



Fiji COVID-19 Response

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK UPDATE

December 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Community feedback mechanism was implemented by Fiji Red Cross Society with support by the IFRC Pacific Country Cluster Delegation.

Data Collection Team:

Fiji Red Cross Society staff and volunteers

Support Team:

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Design and Layout:

The Greenhouse Studio

The team would like to thank all the staff and volunteers from Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS) for their time and dedication in rolling out the feedback mechanism in the communities in Fiji and to all the members of the community that participated. The team also appreciates the strategic support and guidance of the IFRC and FRCS COVID-19 operation team to ensure smooth planning and execution of this activity. Finally, thanks to the IFRC technical team, Asia Pacific Regional Office, for strategic guidance and technical support.

The nurses came to our village to give us the vaccine, we had no choice but to take it and there is the 'No Jab no Job' law.(woman, 30 – 39 years, Cakaudrove)

I needed to get the blue vaccine card to get government assistance. (woman, 18-29 years, Cakaudrove)

Are there any side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine? (man, 18 – 29 years, Ba)

We think the vaccine represents the 'Mark of the Beast'. Red Cross should do awareness whether the vaccine is good or bad. (woman, 50-59 years, Cakaudrove)

Community Engagement & Accountability (CEA)

National Society: Fiji Red Cross Society

Feedback collected: 4 to 26 October 2021

Feedback channels used: Face-to-face, Facebook and telephone

Total feedback: 107 (50 women and 57 men)

Status: 73 closed, 31 open, 1 partially closed and 2 referred

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed over 5.2 million lives as of 29 November 2021, and continue to occur across various countries in the world. Resulting as one of the greatest public health crisis and a humanitarian crisis, the outbreak has largely affected people's health, livelihood as well as mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. While vaccination campaigns have unrolled in many countries, an equitable distribution of vaccines for COVID-19 and adherence to basic preventative measures remain vital to respond to the pandemic.

According to IFRC and FRCS sitreps in August and September 2021, a widespread community transmission was reported in the central and western division on the main island of Viti Levu in Fiji. As of 29 September 2021, around 95.8% of over 18s received first dose, while 72.5% of over 18s received the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine in Fiji. Vaccine hesitancy was being reported impacting the vaccination rates, particularly for the second dose. In addition, information gaps among people led to misinformation and rumours.

As part of the IFRC supported COVID-19 response operation, staff and volunteers of the Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS) has rolled out the feedback mechanism in October and staff/volunteers have been collecting and responding to communities' questions, feedback, complaints and rumours in the communities. Being one of the major activities under the response operation, the feedback mechanism has enabled the programme team to monitor and address the information gaps, promote positive behaviour, and ensure that the services delivered are relevant and appropriate to communities' needs.

To enable all FRCS staff and volunteers to record and respond to various issues on COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccine, a feedback form was developed and deployed through KOBO toolbox. Online trainings on the feedback form were held on 29 September and 1 October 2021 for more than 60 FRCS staff and volunteers from different branches.

A standard operating procedure (SOP) for feedback collectors has been developed to outline the procedures on collecting and responding to various issues. Starting from 4 October 2021, staff and volunteers of FRCS have started to use the KOBO feedback form. This report, covering the period from 4 – 26 October 2021, presents an overview and analysis of various issues - questions, suggestions, and rumours on COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccine. The findings are aimed to inform sector teams and improve the ongoing COVID-19 response operation.



Map 1 Fiji: provinces in red are where feedback data was collected during 4-26 October 2021

OVERVIEW

During the reporting period, a total of 107 feedbacks were received from 50 women and 57 men in Cakaudrove and Ba provinces of Fiji, with majority of data collected from Cakaudrove province (95 feedback). The highest number of feedbacks were reported by men, 53 feedbacks, in Cakaudrove province.

Majority of the feedbacks, 32 feedbacks, were received from community members aged 18-29 years and 31 feedbacks from 30-39 years. Around 4 issues were reported by respondents under 17 and 1 feedback reported by elderly man.

