

Responding to COVID-19 in African Countries:

Executive Summary of Polling Results: South Africa

August 2020



INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact societies across health, financial and day to day life.

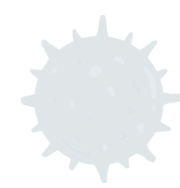
This document provides the findings from public opinion polls in South Africa to understand the public's knowledge, risk perception, attitudes, access to information, reactions, behaviors and practices related to COVID-19.

This Executive Summary is supplemented by an Appendix with the results should readers require additional detail.

METHODOLOGY

The public opinion poll in South Africa was conducted between 3 August and 17 August 2020. The polling was conducted by telephone.

Samples were drawn to be nationally representative of each Member State; weighting was applied by gender and region to align the final data with the population. The unweighted national sample size in South Africa is 1,395 interviews.



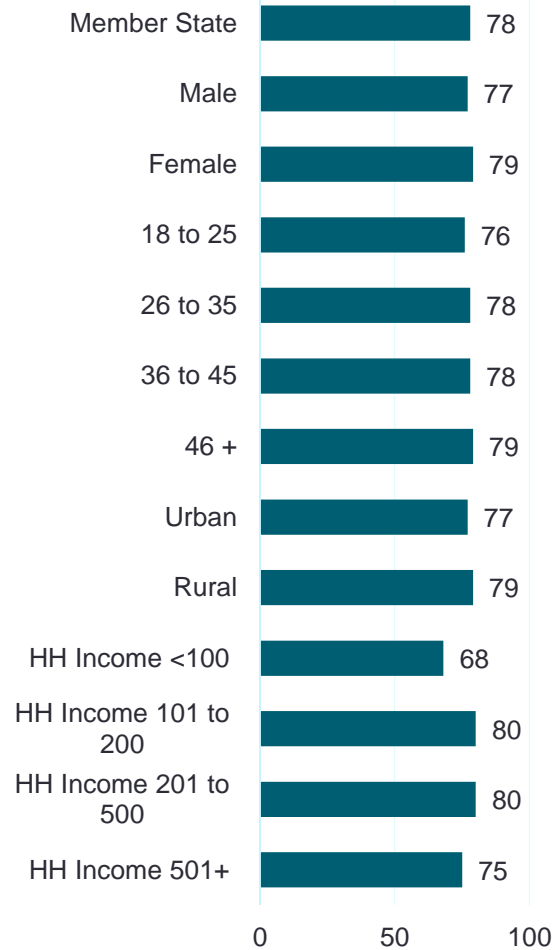
Key Findings

- **PHSM support & adherence:** Both support for, and adherence to, PHSMs in South Africa are high relative to other African Union (AU) Member States surveyed.
- **Risk perceptions & information:** Around half of respondents in South Africa believe they are at risk for contracting COVID-19, a significantly higher share than in other AU Member States surveyed, reflecting the country's large epidemic. However, many respondents in South Africa hold misconceptions or believe rumors or myths.
- **Essential health services:** A high proportion of respondents who needed medical care have had difficulty accessing health care visits (38%) or medicines (31%) during the COVID-19 crisis, and those with longstanding illnesses are particularly affected.
- **Economic burden & food security:** A majority of respondents (62%) report having lost income compared to last year, and many are facing difficulty accessing food. Only 22% report receiving additional aid from the government in the previous month.

