

## Responding to COVID-19: Highlights of a Survey in EGYPT

### Summary

- Almost all Egyptians know about COVID-19 and basic understanding about transmission and the importance of regular hand washing is high. However, a sizeable minority seek more information, which may help address some misconceptions on avoidance and ‘cures.’
- Most Egyptians are positive about the government’s response to date and trust the information it provides on it
- Egyptians see the virus as both a high personal risk and a threat to their country. They are supportive of a wide range of personal and community public health social measures (PHSMs) to help limit the spread of the coronavirus at this comparatively early stage of its spread in the country.
- National TV, along with social media, are the key information sources the public relies on.

### Background

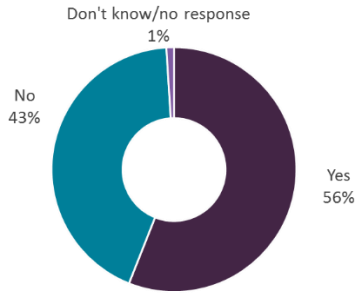
Public health social measures (PHSMs) are an important strategy to delay and reduce the magnitude of COVID-19. PHSMs particularly those that restrict movement or entail the closure of services, can place a significant burden on populations. The effective implementation of PHSMs will require public support and compliance. Hence, this survey was conducted to assess public support for, and the likely social impacts of PHSMs in Egypt.

### Key Findings of the Survey

#### **Awareness of COVID-19 is high - but a sizeable minority seek more information and there is considerable misunderstanding on prevention and ‘cures’**

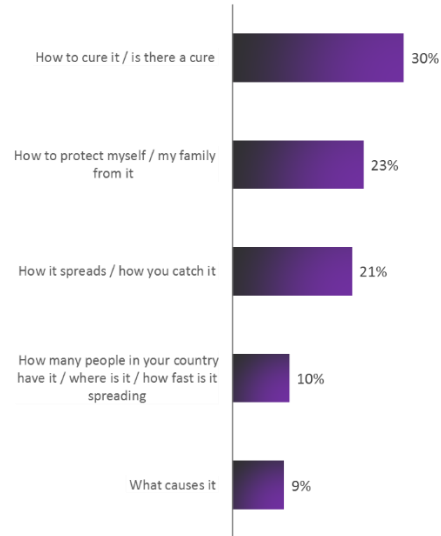
- Almost everyone has heard of COVID-19 (99%). Nine in 10 spontaneously associate the symptoms with a fever (89%) with significant share citing dry cough (64%) and difficulty breathing, shortness of breath (56%). Nevertheless, two in five (43%) feel they do not have enough information about it.
- Egyptians would most commonly like more information on ‘how to cure it/is there a cure’ (30%) followed by ‘how to protect myself/my family from it’ (23%); ‘and/or ‘how it spreads/how you catch it’ (21%).
- Seven in 10 or more believe that it can be prevented by drinking lemon and Vitamin C (78%) or that hot climate prevents the spread (73%). Around two in five also think it can be cured with garlic (42%) or that Africans can’t get it (37%). Almost one in 10 also believes that it can be cured by drinking bleach (9%).
- Almost all believe that COVID-19 started in China (95%). Almost four in five think that ‘You might get it from any Chinese person in your country’ (77%) and three in five believe that ‘Chinese-made hair weaves can be infected with coronavirus’ (64%). A significant share also believes that ‘it is a germ weapon created by a government’ (43%). Those with higher income are more likely to support this idea.

Q10. Do you feel you currently have enough information about the coronavirus/Covid-19 situation?



% who feel they have enough information	
<b>Gender:</b>	
Male	55
Female	57
<b>Age:</b>	
18-25 years	46
26-35 years	58
36-45 years	54
46-55 years	76
56 and older	66
<b>Monthly Household Income:</b>	
\$0-100	52
\$101-200	54
\$201-500	57
\$501+	62

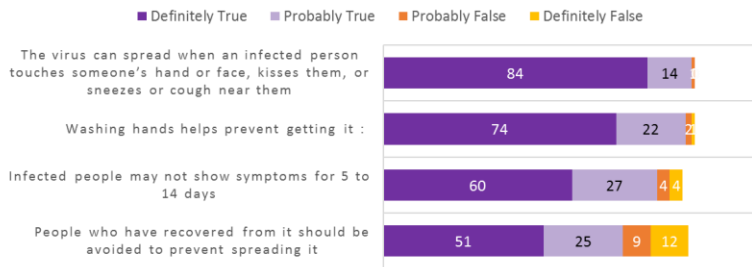
Q11. What are the two things about it that you would like most to have more information about? [Top five mentions]