Respondents by Gender

Figure 1 Feedback by gender, n=107



Respondents by Location

Figure 2 Feedback by location, n=107



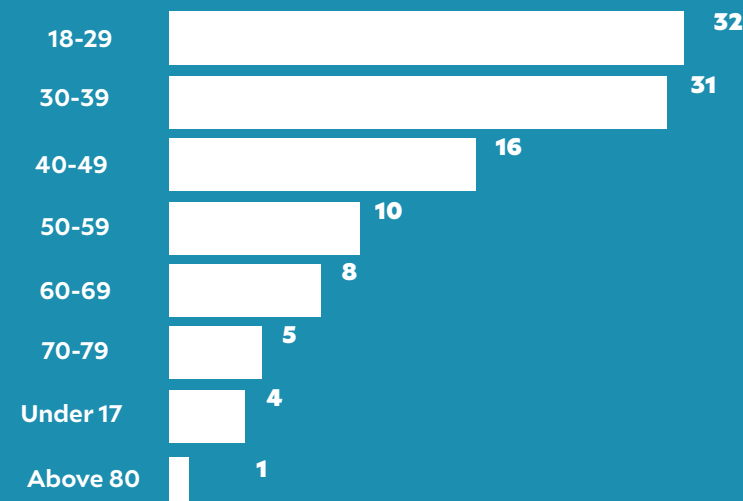
Feedback by Channel

Figure 3 Feedback by channel, n=107



Respondents by Age

Figure 4 Feedback by age, n=107

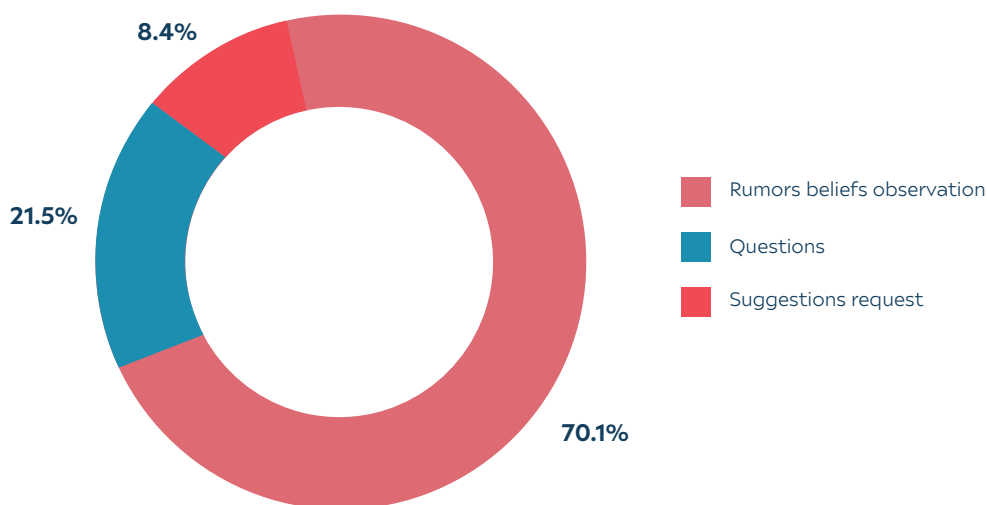


ANALYSIS

Based on the data analysed, out of 107 feedbacks, a majority, 70.1% were rumours, beliefs observations; 21.5% were questions and 8.4% suggestions about largely COVID-19 vaccine.

Respondents by Type

Figure 5 Feedback by type, n=107



Feedbacks were largely related to observations or comments about the vaccine and how it influenced people's access to different services (25 feedbacks). For example, many said they received the vaccine because the nurse visited their communities while others mentioned about getting the vaccine only to avail government assistance or for the 'no job, no job' law. They felt vaccination was mandated for people rather than given a choice. 5 respondents added that they received the vaccine only for travelling pass. Feedback on this topic was reported almost equally by both men and women.

"The nurses came to our village to give us the vaccine, we had no choice but to take it and there is the 'No Jab no Job' law." – woman, 30-39, Cakaudrove.

"I needed to get the blue vaccine card to get government assistance. The eligibility criteria is that we need to get vaccinated." – man, 18-29, Cakaudrove

"I need to get the vaccine because of travelling requirements."
– woman, 18-29, Cakaudrove.

