

TIGER C19

Timely Integration of User
Generated Responses about C19

Introduction and Approach

WHAT: TIGER C19 is an ongoing collaboration between the Burnet Institute and the University of Melbourne that combines big data analytics of social media postings with qualitative research methods.

HOW: Using a sophisticated data analytics tool, TIGER C19 extracts posts containing selected key terms or topics from two social media platforms: “Reddit” and “Twitter”. The resulting data are then subjected to thematic analyses, as presented below.

WHY: TIGER C19 informs public health and health information responses by examining local Covid-related issues of current interest as both a supplement and complement to other research and intelligence. The current focus is on Victoria, though the emerging themes have broader resonance and application to other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas.

Summary of results

Table 1 and "Emerging Themes" below summarise the findings derived from the posts and reposts for the key words or topics.

Data collection period: 7 July 2022

Total number of hits/posts: 14,933

Table 1: Summary of Reddit and Twitter ‘captures’ by key words

Term/Topic	Posts	Term/Topic	Posts
Death	3,364	Boosters	1,902
Reinfection	195	Children	4,137
Long Covid	3,103	Treatment	1,990
Ventilation	247		

Emerging themes

We analysed the most popular posts (and repost trails) to determine emerging key themes.

1. COVID related deaths

- Impact of Covid on death rates and life expectancy
- Deaths amongst elderly deprive relatives of rich life experience and connection
- Increase deaths linked to end of lockdown
- Australian death rates compared internationally

2. Long COVID is a major concern

- Worry that Long Covid increases with reinfection
- New variants resulting in Long Covid
- Narratives of Long Covid experiences, including fatigue and cognitive decline
- Accounts of being stigmatized at work for being “weak”, “unfit”, “a sook”

3. Complexity of treatment options and responses

- Lack of bulk-billed GPs leads to poorer people attending hospital and emergency departments
- Need for Omicron targeted vaccine
- Complacency/uncertainty regarding uptake of fourth booster uptake
- Call for oral treatments (Paxlovid and Lagevno) to be widely available

4. Concern over children in current environment

- Divided opinion as to vaccinating children under five years-old
- Debate around recent research of impact of vaccination on the 5-11 age group
- Calls to vaccinate children even if susceptibility to severe illness is minimal
- Problems of caring for children whilst parents suffering from Covid and Long Covid

5. Improved ventilation and mask wearing as prevention

- Calls to improve ventilation in indoor settings
- Suggestions to switch indoor social events to outdoor venues where possible
- Should adopt same normative approach to mask wearing as did some Asian countries post-SARS
- Need to improve public health messaging on mask etiquette