

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

Summary

- Almost all Zimbabweans know about COVID-19, its transmission, and symptoms.
- Nevertheless, many feel they do not have enough information about the virus.
- While most are aware of the benefit of handwashing, this does not translate into frequent handwashing.
- Most are satisfied with the government's response to the pandemic and have trust in information coming from the government.
- Support for interventions aimed at curbing the spread of the virus is very high, with many forms of intervention receiving almost universal support.
- Most Zimbabweans believe that COVID-19 will be a big problem for their country, but opinions are split as to risk levels of contracting the virus and the health impact.
- Television and WhatsApp are the most important media channels in the country.

Background

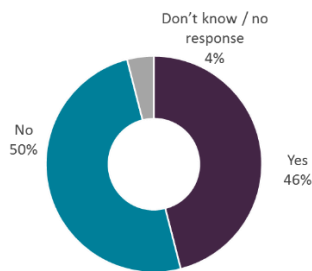
Public health social measures (PHSMs) are an important strategy to delay and reduce the magnitude of COVID-19. PHSMs particularly those that restrict movement or entail the closure of services, can place a significant burden on populations. The effective implementation of PHSMs will require public support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

Key Findings of the Survey

Although awareness of COVID-19 is very high, Zimbabweans feel ill-informed about the disease

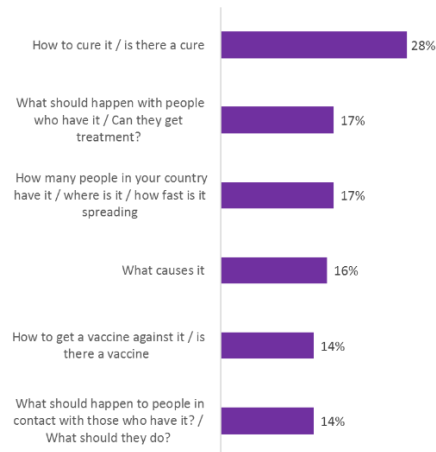
- Awareness of COVID-19 is almost universal at 99%.
- The most common associations with COVID-19 are 'a virus' (52%), 'a respiratory illness, affects lungs or breathing, causes pneumonia' (45%), and 'like a cold or the flu' (41%).
- The perceived symptoms of COVID-19 are a dry cough (70%), difficulty breathing / shortness of breath (66%), and fever (64%).
- Fewer than half of Zimbabweans feel they have enough information about COVID-19 (46%).
- Information needs are broad, but the most commonly sought information is around 'how to cure it / is there a cure' (28%), 'what should happen with people who have it / can they get treatment' (17%), and 'how many people in your country have it / where is it / how fast is it spreading' (also 17%).

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



% who feel they have enough information	
Gender:	
Male	48
Female	45
Age:	
18-25 years	40
26-35 years	47
36-45 years	49
46-55 years	53
56 and older	45
Monthly Household Income:	
\$0-100	41
\$101-200	49
\$201-500	51
\$501+	55

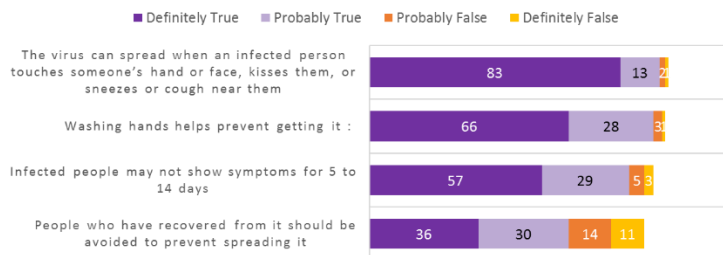
Q11. What are the two things about it that you would like most to have more information about? [Top mentions]



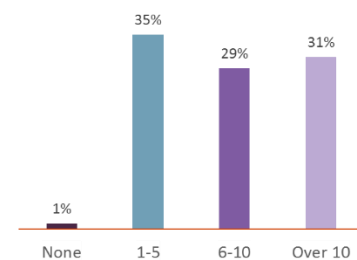
Awareness of modes of transmission and the benefit of handwashing is high, but this does not translate into frequent handwashing