Information, Perception & Misinformation

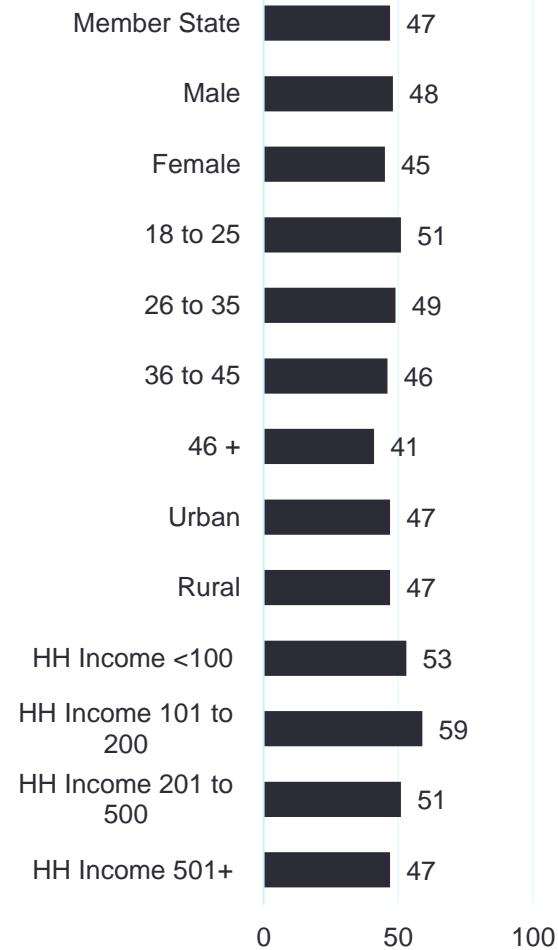
Preventive Measures

- % True for ALL three statements:**
- Washing hands helps prevent getting COVID-19
 - Infected people may not show symptoms for 5 to 14 days
 - Wearing a face mask when around other people prevents the spread of COVID-19



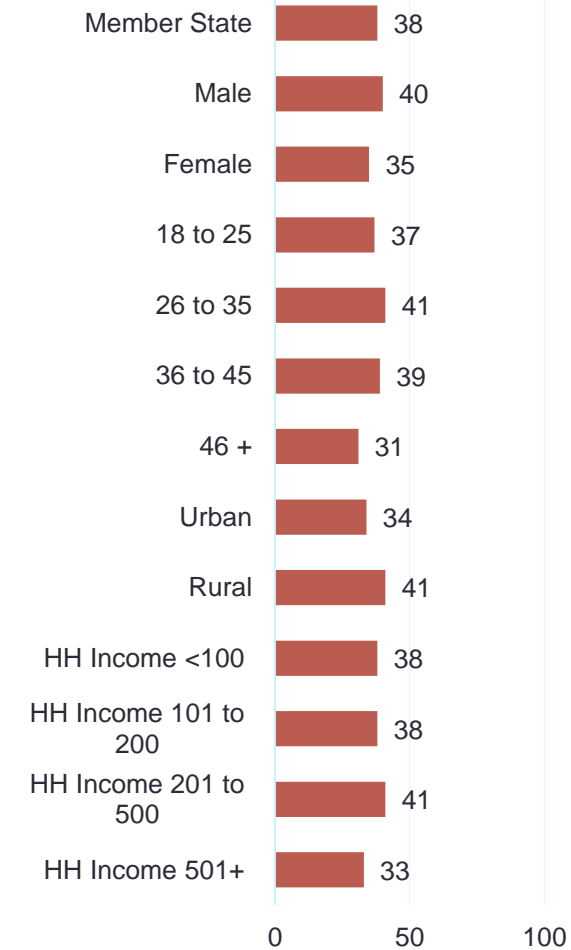
Reaction to Recovered Patients

- % True (one statement):**
- People who have recovered from COVID-19 should be avoided to prevent spreading it.

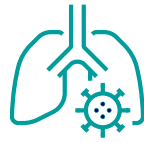


Misinformation

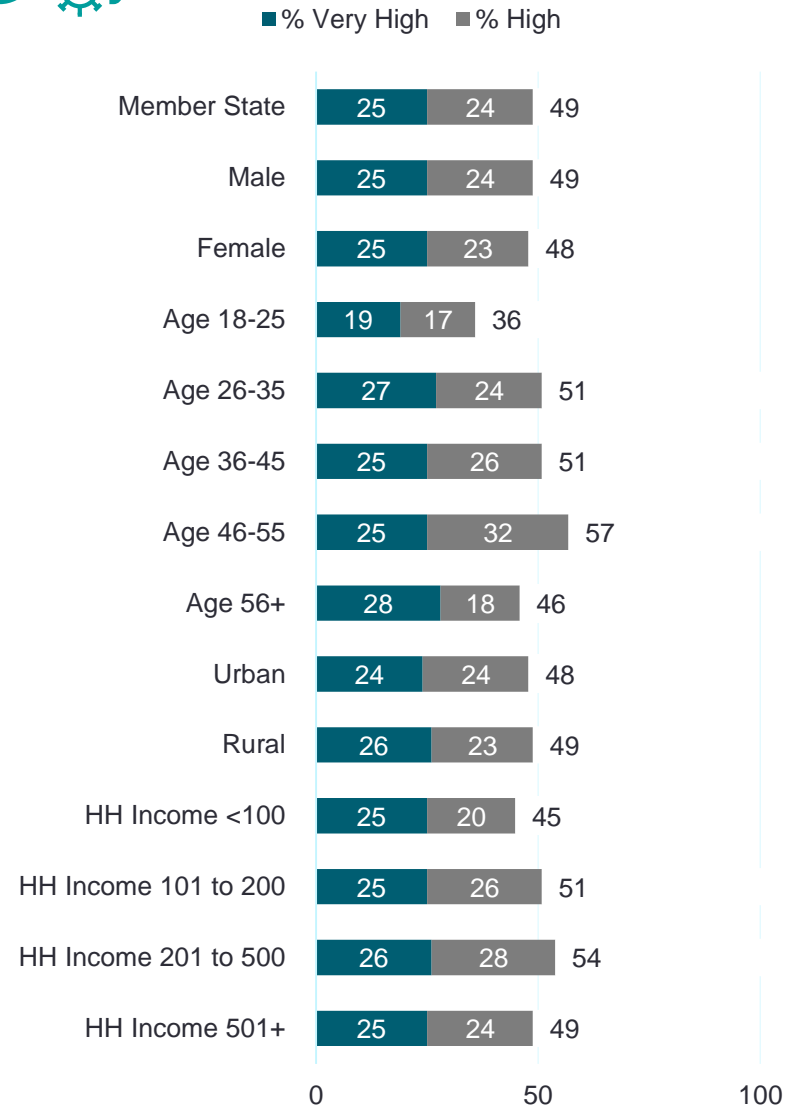
- % True for BOTH statements:**
- Foreigners are discrediting African medicines which could cure COVID-19
 - Foreigners are trying to test vaccines on us



