

# PAKISTAN CORONAVIRUS CIVICACTS CAMPAIGN

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With the continuous spread of COVID-19 in Pakistan; Accountability Lab is continuously building on its work with district governments and Community Front Liners (network of volunteers) through Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC) to debunk rumours, fake news & misinformation related to COVID-19. The Coronavirus CivActs Campaign supported by the Open Society Foundation also conducts fact-checking, synthesizes data, pushes out the verified information through weekly bulletins and social media campaign for mass awareness, and gathers feedback on the COVID19 response in Pakistan. The bulletins are disseminated in five languages including English, Urdu, Pashto, Punjabi & Sindhi to reach far and wide to help citizens build resilience and fight against the pandemic. These bulletins are also shared with a range of stakeholders from the general public, to government departments, development agencies, CSOs and humanitarian networks via online and offline means.

The campaign also highlights important government decisions, information about vaccination drives, community feedback and concerns related to COVID-19. The objective of the campaign is to enhance awareness among the most vulnerable segments of the society including women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, transgenders and persons with disabilities. In the current phase of the campaign, Accountability Lab has also engaged the local female community leaders and building their capacity through training and active civic engagement to counter-myths and disseminate facts around COVID-19 and gender issues.

## MYTHBUSTERS



### Covid infection increases risk of mental health disorders



**FACT** ✓

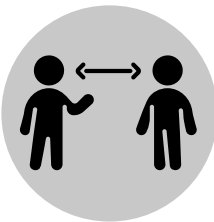
OR

**MYTH** ✗

The long term effects of Covid-19 are gradually being discovered and one of them is an increased risk of mental health disorders. A new study looking at millions of health records in the US has discovered that having Covid-19 puts people at a significantly increased chance of developing mental health conditions. This study found that Covid-19 patients are 80% more likely to develop cognitive problems, 41% more likely to develop sleep disorders, 39% more likely to get depression, 35% more likely to get anxiety and 34% more likely to develop opioid use disorder, compared to those people who don't have Covid-19. The study further found that those with more severe cases of Covid-19, or those who need to be hospitalized, tend to be at a higher risk, however, even those with mild or asymptomatic cases are more likely to develop mental health disorders, compared to those who are not infected.

Source: [The Guardian](#)

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES THAT CAN BE TAKEN AGAINST CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Wear a mask that has two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric and covers your mouth, nose and chin. It should not be loose on the sides.

Practice physical distancing outside your home by keeping a distance of 3 feet between you and others.

Get registered for vaccination as soon as possible and follow all pre and post-vaccination guidelines.

Avoid unnecessary contact with eyes, nose and mouth as that increases chances of virus transfer.



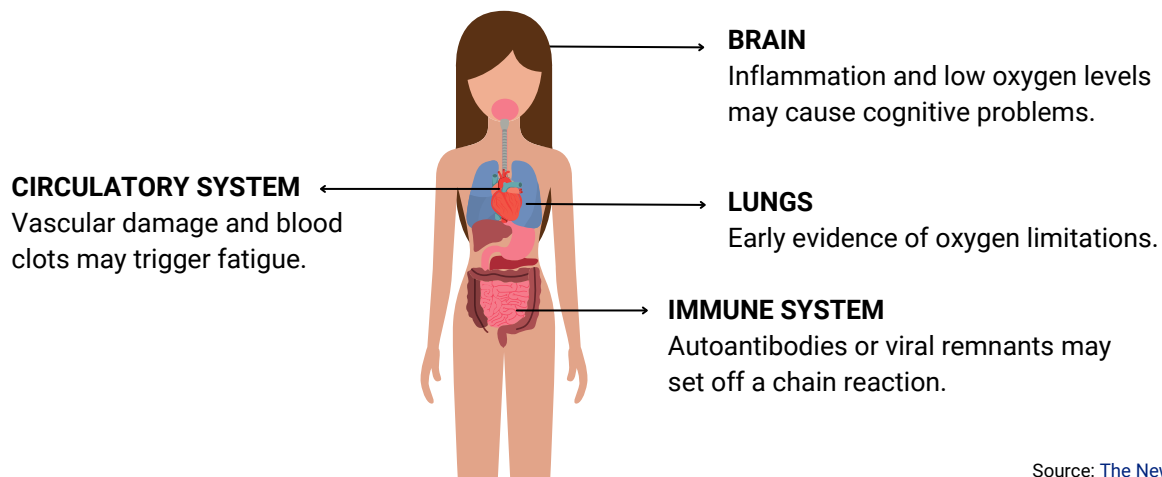
Keep yourself and your environment clean.

If you fall sick, stay at home and contact a healthcare provider.