- Almost all think COVID-19 can be spread by touch, kiss, sneeze, or cough (96%, including 83% thinking this is 'definitely true') and that washing hands helps prevent getting it (94%, including 66% 'definitely true'). Only slightly fewer (87%) believe that infected people may not show symptoms for up to 14 days, while two in three (66%) believe that people who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it.
- Nearly four in five (76%) think you can prevent it by drinking lemon and vitamin C, and around six in ten (63%) believe hot climate prevents spread. Just under four in ten (37%) think you can cure it with garlic, while one in four (27%) believe Chinese-made hair weaves can be infected with coronavirus.
- Three in ten (31%) stated they washed their hands 10+ times in the day prior to their interview, slightly fewer than those who washed them 1-5 times (35%). Men wash their hands less frequently than women.

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?

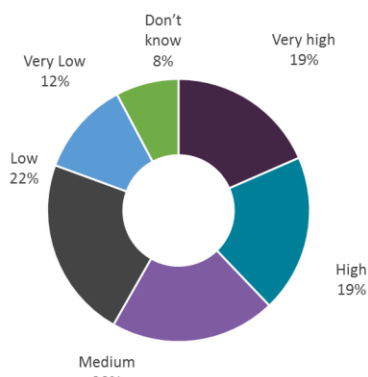


Q14. Share who agree definitely/probably true (%)	Gender		Age					Monthly Household Income			
	Male	Female	18-25 years	26-35 years	36-45 years	46-55 years	56 and over	\$0-100	\$101-200	\$201-500	\$501+
The virus can spread when an infected person touches someone's hand or face, kisses them, or sneezes or cough near them	95	96	95	96	95	94	96	97	97	94	92
Washing hands helps prevent getting it	94	93	95	95	95	92	89	96	94	94	84
Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days	87	86	87	88	86	87	84	86	85	90	83
People who have recovered from it should be avoided to prevent spreading it	68	64	65	67	67	69	61	66	66	64	57

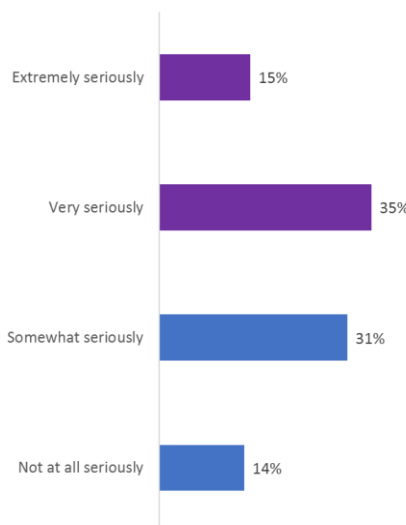
82% of Zimbabweans believe COVID-19 will be a big problem for their country; 39% see themselves at high risk of contracting of COVID-19.

- Two in three (66%) anticipate COVID-19 being ‘a big problem’ in their country and an additional 16% see it being a big problem that will be dealt with. Only 7 percent expect it will be ‘not much of a problem.’ Younger Zimbabweans are more likely to foresee Coronavirus being a big problem than more elderly nationals (respectively 68% versus 57% seeing it as such among respectively the youngest and oldest age groups).
- There is a fairly even split between Zimbabweans considering themselves at high risk versus at low risk, with respectively 39% thinking of themselves as at high risk, compared with 35% at low risk.
- In line with this, half of Zimbabweans believe that contracting the virus would seriously affect their health (50%, with 15% ‘extremely seriously’), while just under half (45%) think that it would not. More elderly Zimbabweans are more concerned, with 63% of those aged 56+ saying that it would have a serious impact.
- The most commonly cited rationale for understanding the perceived effect on health is ‘it caused lots of problems abroad / in China / Iran / Italy / Korea’ (39%) and ‘it could kill me / make me very sick’ (34%).
- Opinions are also split when it comes to confidence about being able to immediately get help (47% confident vs. 50% 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?



