

VACCINE MIS/DISINFORMATION

WEEKLY REPORT

This week's Mis/Disinformation report looks into social media conversation driven by: new changes in mandates, questions around vaccine effectiveness and general hesitancy.

03 February Summary:

TOP STORY

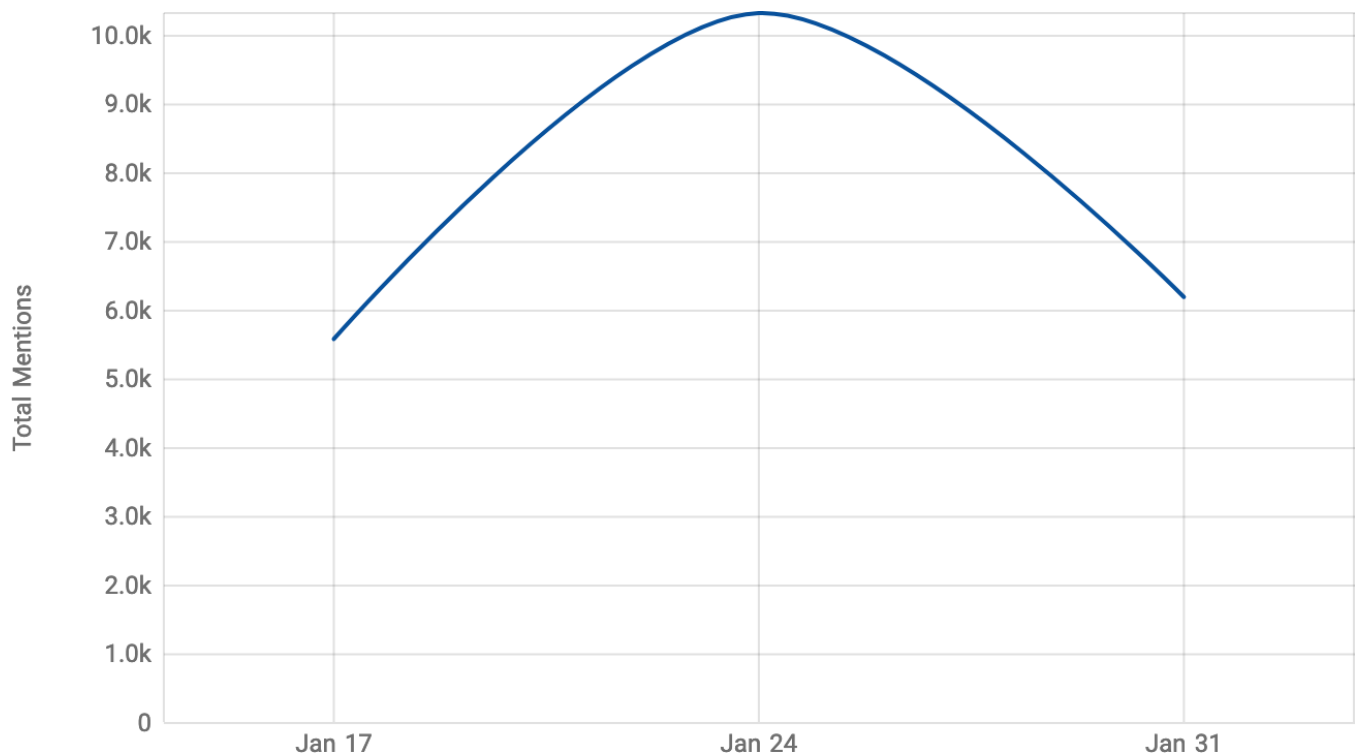
- Reactions to the CCMA's first and second rulings

OTHER TRENDING TOPICS

- CGE statement on vaccination and women's health
- Vaccine mandates and vaccine effectiveness questioned
- Claims suggesting that vaccines are not driven by science

