

VACCINE MIS/DISINFORMATION

WEEKLY REPORT

This week's Mis/Disinformation report looks into social media conversations from two platforms - Facebook and Twitter. Conversations were largely driven by developments in vaccine mandates and regulations, unverified claims which lead to misinformation, conspiracy theories and fear.

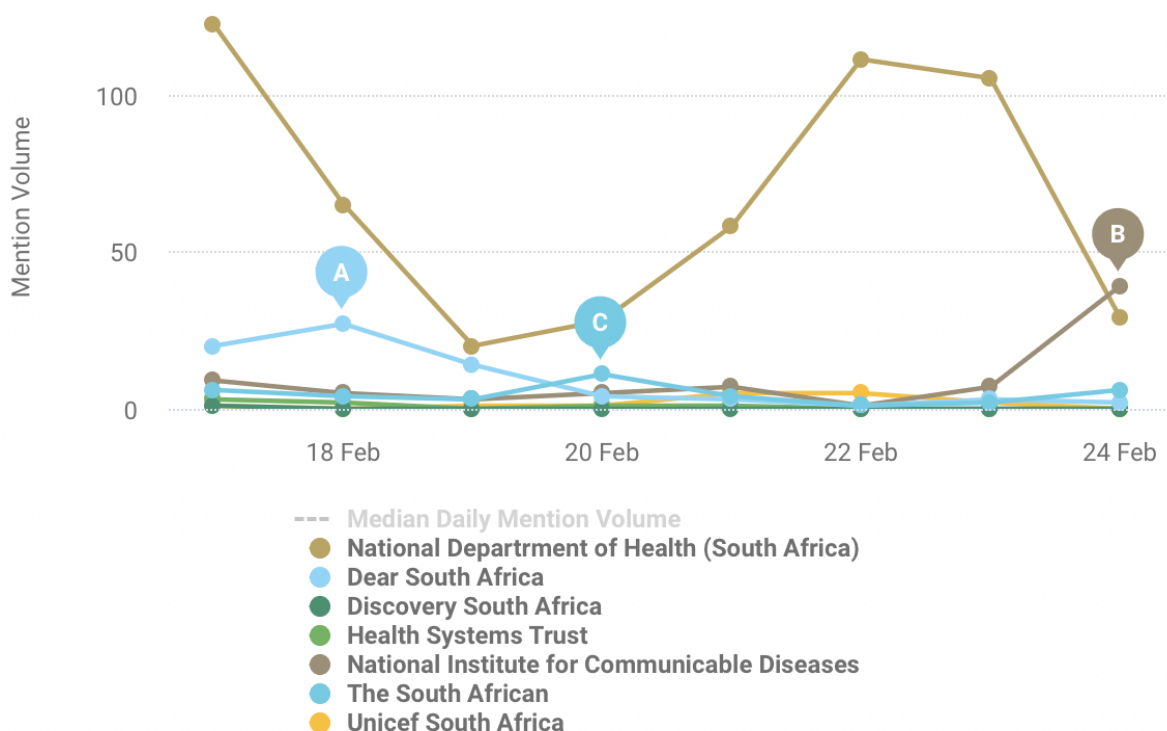
24 February Summary:

- Top 3 Facebook posts
- Controversial views around vaccines mandates
- Booster shot rollout
- Intellectual property and the vaccine
- Who profits from the vaccine?
- Conspiracy theories about the vaccines