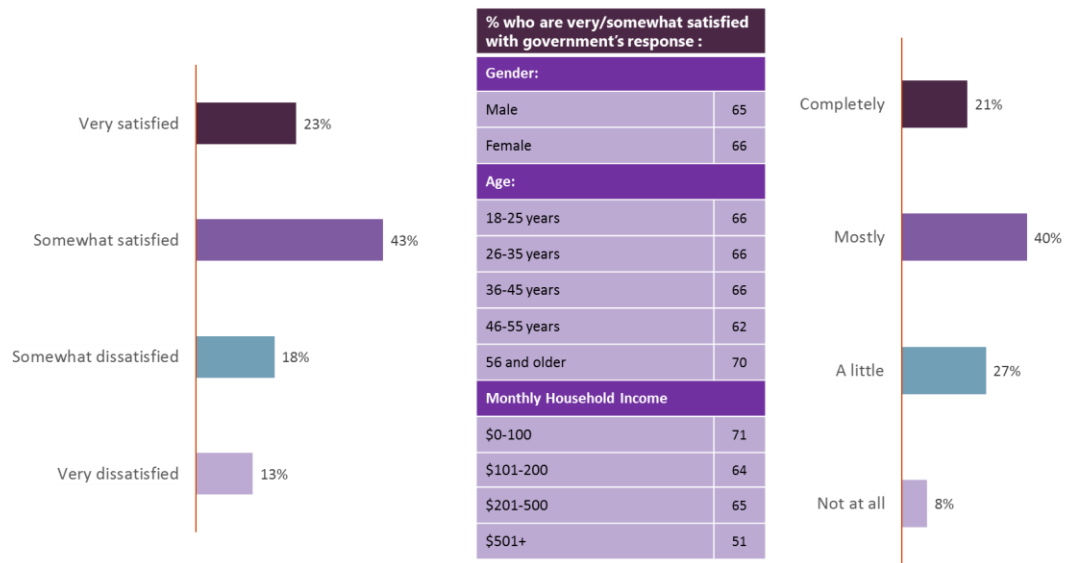
% who think coronavirus would affect their health extremely seriously/very seriously:	
Gender:	
Male	48
Female	51
Age:	
18-25 years	48
26-35 years	47
36-45 years	46
46-55 years	55
56 and older	63
Monthly Household Income:	
\$0-100	52
\$101-200	53
\$201-500	38
\$501+	51

Most Zimbabweans are satisfied with governmental response to COVID-19 and are trusting of disseminated information, though a large minority are not

- Two in three are satisfied with the government’s response to COVID-19 (66%, compared with 32% dissatisfied). Satisfaction is higher among lower earners than higher earners, at respectively 71% and 51% satisfied among the lowest and highest income brackets.
- In line with this, six in ten indicate that they trust information from the government (61%, including 21% ‘completely’), while nearly four in ten say they do not (36%).

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?



Strong support for public health social measures (PHSMs)

- Almost all Zimbabweans support stopping handshake/kiss greetings (98%). Fewer, but still a significant majority, also support requiring those who have contact with infected people to self-isolate (83%) and those with COVID-19 to remain home until they are well (79%).