Risk Perceptions



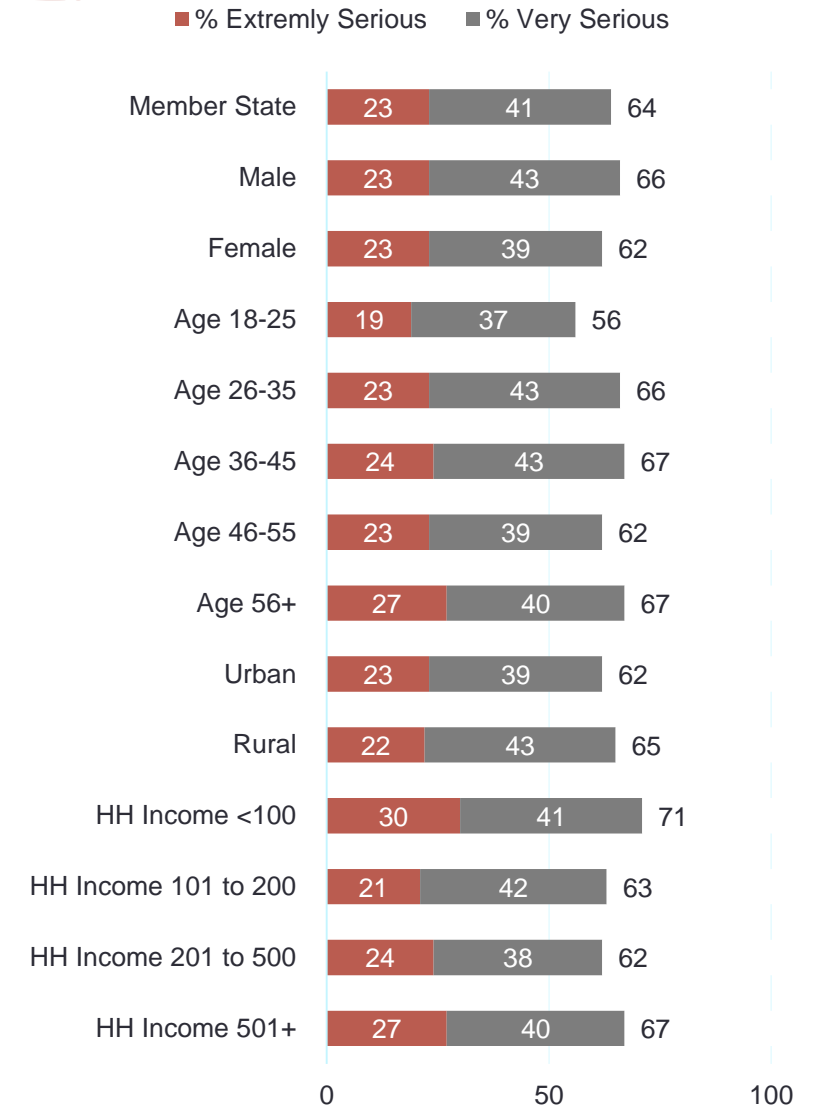
Perceived risk of catching COVID-19:



Q8. Please indicate what you think your level of risk of catching coronavirus or COVID-19 is: Very high, High, Medium, Low, Very Low, Don't know