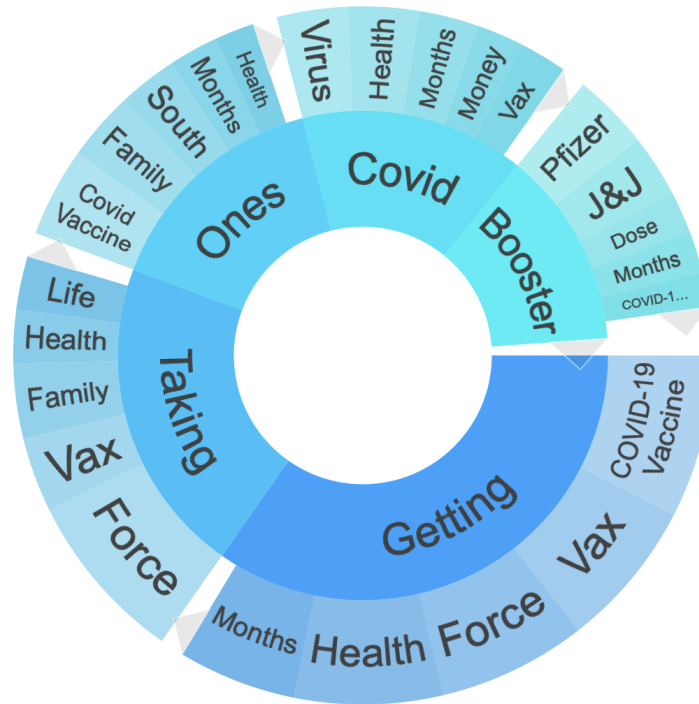
Part 1

Facebook

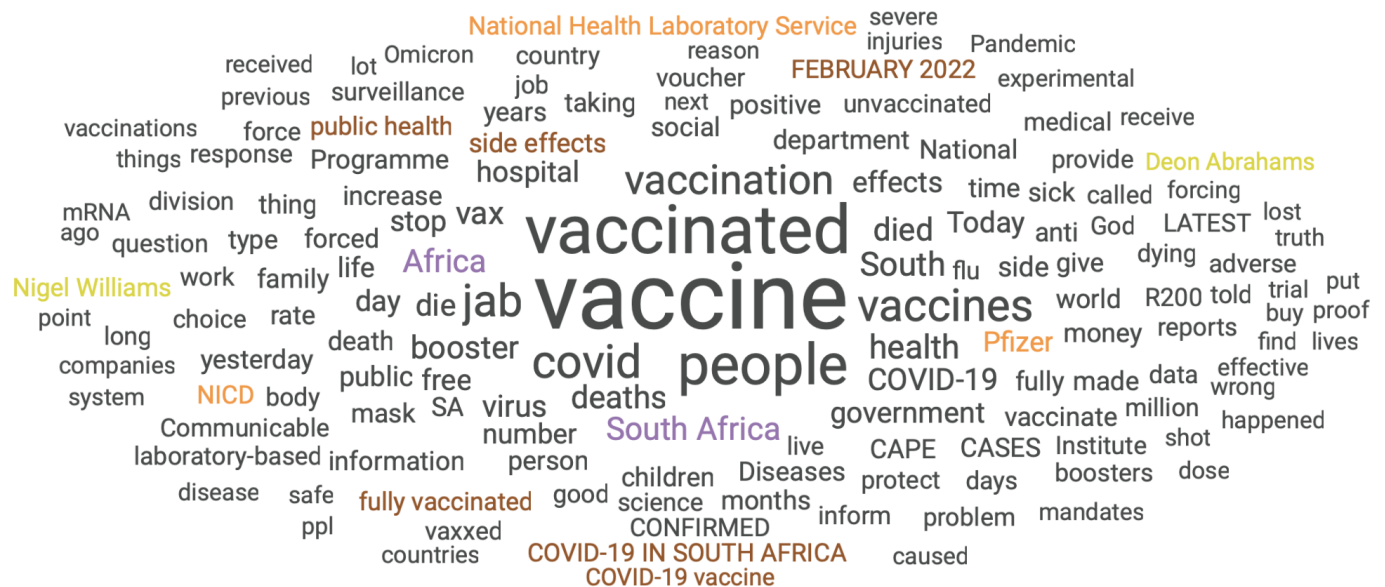
Our Facebook data analysis tracks five key pages as seen below. The graph shows the Mention Volume of the last week. It also indicates peaks in conversations as indicated by alphabets:



Different themes were picked up during analysis. Below is the topics wheel which covers conversations over the last week:



Below are two word clouds which depicts a range of attitudes towards the vaccine. These are the top topics over this past week:

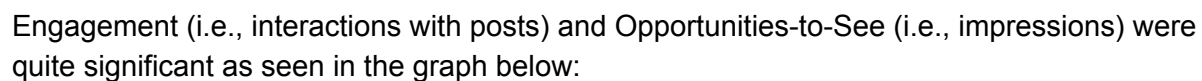


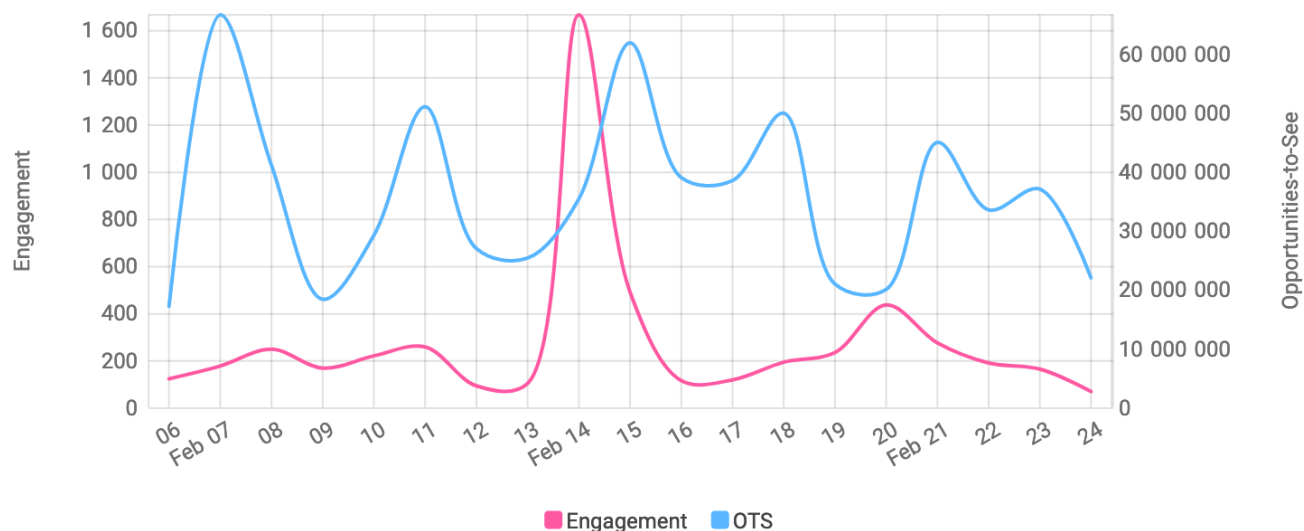
● Locations
 ● Organizations
 ● People
 ● Phrases
 ● Keywords

And lastly, these are the top *trending* topics of the past week:

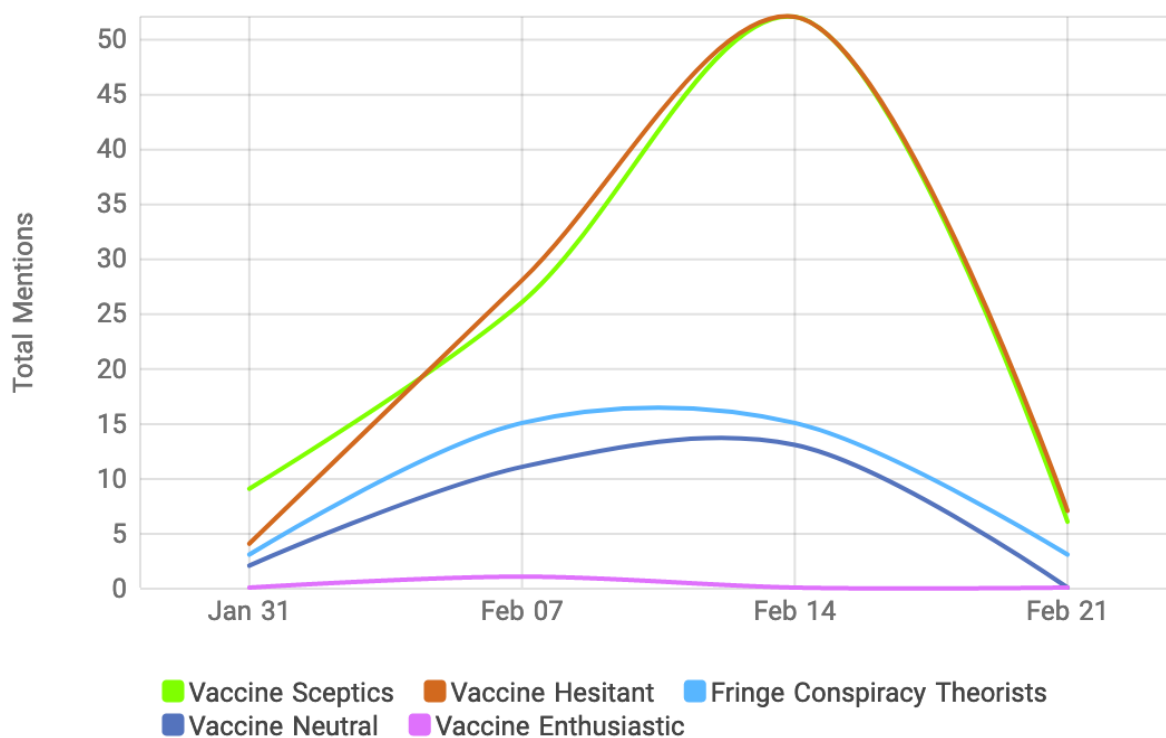


As per usual, our analysis also looked into Twitter conversations regarding the COVID-19 over the last week. The graph below shows that vaccine conversations remained steady in terms of volume:

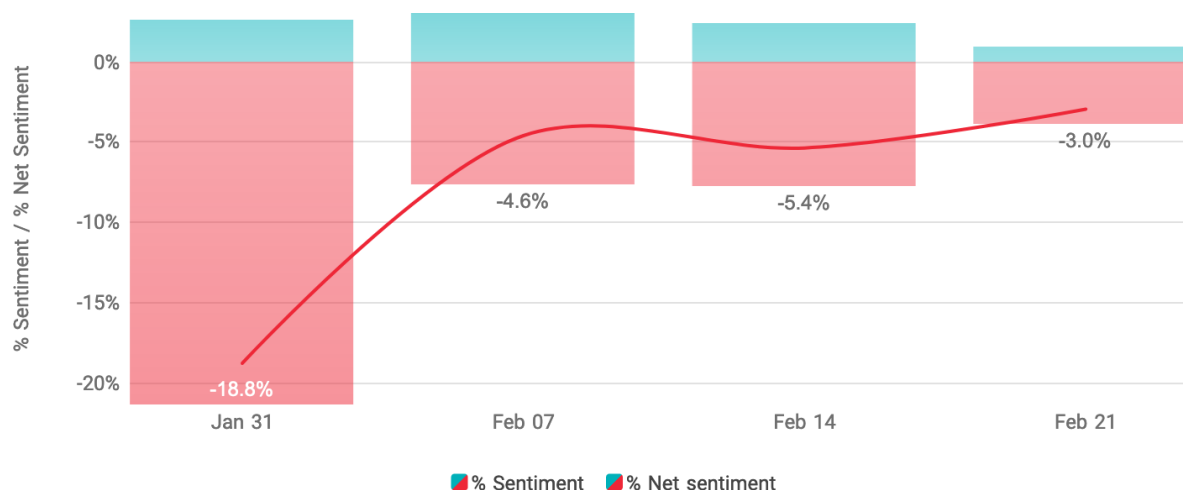




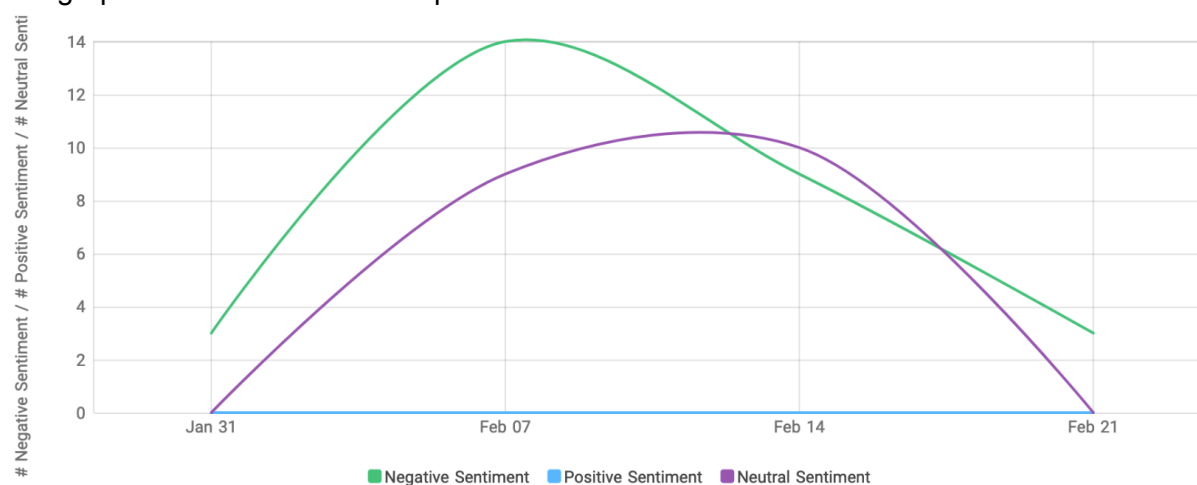
The graph below illustrates the different tones of the Twitter online conversation according to our vaccine trust spectrum:



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:

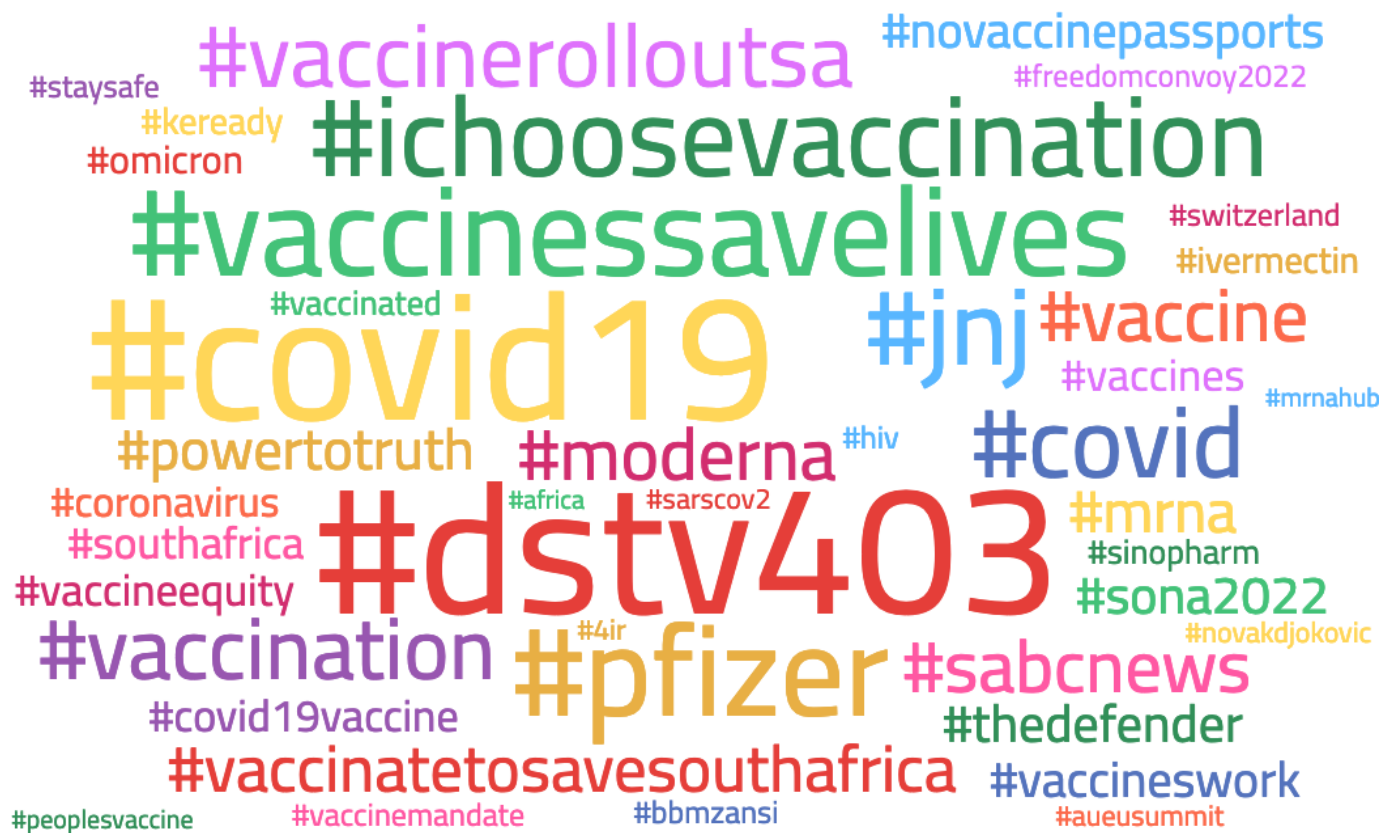


This table below goes even further by unpacking a variety of factors such as engagement, opportunities to see, sentiment etc. Draw your attention to volume column; here you clearly see that the top three drivers in volume are vaccine hesitancy, vaccine skepticism and fringe conspiracy theories:

	Volume	Engagement	OTS	Sentiment	Authors	Followers	Conversations	Engagement Rate
Vaccine Sceptics	37.7% <div></div>	6	4 910 456	-100.0%	88	4 476 732	71	0.1
Vaccine Hesitant	36.8% <div></div>	3	287 970	-57.1%	85	85 369	69	0.0
Fringe Conspiracy Theorists	14.6% <div></div>	3	49 945	-97.2%	35	11 294	35	0.1
Vaccine Neutral	10.5% <div></div>	0	1 116 755	0.0%	26	1 071 603	20	0.0
Vaccine Enthusiastic	0.4% <div></div>	0	0	100.0%	1	0	1	0.0

Part 2

Recent online conversations around the vaccine have demonstrated a range of attitudes towards the vaccine - both against and pro-vaccine. See the word cloud below:



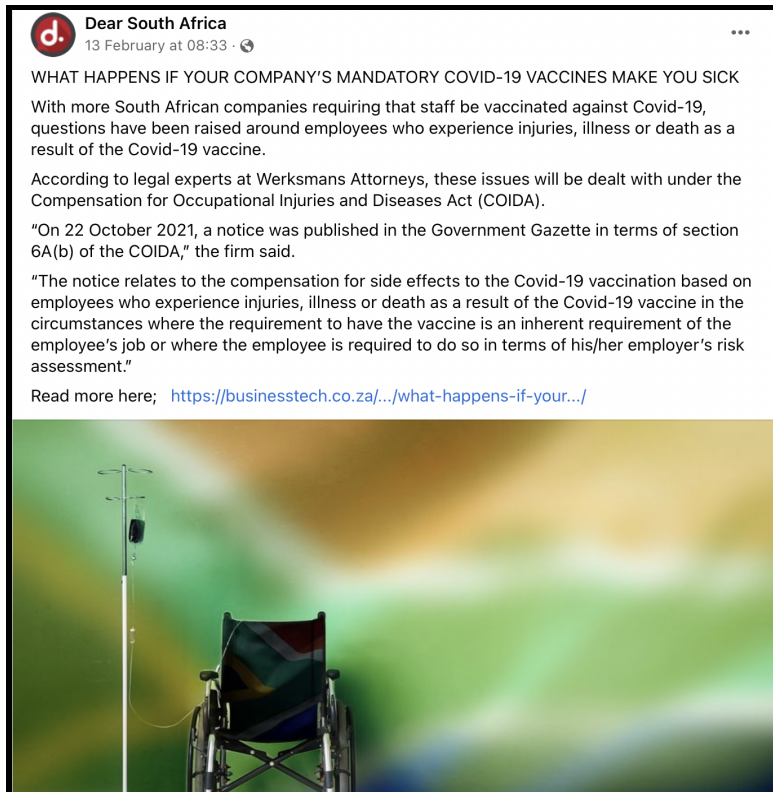
As discussed in Part 1, recent online conversations have been largely driven by vaccine hesitancy and vaccine skepticism. This has been a consistent trend over the last few weeks.

This section will unpack some of the top trending issues that were picked up by our analysts. These topics will also be accompanied by dialogue facilitation suggestions highlighted in *italics*:

Top 3 Facebook posts

Expressions of vaccine hesitancy and skepticism are quite prominent amongst Facebook posts and comments. This subsection will share three posts and selected comments to highlight these issues:

This Dear South Africa [post](#) shared information regarding company regulations regarding the vaccine:



User comment 1:

- "It's an experimental mRNA gene changing injection it's not a vaccine. Never been trialed on Humans YOU ARE THE EXPERIMENT, no liability from big evil Pharma don't go near it 🙄🙄"