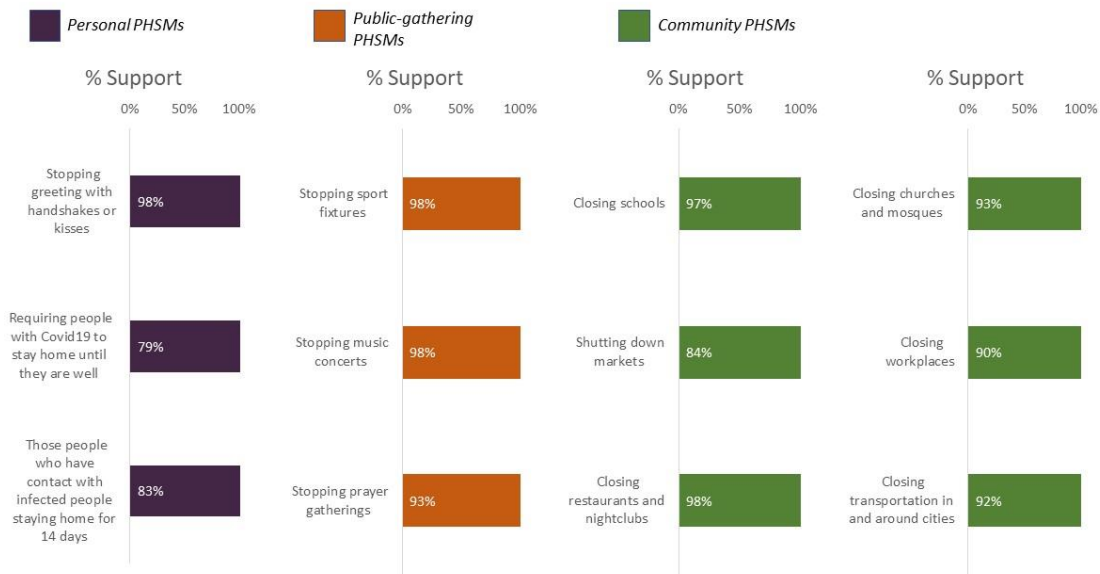
There is also almost universal support for restricting public gatherings

- Support is almost universal for restricting public gatherings to help limit a COVID-19 outbreak by stopping sport fixtures and music concerts (both 98%). Only slightly fewer also support stopping prayer gatherings (93%).
- The most frequently cited way to make prayer or religious gatherings easier would be to make services available on TV or the internet (41%) and to broadcast them on the radio (40%).

There is strong support – and in many cases nearly universal support – for closures to prevent the spread of the virus

- Almost all Zimbabweans support the closure of restaurants and nightclubs (98%) as well as schools (97%) in order to slow the spread of COVID-19.
- Support is also very strong for closing churches and mosques (93%), transportation in and around cities (92%), and workplaces (90%).
- Although slightly weaker, a strong majority also support shutting down markets (84%).

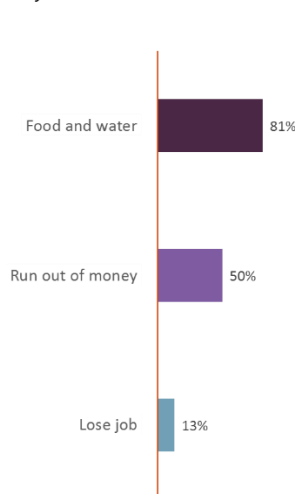
Level of support for Public health social measures (PHSMs) by type of intervention



Quarantine measures may have a strong impact on Zimbabweans, particularly when it comes to access to food and water

- Four in ten Zimbabweans (41%) work outside the home, and the same share indicate they are not working. Of those employed outside the home, fewer than half (44%) say their workplace could accommodate staggered shifts.
- Half (48%) have a separate room to isolate someone who becomes sick; rising to 63% among those aged 56+.
- Four in five (81%) indicate that food and water would be a problem if they had to be at home for 14 days. Half (50%) believe they would run out of money, and just over one in ten (13%) believe they would lose their job. Concerns over food and water in particular are much higher among those earning less (85% of those on household monthly incomes of less than \$100 per month are concerned about this, compared with 59% of those on \$501+).
- If asked to stay at home, on median average, Zimbabweans would need to get both food 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
Gender:			
Male	80	51	13
Female	83	50	13
Age:			
18-25 years	79	45	14
26-35 years	82	49	13
36-45 years	82	52	11
46-55 years	82	59	13
56 and older	83	52	12
Monthly Household Income:			
\$0-100	85	50	12
\$101-200	83	55	12
\$201-500	80	48	11
\$501+	59	45	8

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



Television and WhatsApp are the most common media sources relied on

- Zimbabweans report normally getting information about what is happening in the country through local television (50%), followed by WhatsApp (39%).
- In line with this, these are the two media channels which Zimbabweans indicate using most in one week, at respectively 44% and 31%. One in five indicate the radio as the media channel they use most in a week (18%).

Technical Note

The fieldwork on this study was conducted by Ipsos with results based on 1,034 interviews with adults aged 18+ in Harare. 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.