Perceived severity of COVID-19 on health:



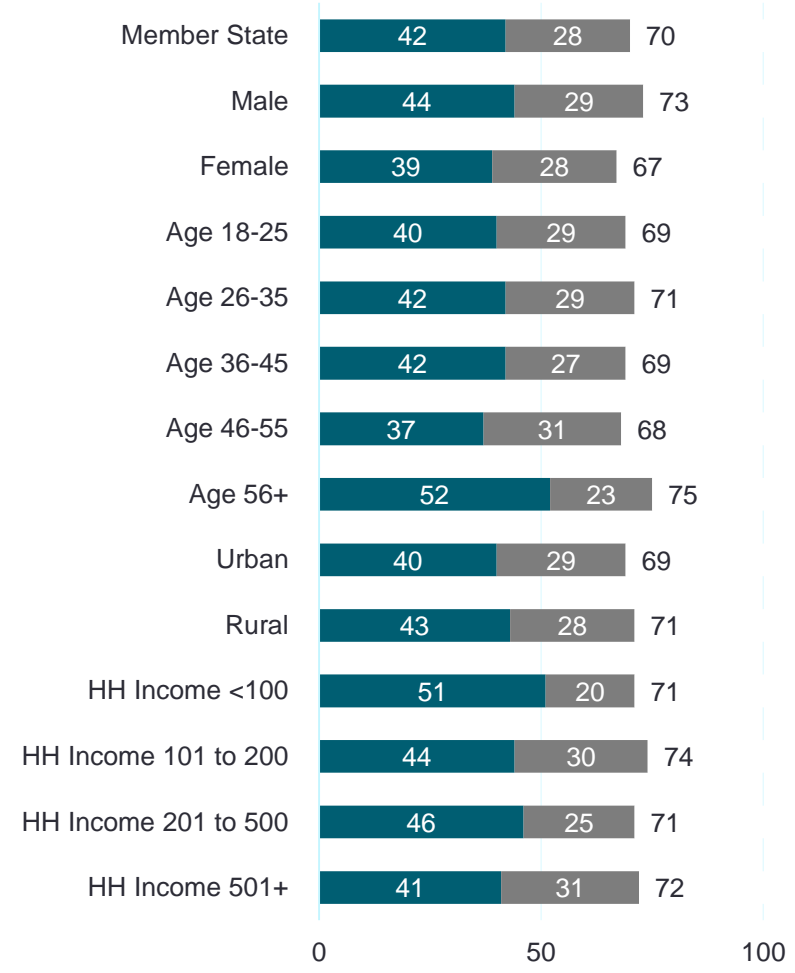
Q9. If you were infected by coronavirus or COVID-19, how seriously do you think it would affect your health? Not at all seriously, Somewhat seriously, Very seriously, Extremely seriously, Don't know / no response

Satisfaction and Trust with the COVID-19 Response



Satisfaction with Government response to COVID-19:

■ % Very Satisfied ■ % Somewhat Satisfied

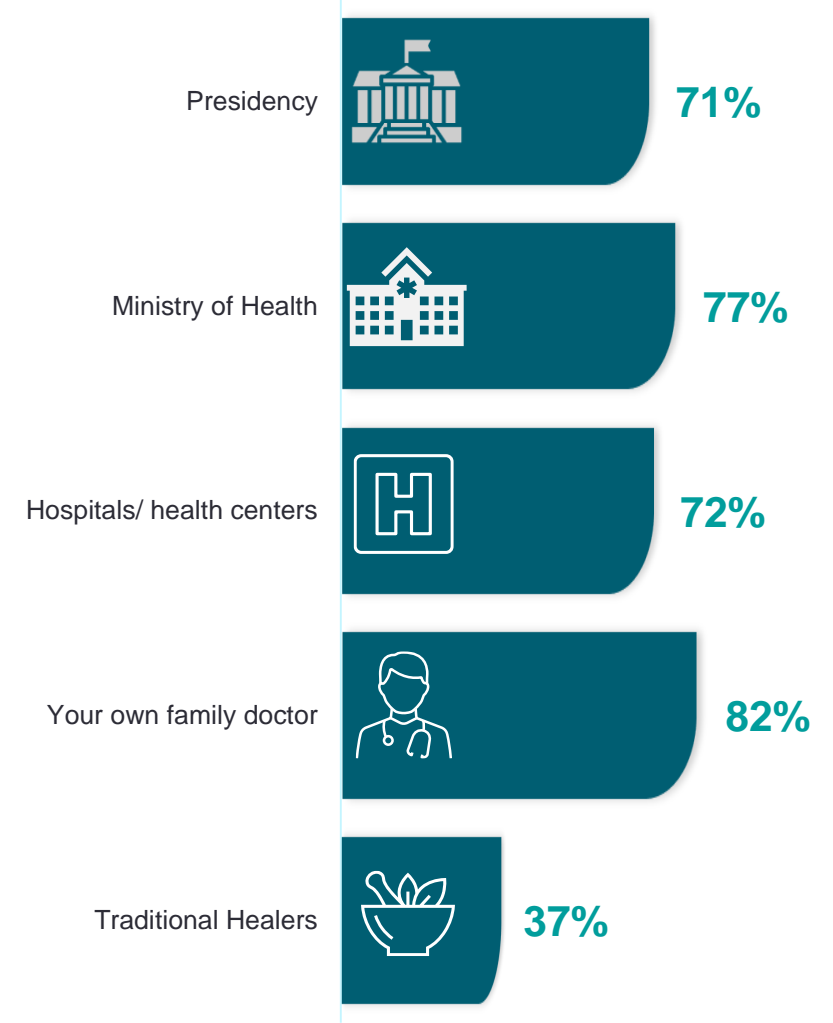


Q11. How satisfied are you with your South Africa government's response to coronavirus or COVID-19? Very satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, Don't know / not sure



Trust in handling of COVID-19

% Trust a great deal + fair amount



Q12. To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of the following individuals and organizations' handling of the coronavirus in South Africa? A great deal, A fair amount, Not very much, Not at all, Don't know, Not heard of organisation, Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF Public Health and Social Measures (PHSMs)

Public Health and Social Measures (PHSMs)

	Adherence: level to which these activities describe “you personally”				Support: perception of necessity		
	<i>Completely applies</i>	<i>Mostly applies</i>	<i>Sometimes applies</i>	<i>Does not apply to me</i>	<i>Absolutely necessary</i>	<i>Somewhat necessary</i>	<i>Not really necessary</i>
Wear a face mask in public when near others	88	9	2	1	90	7	2
Wash more often than they used to	84	12	4	12	93	6	2
Avoid handshakes and physical greetings	77	14	4	4	82	13	5
PERSONAL PHSMS: SUMMARY	83	12	3	6	88	9	3
Stop joining public gatherings and places of entertainment	74	16	6	4	77	15	7
Stop going to the church/mosque	67	18	6	9	70	17	11
PUBLIC GATHERING PHSMS: SUMMARY	71	17	6	7	74	16	9
Reduce the number of times going to the market or grocery store	61	25	10	4	74	20	6
Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities	59	22	11	8	70	20	10
MOBILITY PHSMS: SUMMARY	60	24	11	6	72	20	8

Please see Appendix for detail by country

Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?

Face masks: Perceptions, Use and Attitudes

When other people wear face masks near me, I think...

they are being careful, and I appreciate that they are protecting others

they may be infected, and I should stay away from them

they are being foolish, because this is unlikely to protect anyone



99% have a face mask ready to wear

Adherence:
Wear a Face Mask in Public Around Others:
Completely applies: 88%
Mostly applies: 9%

Q4. Do you have a face mask of any kind that is ready for you to wear?
 Q13g. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: G) Wearing a face mask in public when near others

Q3. I would now like to ask your opinion about face masks, which some people are wearing at the moment. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Showing % agree (Strongly + Somewhat agree)

Impact on Health Care Services



Missed, Delayed or Skipped Health Care Services:

% Yes: (among those requiring services)	40%
People with longstanding illness	56%
Women	44%
Low Income (HH Income <100)	32%
High Income (HH Income 501+)	30%
Urban	42%
Rural	39%

Base = require services (40%)



Difficulty accessing medications:

% Much More Difficult (among those requiring medications)	15%
People with longstanding illness	24%
Women	16%
Low Income (HH Income <100)	22%
High Income (HH Income 501+)	14%
Urban	14%
Rural	17%

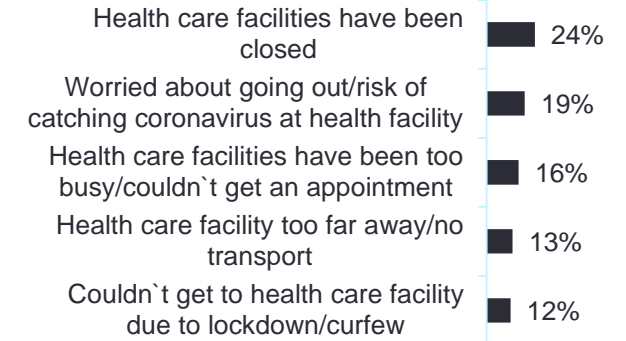
Base = require medication (83%)

Q21. Have you or any other person in your household delayed, skipped or been unable to complete health care visits since the COVID-19 crisis?

