

Responding to COVID-19: Highlights of a Survey in NIGERIA

Summary

- Nigerians are generally well informed about COVID-19, including its symptoms, modes of transmission, and the importance of regular hand washing.
- Levels of satisfaction with government response are fairly high, however many Nigerians do not trust the information they are receiving from government sources.
- There is strong agreement with interventions to stop the spread of the virus including social distancing and closure of public places.
- Half of Nigerians believe that COVID-19 will be a big problem for their country, and the majority believe catching it would seriously affect their health.
- Nigerians indicate high levels of concern around running out of food, water, and money if quarantine were imposed.
- Television, radio, and social media are important media channels in Nigeria.

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 Nigeria.

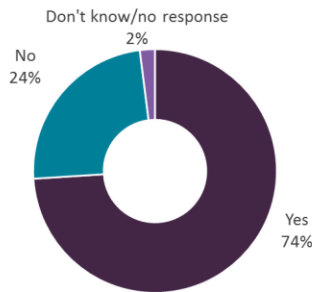
Key Findings of the Survey

Nigerians generally feel well informed about COVID-19, though a sizeable minority would like more information on prevention

- Awareness of COVID-19 is almost universal at 99%.
- The most common associations with COVID-19 are 'A sickness, illness, or disease' (50%) and 'a virus' (49%), followed by a 'killer, deadly disease / serious' (30%). A smaller share of the population see it as a respiratory illness that affects lungs or breathing, causes pneumonia (22%), or 'like a cold or the flu (15%).'.
- The perceived symptoms of COVID-19 are a dry cough (81%), fever (66%), and difficulty breathing, shortness of breath (59%).
- Three in four Nigerians (74%) feel they have enough information about it. Men are more likely than women to say they feel they have enough information about it (79% vs. 69%). This also holds true for higher earners in comparison with lower earners (91% among those with a \$501+ household monthly income compared with 70% of those earning below \$100).
- Despite feeling generally well informed, Nigerians would welcome more information on 'how to cure it/is there a cure' (27%) and 'how to protect myself/my family from it' (24%). Slightly fewer say they would like more information on 'how it spreads/how you catch it' and 'how to get a vaccine against it/is there a vaccine' (both 16%).

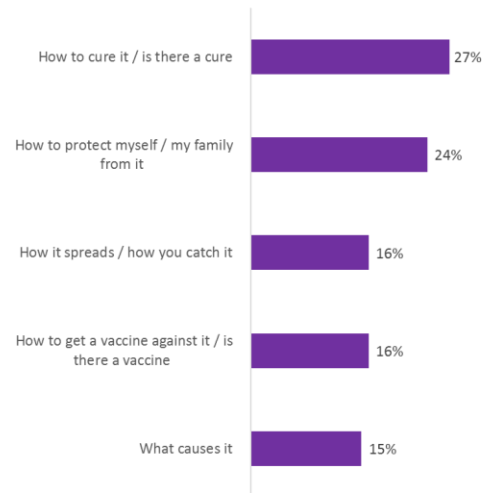


Q10. Do you feel you currently have enough information about the coronavirus/Covid-19 situation?



% who feel they have enough information	
Gender:	
Male	79
Female	69
Age:	
18-25 years	69
26-35 years	78
36-45 years	73
46-55 years	77
56 and older	75
Monthly Household Income:	
\$0-100	70
\$101-200	74
\$201-500	80
\$501+	91

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

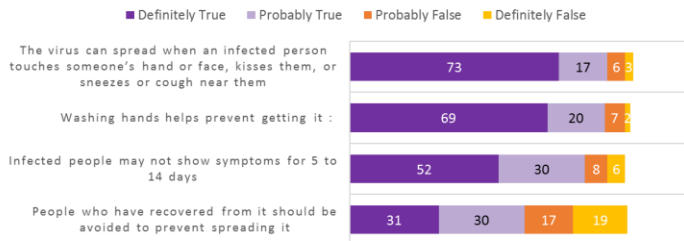


Awareness is high regarding forms of transmission and importance of handwashing, however misbeliefs regarding the prevention of COVID-19 are held by an important share of the population