Many respondents shared comments that were in favour of the vaccine (20 feedbacks), believing that the vaccine could protect themselves and their loved ones from COVID-19. This was greatly reported by men (14 feedbacks) compared to women (6 feedbacks).

“Vaccine protects us from COVID -19” – man, 70-79, Cakaudrove.

Majority of the questions, 14 feedbacks, were about the safety of the vaccine. This included both the immediate side effects as well as long term impact on one’s health after getting the vaccine. Other questions included safety of the vaccine to unborn babies and if the vaccine could provide protection from the disease.

“Will the vaccine protect us from COVID-19?” - woman, 30-39, Cakaudrove.

“Are there any side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?” – man, 18-29, Ba.

Few respondents asked (8 feedbacks) about the types of vaccination available in Fiji and if there would be a third dose of vaccination. Such questions were more common among women respondents (15 feedbacks) than men (7 feedbacks).

***“Will we get another third and fourth dose of vaccines?”
– woman, 30-39, Ba***

Others asked if there were any vaccines for the elderly or if they would fall sick had they not received the second dose. Questions also included about the effectiveness of the vaccine and who created the vaccine or where it was from. One respondent expressed concerns about the disease and what the government could do to respond to this situation.

Respondents also shared rumours and beliefs about vaccine (12 feedback). These included beliefs that the vaccine was a drug, Coronavirus was present in the vaccine or expressing doubts that chips were inserted in the vaccine. Majority of these feedback were shared by men (10 feedback).

“Concern from friend in overseas saying vaccine is a drug”- man, 30-39, Cakaudrove

“Is Coronavirus present in the COVID-19 vaccine?” – man, 30-39 Cakaudrove

***“ Is it true that we will die after two years after taking the vaccine?”
– woman, 30-39, Ba***

3 respondents expressed religious beliefs that the vaccine was the ‘Mark of the Beast’¹.

“The vaccine is the mark of the beast and prophecy is being fulfilled.” – woman, 30-39, Cakaudrove.

¹“666” refers to a part of the Bible, as the number, or name, of wild beast. Some people refer COVID-19 vaccine as the “Mark of the beast” or sign for “666” which relates to the belief that COVID-19 vaccine is a conspiracy of governmental control or that the vaccine contains some sort of marking agent to identify those receiving the vaccine

Few respondents (8 feedbacks) shared comments revealing vaccine hesitancy or gave reasons for not getting the vaccine. These were largely related to fear of the side effects after getting the vaccine or lacking information about the vaccine and having little awareness on the topic.

"I am afraid because I have a sickness but I have to take the vaccine because of 'No jab no travel' law. There wasn't enough awareness on the side effects for people with underlying disease on getting the vaccine." – man, 50-59, Cakaudrove.

"After I heard the rumours, I decided not to take any kind of COVID-19 vaccine." – man, 18-29, Cakaudrove.

Respondents suggested that there should be more awareness raising activities at the communities about COVID-19 vaccine to ensure people have the relevant and factual information, information that addresses the misperceptions and encourage everyone to get the vaccine.

"I don't really understand about the vaccine. There should be awareness among people in the villages." – woman, 18-29, Cakaudrove