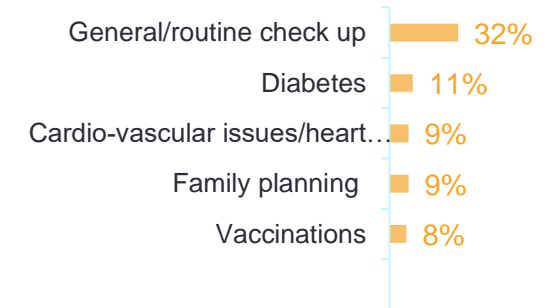
Q24. Has the COVID-19 crisis made it more difficult to obtain medications you need for you or your household or has it had no impact? If you do not need medications, please say so.



Reason for Missed, Delayed or Skipped Services:



Types of services missed, delayed or skipped:



Q22. Why have you or another person in your household delayed, skipped or been unable to complete health care visits since the COVID-19 crisis?

Q23. And do you mind if I ask what those delayed, missed or not completed health care visits were for?

Economic and Food Relief Measures



Barriers and Difficulties Purchasing Food

	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	HH income < 100USD	HH income 500+
EXPERIENCED 'ANY' BARRIER ONE DAY OR MORE:	74	72	76	70	78	77	71
<i>Experienced 1 day or more:</i>							
...had difficulties in going to food markets due to restrictions imposed	36	36	36	33	39	44	39
...had difficulties in buying food due to most food markets being closed?	37	40	34	35	40	47	37
...been unable to buy the amount of food you usually buy because of shortages in the markets	44	46	44	40	47	50	48
...been unable to buy the amount of food you usually buy because the price was too high?	59	56	61	54	62	57	53
...been unable to buy the amount of food you usually buy because your income has dropped?	54	55	54	51	57	55	49

Q17. In the past 7 days, how many days have you or someone in your household experienced any of the following?



Impact on Income: % Reporting Income is Smaller than last year	62%
Women	62%
Men	61%
Low Income (HH Income <100)	62%
High Income (HH Income 501+)	60%
Urban	64%
Rural	59%

Q18. How does the amount of money you made in the past 7 days compare to the amount you made this time last year? Is it... Bigger, Smaller, Stayed the Same, Don't make any, Don't know.



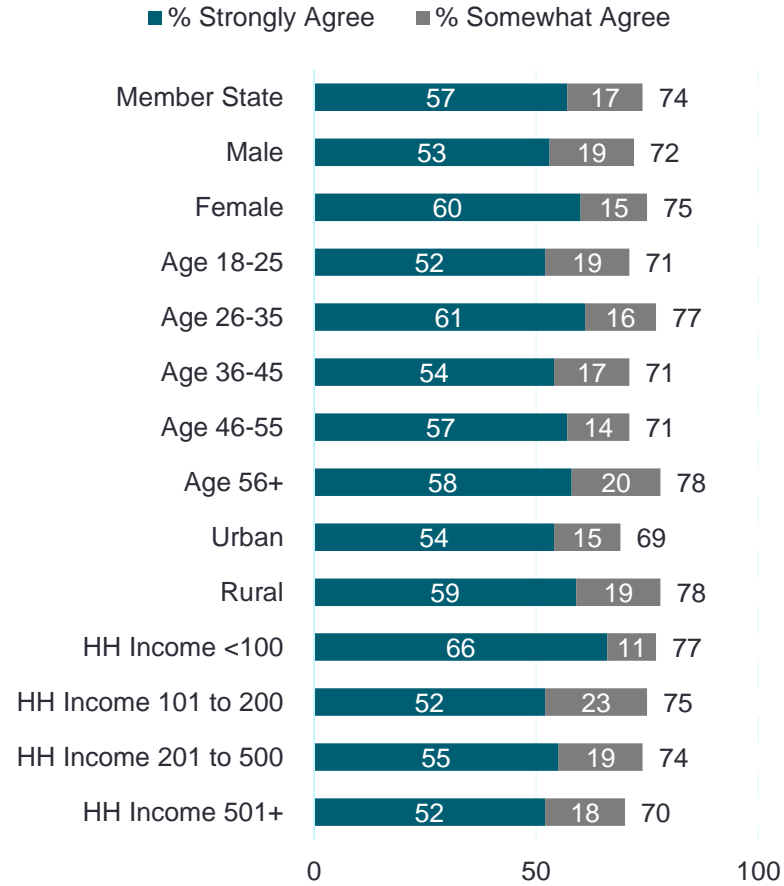
Impact on Unpaid work: % Reporting More Hours on Unpaid Work	22%
Women	25%
Men	20%
Low Income (HH Income <100)	19%
High Income (HH Income 501+)	21%
Urban	22%
Rural	23%

Q19. Since the crisis began, have you had a change in your hours spent on unpaid work, such as childcare, care of the elderly and housework? More hours, less hours, no change in hours, don't know.

