

Supporting Information for:  
*“I Don’t Think That’s True, Bro!”*  
*An Experiment on Fact-checking Misinformation in India*

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## A 2019 WhatsApp Campaign Promoting User-driven Corrections



Figure A.1: WhatsApp ad in Indian newspapers

## B Advertisement Used to Recruit Respondents

The image below is a screenshot of the advertisement we used to recruit respondents into our survey via Facebook.



Figure B.1: Sample recruitment ad

## C Full Text of Experimental Manipulations

The text displayed on our WhatsApp screenshots to treatment group respondents varied as a function of the type of rumor, the politician / media outlet it is attributed to, and the nature of the correction. The spreadsheet below describes the full text associated with each hypothetical WhatsApp screenshot in each condition.

Rumor	Type of claim	SOURCES VARIATIONS				CORRECTION VARIATIONS			
		Message 1	Message 2 (part 1)	Message 2 (part 2)		Message 3a (control)	Message 3b (Domain)	M3b (Factchecker correction)	M3c (random person)
1	Congential to BJP/dissonant to non-BJP	image	Check this out.	In this article published on the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website, a BJP leader claims that the Muslim population in India will overtake the Hindu population in the future.	In this article published on the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website, it is suggested that the Muslim population in India will overtake the Hindu population in India in the future.	thanks -- will read!	The other day I saw a report by prominent demographers that said this was extremely unlikely to happen. So I don't think that's right actually.	The other day I saw a fact-checking report by ALTNEWS/Vishwasnews.com/Times of India/Facebook/WhatsApp that said this was extremely unlikely to happen. So I don't think that's right actually.	The other day I saw something that said this was extremely unlikely to happen. So I don't think that's right actually.
2	Congential to BJP/dissonant to non-BJP	image	Just saw this!	This appeared on the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website -- A BJP leader explains that polygamy (having several wives) is very common in the Muslim population.	This appeared on the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website -- it says that polygamy (having several wives) is very common in the Muslim population.	Thanks. Will check when I have a second.	Hmm, not sure. The Census of India did a report and showed it to be unsubstantiated, though.	Hmm, not sure. A fact-checking report done by ALTNEWS/Vishwasnews.com/Times of India/Facebook/WhatsApp showed this to be unsubstantiated, though.	Hmm, not sure. I saw something showed this to be unsubstantiated, though.
3	Neither congenial nor dissonant to BJP/non-BJP	image	Just came across this article	-	This comes from the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website. Apparently M-R vaccines are associated with autism and retardation.	Wow, ok. will get into this.	Hey I don't think that's true actually. I just saw a report from doctors from AIIMS, there appears to be no basis for this claim...	Hey I don't think that's true actually. I just saw a fact-checking report done by ALTNEWS/Vishwasnews.com/Times of India/Facebook/WhatsApp, there appears to be no basis for this claim...	Hey I don't think that's true actually. Someone told me there was not basis for this claim...
4	Congential to BJP/dissonant to non-BJP	image	This is worth looking at.	The NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website just published this. A bunch of BJP leaders said that drinking cow urine (gomutra) helps build one's immune system.	The NDTV/NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/Republi cTV/India TV website just published this. Claims that Drinking cow urine (gomutra) helps build one's immune system.	Got it, thanks for sending :)	Actually not sure about this, brother. I saw a report from doctors from AIIMS explaining why this is not correct.	Actually not sure about this, brother. I saw a fact-checking report done by ALTNEWS/Vishwasnews.com/Times of India/Facebook/WhatsApp explaining why this is not correct.	Actually not sure about this, brother. I saw somewhere that this is not correct.
5	Neither congenial nor dissonant to BJP/non-BJP	image	Relevant as the ICC world cup approaches...	-	This comes from the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website. I had forgotten that Australia has more ICC cricket world cup wins than any country!	Great. Thanks for sending :)	-	-	-
6	Neither congenial nor dissonant to BJP/non-BJP	image	Important stuff...	-	the NDTV/NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/Republi cTV/India TV website published this. sad that there's still no cure for HIV/AIDS	thanks. will definitely read.	-	-	-
7	Congential to non-BJP/dissonant to BJP	image	Just saw this!	NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV: several INC leaders claim that the BJP hacks electronic voting machines.	NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV: some people suggesting that the BJP hacks electronic voting machines.	ok! reading now...	Not sure about this... the Election Commission released a serious report saying there's no basis for this claim	Not sure about this claim. ALTNEWS/Vishwasnews.com/Times of India/Facebook/WhatsApp has come up with a detailed fact-checking report that showed there was no basis for this argument.	Not sure about this claim. I saw somewhere there is no basis for this argument.
8	Congential to BJP/dissonant to non-BJP	image	Wow	Just saw this on the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website. This BJP guy said UNESCO declared PM Modi best Prime Minister in 2016.	Just saw this on NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website. UNESCO declared PM Modi best Prime Minister in 2016!	Thanks, boss :)	Haha that's not right actually. UNESCO put out a release saying they didn't come up with rankings like that.	Haha that's not right actually. ALTNEWS/Vishwasnews.com/Times of India/Facebook/WhatsApp published a fact-checking thing saying that UNESCO didn't come up with rankings like that.	Haha that's not right actually.
9	Neither congenial nor dissonant to BJP/non-BJP	image	Have a look at this!	From the NDTV Hindi/Doordarshan/India TV website -- Netaji Bose did NOT die in a plane crash in 1945!		wow - thanks for sharing!	This theory has been debunked, I think. I read a report by Delhi University historians explaining there was no ground to believe any of this.	This theory has been debunked, I think. I read a fact-checking report by ALTNEWS/Vishwasnews.com/Times of India/Facebook/WhatsApp explaining there was no ground to believe any of this.	I think this theory has been debunked, though.