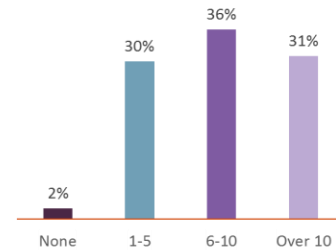
- Nine in ten Nigerians think hand washing can help prevent catching COVID-19 (90% including 69% 'definitely true'), and a similar share think the disease can be spread by touch, kiss, sneeze, or cough (89%, including 73% thinking this is 'definitely true'). There is significant majority acceptance that infected people may not show symptoms for 14 days (82%) and nearly two in three (61%) believe that people who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it.
- Two-thirds (66%) believe the statement 'you can prevent it by drinking lemon and Vitamin C', and half (51%) think 'you can cure it with garlic'. Two in five (40%) believe that 'Africans can't get it' and one in five (21%) think 'drinking bleach cures COVID-19 disease'.
- Three in ten Nigerians (30%) said they washed their hands 1-5 times in the day prior to their interview, while 36% indicated washing their hands 6-10 times in this time period, and 31% over 10 times.



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?



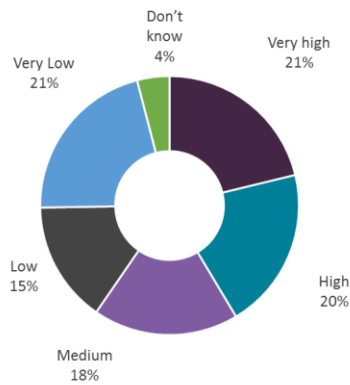
Q14. Share who agree definitely/probably true (%)	Gender		Age					Monthly Household Income			
	Male	Female	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 and over	\$0-100	\$101-200	\$201-500	\$501+
The virus can spread when an infected person touches someone's hand or face, kisses them, or sneezes or cough near them	89	89	86	91	89	88	93	83	89	90	97
Washing hands helps prevent getting it	91	88	86	90	89	93	93	87	87	91	95
Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days	83	81	80	83	82	84	85	76	81	86	88
People who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it	62	60	64	62	60	66	55	65	63	51	59

55% of Nigerians see COVID-19 as a problem for their country; 41% consider themselves at risk of contracting COVID-19.

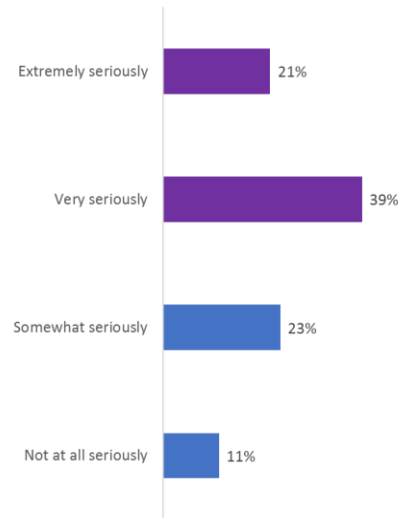
- Over half (55%) foresee the coronavirus being a 'big problem' in Nigeria, with only 2% expecting it will be 'not much of a problem.'
- Opinions are split when it comes to the risk of contracting COVID-19, with 37% considering themselves at low risk of catching the disease, compared with 41% who consider themselves at high risk. Those aged 46-55 are most likely to consider themselves at high risk (55%).
- Despite many considering themselves at low risk, six in ten (60%) think that contracting COVID-19 would affect their health very or extremely seriously, while one third (34%) think it would not at all or only somewhat impact their health. Nigerians aged 56+ are the most likely to think COVID-19's impact on their health would be limited (41%).
- The most commonly cited rationale for understanding the perceived effect on health is 'it could kill me/make me very sick' (44%), followed by a perception that 'it seems serious' (27%).
- Seven in ten (71%) are confident they could immediately get the help they need if they contracted the disease, compared with one in four (26%) who are not confident.



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?

