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

Summary

- All Senegalese know about COVID-19 and have a basic understanding about transmission and the importance of regular hand washing is high.
- While most feel they have enough information about the virus, there is still a desire to learn more about how to protect against it, country-specific infection numbers, transmission, and cure.
- Most Senegalese are positive about the government's response to date and trust the information it provides on it.
- Senegalese see the virus as both a high personal risk and a threat to their country. As such, 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 Senegal.
- Such interventions may be difficult to comply with as current personal supplies of food and cash will not last much beyond a fortnight and many do not have separate rooms at home to isolate those who may become infected. Effective risk management and relief measures are essential to ensure the successful implementation of public health measures.
- National and local TV are the key sources of information 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 Senegal.

Key Findings of the Survey

Awareness of COVID-19 is universal - but a minority seek more information and there is considerable misunderstanding on prevention and 'cures'

- Everyone has heard of COVID-19 (100%). Most spontaneously associate the symptoms with a fever (89%), dry cough (74%) or difficulty breathing (67%).
- Most (92%) feel they have enough information about the virus, nevertheless, one in five would like to know 'how to protect myself / my family from it' (20%) and/or 'how many people in your country have it / where is it / how fast is it spreading' (also 20%). One in seven would like to find out 'how it spreads / how you catch it' and/or 'how to cure it / is there a cure' (15% each).
- More than two in five believe that hot climate prevents the spread of COVID-19 (43%). One in four or more think that it can be prevented by drinking lemon and vitamin C (30%) or cured with garlic (24%). As many as one in seven or more think that Africans can't get it (19%) or that drinking bleach cures it (15%).
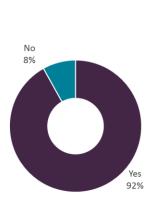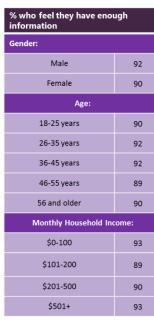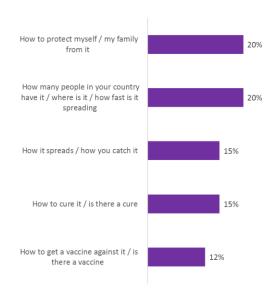
Q10. Do you feel you currently have enough information about the coronavirus/Covid-19 situation?
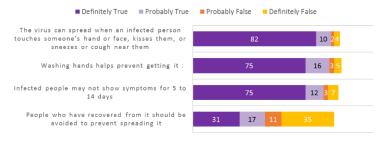
No
8%

Yes
92%

% who feel they have enough information	
Gender:	
Male	92
Female	90
Age:	
18-25 years	90
26-35 years	92
36-45 years	92
46-55 years	89
56 and older	90
Monthly Household Income:	
$0-100	93
$101-200	89
$201-500	90
$501+	93

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

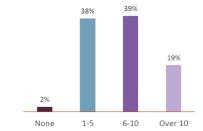|	
How to protect myself / my family from it	20%
How many people in your country have it / where is it / how fast is it spreading	20%
How it spreads / how you catch it	15%
How to cure it / is there a cure	15%
How to get a vaccine against it / is there a vaccine	12%

The basic understanding of close contact transmission and the importance of hand washing stands high – yet, only one in five say they often wash their hands

- Almost all think COVID-19 can be spread by touch, kiss, sneeze, or cough (93%, including 82% thinking this is 'definitely true') and that washing hands helps prevent getting it (91%, including 75% 'definitely true'). Half (48%) think people who have recovered from it should be avoided due to risk of spreading the virus.
- One in five stated they washed their hands 10+ times in the day prior to their interview compared with two in five washing 5 times or fewer (19% versus 40%).