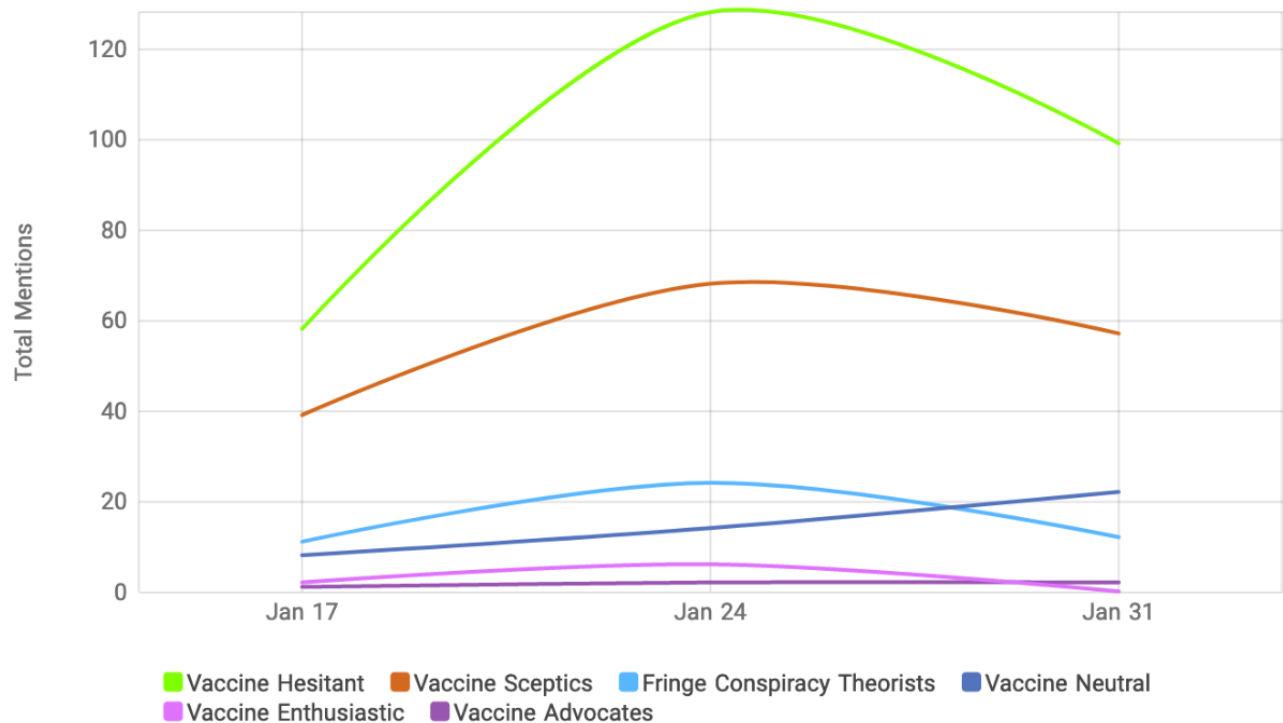
Part 1

Over the last week, Twitter conversations regarding the COVID-19 vaccine garnered considerable traction in terms of volume. See the graph below:

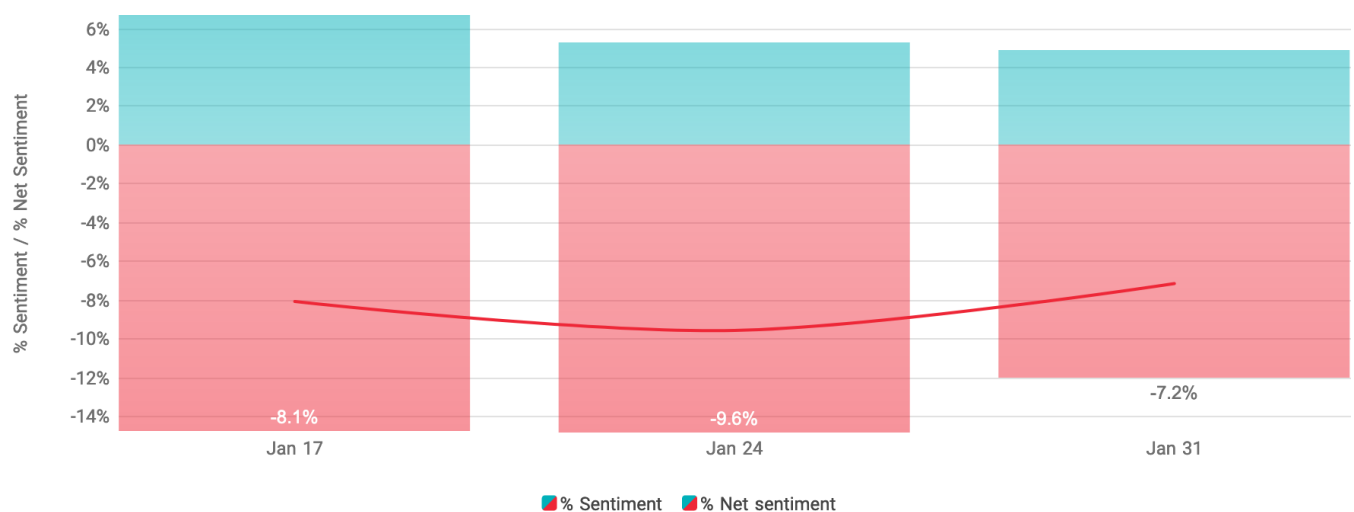


The graph below illustrates the different tones of the Twitter online conversation according to our vaccine trust spectrum. As has been for the past few weeks, vaccine hesitancy and vaccine

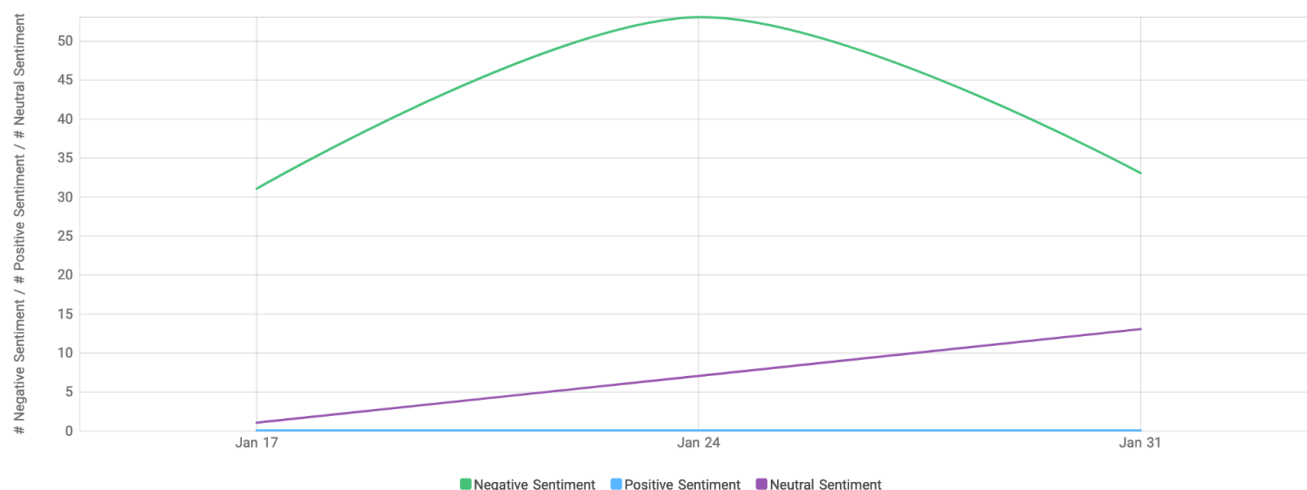
skepticism have been the most prominent. Vaccine advocates and vaccine enthusiasts are right at the bottom:



The graph below shows the overall net sentiment of mentions over the last week. The blue indicates positive sentiments and the red indicates negative sentiments. As has been for the last month, sentiments over this period have been in the negative zone:



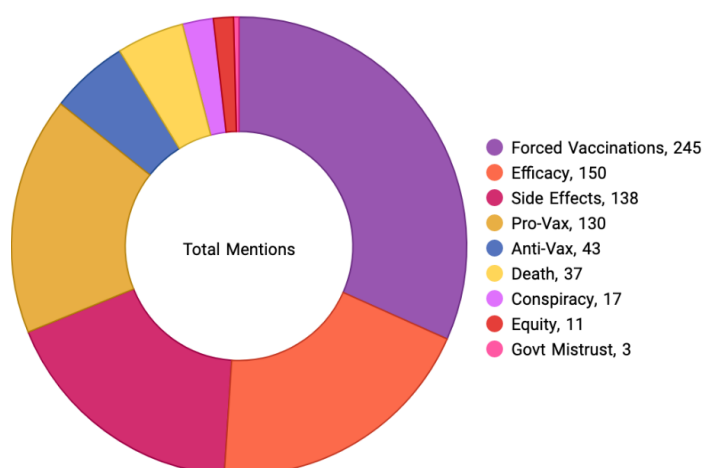
The graph below is another example of this. The green line represents negative sentiment:



This table below goes even further by unpacking a variety of factors such as engagement, opportunities to see, sentiment etc. Draw your attention to volume column; here you clearly see that the top three drivers in volume are vaccine hesitancy, vaccine skepticism and fringe conspiracy theories:

	Volume	Engagement	OTS	Sentiment	Authors	Followers	Conversations	Engagement Rate
Vaccine Hesitant	51.3%	39	1 242 304	-47.0%	222	218 337	247	0.1
Vaccine Sceptics	29.9%	14	3 441 869	-99.4%	136	1 754 742	158	0.1
Fringe Conspiracy Theorists	8.6%	12	278 184	-100.0%	41	153 368	46	0.3
Vaccine Neutral	7.9%	3	815 693	-11.4%	43	510 601	36	0.1
Vaccine Enthusiastic	1.4%	0	1 089	100.0%	8	891	8	0.0
Vaccine Advocates	0.9%	0	3 601	100.0%	5	1 972	4	0.0

And lastly, the figure below gives some insights into the kind of rhetoric being used online:



**Suggested Responses:**

- *The CCMA ruling is trying to provide a protection against the spread of the covid 19, however it is necessary to acknowledge that in a case of a refusal to vaccinated an individuals can provide sufficient proof that the vaccine can present a risk to them and in a case of a dispute, matters can be brought in front of a judiciary entity.*

This echoed in the [post](#) below sharing a news article on the issue:



Suggested Responses:

- *In a case of a major dispute in the term of your contract with the company, a judiciary system is in place to decide if whether the employee or the employer is right*

Sharing further details on this issue, the [thread](#) below gained traction with many retweeting and commenting against the CCMA's ruling:



The screenshot shows a Twitter thread by user Sbu Dube (@sibudube) dated Jan 28. The thread consists of three tweets. The first tweet discusses a CCMA case where refusal to grant an employee access to the workplace for refusing vaccination or submitting a weekly COVID-19 test is considered a fair suspension. It has 11 replies, 389 retweets, and 390 likes. The second tweet mentions a case where an employee was instructed to return to work only after vaccination or a weekly COVID-19 test. It has 1 reply, 17 retweets, and 22 likes. The third tweet is a text-based summary of the situation involving Sasol and Ndaka Security, stating that an employee refused vaccination and weekly tests. The thread has a total of 18 retweets, 1 quote tweet, and 15 likes. The tweets were posted at 10:57 AM on Jan 28, 2022, via the Twitter Web App.

Sbu Dube @sibudube · Jan 28

In another CCMA case it has been found that refusal to grant an employee access to the workplace for refusing to be vaccinated or submit a weekly #COVID19 test amounts to a fair suspension.

11 389 390

Sbu Dube @sibudube · Jan 28

In Kok vs Ndaka Security and Services the employee was instructed to only return to work once he has been vaccinated or he should submit a weekly Covid19 test.