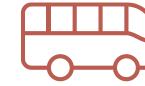
Concerns about resuming normal activities



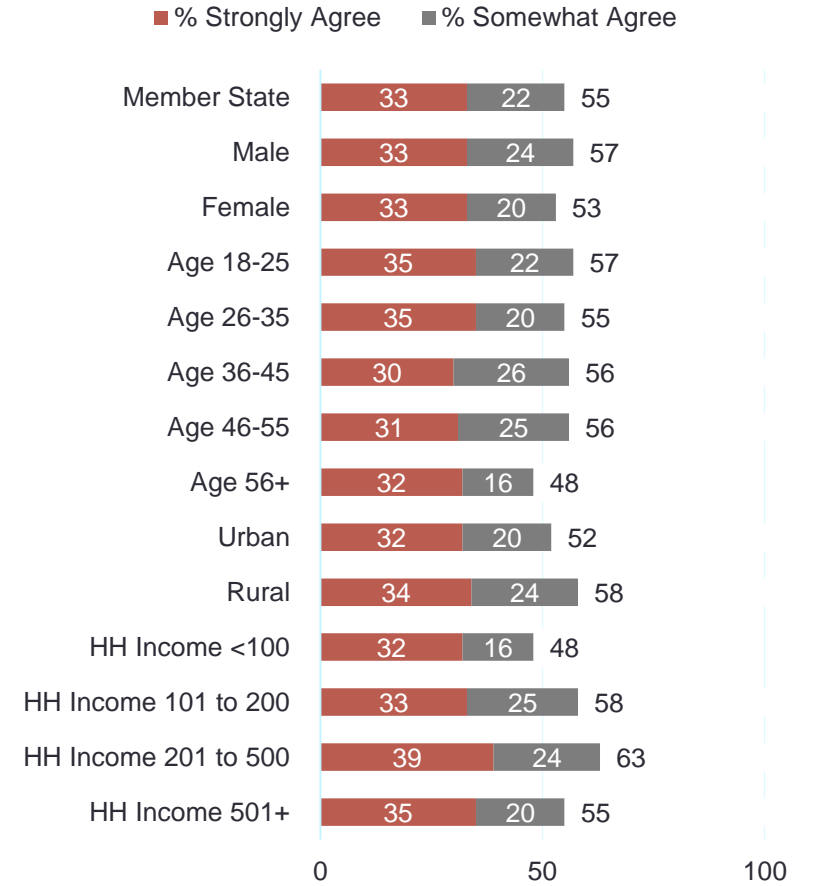
Thinking about resuming normal activities after the lockdown makes me feel very anxious



Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



I would feel comfortable taking public transportation such as local buses or trains if it was not too busy