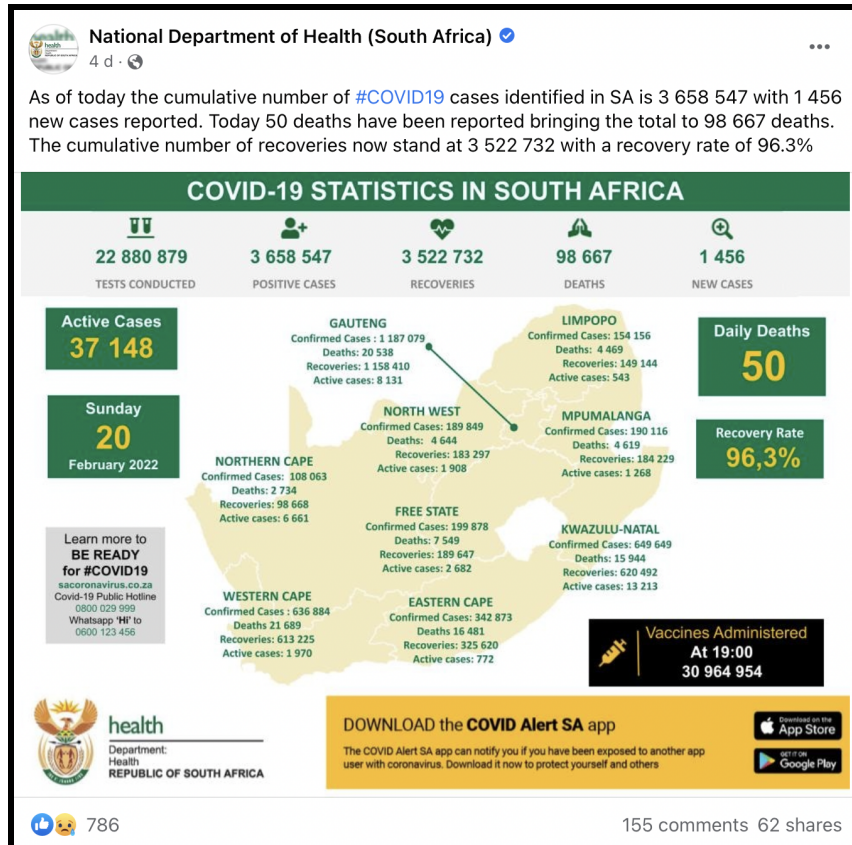
User comment 2:

- "In normal times this poison clotshot would have been removed. Genocide is what this is, millions are injured and dying 🙄🙄🙄🙄 But hey that's the agenda for all to see if ppl would only start researching instead of listening to MSM"

Suggested dialogue response:

- I am curious when you say millions are dying, dying from the covid that's for sure and why do you call it poison clotshot ?

This National Department of Health [shared](#) an update containing statistics related to COVID-19:



User comment 1:

- “Ladies and gentlemen Let's be realistic. If covid was a deadly disease why shouldn't the vaccines be mandatory in the first place when the disease was still young???? 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔 We live in a society where they keep cures a secret and sell medication for huge profits. Whatever killed our ancestors might as well kill us. Let's be informed and Unite...”

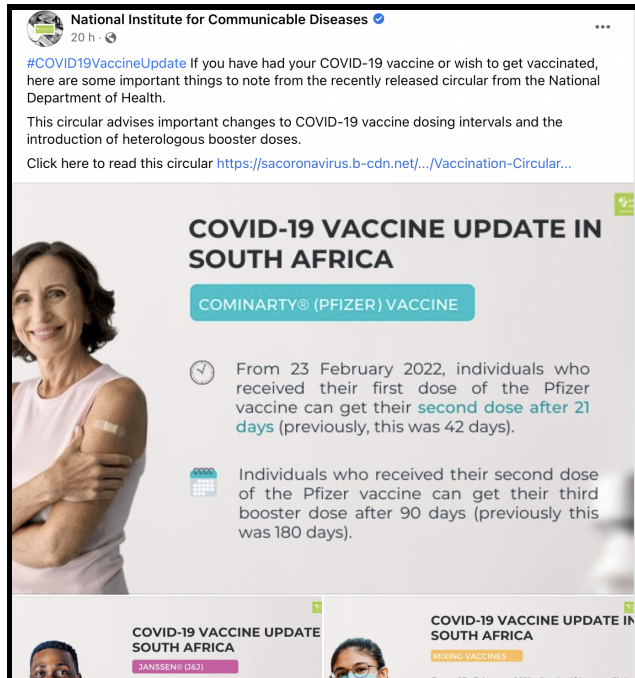
User comment 2:

- “dont take the vaccine! all the people that are vaccinated are chipped. please do yourself a favour and take a coin and stick it to ur injection where u were vaxxed.”

Suggested dialogue response

- Weirdly I tried it after getting my jab and the coin dropped immediately, i think people should try that for themselves and see that the vaccine is not what they read on social media.