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. (%)

Legend: ■ Definitely True ■ Probably True ■ Probably False ■ Definitely False

	Definitely True	Probably True	Probably False	Definitely False
The virus can spread when an infected person touches someone's hand or face, kisses them, or sneezes or cough near them	82	10	2	4
Washing hands helps prevent getting it :	75	16	3	5
Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days	75	12	3	7
People who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it	31	17	11	35

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

None	1-5	6-10	Over 10
2%	38%	39%	19%

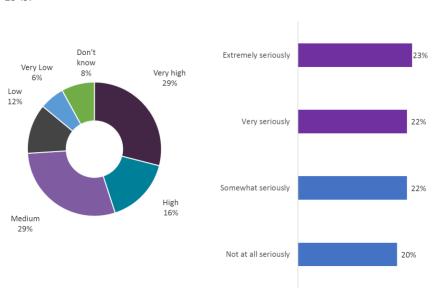| Q14. Share who agree definitely/probably true (%)	Gender		Age					Monthly Household Income			
	Male	Female	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 and over	$0-100	$101-200	$201-500	$501+
The virus can spread when an infected person touches someone's hand or face, kisses them, or sneezes or cough near them	92	93	93	92	93	95	92	95	90	91	95
Washing hands helps prevent getting it	90	93	93	92	91	89	88	92	89	91	93
Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days	86	88	85	87	89	85	84	93	86	83	91
People who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it	48	48	53	45	48	39	52	53	53	45	44

88% of Senegalese believe that COVID-19 poses a big problem for the country; 44% see COVID-19 as a high risk for themselves.

- Almost all Senegalese think that the coronavirus will be a problem for Senegal (88%, including 69% thinking it will become 'a big problem').
- More than twice as many feel they are at high risk of catching the coronavirus compared to low risk (44% high risk, including 29% 'very high' vs. 18% low risk, including 6% 'very low').
- Almost half believe that infection would seriously affect their health (45% 'extremely/very seriously' vs. 42% 'somewhat/not at all seriously').
- The most commonly cited rationale for understanding the perceived effect on health is 'it could kill me or make me very sick' (36%), followed by 'it caused a lot of problems abroad' (24%) and 'it can cause pneumonia' (14%).
- Senegalese are optimistic about receiving help they would need to deal with the illness if they become infected – with almost seven times as many confident about being able to get immediate help as not those not confident (81% vs. 12%).

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?

Don't know 8%
Very Low 6%
Low 12%
Very high 29%
High 16%
Medium 29%

Extremely seriously — 23%
Very seriously — 22%
Somewhat seriously — 22%
Not at all seriously — 20%

% who think coronavirus would affect their health extremely seriously/very seriously:	
Gender:	
Male	44
Female	47
Age:	
18-25 years	44
26-35 years	51
36-45 years	37
46-55 years	51
56 and older	54
Monthly Household Income:	
$0-100	41
$101-200	43
$201-500	51
$501+	47

Senegalese' perceptions of the governmental response to COVID-19 is very positive

- The overwhelming majority are satisfied with their government's response (89% vs. 11% dissatisfied).
- Senegalese are also much more likely than not to trust the information provided by the government (85%, including 58% 'completely trust' vs. 14%, including 3% 'not at all').
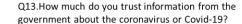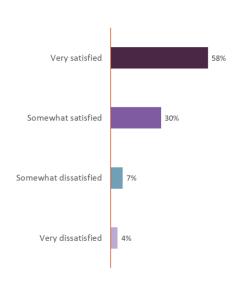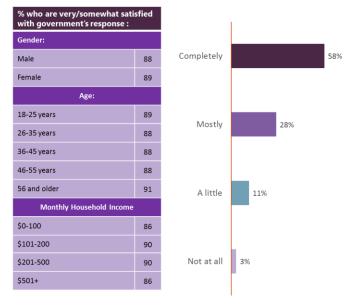
Q12.How satisfied are you with the government's response to coronavirus or Covid-19?

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

% who are very/somewhat satisfied with government's response :	
Gender:	
Male	88
Female	89
Age:	
18-25 years	89
26-35 years	88
36-45 years	88
46-55 years	88
56 and older	91
Monthly Household Income	
$0-100	86
$101-200	90
$201-500	90
$501+	86

Very satisfied — 58%
Somewhat satisfied — 30%
Somewhat dissatisfied — 7%
Very dissatisfied — 4%

Completely — 58%
Mostly — 28%
A little — 11%
Not at all — 3%

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

- Almost all Senegalese support stopping handshake/kiss greetings (97%); a majority also supports requiring those who have contact with infected people to self-isolate (62%) and requiring those with COVID-19 to remain home until they are well (58%).

Senegalese also support restricting public gatherings

- Support is almost universal for restricting public gatherings to help limit a COVID-19 outbreak by stopping sports fixtures (99%), music concerts (97%) and prayer gatherings (86%). One in five or more say that stopping prayer gatherings would be made easier by radio broadcast (27%), having small groups instead of large gatherings (25%) or broadcasting services on TV/internet (21%).

