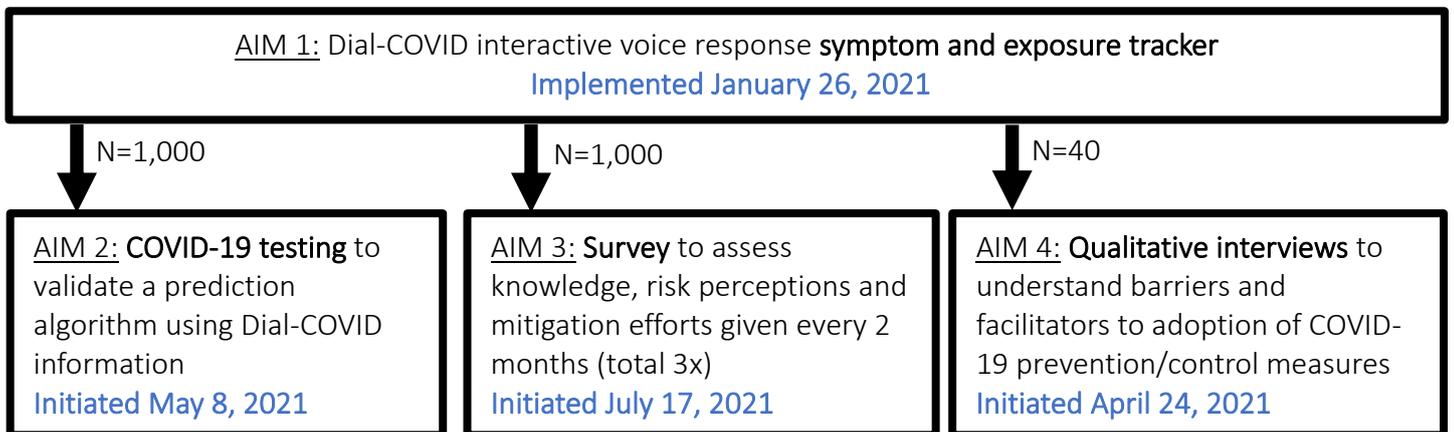
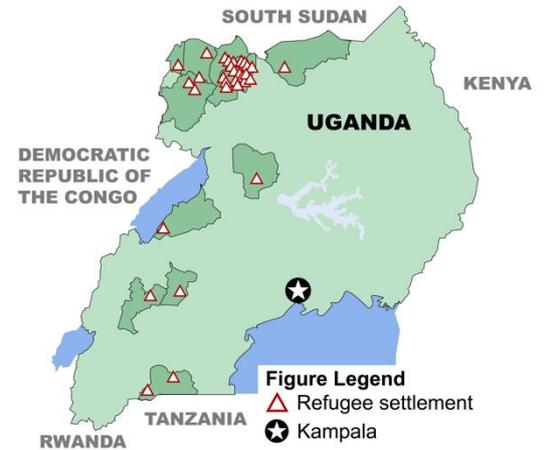




STUDY OVERVIEW: WHAT IS DIAL-COVID?

Dial-COVID is a mobile telephone-based interactive voice response (IVR) platform to understand COVID-19 in refugee settlements in Uganda. The Dial-COVID platform, available in 10 languages, is advertised in refugee settlements in Uganda by Village Health Teams. This research will help to identify barriers and facilitators to the adoption of public health interventions in refugee settlements in support of implementing partners. If effective, Dial-COVID can be deployed in other settings for surveillance of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, and the lessons learned can be employed to design more effective health interventions in the future.



COVID AMONG REFUGEES IN UGANDA

COVID cases in Uganda are increasing dramatically among both Uganda nationals and refugees. People testing positive receive either home-based care if they asymptomatic or have mild symptoms, or facility-based care if they display moderate to severe symptoms or have a home environment that is not suitable.

Total refugee population Uganda	1,498,442
Refugees tested	21,000
Refugees tested positive	1,976
Cases recovered	969
Refugee deaths	34

UNHCR data as of July 13th, 2021

Coverage area 842,000 refugees and 367,000 nationals	
Cases under home-based care	2,229
Cases deisolated under home-based care	1,305
Households evacuated from home-based care	30
Deaths	0