Figure C.1: Text for experimental manipulations

## D Hypotheses 2a and 2b

Hypothesis 2a: WhatsApp corrections will be more effective when the rumor is attributed to a dissonant politician (compared to an unattributed or neutral politician).

To test this hypothesis, we run the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Belief Accuracy}_i = & \alpha + \beta_1 \text{AnyCorrection}_i + \beta_2 \text{DissonantPol}_i \\ & + \beta_3 \text{AnyCorrection} * \text{DissonantPol}_i + \epsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (\text{D.1})$$

As noted in the body of the article, we limit our analyses to the subset of rumors that are clearly partisan in nature (rumors 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9) and code whether the claim was attributed in the prompt to a congenial or dissonant politician. We code a politician as congenial or dissonant as a function of the respondent’s partisan inclination towards the BJP (the ruling party), relying on the respondent’s expressed closeness to this party. A BJP politician is deemed congenial if the respondent describes herself as close or very close to the party and dissonant if the respondent describes herself as far or very far from the party. By contrast, a INC politician is deemed congenial if the respondent describes herself as far or very far to the BJP and dissonant if the respondent describes herself as close or very close to the BJP. Note that we are pooling members of both major parties in each category (e.g., “dissonant” takes the value of 1 for BJP identifiers who read an anti-BJP claim and for INC identifiers who read a pro-BJP claim).

Table D.1: Effect of Any Correction \* Dissonant Speaker on Belief in Rumor

	<i>Dependent variable: Belief in Rumor</i>				
	MuslimPop (1)	Polygamy (2)	Gomutra (3)	EVM (4)	UNESCO (5)
AnyCorrection	−0.127*** (0.038)	−0.178*** (0.031)	−0.092*** (0.033)	−0.007 (0.033)	−0.405*** (0.040)
DissonantPol	−0.564*** (0.149)	−0.310* (0.164)	−0.242 (0.154)	−0.229** (0.108)	−0.184 (0.203)
AnyCorrection* DissonantPol	0.482*** (0.163)	0.062 (0.174)	−0.055 (0.168)	0.008 (0.118)	0.016 (0.218)
Constant	2.775*** (0.034)	3.280*** (0.026)	3.018*** (0.028)	1.666*** (0.028)	3.005*** (0.034)
Observations	5,104	5,103	5,099	5,136	5,109
R <sup>2</sup>	0.005	0.012	0.006	0.005	0.022
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.004	0.011	0.006	0.005	0.021
Res. Std. Er.	1.093 (df = 5100)	0.944 (df = 5099)	1.058 (df = 5095)	1.011 (df = 5132)	1.250 (df = 5105)
F Statistic	7.934***	20.647***	10.792***	9.195***	37.700***

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Hypothesis 2b: WhatsApp corrections will be less effective when the rumor is attributed to a congenial politician (compared to an unattributed or neutral politician).

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Belief Accuracy}_i = & \alpha + \beta_1 \text{AnyCorrection}_i + \beta_2 \text{CongenialPol}_i + \\ & \beta_3 \text{AnyCorrection} * \text{CongenialPol}_i + \epsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (\text{D.2})$$

