
European Science-Media Hub

Trending mis- and disinformation topics around COVID-19 on social media – February 2021



Analysis Overview:

Time range: 01/02/2021 - 28/02/2021

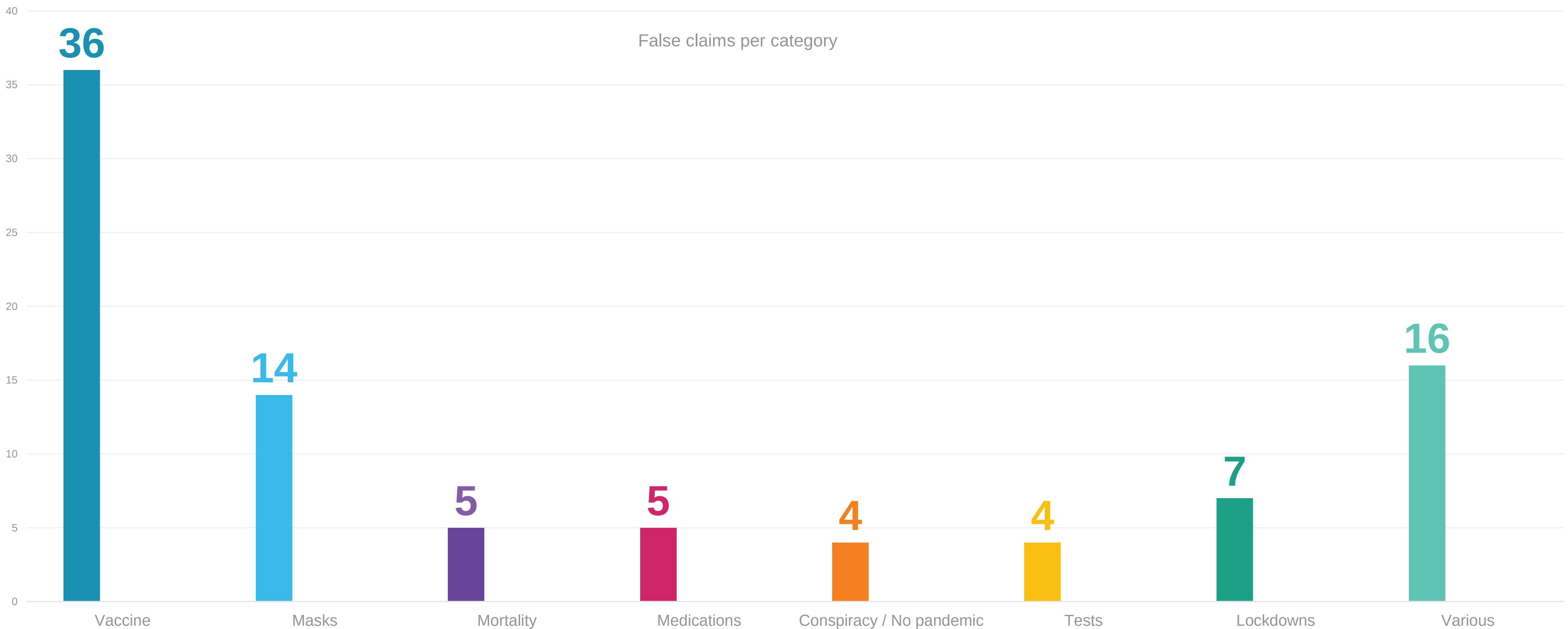
Sources: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Websites, Blogs

Number of false claims: 90

Number of fact-checks: 53

Content Analysis - False claims

Total items: 90



Content Analysis - Main findings

Featured **false claims** related to COVID-19 in February 2021:

The majority of false **claims (36)** have been targeting the **COVID-19 vaccine**:

- Many **deaths** are attributed to the vaccine, especially in **care homes**, in the UK, Germany and other European countries.
- Since the **inoculation** started in the UK, **deaths per reported cases** have allegedly increased.
- The UK government is said to be fiddling with **statistics** to cover up for vaccine-related **deaths**.
- Vaccination is about to cause many **deaths** among the global population. To some, what will happen is nothing short of a '**genocide**'.
- The jab is detrimental to human **fertility**.
- Reports of an alleged **miscarriage due to the vaccine** circulate online.
- The vaccine is '**experimental**' and will modify the human **DNA**.
- **No need** to vaccinate. **Natural immunity** is preferable to vaccine immunity, which may only last for three months.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is responsible for **new variants** of the virus.