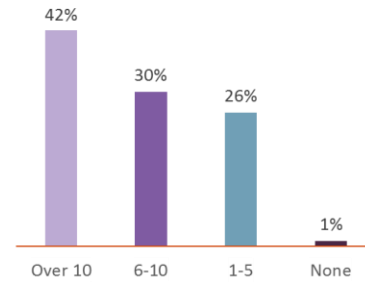
**Nevertheless, the basic understanding of close contact transmission and the importance of hand-washing stands high**

- Almost all think COVID-19 can be spread by touch, kiss, sneeze, or cough (98%, including 84% thinking this is 'definitely true') and that washing hands helps prevent getting it (96% including 74% 'definitely true'). Three-quarters (76%) think people who have recovered from it should be avoided due to risk spreading the virus.
- More stated they washed their hands or used hand sanitizer more than 10 times in the day prior to their interview compared with those washing 5 times or fewer (42% vs. 27%). Those with higher income tend to wash their hands more often.

Q14. I'm going to read things people have said about coronavirus or Covid-19. Please tell me if you think each is definitely true, probably true, probably false, or definitely false. (%)



Q40. Yesterday, how many times did you wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitizer?

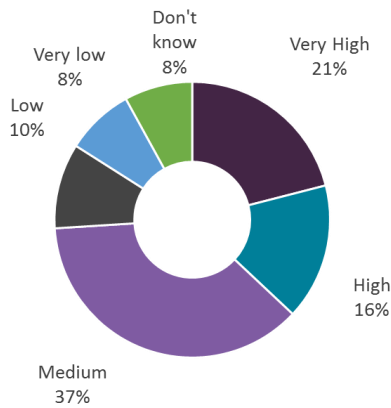


Q14. Share who agree definitely/probably true (%)	Male	Female	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 and over	\$0-100	\$101-200	\$201-500	\$501+
The virus can spread when an infected person touches someone's hand or face, kisses them, or sneezes or cough near them	97	98	96	98	99	96	97	100	97	98	97
Washing hands helps prevent getting it	96	97	95	95	97	97	99	98	96	97	95
Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days	87	87	84	89	87	89	91	91	85	87	91
People who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it	77	75	75	73	78	76	80	80	76	78	72

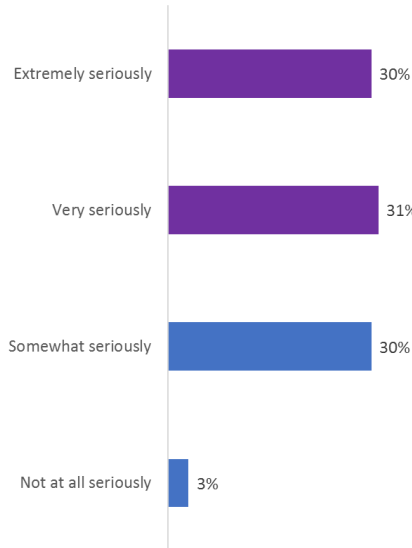
**83% of Egyptians believe that COVID-19 will be a big problem for their country; 37% believe they are at very high or high risk of infection.**

- Egyptians think that the coronavirus will be a problem for the country (36% thinking it will ‘a big problem’; an additional 46% think it will be big problem that will be dealt with).
- Twice as many Egyptians feel they are at high risk of catching the coronavirus compared to low risk (37% high risk, including 21% ‘very high’ versus 19% low, including 8% ‘very low’).
- The clear majority believes that infection would seriously affect their health (61% ‘extremely/very seriously’ vs. 33% ‘somewhat/not very seriously’). Older people are more likely than younger to consider the impact to be serious.
- The most commonly cited rationale for understanding the perceived effect on health is ‘it could kill me/make me very sick’ (36%), followed by ‘it seems serious’ (21%) and ‘it can cause pneumonia’ (13%).
- Egyptians are, on balance, optimistic about receiving help they would need to deal with the illness if they become infected – with twice as many confident about being able to get immediate help as not those not confident (64% vs. 32%). Those aged 56+ in particular are likely to trust that they would get immediate help should they need it.

Q5. Please indicate what you think your level of risk of catching coronavirus or Covid-19 is?



Q6. If you were infected by coronavirus or Covid-19, how seriously do you think it would affect your health?