A clear majority of Senegalese also support other temporary 'community PHSMs' to help slow the COVID-19 outbreak

- This includes closing restaurants/nightclubs (96%), markets (89%) and churches and mosques (86%).
- Four in five or more would support closing transport between cities (85%), closing a city off for two weeks (85%) and closing transport in and around cities (82%).
- Almost all (98%) would support school closures. The majority of those with children say they would have someone to look after them (includes 76% of those with 1 to 2 children at home and 81% of those with 3+ children at home).
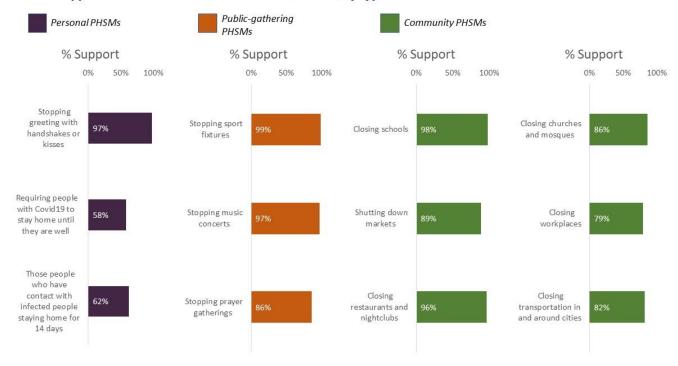
Level of support for Public health social measures (PHSMs) by type of intervention

■ Personal PHSMs **■ Public-gathering PHSMs** **■ Community PHSMs**

% Support			
Stopping greeting with handshakes or kisses	97%		
Requiring people with Covid19 to stay home until they are well	58%		
Those people who have contact with infected people staying home for 14 days	62%		

% Support	
Stopping sport fixtures	99%
Stopping music concerts	97%
Stopping prayer gatherings	86%

% Support	
Closing schools	98%
Shutting down markets	89%
Closing restaurants and nightclubs	96%

% Support	
Closing churches and mosques	86%
Closing workplaces	79%
Closing transportation in and around cities	82%

PHSMs will place a significant burden on many Senegalese
- More than twice as many work outside the home as in it to earn money (38% vs. 16%) and fewer than half have a separate room to isolate someone who becomes sick (44%). More than one in four doubt that their workplace could accommodate staggered shifts (27%).
- Asked about the biggest problems posed if asked to stay home for two weeks, most spontaneously talk about access to food and water (76%). Almost half talk of running out of money (46%), while one in six say losing their job (17%).
- If asked to stay at home, on median average, Senegalese would need to get more food and more money after 7 days.
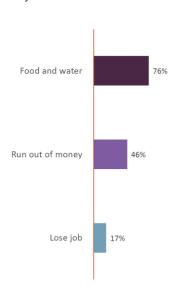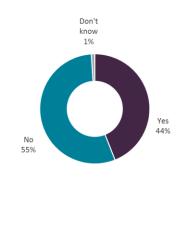
Q17: What would be the biggest problems for people like you to stay at home for 14 days?

Food and water	76%
Run out of money	46%
Lose job	17%

Share who think the following would be the biggest problem... (%)	Food and water	Running out of money	Losing your job
Gender:			
Male	77	52	17
Female	76	39	17
Age:			
18-25 years	71	38	14
26-35 years	74	51	19
36-45 years	80	49	17
46-55 years	86	36	19
56 and older	77	43	11
Monthly Household Income:			
$0-100	93	70	30
$101-200	77	47	16
$201-500	71	44	18
$501+	75	45	14

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

Don't know 1%
Yes 44%
No 55%

Mass media like TV is relied on for national and local information, supplemented by social media, WhatsApp and radio, suggesting that multiple channels are useful for communicating COVID-19 information

- Seven in 10 say they normally get their information on what's happening in the country from TV (69%); sizeable reach also comes from social media (22%), WhatsApp (21%), international TV (19%) and local radio (17%). For local news, local TV is also the main source of information (67%); one in five also cite social media (23%), WhatsApp (22%) and local radio (22%).

Technical Note

The fieldwork on this study was conducted by Ipsos with results based on 1,039 interviews with adults aged 18+ in Dakar. 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 April 1 and April 4, 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.