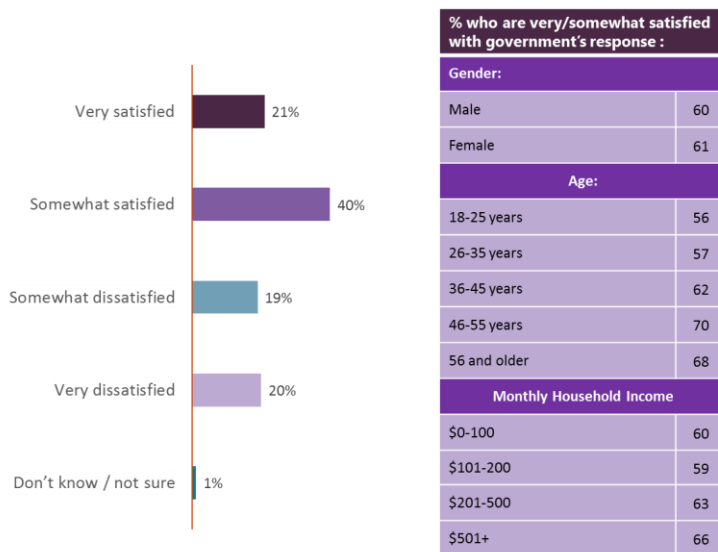


% who think coronavirus would affect their health extremely seriously/very seriously:	
Gender:	
Male	62
Female	58
Age:	
18-25 years	61
26-35 years	62
36-45 years	59
46-55 years	66
56 and older	55
Monthly Household Income:	
\$0-100	65
\$101-200	61
\$201-500	55
\$501+	48

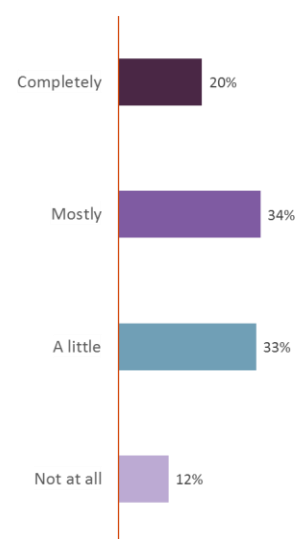
Perceptions of the government’s response to COVID-19 could be stronger, particularly when it comes to trust in information

- Six in ten are satisfied with the government’s response to COVID-19 (60%, including 21% ‘very satisfied’). Two in five, however, are dissatisfied (39%, including 20% ‘very dissatisfied’).
- Nigerians have mixed feelings about information received by the government about COVID-19, with just over half (54%) indicating being trusting of this information, while just under half are not (45%).

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 is widespread for Public health social measures (PHSMs)

- Almost all Nigerians support stopping handshake/kiss greetings (93%), with significant support for requiring those who have contact with infected people to self-isolate (87%) and those with COVID-19 to remain home until they are well (86%).



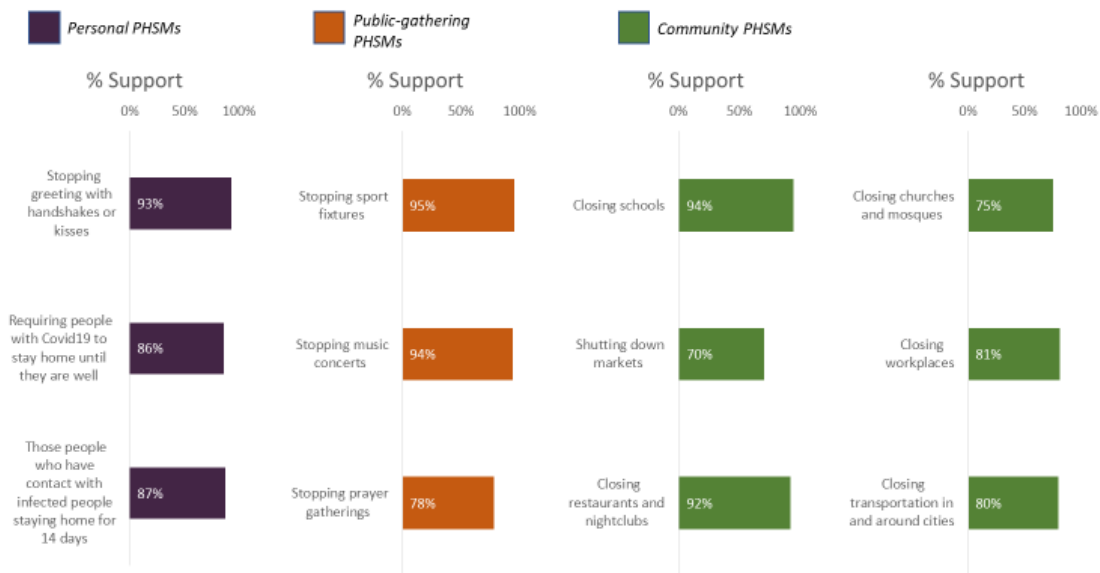
There is also strong support for restricting public gatherings

