners, women, internally displaced persons, transgender persons, persons with disabilities, victims of torture, and other marginalized communities), with a focus on the marginalized communities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. These bulletins are translated into Urdu and Sindhi, with audio transcriptions in Pashto. They are shared with stakeholders, local government leaders, media, legal aid centers, community radios, learning centers, CSOs, and humanitarian networks via online and offline means. They are also disseminated through a web-page, shared widely on social media, and are aired on a wide network of radio stations in local languages.

Current Situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan

Total Confirmed Cases
479,715

Total Active Cases
34,537

Total Deaths
10,105

Total Recoveries
435,073

Provinces	Active Cases	Confirmed Cases	Deaths	Recoveries
Sindh	16241	214425	3533	194651
Punjab	10667	137949	4013	123269
KPK	3469	58379	1638	53272
Islamabad	3429	37702	416	33857
AJK	418	8256	221	7617
Balochistan	263	18148	183	17702
GB	50	4856	101	4705

Source: <http://covid.gov.pk/stats/pakistan>



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Fact

Myth



Common myths around Covid-19 that have been circulating at the local, national, and international level have come into focus in the past few months of the pandemic.



Pakistan has a Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine available.

MYTH

There is no vaccine for Covid-19 available in Pakistan as of yet, however, clinical trials of the Chinese vaccine have been administered on more than 15,000 volunteers between September and now, according to Dr Javed Akram, Vice Chancellor and Scientific Task Force on Covid-19 member at the University of Health Sciences. The vaccine is ribonucleic acid-based and will generate antibodies against the spikes of the virus, as a result of which the virus will not be able to attach itself to the lungs.

The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has announced that the government is in close connection with the world's leading vaccine manufacturers, including those in China, and would soon make a decision about its availability in the country. NCOC said the government was regularly reviewing developments taking place around the globe, including data from phase 3 trials. "These steps will lead to a final decision about early availability of the vaccine in Pakistan", NCOC officials said.

FACT

A new strain of coronavirus has been found in Pakistan.



Pakistan has reported its first confirmed cases of the new coronavirus strain that had been detected in the UK earlier this year. According to the Sindh health department, 12 samples of UK returnees were taken for genotyping out of which six were positive and three showed the new variant of the Covid virus in the first phase. "The genotyping showed 95 per cent match of the new variant from the UK. These samples will go through another phase of genotyping," said Meeran Yousuf, spokesperson for the Sindh health department.

"Meanwhile, the contact tracing of these patients is in process and their contacts are also being isolated," she said. The news of the coronavirus variant coming to Pakistan is concerning because according to a study conducted by the Center for Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the UK, this variant is 56% more contagious than the original virus strain. It is spreading faster than before and is likely to lead to more hospitalizations and deaths.

Sources: Dawn, The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (NHSRC), National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC).



