

Monthly Bulletin

# Gov-HER-Nance

Ensuring Gender Equity and  
Socio-Economic Resilience  
During COVID-19



Women are generally the primary caregivers in Pakistani society. And with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, that burden of care has vastly increased. Data\* shows that 83% of a woman's time is spent at home, providing care for household members, home maintenance and self-care. It is also reflected in the limited mobility of many Pakistani women.

**They are often four times less mobile than men leading to limited sources of information being available for them.**

Their need for updated information is critical to providing efficient care for their families. This bulletin aims to reach women and provide them with COVID-19 related news to help them navigate around issues of safety, community and local governance.

Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP), with support from the Department of Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, is publishing bulletins under the "Governance Ensuring Gender Equity and Socioeconomic Impact during COVID-19" campaign. This campaign aims to build and strengthen the resilience of marginalized populations, especially women, in three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against the negative impacts of COVID-19 as well as other future pandemics and health emergencies.

These bulletins include important government decisions, community feedback, verified information, valid concerns, and other questions from the ground around health, safety and local governance. These bulletins are translated into Urdu and 600 copies are disseminated on a monthly basis in three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - Peshawar, Mardan and Nowshera.

\*Source: UNWomen

# FACT



## There are no major side effects of booster shots

So far, evidence has shown that after receiving the booster shots, the major side effects identified are similar to the ones seen after the effects from the first vaccination dose, which include — localized discomfort, redness or swelling on the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle ache, fever or nausea. These symptoms indicate that your body is constructing immunity from the virus and will go away after a few days. Some people don't have any facet results and allergic reactions are very rare. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has authorized mix and match booster doses for people who are eligible for a booster dose after their two initial doses. This means that someone can receive a booster of a COVID-19 vaccine that is exceptional than the COVID-19 vaccine they received for his or her primary series. COVID-19 booster shots can intensely support the body's immune system, according to a study that raises hope of preventing another wave of severe disease driven by the omicron variant.

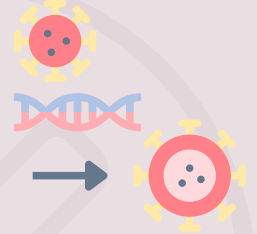
Source: [COVID-19 Booster Shot, University of Pittsburgh](#)

# MYTH



## COVID-19 vaccines are causing new variants to evolve

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there is no evidence that vaccines can cause new variants to evolve.



Alternatively COVID-19 vaccines can save you from new variants that are emerging. However, this is not the case at all. The virus mutations occur precisely in those areas where there is not yet a high vaccination rate and a big number of people are meeting together within a restricted area. Lillebaek, Professor of Global Health Section, Department of Public Health, University of Copenhagen, says that new variants could pose greater challenges in places that have lower vaccination rates. CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) suggests that everyone who is five years of age and older should get their vaccines done as soon as possible.

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

## ***The Importance of Booster Shots: Additional doses for COVID-19 Vaccination***

There is a need to get a third dose of a vaccine even if you've already received your first two doses. There are three reasons why we may have to receive an additional dose.

The first is if you didn't respond, if you're in a category of people that didn't respond adequately to the first two doses that you received, for immunocompromised people, it may be necessary to receive a third dose because those first two aren't doing what they do in otherwise normal, healthy people.

The second reason is if over time the immunity that you received and accomplished due to being vaccinated starts to wane, it starts to deteriorate or pass down through the years. And in fact, the evidence right now shows that the vaccines are holding up extremely well to protect you against severe disease, hospitalization or even death.

The third motive we might need to give a third dose is if the overall performance of the vaccines are less or insufficient towards the number of the variants of the situation that have emerged. And again, the vaccines that are available right now against the variants and are holding up extremely well against the severe end of the disease spectrum. Generally speaking, the vaccines are performing very well.

Vaccination with two doses along with a booster shot helps prevent infection, and in those that do still get infected, lessens the impact of the virus by reducing disease severity, transmission of infection and death.

Source: [COVID-19 Booster Shots: Everything you should know](#)

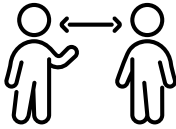
## How can I protect myself against COVID-19?



Wash your hands frequently



Avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth



Put space between yourself and others



Cough or sneeze into your bent elbow or a tissue

If you have fever, cough or difficulty breathing, seek care early. Call beforehand, and seek medical advice

Source: WHO (World Health Organization)

## New variant and its symptoms

Viruses are constantly evolving and converting. Whenever a wave replicates (makes copies of itself), there's the capability for there to be modifications in its structure. Each of these changes is a "mutation." A wave with one or extra mutations is referred to as a "variant" of the authentic virus. A few mutations can cause changes in essential traits of the virus, such as characteristics that have an effect on its capability to spread and/or its capacity to motivate greater extreme infection and death. Scientists have confirmed the life of a new COVID-19 variant that mixes mutations from each omicron and delta variations for the primary time. According to GISAID (Global initiative on sharing all influenza data), the new variant is believed to have been circulating since January.. The Stealth Omicron variant has fueled the recent outbreak in China, which in line with record is the biggest one in years for the east Asian country.

