



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT: COVID-19 Vaccine

Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, January 2024



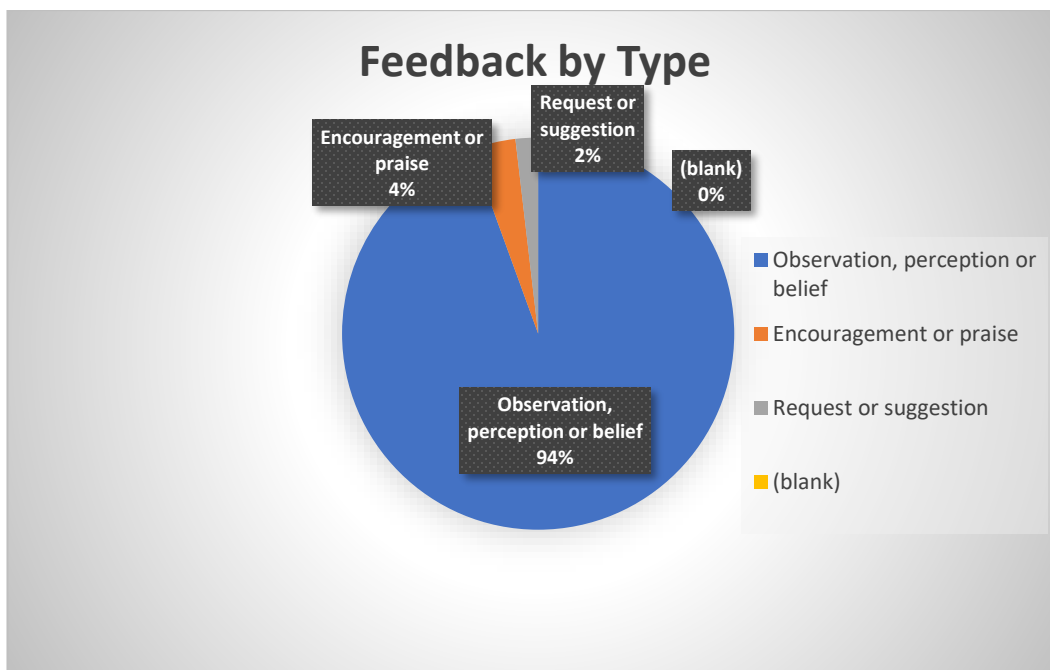
Country context:

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a country located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and numerous smaller islands. It shares the island of New Guinea with Indonesia to the west and is north of Australia.

The country has diverse cultures and languages, with over 800 spoken. Rich in natural resources like gold and oil, the country faces challenges in development, including poverty and limited access to healthcare. Its stunning landscapes, unique wildlife, and traditional customs make it a culturally vibrant yet complex nation.

Community Insights:

Community feedback considered in this report was collected between 06th – 07th of January, 2024 by Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, Madang Branch. All of the feedback were conducted through face-to-face interaction with the community members. Total number of feedback is 54 (36 Male & 18). The data that has been collected represents a limited number of community in respective districts and should be noted that data is not representative and has limitations.

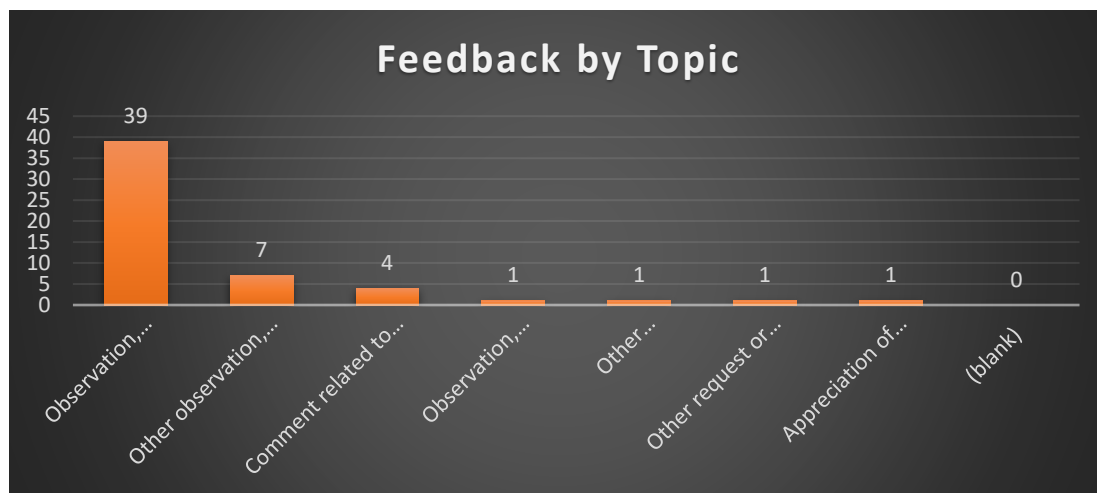


Total number of feedback (n=54)