Table D.2: Effect of Any Correction \* Congenial Speaker on Belief in Rumor

	<i>Dependent variable: Belief in Rumor</i>				
	MuslimPop (1)	Polygamy (2)	Gomutra (3)	EVM (4)	UNESCO (5)
AnyCorrection	−0.102*** (0.039)	−0.181*** (0.031)	−0.131*** (0.034)	−0.043 (0.032)	−0.400*** (0.041)
CongenialPol	0.070 (0.132)	0.167 (0.107)	−0.011 (0.119)	0.518*** (0.180)	0.409*** (0.157)
AnyCorrection* CongenialPol	−0.054 (0.141)	−0.155 (0.116)	0.176 (0.129)	−0.120 (0.191)	−0.349** (0.167)
Constant	2.741*** (0.034)	3.262*** (0.027)	3.011*** (0.028)	1.638*** (0.027)	2.979*** (0.035)
Observations	5,104	5,103	5,099	5,136	5,109
R <sup>2</sup>	0.002	0.008	0.004	0.010	0.022
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.001	0.008	0.004	0.009	0.022
Res. Std. Error	1.095 (df = 5100)	0.946 (df = 5099)	1.059 (df = 5095)	1.009 (df = 5132)	1.250 (df = 5105)
F Statistic	2.747**	14.136***	7.207***	16.946***	38.594***

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## E Hypotheses 3a and 3b

Hypothesis 3a: WhatsApp corrections will be more effective when the rumor originates from a dissonant media outlet (compared to an unattributed or neutral outlet).

Hypothesis 3b: WhatsApp corrections will be less effective when the rumor originates from a congenial media outlet (compared to an unattributed or neutral outlet).

To test these hypotheses, we code a media outlet as congenial or dissonant as a function of the respondent's expressed proximity to the BJP. Concretely, we code the "pro-BJP" outlet (here, India TV) as congenial and the "anti-BJP" outlet (here, New Delhi TV or NDTV) as dissonant when the respondent reports feeling close or very close to the BJP. By contrast, we code the "pro-BJP" outlet (India TV) as dissonant and "anti-BJP" outlet (NDTV) as congenial when the respondent reports feeling far or very far to the BJP.

We test this hypothesis with the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Belief Accuracy}_i = & \alpha + \beta_1 \text{AnyCorrection}_i + \beta_2 \text{CongenialMedia}_i + \beta_3 \text{DissonantMedia}_i + \\ & \beta_4 \text{AnyCorrection} * \text{CongenialMedia}_i + \beta_5 \text{AnyCorrection} * \text{DissonantMedia}_i + \epsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (\text{E.1})$$

Table E.1: Effect of Any Correction \* Media Outlet Source on Belief in Rumor

	<i>Dependent variable: Belief in Rumor</i>						
	MuslimPop (1)	Polygamy (2)	MMR (3)	Gomutra (4)	EVM (5)	UNESCO (6)	Bose (7)
AnyCorrection	−0.150*** (0.041)	−0.167*** (0.033)	−0.419*** (0.036)	−0.128*** (0.036)	−0.006 (0.035)	−0.399*** (0.043)	−0.110*** (0.034)
Congenial Media	−0.224* (0.126)	0.230** (0.113)	−0.078 (0.121)	0.080 (0.108)	−0.163 (0.111)	0.036 (0.151)	0.186 (0.114)
Dissonant Media	−0.132 (0.121)	0.061 (0.108)	−0.050 (0.121)	−0.184 (0.116)	0.051 (0.118)	0.094 (0.143)	−0.048 (0.116)
AnyCorrection* CongenialMedia	0.271** (0.135)	−0.194 (0.122)	−0.049 (0.131)	−0.056 (0.119)	0.080 (0.121)	−0.067 (0.162)	−0.174 (0.125)
AnyCorrection* DissonantMedia	0.219* (0.131)	−0.134 (0.116)	−0.067 (0.130)	0.272** (0.126)	−0.134 (0.127)	−0.092 (0.155)	0.091 (0.127)
Constant	2.773*** (0.036)	3.256*** (0.027)	2.834*** (0.030)	3.015*** (0.029)	1.658*** (0.029)	2.992*** (0.036)	2.781*** (0.027)
Observations	5,104	5,103	5,061	5,099	5,136	5,109	5,117
R <sup>2</sup>	0.003	0.009	0.038	0.003	0.002	0.021	0.003
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.002	0.008	0.037	0.002	0.001	0.020	0.002
Res. Std. Er.	1.095	0.945	1.038	1.060	1.013	1.251	1.048
F Statistic	3.055***	9.650***	39.456***	3.394***	1.663	21.697***	3.190***

Note:

\*p&lt;0.1; \*\*p&lt;0.05; \*\*\*p&lt;0.01

## F Heterogeneous Effects of BJP Support

To complement our tests of motivated reasoning (based on the congeniality/dissonance of the information presented and the source of the information), we present OLS results from models that test whether BJP voters react differently to corrective information.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Belief Accuracy}_i = & \alpha + \beta_1 \text{AnyCorrection}_i + \beta_2 \text{BJPSupport}_i \\ & + \beta_3 \text{AnyCorrection} * \text{BJPSupport}_i + \epsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (\text{F.1})$$