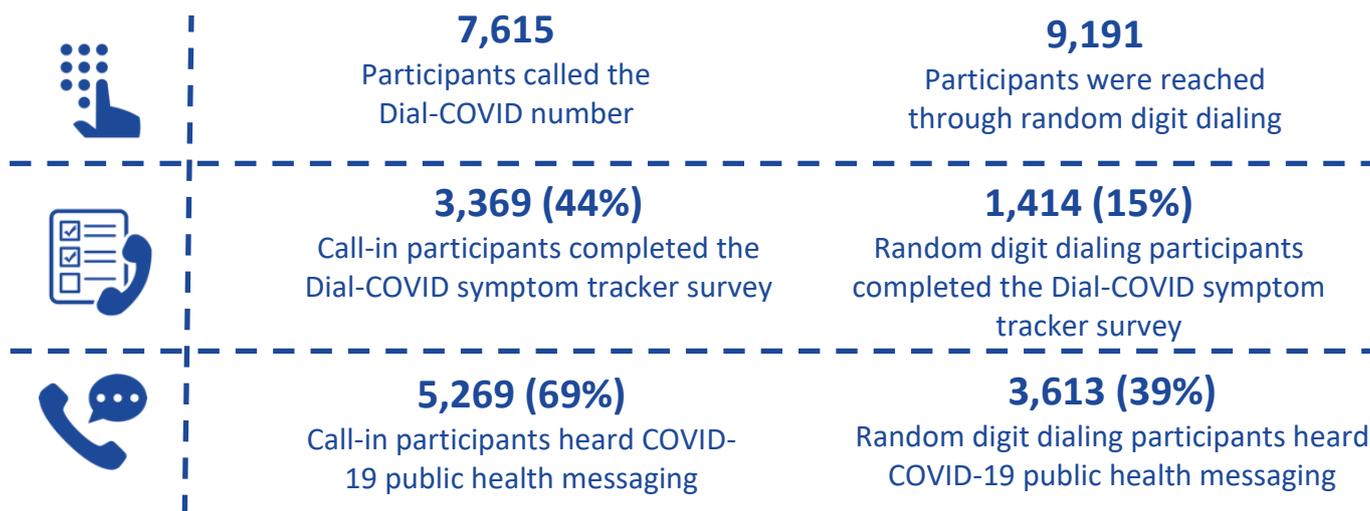
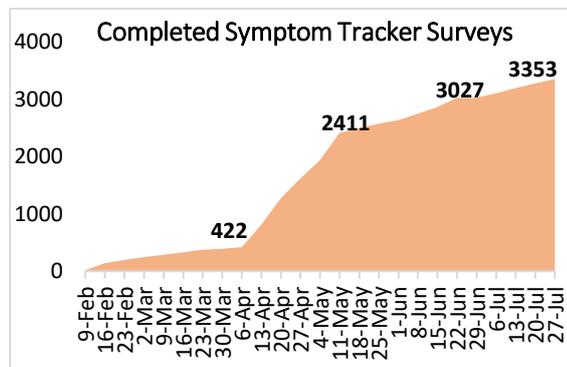
Medical Teams International data as of July 7th, 2021

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: WHAT ARE THE MAIN TAKEAWAYS?

- 98 Dial-COVID participants reporting at least one COVID-19 symptom or exposure have been tested for COVID-19 using PCR testing. Twelve participants tested positive, 74 participants were negative, and twelve results are still pending. Confirmed cases were linked to appropriate treatment services and results were shared with the Uganda national COVID-19 response platform.
- The dramatic increase in national COVID-19 cases in Uganda over recent weeks highlights the importance of COVID-19 prevention and testing at this time.
- Through Dial-COVID, public health messages about COVID-19 have been shared during 8,882 calls.
- Preliminary analysis of 5 qualitative interviews suggests participants have a positive attitude towards COVID-19 vaccination and would be willing to be vaccinated if a vaccine was freely available to them.

ARE PEOPLE USING DIAL-COVID?

Dial-COVID was launched at the end of January 2021 and is targeted at people living in refugee settlements in Uganda, a population of approximately 1.4 million. Initially, uptake was limited. At the end of March, advertising efforts were ramped up in refugee settlements to raise awareness about Dial-COVID. Study promotion through posters, social media messaging, radio spots, door-to-door advertising by village health teams and megaphone announcements in public areas led to a dramatic increase in participant numbers in April and May. By the end of July, 3,369 call-in participants had completed the symptom tracker survey.

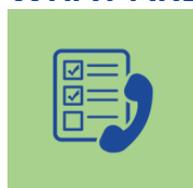


COVID-19 TESTING



To date, 75 male and 23 female call-in participants, including 92 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (88%), Rwanda (9%) and South Sudan (2%) have been tested for COVID-19. Twelve of the participants tested were positive for COVID-19 and were linked to the appropriate treatment services. Test results were uploaded to the national COVID-19 database and shared with implementing partners. The goal is to test 1,000 participants as part of Dial-COVID.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?



We will continue COVID-19 testing (Aim 2) and conduct qualitative interviews to understand barriers and facilitators to the adoption of COVID-19 prevention and control measures (Aim 4). In July, a cohort of call-in participants will receive the first of three surveys assessing knowledge about COVID-19 and exploring risk perceptions and thoughts regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies as well as knowledge and perceptions of vaccination for COVID-19 (Aim 3).

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions or want to hear more about Dial-COVID, please contact Dr. Kelli O’Laughlin (study PI) at kolaugh@uw.edu or Dr. Timothy Muwonge (Site-PI) at tmuwonge@idi.co.ug. Learn more at: <https://www.elrha.org/project/dial-covid-telephone-symptom-surveillance-refugees-uganda/>



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