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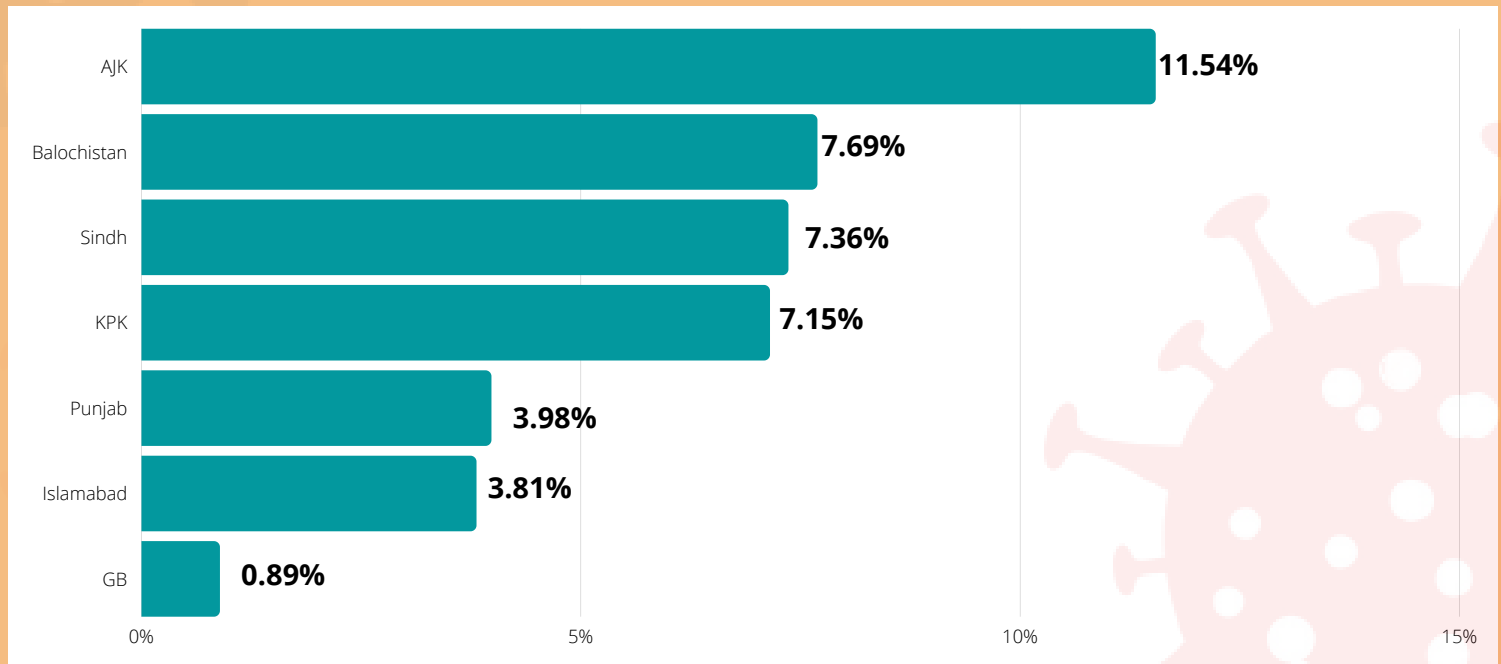


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Status of coronavirus in the major cities of Pakistan

The NCOC data from Dec 27 revealed that the **national positivity ratio is at 5.57%** with **Abbottabad** having the highest positivity rate at **25.53%**, followed by **Karachi** at **13.56%**, and **Faisalabad** at **10.14%**. Province-wise, the positivity ratios were reported as follows:



If you think you or someone you know is infected with COVID-19, you can call the following government helplines by province:



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT I OR SOMEONE IN MY FAMILY HAS CORONAVIRUS?

DON'T PANIC

There are government helplines you can call for help

FEDERAL		1166
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA		1700
PUNJAB		0800 99 000
SINDH		021-99203443 021-99204405
BALUCHISTAN		081-9241133-22 0334-9241133

whatsapp



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES REGULATIONS AND COORDINATION
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
www.nhsrco.gov.pk





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The medical team starts research on Covid-19 patients in Pakistan

A team of American scientists and the paramedical staff of the **Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims)** commenced research on **Covid-19 patients in Pakistan**. In the first phase, the team started collecting samples of Covid-19 patients and sending them for lab tests. For this purpose, they also visited **Taxila** where **300 samples** were collected, according to **Dr. Wasim Khawaja**.

Dr. Khawaja said the team would also visit other cities with Faisalabad being its next stop in the coming week. The scientists are conducting research on coronavirus-affected people in Pakistan, particularly their symptoms and the effects of the virus on the patients. On the fluctuation in the single-day count of positive cases, Dr. Khawaja said **90% of the patients showed no symptoms** and therefore did not get themselves tested. The **majority of the asymptomatic patients recover without any medical assistance but end up spreading the virus to their close contacts**, Dr Khawaja said.

It has also been observed that some patients with complaints of flu and cough come to the hospital and get themselves tested, but their **results are negative**. However, when their **CT scans** and **chest X-rays** are carried out, they are found to be **infected with Covid-19**.

Mild Symptoms include:

- Sore Throat
- Fatigue
- Loss of smell
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Coughing

Severe Symptoms include:

- Chest Pain
- Difficulty in Breathing
- Inability to stay awake
- Bluish Face or Lips

If you have COVID-19 symptoms contact your doctor or the coronavirus helpline at **1166**



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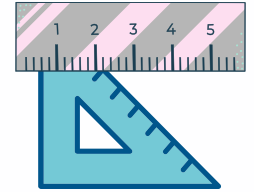
WHAT IS A VIRUS?