### Stealth Omicron version

The deadly novel coronavirus mutated through the years and has created more modern editions that fueled every wave of the pandemic. The Delta version killed a large number of people all through the second wave. The one-third wave became driven by the Omicron version that was first detected in South Africa. Appreciably, the brand-new sub-version of the Omicron is numerous from the figure variant. Dubbed as "stealth", the sub-variation of Omicron is concerning as they're tough to detect. Knowing the symptoms of the stealth variant can help in detecting the virus faster and help the affected patients to take the right steps to deal with the virus.

### Signs and symptoms

The 2 most said symptoms of patients infected by way of the Stealth Omicron version is -dizziness and fatigue. However, one ought to observe, those are the best early degree signs.

Even though dizziness and fatigue are common normal symptoms, one ought to preserve a watch out for the staying power of the same. If this bothers you for a couple of days or extra, then one should consult a medical doctor. These symptoms can appear within two-three days after you are inflamed with the virus and may linger inside the body for longer. Aside from tell-tale symptoms, the brand-new sub-variant may also cause other signs and symptoms like: Fever, extreme fatigue, coughing, sore throat, sore head, muscular fatigue and expanded coronary heart rate. One can also rule out signs like loss of smell or flavor and shortness of breath, as the BA.2 variation does not now have an effect on the lungs in most cases.

COVID-19 vaccines are exceptionally effective at protecting you in opposition to critical contamination and loss of life; a few people will nevertheless get ill from COVID-19 after vaccination. You could also pass the virus on to others who are not vaccinated. This makes it very crucial to continue to exercise defensive measures, even after you have been fully vaccinated.

Source: [livemint](#), [livescience](#)



# EXPERT INTERVIEW WITH.....

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*For our third bulletin, we interviewed Catrina Khan, President of Rehabilitation Education Skills Development (READ)- trainings for transgender welfare organization to learn how the Covid-19 pandemic in Pakistan is leaving transgender community behind. Rehabilitation Education Skills Development (READ)- trainings for transgenders welfare organization works for the best of the transgender community. It is one of the pioneer organizations which started working for transgender rights to solve their problems and to give them information about health prevention.*



Transgender people wearing face masks as a precaution against COVID-19 take selfies at a park in Peshawar, Pakistan, March 20, 2020. © 2020 AP Photo/Muhammad Sajjad

**Even before the pandemic, the transgender community in Pakistan were seen as outcasts and faced discrimination on a regular basis, but the pandemic has escalated this even more. Can you please share some of the experiences of transgender community before and after the pandemic?**

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As a marginalized community, we were already facing so many issues but after the arrival of COVID-19 our issues got more prominent. Because of the lockdown every function and gathering got banned and we were bound just around our "Deras". The 1st and 2nd wave of COVID-19 was very strong so we had to take safety measures for ourselves to protect our community. The government didn't provide any awareness around COVID-19 to our community. We learned more about the virus and necessary steps to be taken to avoid it through different social media sites and transferred the knowledge to our community as well.

## During this COVID-19 tenure, has there been any mental health effects on the transgender community specifically, due to the rise in challenges?

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Yes, alot. As I've told you earlier, after COVID-19 outbreak began we were just bound to our rooms or Deras and this affected our mental health badly. Alot of people started taking drugs, injections and tablets and were having suicidal thoughts because of the escalating tension and mental pressure.

Source:Dawn

## What were some of the health care challenges for transgender individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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There were a lot of challenges. Before the availability of vaccines, members of our community were not allowed within the hospitals. Members of our community who had contracted the virus were returned back on the basis that they couldn't be treated in the female or male wards. No attention was even given to transgenders who were in severe conditions from COVID-19 contraction. We basically then had to care for our members ourselves keeping in view the SOPs for COVID-19.

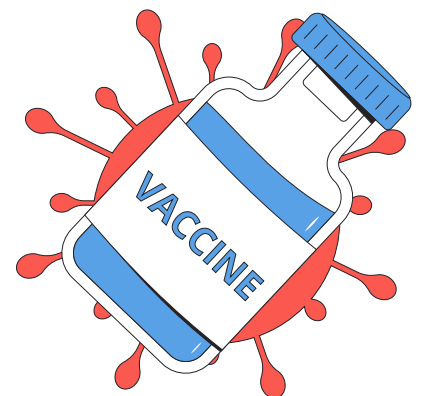


Another challenge that came to the surface when the vaccination process began was the absence of identity cards. Since they were required in order to avail the vaccine, a vast number of the TG community were left out from being vaccinated. For those who were having the cards, they faced another set of challenges by the support staff at the vaccination centers that the facility only had spaces for male and females.