1 17 22

Sbu Dube @sibudube

This came about as Sasol, the employer's client, requires a 100% vaccination rate. Ndaka Security operates from Sasol's site. Kok refused to get vaccinated and to continue submitting weekly Covid tests as he was required to pay for them.

10:57 AM · Jan 28, 2022 · Twitter Web App

18 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 15 Likes

Influential organisations also weighed in on the issue. COSATU, the biggest trade union in South Africa, faulted the government for not providing clear legislation for labour regarding vaccine mandates that make jobs compulsory. See [tweet](#):



The screenshot shows a tweet from SAfm news (@SAfmnews) dated Jan 27, 2022. The tweet text states that COSATU has accused the government of failing to ensure clear legislation is enacted regarding mandatory vaccination, following a CCMA dismissal of an employee of Gold Rush Group who was fired for not being vaccinated against COVID-19. The tweet includes the hashtag #sabcnews. It has 12 retweets, 1 quote tweet, and 39 likes. The tweet was posted at 8:16 AM on Jan 27, 2022, via the Twitter Web App.

SAfm news @SAfmnews

COSATU has accused government of failing to ensure clear legislation is enacted with regard to mandatory vaccination. This after the CCMA dismissed an application of an employee of Gold Rush Group after she was fired for opting not to be vaccinated against COVID-19 #sabcnews

8:16 AM · Jan 27, 2022 · Twitter Web App

12 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 39 Likes

Suggested Responses:

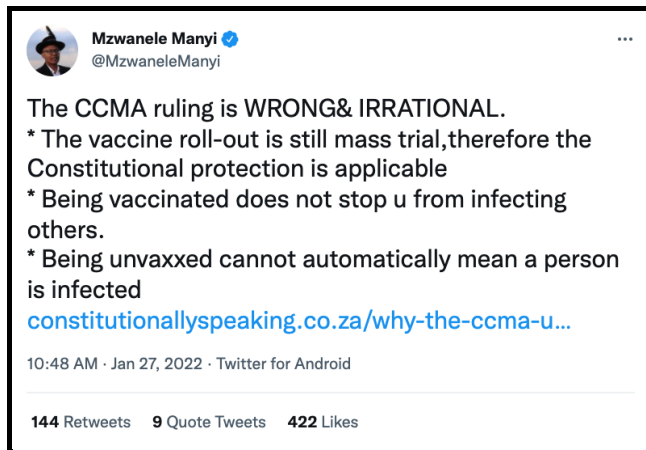
- *If I recall correctly, the Government has issued directives on mandatory vaccination in workplaces. These directives have within them a set of rules or guidelines which employers must follow prior to enacting a mandate policy. As far as I can read, both employers who came before the CCMA went the extra mile in ensuring due process was followed. What do you think?*

Similarly, many have rejected the CCMA's ruling on the basis of claims indicating that the vaccine is ineffective. See [comment](#) to the op-ed below:

**Suggested Responses:**

- *It is true that natural immunity provides good immunity but the vaccine allows one to have this immunity without the risk of falling really sick or in the worst case scenario dying.*
- *The data is very clear, post-vaccinated countries have seen a remarkable decline in Covid-19 mortality. If our natural immunity was sufficient, there would not have been a need for lockdown and all the Covid-19 protocols. We have a safe vaccine that has been proven to reduce mortality rate. Should we not use it?*

As seen in the [tweet](#) below, the fallout from the CCMA's ruling extends to others who suggest that the constitution needs to protect employees who do not want to be vaccinated:



Suggested Responses:

- *It is true that natural immunity provides good immunity but the vaccine allows one to have this immunity without the risk of falling really sick or in the worst case scenario dying.*
- *The data is very clear, post-vaccinated countries have seen a remarkable decline in Covid-19 mortality. If our natural immunity was sufficient, there would not have been a need for lockdown and all the Covid-19 protocols. We have a safe vaccine that has been proven to reduce mortality rate. Should we not use it?*