Table F.1: Effect of BJP Support \* Correction

	<i>Dependent variable: Belief in Rumor</i>						
	MuslimPop (1)	Polygamy (2)	MMR (3)	Gomutra (4)	EVM (5)	UNESCO (6)	Bose (7)
AnyCorrection	−0.078 (0.064)	−0.168*** (0.053)	−0.452*** (0.058)	−0.027 (0.056)	−0.123** (0.052)	−0.405*** (0.068)	−0.058 (0.054)
BJP Support	0.424*** (0.069)	0.338*** (0.055)	0.092 (0.060)	0.578*** (0.057)	−0.870*** (0.054)	0.491*** (0.071)	0.237*** (0.053)
AnyCorrection * BJP Support	−0.043 (0.078)	−0.027 (0.064)	0.006 (0.070)	−0.114* (0.068)	0.151** (0.064)	−0.017 (0.083)	−0.081 (0.066)
Constant	2.460*** (0.057)	3.040*** (0.045)	2.765*** (0.050)	2.616*** (0.047)	2.238*** (0.045)	2.669*** (0.058)	2.629*** (0.044)
Observations	5,104	5,103	5,061	5,099	5,136	5,109	5,117
R <sup>2</sup>	0.029	0.032	0.037	0.051	0.124	0.052	0.009
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.029	0.032	0.037	0.050	0.123	0.051	0.009
Res. Std. Er.	1.080	0.934	1.038	1.034	0.949	1.231	1.045
F Statistic	51.459***	56.702***	65.187***	90.418***	241.189***	93.117***	16.129***

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## G Main Effect of Congenial / Dissonant Claim

In this section, we show that the claims we code as congenial to respondents are more likely to be believed (G.1) and that the claims we code as dissonant to respondents are less likely to be believed (G.2). In each case we run a simple bivariate OLS model:

$$Belief = \alpha + \beta_1(CongenialClaim/DissonantClaim) + \epsilon \quad (G.1)$$

Table G.1: Effect of Rumor Congeniality on Belief

	<i>Dependent variable: Belief in Rumor</i>				
	MuslimPop (1)	Polygamy (2)	Gomutra (3)	EVM (4)	UNESCO (5)
CongenialClaim	0.218*** (0.031)	0.214*** (0.027)	0.378*** (0.030)	0.480*** (0.029)	0.309*** (0.036)
Constant	2.530*** (0.025)	3.001*** (0.021)	2.702*** (0.024)	1.478*** (0.017)	2.506*** (0.028)
Observations	5,104	5,103	5,099	5,136	5,109
R <sup>2</sup>	0.009	0.012	0.030	0.049	0.014
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.009	0.012	0.030	0.049	0.014
Res. Std. Er.	1.091 (df = 5102)	0.944 (df = 5101)	1.045 (df = 5097)	0.989 (df = 5134)	1.255 (df = 5107)
F Statistic	48.141***	62.228***	157.494***	264.374***	73.238***

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table G.2: Effect of Rumor Dissonance on Belief

	<i>Dependent variable: Belief in Rumor</i>				
	MuslimPop (1)	Polygamy (2)	Gomutra (3)	EVM (4)	UNESCO (5)
DissonantClaim	-0.157*** (0.033)	-0.176*** (0.028)	-0.309*** (0.031)	-0.625*** (0.028)	-0.231*** (0.038)
Constant	2.716*** (0.019)	3.190*** (0.016)	3.035*** (0.018)	2.019*** (0.022)	2.772*** (0.021)
Observations	5,104	5,103	5,099	5,136	5,109
R <sup>2</sup>	0.004	0.008	0.019	0.090	0.007
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.004	0.007	0.018	0.089	0.007
Res. Std. Er.	1.093 (df = 5102)	0.946 (df = 5101)	1.051 (df = 5097)	0.967 (df = 5134)	1.259 (df = 5107)
F Statistic	22.998***	38.607***	96.136***	505.256***	37.676***

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

## H Summary Statistics

Table H.1: Summary Statistics for Muslim Population Rumor

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Belief in Rumor	5,104	2.665	1.096	1	3	4
Any Correction	5,104	0.781	0.414	0	1	1
Outpartisan Speaker	5,104	0.069	0.253	0	0	1
Copartisan Speaker	5,104	0.126	0.332	0	0	1
Congenial Media	5,104	0.134	0.341	0	0	1
Dissonant Media	5,104	0.127	0.333	0	0	1
Congenial Claim	5,104	0.616	0.486	0	1	1
Dissonant Claim	5,104	0.326	0.469	0	0	1
BJP Partisan	5,104	0.678	0.467	0	1	1
Congress Partisan	5,104	0.057	0.233	0	0	1
Pure Control	5,104	0.023	0.148	0	0	1
Peer Correction	5,104	0.258	0.438	0	0	1
Expert Correction	5,104	0.261	0.439	0	0	1
Alt News	5,104	0.051	0.220	0	0	1
Vishwas	5,104	0.053	0.225	0	0	1
TOI	5,104	0.048	0.213	0	0	1
Facebook	5,104	0.054	0.226	0	0	1
WhatsApp	5,104	0.056	0.229	0	0	1