The National Institute of of Communicable Diseases [shared](#) information related to new vaccine regulations and booster shots:



User comment 1:

- "I'm not an anti vaxxer but is it still necessary to keep vaccinating people with all the data we now have on the behaviour of the virus?:"

Controversial views around vaccine mandates

The SACP leader made a controversial statement when comparing vaccine mandates to rape as seen in this [tweet](#):



Suggested dialogue responses:

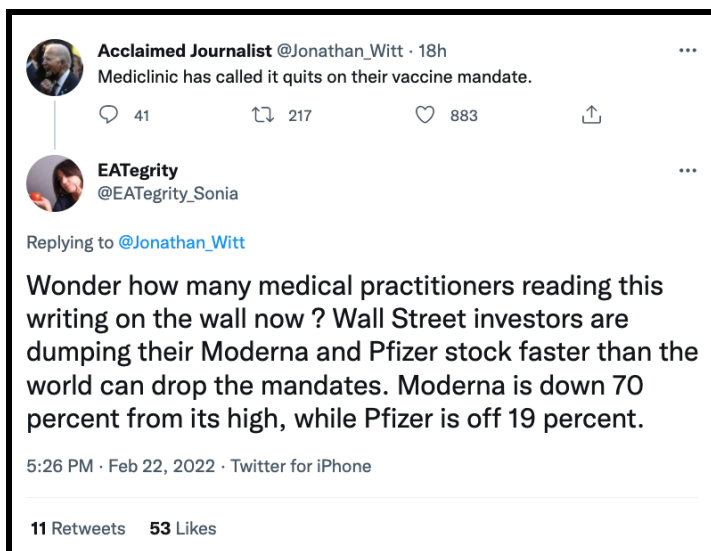
- *How can one compare rape to a vaccine? Were you raped when your parents took you for measles and polio vaccines when you were a baby?*
- *This statement is extremely ignorant and problematic.*

The University of the Free State has come under fire from students who are against vaccine mandates as seen in this [post](#):

**Suggested dialogue responses:**

- *The university should respond to students. It's their right to know what the final decision is. However, students should respect the Institutions policy and do what is necessary to protect others from covid-19.*

As seen in this [exchange](#), recent news of pharmaceutical executives dumping their stocks and developments in the health sector have led to uncertainty and speculation:

**Suggested dialogue responses:**

- *What does the stock market have to do with the medical practitioners? Their first priority is to render appropriate medical attention to their patients.*

Booster shot rollout

Recently, the government announced amendments to the period between vaccine doses and booster shots too. See [tweet](#):

Eyewitness News @ewnupdates

Government has shortened the wait between COVID vaccine doses. Here's how the vaccinations will be administered.

VACCINATION PROGRAMME CHANGES
Effective from 23 February.

PFIZER	J&J
First dose	One dose
21-day interval (minimum)	
Second dose	
90-day interval (minimum)	60-day interval (minimum)
Pfizer OR J&J booster	Pfizer OR J&J booster

11:18 AM · Feb 21, 2022 · Twitter for Android

5 Retweets 2 Quote Tweets 18 Likes

Suggested dialogue responses:

- *I think those measures have been taken to prevent further covid 19 infection waves.*

Rumors about vaccine (in)effectiveness continue to be driven by skeptics. An example of this can be seen in the [tweet](#) below:

Dr Nathi Mdladla @drnathimdladla

Had a chat with an “expert” and someone who advises SAHPRA the other day about the vaccines currently being rolled out in SA - they r recently boosted 😏. They didn’t know or realise that the current vaccines have not been updated since the alpha variant 🤔! Same spike protein 🧑🏿

10:06 PM · Feb 21, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

213 Retweets 10 Quote Tweets 445 Likes

Suggested dialogue response:

- Share the proof on this please.
- Which vaccine are you talking about specifically?

Intellectual property and the vaccine

Conversations about the intellectual property and ownership rights of the vaccine have gained some traction amongst South African audiences. This [tweet](#) speaks to ongoing developments:



Suggested dialogue responses:

- *I don't see any harm in having a deadline for discussions such as these.*

Who profits from the vaccine?

The topic of vaccine profiteers has often led to unverified claims. See [tweet](#):



Suggested dialogue responses:

- *Where is the proof that the prime minister gets profits from the jabs?*
- *Just a reminder that there are entities like COVAX who provide free vaccines to countries. I don't see how they are making money out of that one, but you can share proof of what you are claiming if you don't mind.*

Conspiracy theories about the vaccine

Conspiracy theories have continued to make the rounds on social media. This [post](#) suggests that journalists are funded by Bill Gates and that the COVID-19 vaccine is gene therapy:

**Suggested dialogue responses:**

- *Any proof of that?*

Tweeted by the same author, this [post](#) shares similar sentiment:



Suggested dialogue responses:

- Share more please. In what ways have we “been manipulated by the COVID science”?
- I don’t think the rules of science have been changed. It is true the vaccine was developed in a fast manner, but guidelines and checks still have been respected.