Conversely, others seem to understand that the CCMA acted in accordance with what is appropriate. The [post](#) below shares a caption which seemingly mocks anti-vaxxers and the misinformation spreading across social media:



Suggested Responses:

- *Yes, the CCMA took a hard stance against 'self-research' and reliance on misinformation. The decision is welcomed!*

CGE statement on vaccination and women's health

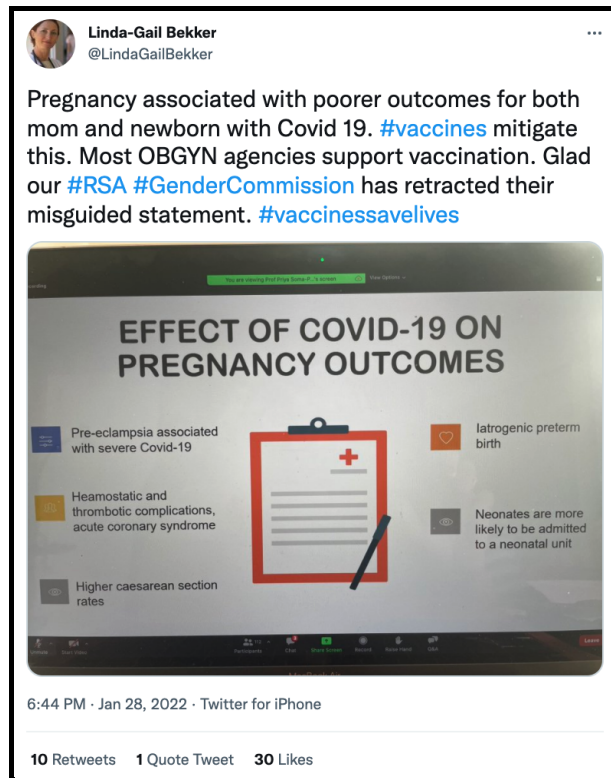
The Commission for Gender Equality South Africa (CGE) recently made a statement alleging that the vaccination has negative consequences on women's sexual and reproductive health. This gained considerable traction online thus causing some controversy.

The CGE has since retracted that statement. Subsequently, this also caused more hesitancy online with some claiming that the COVID vaccine rollout is "political". See [tweet](#) below:

**Suggested Responses:**

- *Very true! Bad news always spreads faster than good news or the apology. A sky news anchor recently made the same mistake. We should all endeavour to be careful and precise when talking about Covid-19 or the vaccine.*

Conversely, others welcomed the CGE's statement retraction by [citing](#) the positives of the vaccine for pregnant women.



Vaccine mandates and vaccine effectiveness questioned

The anti-vaxxer movement remains steadfast as is often championed by organised movements such as the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) and more.

The [tweet](#) below argues that mandates need to be done away with:



Suggested Responses:

- *The jabs are not pointless and while the vaccine does not prevent transmission with Omicron, it still does prevent severe hospitalization and death from all Covid-19 variants. Do you agree?*

The same ACDP also [suggested](#) that the vaccine is money-making scheme against the most vulnerable:

**Suggested Responses:**

- *Incentives are a normal part of everyday life. An incentive to get a vaccine that is safe and effective should be welcomed, not criticized.*

