

Vaccine misinformation in Papua New Guinea draws on distrust of authorities | First Draft

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Papua New Guinea (PNG)'s response to Covid-19 is facing a perfect storm. There are too few trained medical staff, supplies are scarce and virus cases are up, nearly doubling in the past week. Vaccine hesitancy, compounded by online misinformation, threatens to further complicate the situation.

Neighboring Australia and the World Health Organization (WHO)'s COVAX initiative had offered PNG emergency vaccines in an attempt to curb the surge, but Australia's effort has been met with a viral claim that the 8,000 locally produced AstraZeneca vaccines the country donated were part of its plan to use Papua New Guineans as "guinea pigs."

This was just one example of a narrative surfaced by First Draft's research into vaccine hesitancy in Papua New Guinea, a complex phenomenon with many drivers: distrust in local authorities; fears of regional "victimization"; confusing public health messaging; and some medical workers' reluctance to get vaccinated. In social media posts from February and March, misleading claims drew on these attitudes. The result could hamper a vaccine rollout that has already encountered difficulties.

[...]

Source: [Vaccine misinformation in Papua New Guinea draws on distrust of authorities | First Draft](#)