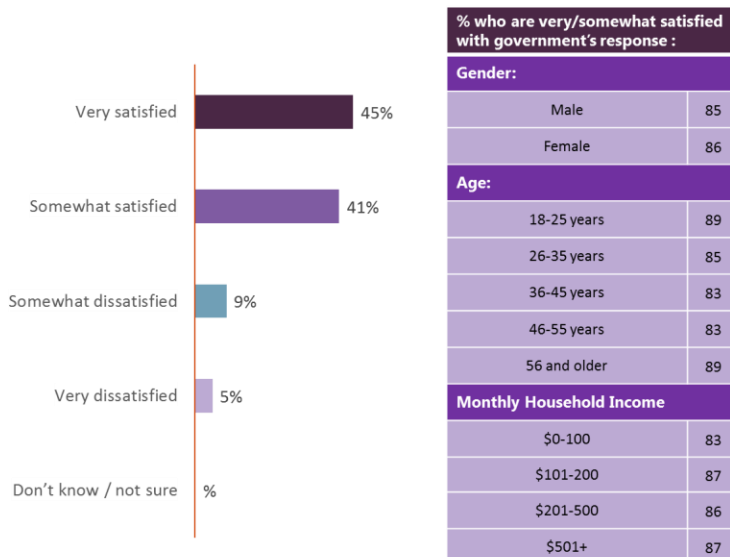


% who think coronavirus would affect their health extremely seriously/very seriously:	
<b>Gender:</b>	
Male	60
Female	62
<b>Age:</b>	
18-25 years	54
26-35 years	60
36-45 years	61
46-55 years	63
56 and older	81
<b>Monthly Household Income:</b>	
\$0-100	61
\$101-200	62
\$201-500	64
\$501+	55

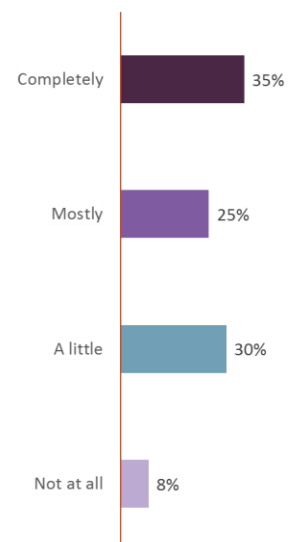
### Egyptians' perceptions of the governmental response to COVID-19 is positive

- The majority are satisfied with their government's response (86%; vs. 14% dissatisfied).
- Egyptians are also more likely than not to trust the information provided by the government (60% including 35% 'completely trust' vs. 39% including 8% 'not at all'). Older Egyptians in particular are likely to express trust in the information provided by the government.

Q12. How satisfied are you with the government's response to coronavirus or Covid-19?



Q13. How much do you trust information from the government about the coronavirus or Covid-19?



**Support for personal health social measures (PHSMs) runs high**

- Almost all Egyptians support stopping handshake/kiss greetings (96%); requiring those who have contact with infected people to self-isolate (94%); and requiring those with COVID-19 to remain home until they are well (91%).

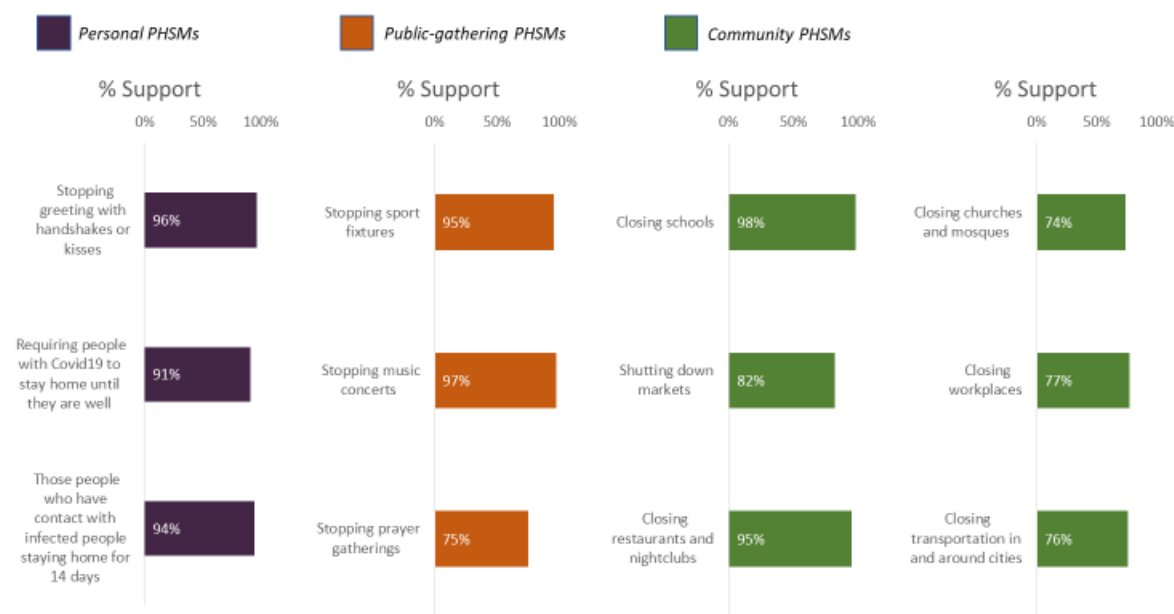
**Egyptians also support restricting public gatherings**