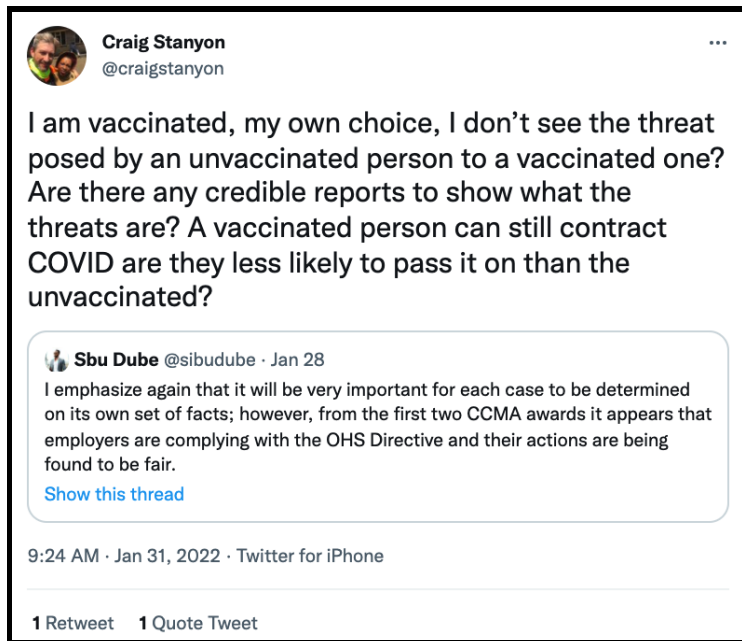
Other anti-vaxxers [continue](#) to purport alternatives such as ivermectin:



Suggested Responses:

- *Where does this 'sudden death' side effect come from? I've not read about it in any study nor publication, nor has such a thing ever been reported. Further, the studies on ivermectin are sketchy - if it works, great. But we have a **safe and effective** vaccine that does the same thing without the need to get infected.*

Furthermore, because the vaccine does not guarantee immunity or transmission, many continue to suggest that it should not be mandatory. See the [tweet](#) below:

**Suggested Responses:**

- *While the vaccine does not provide complete immunization, it does still provide **some**. So the unvaccinated are more likely to pass on the virus. However, the reason behind vaccination is to drive severe illness and deaths down, these are a threat to any business or employment place and the individual themselves*

Lastly, and more concerningly, others believe conspiracy theories. The [tweet](#) below suggests that the vaccine turns people into “transhumans”:



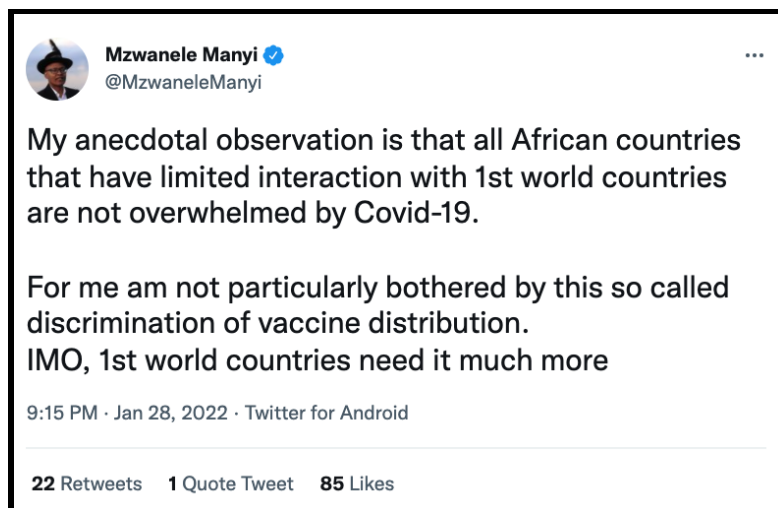
Suggested Responses:

- *The study conducted which showed that the vaccine contains nanotechnology has repeatedly been shown to be false, biased and followed a poor methodology. Do you really believe the vaccine contains nanotechnology?*

Claims suggesting that vaccines are not driven by science

Numerous anti-vaxxers have cited that the vaccine is not driven by scientific evidence.

The [tweet](#) below suggests that COVID19 is a “1st world” problem that does not affect Africa.



Suggested Responses:

- *South Africa's hospitals were overwhelmed multiple times. Perhaps we should all rely less on anecdotal evidence and on accurate data instead? What do you think?*

The same account mocked those who take the vaccine by suggesting that they are not following science. See [tweet](#) below:

**Suggested Responses:**

- *I have unwavering faith that the science behind this vaccine will deliver us from this Pandemic. Can I get an Amen?*