In the data collated, 94% of the feedback type received from the interviewees were on; 'Observation, perception or belief'. The other 4% of the feedback data were on; 'Encouragement and praise – 3%' and 2% on the feedback type, "Request or Suggestion". The feedback interestingly indicates comments that were quite similar and most related to the COVID-19 vaccine but also on the COVID-19 virus. Some of these feedbacks were on:

- Lack of educational and informational awareness
- Religious beliefs
- Fear of death if they get vaccinated
- Belief that they are immune to the COVID-19 virus because not many were affected

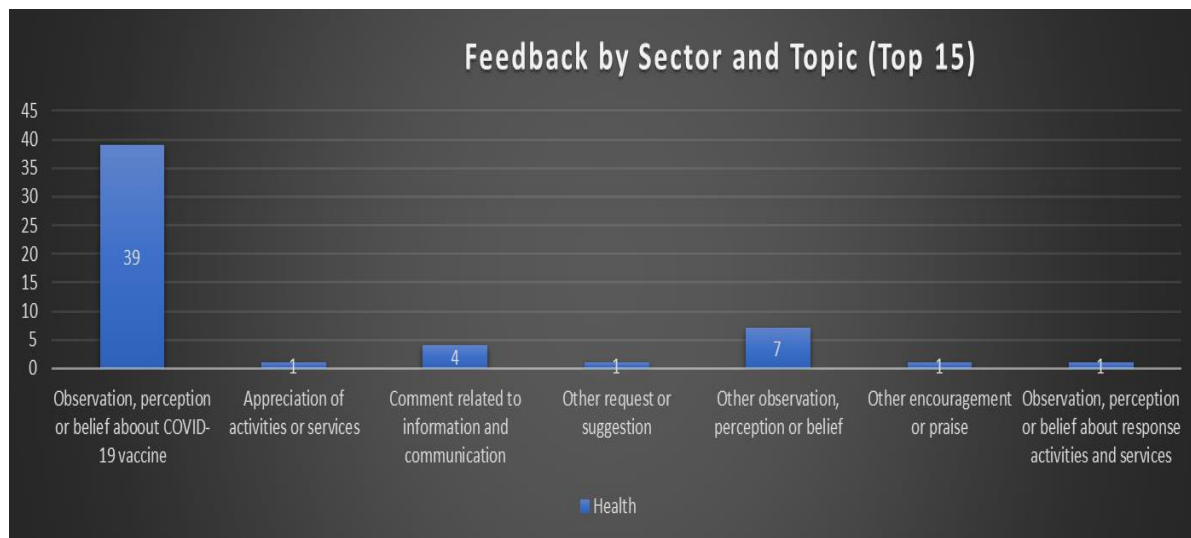
Most of the interviewees were hesitant to get vaccinated as outlined above but there were also a few positive comments, although they were not vaccinated, had identified the importance of getting vaccinated to protect themselves and their families.



Total number of feedback (n=54)

Feedback by sector and topic:

All feedbacks were related to the Health sector, since the survey is related to COVID19. All of the feedback was done through face-to-face interactions. Most of the feedback collected were on the topic, "Observation, perception or belief" which entailed more about people observation, what they heard which had an influence on decision making and another common identified feedback was around the lack of awareness raising especially around the COVID19 vaccine.

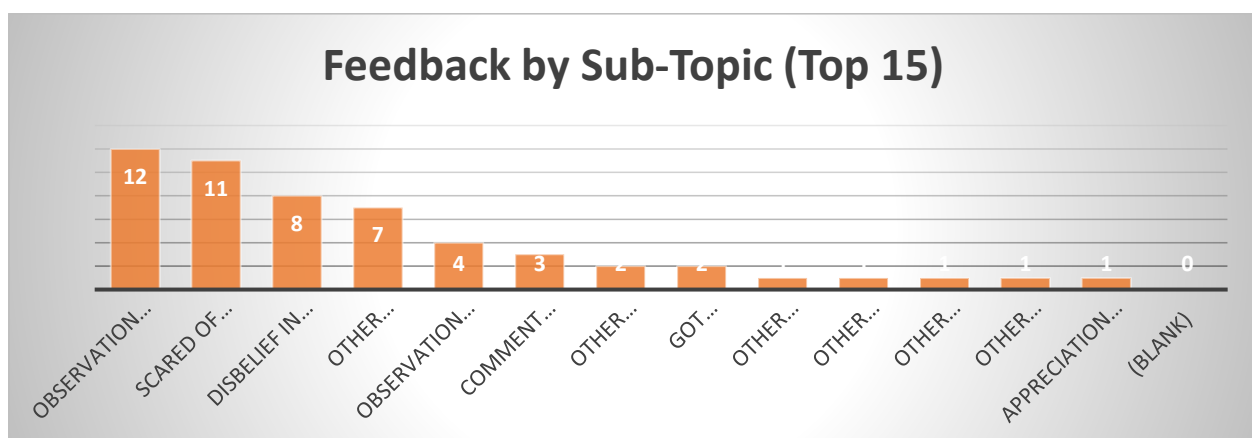


Total number of feedback (n=54)

Feedback by subtopic:

As the feedback were further analyzed into subtopics, the data showed interesting analysis indicating, each interviewees perception and observations feedbacks were based on common areas that was mainly on information that were shared, heard or seen and also the lack of awareness in the communities. That had a greater impact towards vaccine hesitancy amongst people.