Table H.2: Summary Statistics for Polygamy Rumor

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Belief in Rumor	5,103	3.133	0.949	1	3	4
Any Correction	5,103	0.735	0.441	0	1	1
Outpartisan Speaker	5,103	0.063	0.243	0	0	1
Copartisan Speaker	5,103	0.118	0.323	0	0	1
Congenial Media	5,103	0.116	0.321	0	0	1
Dissonant Media	5,103	0.127	0.333	0	0	1
Congenial Claim	5,103	0.618	0.486	0	1	1
Dissonant Claim	5,103	0.323	0.468	0	0	1
BJP Partisan	5,103	0.680	0.467	0	1	1
Congress Partisan	5,103	0.058	0.234	0	0	1
Pure Control	5,103	0.022	0.145	0	0	1
Peer Correction	5,103	0.247	0.431	0	0	1
Expert Correction	5,103	0.247	0.431	0	0	1
AltNews	5,103	0.045	0.208	0	0	1
Vishwas	5,103	0.050	0.219	0	0	1
TOI	5,103	0.048	0.215	0	0	1
Facebook	5,103	0.047	0.212	0	0	1
WhatsApp	5,103	0.050	0.218	0	0	1

Table H.3: Summary Statistics for MMR Rumor

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Belief in Rumor	5,061	2.500	1.058	1	3	4
Any Correction	5,061	0.729	0.444	0	1	1
Congenial Media	5,061	0.125	0.331	0	0	1
Dissonant Media	5,061	0.121	0.326	0	0	1
BJP Partisan	5,061	0.680	0.466	0	1	1
Congress Partisan	5,061	0.058	0.234	0	0	1
Pure Control	5,061	0.022	0.146	0	0	1
Peer Correction	5,061	0.234	0.424	0	0	1
Expert Correction	5,061	0.243	0.429	0	0	1
AltNews	5,061	0.054	0.227	0	0	1
Vishwas	5,061	0.053	0.224	0	0	1
TOI	5,061	0.050	0.218	0	0	1
Facebook	5,061	0.046	0.210	0	0	1
WhatsApp	5,061	0.049	0.215	0	0	1

Table H.4: Summary Statistics for Gomutra Rumor

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Belief in Rumor	5,099	2.935	1.061	1	3	4
Any Correction	5,099	0.706	0.455	0	1	1
Outpartisan Speaker	5,099	0.061	0.240	0	0	1
Copartisan Speaker	5,099	0.121	0.326	0	0	1
Congenial Media	5,099	0.128	0.334	0	0	1
Dissonant Media	5,099	0.127	0.334	0	0	1
Congenial Claim	5,099	0.618	0.486	0	1	1
Dissonant Claim	5,099	0.323	0.468	0	0	1
BJP Partisan	5,099	0.680	0.467	0	1	1
Congress Partisan	5,099	0.058	0.233	0	0	1
Pure Control	5,099	0.023	0.151	0	0	1
Peer Correction	5,099	0.204	0.403	0	0	1
Expert Correction	5,099	0.251	0.433	0	0	1
AltNews	5,099	0.053	0.224	0	0	1
Vishwas	5,099	0.051	0.221	0	0	1
TOI	5,099	0.048	0.214	0	0	1
Facebook	5,099	0.052	0.222	0	0	1
WhatsApp	5,099	0.046	0.209	0	0	1

Table H.5: Summary Statistics for EVM Rumor

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Belief in Rumor	5,136	1.633	1.014	1	1	4
Any Correction	5,136	0.728	0.445	0	1	1
Outpartisan Speaker	5,136	0.125	0.331	0	0	1
Copartisan Speaker	5,136	0.063	0.243	0	0	1
Congenial Media	5,136	0.125	0.331	0	0	1
Dissonant Media	5,136	0.125	0.331	0	0	1
Congenial Claim	5,136	0.323	0.468	0	0	1
Dissonant Claim	5,136	0.618	0.486	0	1	1
Congress Partisan	5,136	0.057	0.232	0	0	1
BJP Partisan	5,136	0.680	0.467	0	1	1
Pure Control	5,136	0.022	0.148	0	0	1
Peer Correction	5,136	0.250	0.433	0	0	1
Expert Correction	5,136	0.221	0.415	0	0	1
AltNews	5,136	0.051	0.220	0	0	1
Vishwas	5,136	0.053	0.224	0	0	1
TOI	5,136	0.051	0.220	0	0	1
Facebook	5,136	0.055	0.227	0	0	1
WhatsApp	5,136	0.048	0.214	0	0	1