- Support is almost universal for stopping sport fixtures (95%) and music gatherings (94%) in an attempt to curb COVID-19. While still strong, there is less support for stopping prayer gatherings (78%).
- The most frequently cited way to make prayer or religious gatherings easier would be for religious services to be available on TV or internet (47%), followed by as radio broadcasts (37%).

With the exception of closing markets and places of worship, there is strong support for closures to prevent the spread of the virus

- Nine in ten support closure of schools (94%) and closing restaurants and nightclubs (92%).
- About eight in ten support closing transportation between cities (83%), closing workplaces (81%) and closing transportation in and around cities (80%).
- Three in four (75%) support closing churches and mosques, with slightly fewer supporting shutting down markets (70%).

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



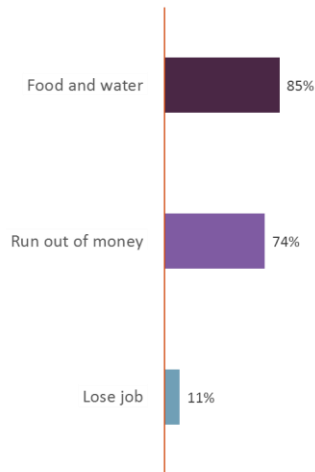
Levels of concern over quarantine measures run high, particularly among the more elderly population

- Just over one-quarter (27%) work outside the home, while nearly half (47%) indicate they are not working. Of those who work outside the home, fewer than half (45%) say that it would be feasible for their work to stagger the shifts of employees.
- Fewer than three in ten (28%) say they would have a separate room in their home to isolate someone who was sick. This increases gradually as household income rises.
- More than four in five (85%) say that food and water would be a problem if they had to stay at home for 14 days, followed by over seven in ten (74%) indicating that running out of money would be a problem. Running out of these necessities is of particular concern to more elderly Nigerians (95% of those aged 56+ indicate running out of food and water would be a problem, while 84% say they would be concerned of running out of money). One in ten (11%) say they would be concerned of losing their job.



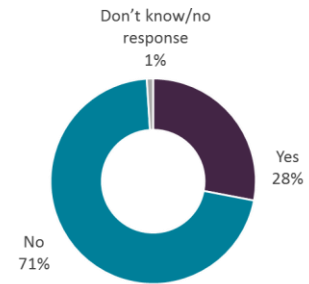
- If asked to stay at home, on median average, Nigerians would need to get food after 6 days and money after 4 days.

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
Gender:			
Male	85	74	10
Female	86	75	11
Age:			
18-25 years	85	70	10
26-35 years	82	70	11
36-45 years	85	76	11
46-55 years	93	88	7
56 and older	95	84	11
Monthly Household Income:			
\$0-100	87	69	15
\$101-200	84	73	13
\$201-500	89	79	10
\$501+	84	85	5

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



Television is the most common media source relied on

- The media channels most commonly by Nigerians are television (44%), followed by the radio (20%) and Facebook (19%).
- Local television (51%) and social media (46%) were cited as the most frequently used sources for information in the country.

Technical Note

The fieldwork on this study was conducted by Ipsos with results based on 1,068 interviews with adults aged 18+ in Lagos, Abuja, and Kano. 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 2, 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 NPIs 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.