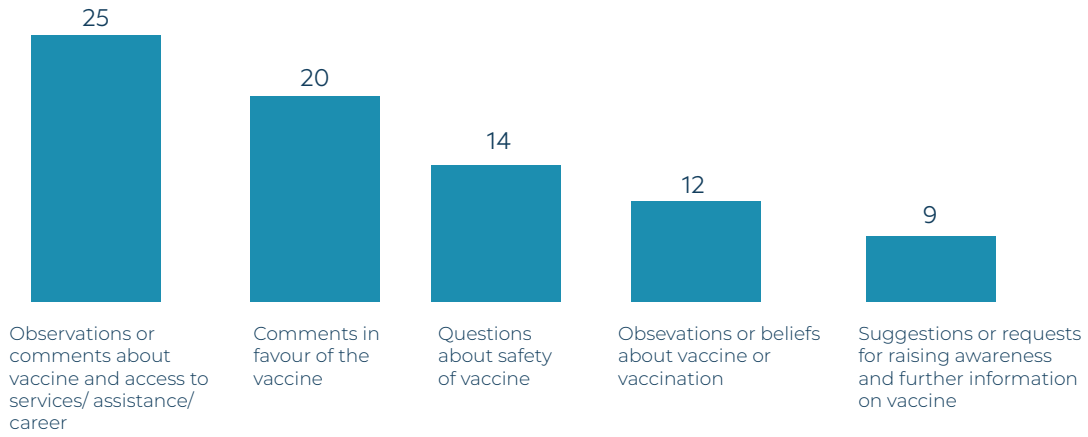
"We think this vaccine represent the 'Mark of the Beast'. Red Cross should do awareness whether the vaccine is good or bad." – woman, 50-59, Cakaudrove.



Fiji Red Cross survey team member interviews a member from Cogeia village in Bua.