Table H.6: Summary Statistics for UNESCO Rumor

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Belief in Rumor	5,109	2.697	1.264	1	3	4
Any Correction	5,109	0.734	0.442	0	1	1
Outpartisan Speaker	5,109	0.059	0.235	0	0	1
Copartisan Speaker	5,109	0.118	0.322	0	0	1
Congenial Media	5,109	0.119	0.324	0	0	1
Dissonant Media	5,109	0.119	0.323	0	0	1
Congenial Claim	5,109	0.619	0.486	0	1	1
Dissonant Claim	5,109	0.324	0.468	0	0	1
Congress Partisan	5,109	0.057	0.233	0	0	1
BJP Partisan	5,109	0.681	0.466	0	1	1
Pure Control	5,109	0.010	0.099	0	0	1
Peer Correction	5,109	0.253	0.435	0	0	1
Expert Correction	5,109	0.249	0.433	0	0	1
AltNews	5,109	0.049	0.215	0	0	1
Vishwas	5,109	0.044	0.204	0	0	1
TOI	5,109	0.050	0.218	0	0	1
Facebook	5,109	0.047	0.211	0	0	1
WhatsApp	5,109	0.042	0.202	0	0	1

Table H.7: Summary Statistics for Bose Rumor

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Median	Max
Belief in Rumor	5,117	2.716	1.049	1	3	4
Any Correction	5,117	0.663	0.473	0	1	1
Congenial Media	5,117	0.126	0.331	0	0	1
Dissonant Media	5,117	0.114	0.317	0	0	1
BJP Partisan	5,117	0.681	0.466	0	1	1
Congress Partisan	5,117	0.057	0.232	0	0	1
Pure Control	5,117	0.023	0.149	0	0	1
Peer Correction	5,117	0.252	0.434	0	0	1
Expert Correction	5,117	0.175	0.380	0	0	1
AltNews	5,117	0.047	0.211	0	0	1
Vishwas	5,117	0.045	0.207	0	0	1
TOI	5,117	0.047	0.212	0	0	1
Facebook	5,117	0.048	0.214	0	0	1
WhatsApp	5,117	0.048	0.214	0	0	1

# I Pretest Data

We ran a pretest on a panel of Facebook-recruited Indian respondents in early May 2019 (N=640) to measure the salience and rate of belief in 37 different rumors commonly disseminated on social media in India. These rumors were:

1. In the future, the Muslim population in India will overtake the Hindu population in India.
2. Polygamy is very common in the Muslim population.
3. Papaya leaf juice is a good way to cure dengue fever.
4. The food prepared by menstruating women is contaminated and rots faster.
5. M-R vaccines are associated with autism and retardation.
6. M-R vaccines are sometimes used by the government to control the population growth amongst certain groups.
7. One must sleep on the left side after having food, as any other sleeping position could be harmful to the digestive tract.
8. Drinking cow urine (gomutra) can help build one's immune system.
9. Gandhi did not try to save Baghat Singh and may even have been a co-conspirator in his death.
10. Indira Gandhi converted to Islam after marrying Feroze Gandhi.
11. Netaji Bose did NOT die in a plane crash in 1945.
12. Arvind Kejriwal has a drinking problem and makes videos while drunk.
13. Sonia Gandhi smuggled Indian treasures to Italy.
14. The BJP has hacked electronic voting machines.
15. NRIs will be able to vote online during the 2019 elections.
16. New Indian notes have a GPS chip to detect black money.
17. UNESCO declared PM Modi best Prime Minister in 2016.
18. WhatsApp profile pictures can be used by ISIS for terror activities.

19. People with cancer shouldn't eat sugar as it feeds cancer cells.
20. Biopsy causes a tumour to turn cancerous.
21. One should not take the P/500 paracetamol, as doctors have shown it to contain machupo, one of the most dangerous viruses in the world.
22. Dengue can be prevented with coconut oil, cardamom seeds, and eupatorium perfoliatum.
23. Amul Kulfi has some pig contents.
24. Drinking Pepsi after eating Polo or Mentos can cause instant death.
25. The BJP is in league with Facebook to remove anti-BJP pages and advertisements.
26. PM Modi hired a makeup artist for 15 lakh monthly salary.
27. Amit Shah personally ordered the assassination of Judge Loya.
28. Arun Jaitley is the current minister of Finance of the Government of India.
29. Scientists warn that current air quality in Delhi shortens lifespan by several years on average.
30. Priyanka Chopra married an American singer in 2018.
31. Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai is the largest private home in the world.
32. India is now the fifth largest economy in the world.
33. Sachin Tendulkar owns the record number of runs record in the ICC cricket world cup.
34. Australia is the country that has won the ICC cricket world cup the most often.
35. According to the 2011 census, Sikhs represent less than 2% of the total Indian population.
36. There is no vaccine that cures HIV/AIDS.
37. Gandhi started his political career in South Africa before coming back to India.