Viruses have been responsible for some of the most devastating diseases in history including Influenza, Ebola, Smallpox, Polio, Rabies, HIV, and now COVID-19. While viruses are the most common and abundant organisms on the planet, we know very little about them. Here are some of the characteristics unique to viruses (New Scientist):



How big are they?

Viruses are tiny and simple. They are much smaller than bacteria. In recent years, larger viruses have been discovered, known as mamavirus and megavirus.



Do they have a colour?

No, viruses are colourless. Images of viruses are artificially coloured to help us distinguish them.



Are they living or not?

There is debate in the scientific community if viruses are living organisms or not. There are two lines for argument for this:

No, because they cannot reproduce independently of a host. That is, they depend on a living organism to reproduce and cannot do so on their own.

Yes, because they contain nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) and can reproduce. Having genetic information and the ability to reproduce are characteristics of living organisms.



What temperature can they survive at?

Viruses last longer in the cold. Heating is one way of killing them.



How do they enter the human body (or other living organisms)?

They enter the human body (host) via various ways including: the airways, digestive system, wounds, or via insects. Viruses can infect all living organisms (hosts) such as animals, plants, fungus and bacteria.



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How do they affect the body of a living organism?

Viruses attack the cells of the host's body to use the host's cellular machinery for reproduction, since they cannot reproduce on their own.



How many are they out there?

According to a study, the total virus population of Earth is more than a million times the estimated number of stars in the universe. In the past 5 years, the number of identified species of viruses has increased by 20 times.



Do they offer any benefits?

Viruses play a vital role in evolution. Their ability to enter cells has made them useful in 'gene therapy'. They also offer solutions to overcoming drug-resistant superbugs.



Immunity after being infected with Covid-19

WHO's **Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove** explained the process of natural immunity after having been infected with Covid-19. She explained that while people develop antibodies with the disease, several studies are underway to understand **how long these antibodies last**, whether it's a month, or six months, or longer.

However, one thing is certain and that is these **antibodies do not provide lifelong immunity** from the virus. Not knowing how long the immune response lasts, it is very important that we continue to follow the health measures of **mask-wearing, practicing hand hygiene, and maintaining social distance**, and follow all the **safety precautions both at work and at home**. As this is still a new disease, there are many things to understand - and scientists all over the world are conducting research to get to the root of the virus.

Additionally, what we know about re-infection from Covid-19 is still very limited. These cases of re-infections are being studied - whether they are **more or less severe than the first time of infection**, and how they **affect the immune response** in the human body.



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Where can I get tested?

Islamabad	National Institute of Health Park Road, Chak Shahzad, Islamabad
Karachi	Agha Khan University Hospital, Stadium Road, Karachi, Sindh
Hyderabad	Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), Liberty Market Roundabout, Liaquat University Hospital, Hyderabad
Khairpur	Gambat Institute of Medical Sciences, Gambat, Khairpur, Sindh
Peshawar	Hayatabad Medical Complex Phase-4 Phase 4 Hayatabad, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
Mardan	Chughtai Lab Mardan point, near Allied Bank, Shamsi Road, Mardan, KP
Haripur	Excel Labs, TMA Plaza Shop No. 6, Near Girls Degree College Circular Road Haripur, KP
Lahore	Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital, 7A Block R-3 M.A. Johar Town, Lahore, Punjab
Multan	Nishtar Hospital Nishtar Road, Justice Hamid Colony, Multan
Rawalpindi	Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Range Road, CMH Complex, Rawalpindi, Punjab
Quetta	Fatima Jinnah Hospital Bahadurabad, Wahdat Colony, Quetta
Muzaffarabad	Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS), Ambore, Muzaffarabad, Azad Kashmir
Gilgit	District Headquarters Hospital, Hospital Road, Gilgit, GB

For more cities visit the [COVID-19 Health Advisory Platform](#)

To receive our
regular updates
through WhatsApp

1. Add our number **+27 60 080 6146** as a contact.
2. Send the word **"Pakistan"** as a message on WhatsApp.



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