## Was there vaccine hesitancy observed in the transgender community, if so what was the reason?

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The transgender community was reluctant to get their COVID-19 vaccination done because of different rumors that were spreading, such as that the recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine would die within two years after taking the vaccine. Understanding the importance of vaccines and the repercussions in vaccine delay, along with my organization, I took the initiative to create awareness among the TG community to counter such conspiracies being spread about COVID vaccines, acquire their identity cards and went together as a group to attain the COVID-19 vaccine.





**What were some of the challenges the transgender community faced in getting covid-19 vaccination and what were the steps to overcome those challenges? What was the procedure of COVID-19 vaccine for the transgender community?**

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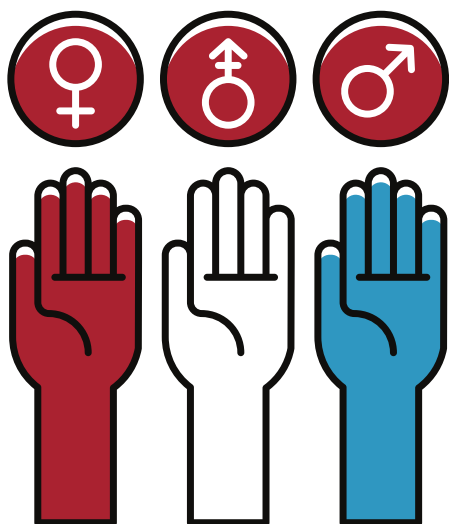
As mentioned before, there were a number of challenges that transgender community faced in getting COVID-19 vaccination. However, we tried our best to educate our people so that they can fight for their rights. We also conducted a meeting with doctors and health care staff as well. We gave them an application and requested them to arrange a vaccination camp for our community.

**According to your knowledge, how many people from transgender community got their vaccinations done?**

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According to my knowledge, around 60% of transgender community has got their vaccination done, including both doses; while the remaining 40% have not been vaccinated yet. The reason lies that they are facing challenges in attaining the ID cards and a few others have a different citizenship.

The NADRA personnel are neither cooperating nor providing support on how our members can get their cards.



**Have there have been any specific support mechanisms developed by the KP government to facilitate marginalized segments including transgender community?**

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There have not been any specific support mechanisms developed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to facilitate marginalized segments including the transgender community. They did not provide any support nor came to visit our dera's when we were in most need. Only we were the ones who supported our community.

**Any particular awareness session regarding COVID-19 that has been arranged for you?**

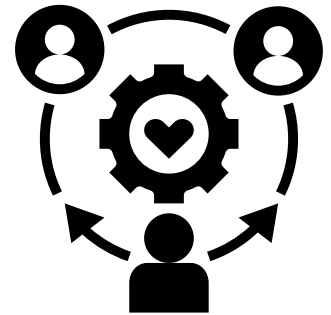
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Yes, the private sector contacted me and gave me sessions regarding covid-19. After learning from them I transferred that knowledge to my community.

**Do you have any suggestions for the government to improve the support mechanism for transgender community during such emergencies?**

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Speaking as a member of the transgender community, we want the government as well as the private sector to please keep the transgender community a part of any response/ implementation plan during such pandemics, natural disasters or future emergencies. We always remain neglected and absent from any such support or any such guidance that the government provides to its citizens.



I would like to mention here that in regards to a mini survey conducted in KP to identify the number of transgenders in order to provide relief to the transgender community suffering silently due to lockdown, ration packages were distributed among the community members with the help of government and read foundation funds. We got to know that there are more than 20,000 transgenders living in KPK. And these are those identified having ID cards, many more remain and were neglected from the aid.

They have always been suffering in such situations. The government should come forward and help the transgender community in getting the members registered so remaining members can obtain the support and get their vaccination process completed as soon as possible. In addition, the government can support in and help us get vaccinated in a smooth manner by establishing a separate vaccination center for the transgender community, develop and allocate a separate cash support program just like those for the underprivileged communities to our members can fulfil their basic needs during such difficult situations, and open up towards inclusive healthcare services which can benefit not only transgender communities but all members of the society.



**Do you want to share any message or advice with your own community members for fighting covid in a better way?**

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I want to request from my community to please carefully listen and act upon SOPs that the government shares, because it's for our own benefit. So please accept it and get your vaccines as early as you can. Please remember to keep distance, wear masks, keep your surroundings clean and love your life because you only live once.







## VACCINATION CENTRES

### ➤ MARDAN

➤ **DHQ Hospital Mardan**  
03005921350

➤ **Mardan Medical Complex, Mardan**  
03339298814

### ➤ NOWSHERA

➤ **Cat D Hospital, Manki Sharif**  
03028318682

➤ **District Head Quarter Hospital Nowshera**  
03005712208

### ➤ PESHAWAR

➤ **Hayat Abad Medical Complex Hayatabad**  
03005669116

➤ **Khyber Teaching Hospital University Town**  
03339677767