- Support is almost universal for restricting public gatherings to help limit a COVID-19 outbreak by stopping music concerts (97%); sports fixtures (95%); and prayer gatherings (75% - with older Egyptians particularly likely to be in favor). The majority say that stopping prayer gatherings would be made easier by TV/internet (59%) or radio broadcast (41%). One in four or more also mentioned having small groups instead of large gatherings (28%) or outdoor services (25%).

**Most Egyptians also support other temporary ‘community PHSMs’ to help slow the COVID-19 outbreak**

- This includes closing restaurants/nightclubs (95%); markets (82%) and churches and mosques (74%).
- Three in four or more would support closing a city off for two weeks (81%); closing transport between cities (79%); and closing transport in and around cities (76%).
- Almost all (98%) would support school closures. Of those with children, around one in five say they would not have someone to look after them.

**Level of support for Public health social measures (PHSMs) by type of intervention**

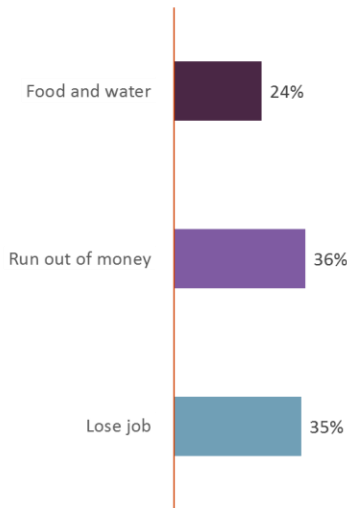


**PHSMs will place a significant burden on many Egyptians**

- Twice as many work outside the home as in it to earn money (29% vs. 15%) and almost half doubt that their workplace could accommodate staggered shifts (44%).
- Three in 10 do not have a separate room to isolate someone who becomes sick (29%).
- Asked about the biggest problems posed if asked to stay home for two weeks, they are most likely to mention running out of money (36%) or losing their job (35%). One in four mentions access to food and water (24% - with older Egyptians particularly likely to mention this).

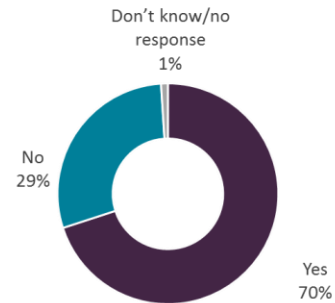
- If asked to stay at home, on median average, Egyptians would need to get more food after 5 days (with men likely to estimate a shorter period than women) and money after 7 days.

Q17: What would be the biggest problems for people like you to stay at home for 14 days?



Share who think the following would be the biggest problem... (%)	Food and water	Running out of money	Losing your job
<b>Gender:</b>			
Male	23	45	44
Female	24	27	25
<b>Age:</b>			
18-25 years	18	20	37
26-35 years	25	41	35
36-45 years	23	41	36
46-55 years	31	49	43
56 and older	30	39	14
<b>Monthly Household Income:</b>			
\$0-100	28	45	28
\$101-200	26	39	31
\$201-500	22	34	37
\$501+	18	34	47

Q38. Would you have a separate room in your home to keep someone isolated if they are sick?



**TV and social media are relied on for national and local information, supplemented by family and friends for local news**

- Over half say they normally get their information on what’s happening in the country from TV (54%); with sizeable reach also coming from social media (44%) and websites (26%). For local news, social media also plays an important role (37%); along with family and friends (34%) and local TV (19%).

**Technical Note**

The fieldwork on this study was conducted by Ipsos with results based on 1,098 interviews with adults aged 18+ in Cairo. Fieldwork was administered by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) using a Random Digit Dial (RDD) approach incorporating both landline and mobile sample. Data are representative of the populations of the urban area (s) included and are unweighted. Fieldwork took place between March 30 and April 3, 2020.

This program of research is an outcome of a partnership between Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies, Africa CDC, the World Health Organization’s African Regional Office (AFRO) and Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO), and the World Economic Forum to form a new public-private partnership to support evidence-based implementation of PHSMs to reduce COVID-19 transmission in African countries (“flattening the curve”) while working with governments to mitigate social and economic disruption and other unintended consequences.