Content Analysis - Main findings

Featured **false claims** related to COVID-19 in February 2021:

Lockdown-related claims (7):

- The common narrative that **lockdowns don't work** is still present.
- People **should not get tested** for COVID-19, to avoid the continuation of lockdowns.
- Governments **fake data** to prolong lockdowns.
- People only agree to this measure solely out of **fear** for COVID-19.

Mask related claims (14):

- People still claim that face masks **do not work**.
- Dr. Anthony Fauci suggests double masking to promote **Chinese KN95 masks**.
- There is still a claim that masks are responsible for **bacterial pneumonia**.
- Masks allegedly “injure every organ of the body”.

Content Analysis - Main findings

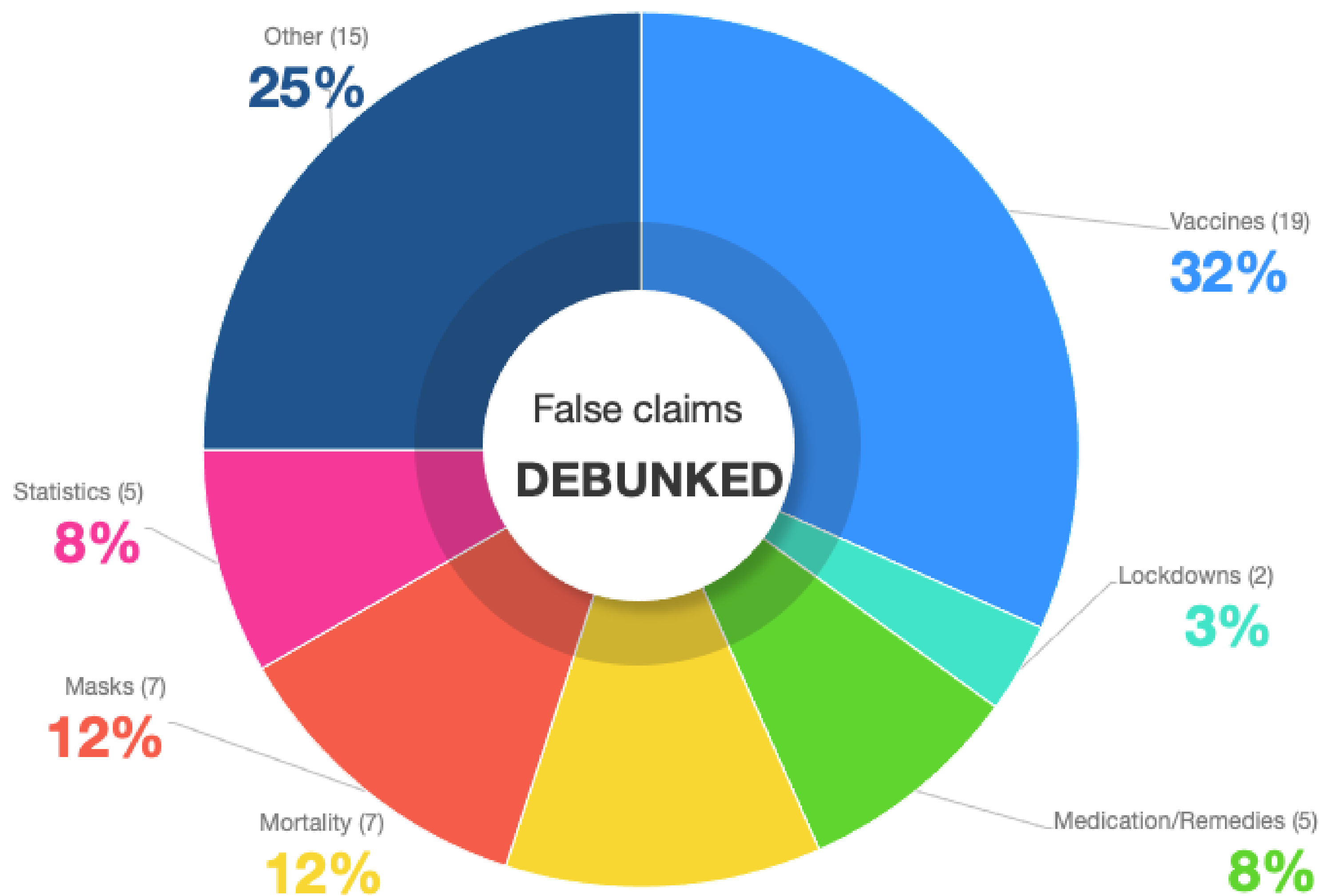
Featured **false claims** related to COVID-19 in February 2021:

Other claims:

- The **PCR tests** are a fraud. These tests are highly **inaccurate** and are only used to prolong **lockdowns**.
- There are many claims regarding the need to use **ivermectin** as a treatment of COVID-19. Others continue to argue that **hydroxychloroquine** is effective.
- **Children in Iraq** die because of the new COVID-19 strain.
- **Vapers** are 17% more likely to spread COVID-19.
- The **AMISH** communities do not suffer from COVID-19.
- **Glass wearers** are less likely to contract COVID-19.
- **12 immigrants** in Dover, UK, tested positive for COVID-19.
- Many **alternative therapies** for COVID-19 with **vitamins**, **steam** and other substances are also circulating online.
- In **Nigeria**, an photo depicting **students jumping** from a balcony is used to claim they are escaping a forced COVID-19 **vaccination**.
- The possibility of a **vaccine (health) passport** will be nothing less than an act of submission.

Content Analysis - Fact-checkers' debunked claims

Total items: 53



Content Analysis - Fact-checkers' debunked claims



- Fact-checks during February focused mostly on **vaccine related mis- and disinformation**, debunking claims about the **death** of several people in **care homes**, which is not attributed to the **inoculation** of elderly people.
- The vaccine **prevents deaths**, whilst **natural remedies** are not proven to work.
- The vaccine is not responsible for new COVID-19 **variants**.
- The **mRNA vaccine** cannot alter the **human DNA**.
- US and European **vaccine-related deaths** have not been proven.
- The **UK death rate** has not risen due to the vaccine.
- A Latin American **medical professional** dismisses the allegation that her **miscarriage** should be attributed to her **vaccination** for COVID-19.

Content Analysis - Fact-checkers' debunked claims



- **PCR tests** are deemed by scientists both **reliable** and **effective**.
- The **UK virus variant** is not proven worse for **children**, as a report claims, in **Iraq**.
- The UK **NHS data** does not show only **3000 deaths** from COVID-19.
- Study does not prove that **glass-wearers** are less likely to contract COVID-19.
- The **AMISH** communities in the USA do suffer from COVID-19 like the rest of the population.
- The **12 immigrants** in Dover have not tested positive for COVID-19 as UK politician **Nigel Farage** alleged.
- **Ivermectin**, **hydroxychloroquine** and other alternative **medicines** and **remedies** have not been proven to work against COVID-19.
- In **Nigeria**, a photo depicting students jumping from a balcony, claiming they were escaping a force COVID-19 **vaccination**, was an out of context old photo.

Content Analysis - Fact-checkers' debunked claims



- As regards to **mask-related claims**, face masks do **help contain** COVID-19.
- Scientists believe it is important to wear good **face-covers**.
- Masks do not cause **bacterial pneumonia**.
- A video showing the **size of virus particles** under the **microscope**, comparing it to the density of mask fabric, is false.

Content Curation – Data/Sources



Time range of selected content: 1-28 February



Out of the initial bulk, 143 results have been singled out



Sources: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Websites



Main keywords: covid19, lockdown, covid-19, coronavirus, nomask, masks, vaccine, pandemic, plandemic