Many mentioned that they were scared or afraid to take the vaccine because of the stories they heard and a few alleged deaths related information which many think was caused by the vaccine which were given. And a few related feedbacks were on religious beliefs that discouraged people to take the vaccine.



Total number of feedback (n=54)

Examples of positive and negative feedback received:

Positive feedbacks:

" In my opinion COVID19 vaccine is a good thing that has helped to stop or prevent COVID19. But awareness is lacking so that caused a lot of people to be afraid of taking the vaccine. There should be soon awareness in the villages, especially as many lack information and are afraid to take it compared to the awareness, but I believe that the vaccine is a good thing. I would get vaccinated if asked. I see that if you do not get vaccinated, you'd be restricted from things like getting a job or travelling overseas. ."
(Male, age 18-29, Madang branch, PNG)

" He thinks that its good for people to take vaccine to protect them from COVID19."
(Male, age 40-49, Madang branch, PNG)

"Generally speaking, I think the COVID10 vaccination campaign was quite successful here in Madang. However, I think not many people in most rural areas may have voluntarily taken these COVID19 vaccination. Mainly due to the many stories & myths surrounding these particular drug." (Male, age 50-59, Madang branch, PNG)

Negative Feedbacks:

"I think COVID19 is a foreign disease/illness. When I first heard about it, I was afraid of what might happen to me or my family, but then none of us got sick in my community but I heard of other educated people dying so I thought it only affects the high class. I heard people were getting the vaccine but I heard that once you get the vaccine, you will die so that made me scared to get vaccinated but then I heard you have to get vaccinated to get a job. Some say that getting the vaccine is getting the mark of the beast (666). Haven't heard any awareness of the vaccine. I just stayed home with my kids when COVID came because I was afraid." (Female, age 30-39, Madang branch, PNG)

"When I first heard of this COVID-19, I thought it related to imported and processed food brought in from overseas. We were scared and stopped our kids from roaming around. We started following health advise, washed our hands, wore masks. We don't want to get vaccinated because of rumors that we ca die or get very sick. We also heard rumors that we could get disabled or not have kids. I heard awareness about COVID19 when I came into town but haven't heard any awareness in my village. I do not believe the vaccine will help me so I will not take it." (Female, age 40-49, Madang branch, PNG)

"It is just like every other disease but if they had given some good awareness then maybe we would have got vaccinated but we heard that if we got vaccinated we would die or get very sick so we are hesitant. We have been told that if we are not vaccinated

we cannot travel but how can we get vaccinated if we are not fully aware of the vaccine? So the push to get everyone vaccinated within proper awareness is wrong. There hasn't been proper awareness in the community we are just told to get vaccinated." (Female, age 40-49, Madang branch, PNG)

Recommendations:

These recommendations collectively suggested are based on the analysis of the feedback data:

- Dissemination of information: Vital information is clearly communicated to the communities through awareness during bigger community gatherings and events. And also integration of messaging in collaboration with the health authorities during community health patrols.
- IEC materials on "Myths & Facts": Distribution of IEC materials during community events to ensure people have to right information. Materials to be also translated to local language (Pidgin, Motu and etc) so can be easily understood, especially people in the rural communities.
- Engagement and Collaboration with Local Leaders and Community Based Organizations (CBO): Facilitate a Leadership training with the intention to integrate the COVID-19 and Vaccination messaging and awareness. Leaders includes the community leaders, women and youth leaders, church leaders and etc. The training to ensure that the leaders are equipped with the right information and also understanding what their role and responsibility during any emergencies is or in this situation COVID19 pandemic that has an impact on their community members.
- Story telling or Community Conversations: Community members who had been vaccinated sharing their experiences. This will trigger questions and discussions and creating a 'safe space' for community members to openly discuss. Part of this concept is also to understand any learnings and how the community to learn from them. Community to initiate their own recommendation on how they can keep their community safe.
- Capture the learning from community engagement for COVID-19 vaccine promotion emphasize the significance of listening, tailored information sharing, and localized accessibility. These lessons, rooted in trust-building and cultural sensitivity, should be used for wider learning.
- Partnership Collaboration: More collaboration with health authorities and other health institutions to ensure that the correct information is disseminated to the communities in both urban and rural areas. And ensure that the medical interpretation of vaccination is clearly communicated and understood at the community level given the low literacy rate of most of the people.

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