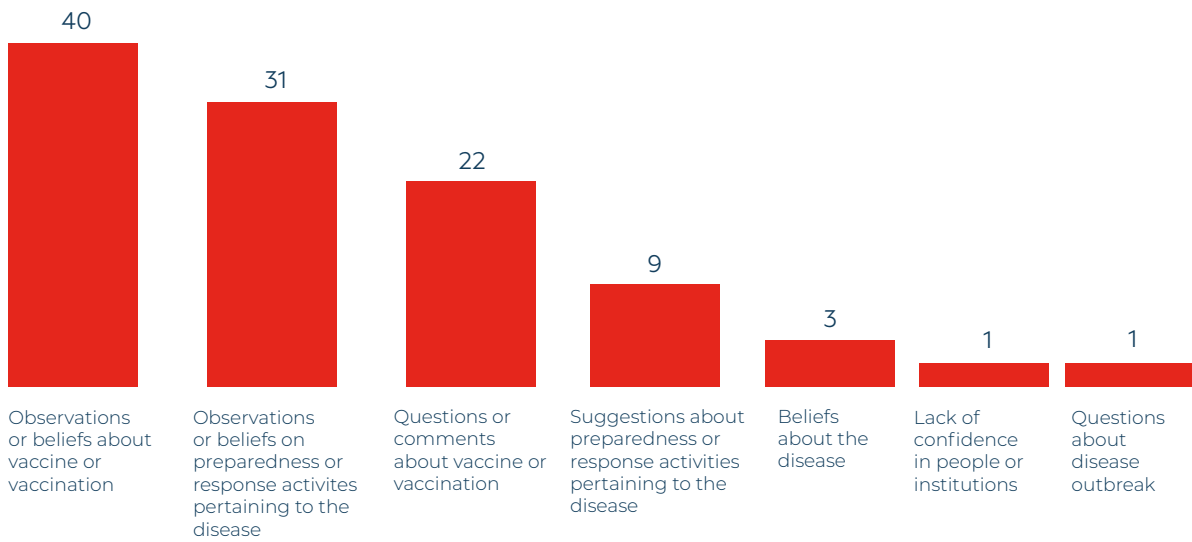
Top Raised Subtopic

Figure 6 Top raised subtopic



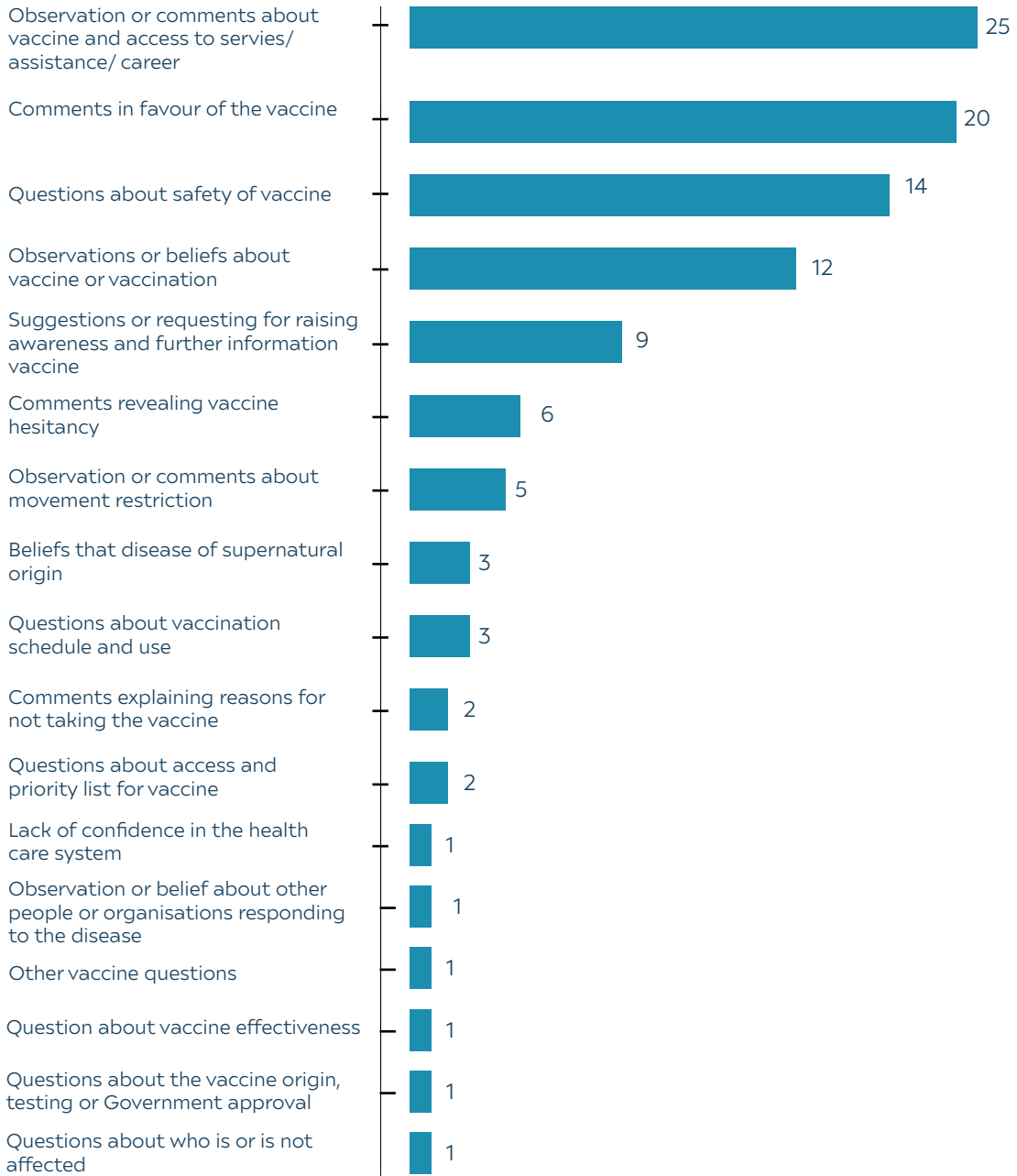
Feedback by Topic

Figure 7 Feedback by Topic



Feedback by Subtopic

Figure 7 Feedback by Subtopic



CHALLENGES

The feedback data collection was done only in the two provinces, hence to get a better understanding of people's perception about COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccine, data collection needs to be increased in other provinces, communities and vaccination centres.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Community feedback should be responded through sharing relevant and factual information answering their questions, addressing rumours and misperceptions and via awareness raising activities, using multiple and accessible communication channels and ensuring a two-way dialogue with communities. FAQs needs to be updated and shared with NS staff and volunteers along with IEC materials for different topics. Risk communication approach should consider the information gaps between men and women and ensure their participation and access to information through community meetings or outreach activities.
- Organising meeting with feedback collectors/COVID-19 focal point at the NS's branches to identify challenges in data collection and make adjustments in the feedback form/SOP. A refresher's training for feedback collectors can be organised to enhance quality data collection.
- Link to the community feedback dashboard." [HERE](#)"

CONTACT

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A member from the Fiji Red Cross survey team interviews a member from Vuya village in Bua.