Avoid unnecessary outdoor socialising and spending time in crowded spaces

## HOW LONG COVID EXHAUSTS THE BODY

In the typical Covid-19 scenario, patients infected with the virus end up in hospitals or on ventilators till their symptoms are resolved. The damage done by Covid-19, such as pneumonia, low oxygen and inflammation, can be seen on standard diagnostic tests. The post infection results of long covid however, are different. Long covid is a chronic illness with a wide variety of long term symptoms, many of which are not explainable using conventional lab tests. Long covid takes an exhaustive and debilitating toll on the body. Long covid patients appear to have disrupted immune systems. The virus spreads widely during an initial infection, and viral genetic material remains embedded in tissues for many months. Secondly, long covid patients struggle with physical activity and can experience a relapse of symptoms if they exercise. Thirdly, researchers have found a wide range of dysfunction in the brains of long covid patients, where even mild infections cause significant brain inflammation. Fourthly, shortness of breath and damage to the lungs is another symptom of long covid even though common lung tests, such as chest x-rays often come back normal. In short, long covid affects every organ in the body, and can exhaust it completely.



Source: [The New York Times](#)

## Impact of Covid-19 on adolescents' learning and enrollment in Punjab, Pakistan: Insights from SMS Girl Data

Since March 2020, schools in Punjab have closed and reopened in various stages. Even though in total, school closures in Punjab have lasted only 10.5 months, they have disrupted the education of 14 million school going girls and boys in long lasting ways. Even simple initial estimates indicate that students have suffered substantial learning losses and that close to a million students will not be returning to school due to economic and financial hardships faced during the pandemic. This has exacerbated the initial pre-pandemic learning crisis whereby a high percentage of children were out of school and only one in four children in Pakistan could read by the age of 10. Drawing on household surveys and qualitative interviews, the SMS Girl Data study by World Bank has evaluated the impact of school closures and found the following findings:

1. The most alarming finding is that adolescents are dropping out at much higher levels than initially suggested.
2. Being confined to homes during the school closures led to an increase in the burden of work for girls.
3. Remote learning is not an effective substitute for in-person learning for nearly every student in Pakistan except perhaps the most privileged.
4. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities.

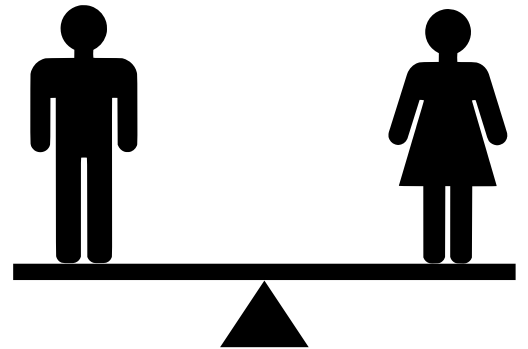
Source: [The World Bank](#)

## INSIGHTS

We interviewed Dr. Ikram Ullah (Chief HSRU, Department of Health, KP) to learn about the number of vaccinations in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to understand the systematic changes they have made to reduce vaccine hesitancy.

### Expert's Interview

Regarding the percentages of male vs female vaccine uptake ratio and how the government is working to ensure gender balance in the vaccination campaign, Dr Ikram replied; "At first we had a higher percentage of male vaccination but as we started door to door vaccine services the percentage of female vaccination greatly increased. Now we look at the vaccinated individuals. There is almost 50-50 percent of male to female vaccination uptake ratio. We have targeted schools and madrasas students above the age of 12yrs, irrespective of their gender. And when our teams visit homes we usually encounter female members of a family as their male members are outside earning a living.



To better facilitate this interaction with female members of a household we have tried to increase females in our teams. We have involved Lady Health Workers in these door to door teams. Currently, we have almost more than 16000 LHWs and other female staff involved in the vaccination campaign. So we are trying to apply a gender lens to our COVID 19 vaccination program."



Research shows that women's literacy plays a leading role in vaccine uptake. On the topic of what programs have the KP government started to inform local women about coronavirus infection and the benefits of its vaccination, he informed that "we have almost 17000 lady health workers and lady health supervisors. who form our door to door vaccination campaign teams. When our teams go for vaccination they engage with local women and inform them about the benefits of vaccination. Every month they report community engagements they carried out around benefits of vaccination."

## INSIGHTS

The vaccination campaign can only be most effective if the locals are willing to help and cooperate with the local health workers, especially lady health workers going door-to-door for vaccination. Upon the question of how local women can help lady health workers in the promotion of COVID 19 vaccines. He suggested: "The initial focus of the Lady Health Worker program was to make local community groups of mothers and women keep them engaged and aware about different health risks, family planning and local diseases.



Seeing the effectiveness of lady health workers in public health we engaged them in many other activities related to health. To keep them motivated.

- ✓ We regularized their jobs and provided them with a service structure for their promotion.
- ✓ Each LHW serves a specific community of 100 to 150 houses where they are engaged with female members of these households and with influential female community members.
- ✓ Among these communities they act as our liaison, in their monthly report, they mention how many meetings they have conducted with them and how they have engaged their community groups.
- ✓ LHWs are always strengthening their community linkages.

During the pandemic, they have helped local women to register for vaccines from their own mobiles. Lady Health Workers are trained in National Incident Management System (NIMS ) registration, local organizations have also provided us tremendous support. Different levels of health management have tried to keep LHWs motivated during this time of burden which has positively impacted the percentage of vaccine uptake."



# Where can I get tested?

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

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