In Figure I.1 we plot the percent of the pretest sample who said they heard each rumor. In Figure I.2 we plot the percent of the sample who said a given rumor was very accurate or somewhat accurate. We highlight the rumors from this list that we selected for the final experiment.

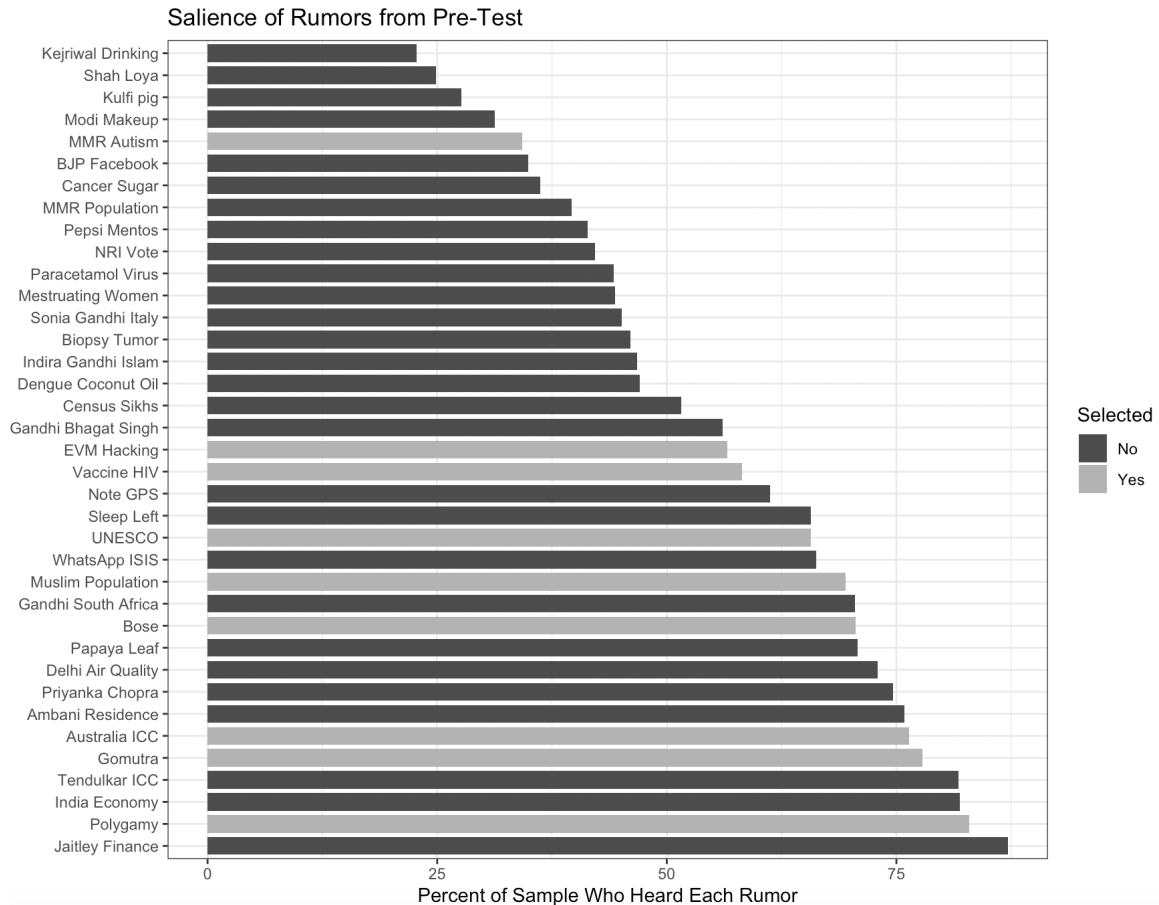


Figure I.1: Salience of Pretest Rumors

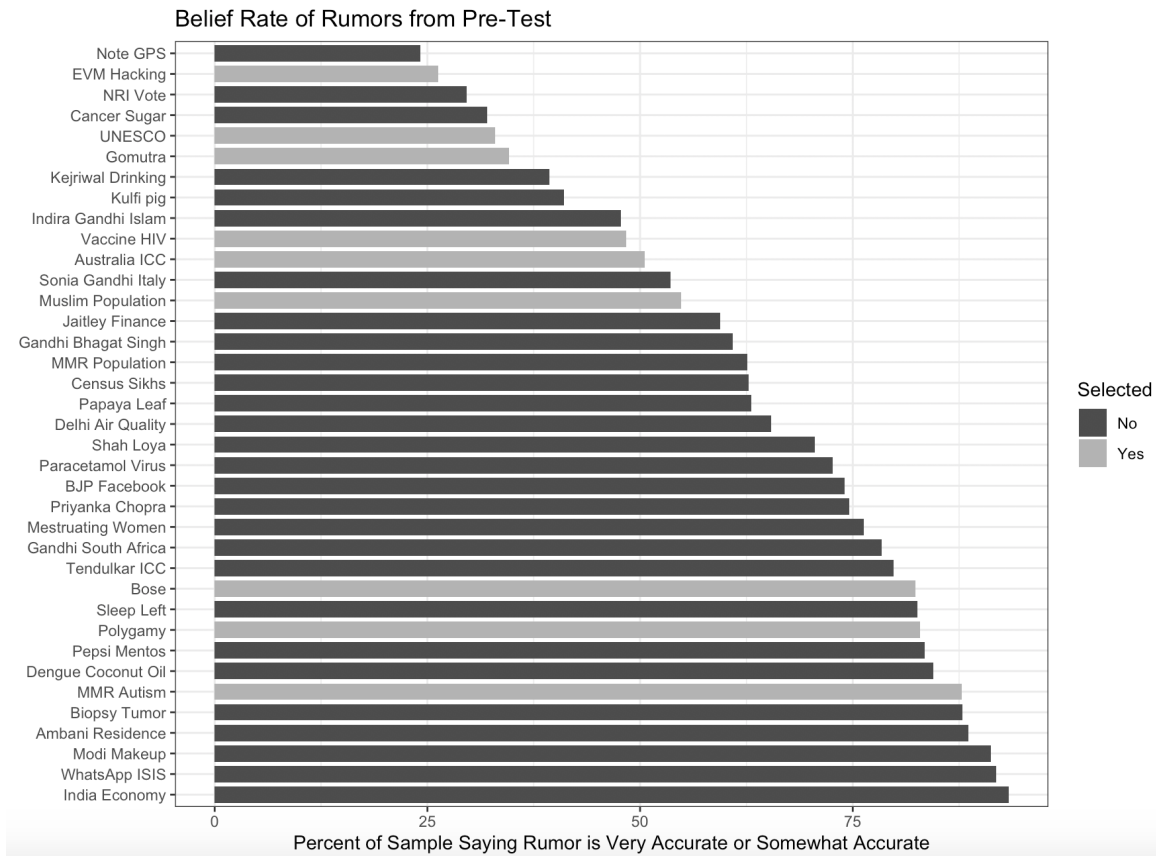


Figure I.2: Belief in Pretest Rumors

## J Comparing the Effect of Control vs. Pure Control on Belief in Rumors

In this section, we restrict our sample to items for which respondents received either the control condition (“neutral” reaction by a second user but no correction) or the pure control (no screenshot; respondents directly asked the dependent variable). In the regressions presented below, we test in this sub-sample the effect of receiving the “pure control”, compared to the control condition, which is here the omitted category. We run a simple bivariate OLS model where the independent variable is an indicator representing assignment to pure control. We find no differences between the control and pure control conditions.

Table J.1: Difference Between Control and Pure Control Conditions

	<i>Dependent variable: Belief in Rumor</i>						
	MuslimPop (1)	Polygamy (2)	MMR (3)	Gomutra (4)	EVM (5)	UNESCO (6)	Bose (7)
Pure Control	−0.172 (0.108)	−0.059 (0.089)	−0.028 (0.100)	0.100 (0.102)	−0.074 (0.100)	0.085 (0.172)	−0.084 (0.102)
Constant	2.763*** (0.035)	3.277*** (0.025)	2.829*** (0.028)	3.001*** (0.029)	1.656*** (0.029)	2.993*** (0.035)	2.834*** (0.030)
Observations	1,117	1,351	1,371	1,458	1,398	1,260	1,382
R <sup>2</sup>	0.002	0.0003	0.0001	0.001	0.0004	0.0002	0.0005
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.001	−0.0004	−0.001	−0.00002	−0.0003	−0.001	−0.0002
Res. Std. Er.	1.097	0.898	1.008	1.061	1.032	1.205	1.055
F Statistic	2.539	0.437	0.076	0.972	0.538	0.244	0.675

Note:

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001