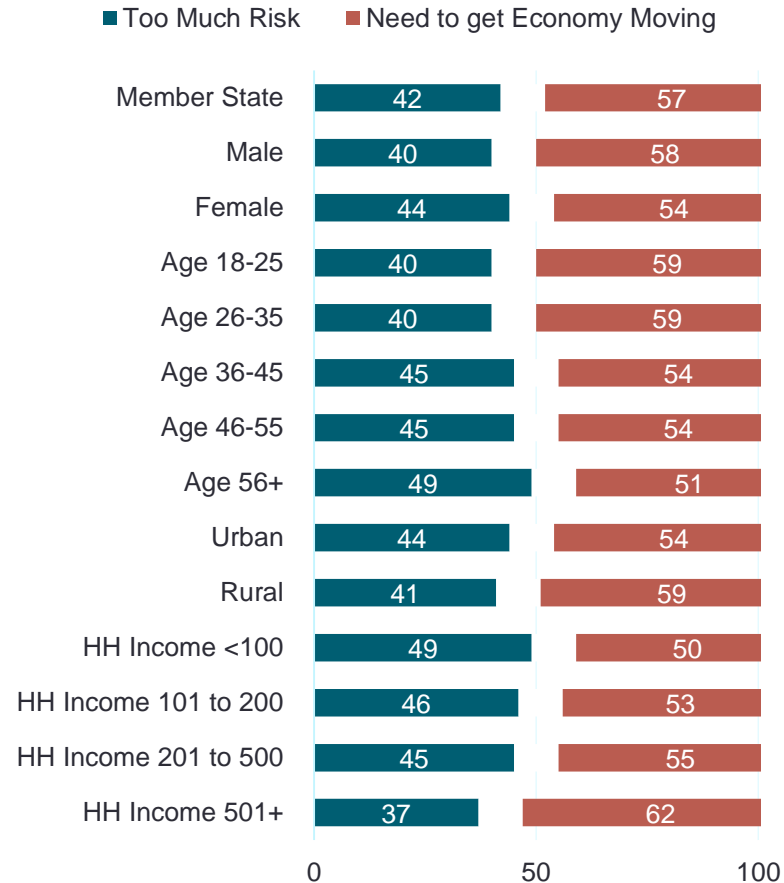


Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Expectations about COVID-19



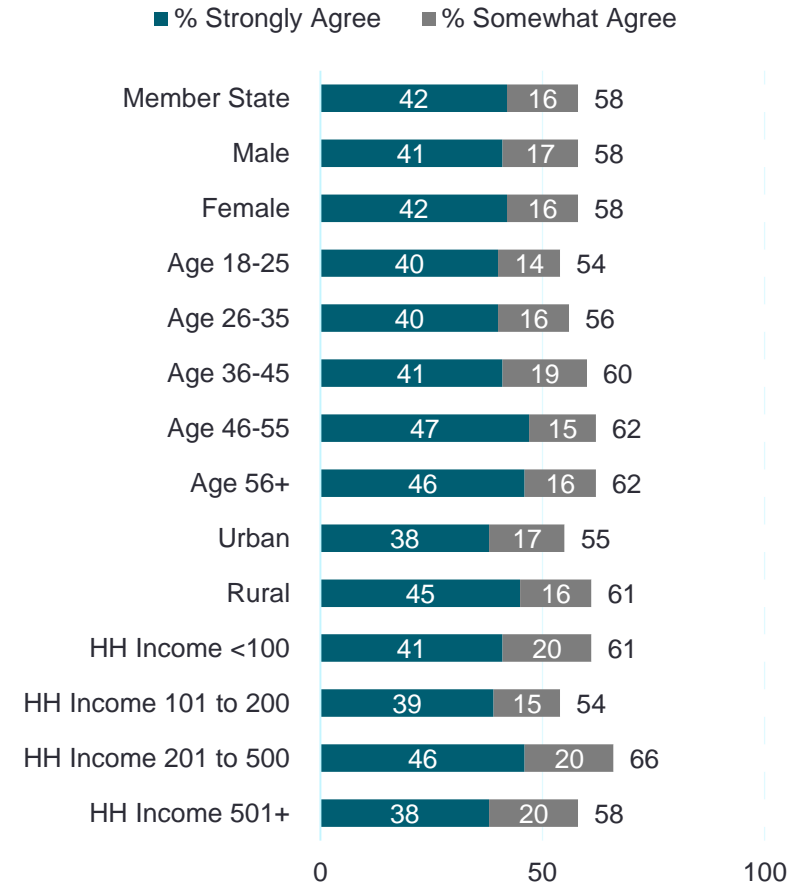
Loosening Restrictions: “too risky to loosen restrictions” versus “there is a low risk and need to get economy moving”



Q16. Some people say that loosening restrictions now puts too many people at risk of contracting COVID-19 and we need to wait at least a few more weeks. Other people say that the health risk is minimal if people follow social distancing rules and we need to get the economy moving again. Which is closer to your point of view?



It will be at least six months before COVID-19 is contained



Q15. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements?

For more information, contact:

Stephanie Salyer, DVM, MPH
Africa-CDC
stephanies@africa-union.org

Nandita Murukutla, PhD
Vital Strategies
nmurukutla@vitalstrategies.org



Partnership for Evidence-Based
Response to COVID-19

Additional Methodology Details

- The public opinion polling was conducted using a telephone interviewing methodology.
- The questionnaire was developed by Resolve to Save Lives, Ipsos and members of the PERC consortium.
- The polling program was approved by local review boards and all respondents gave explicit permission to participate in the polling.
- Note that where referenced, income categories should be interpreted as indicative as sample sizes vary and income reporting can be subject to bias.
- The weighted sample sizes for the demographic breaks in this report are as follows:

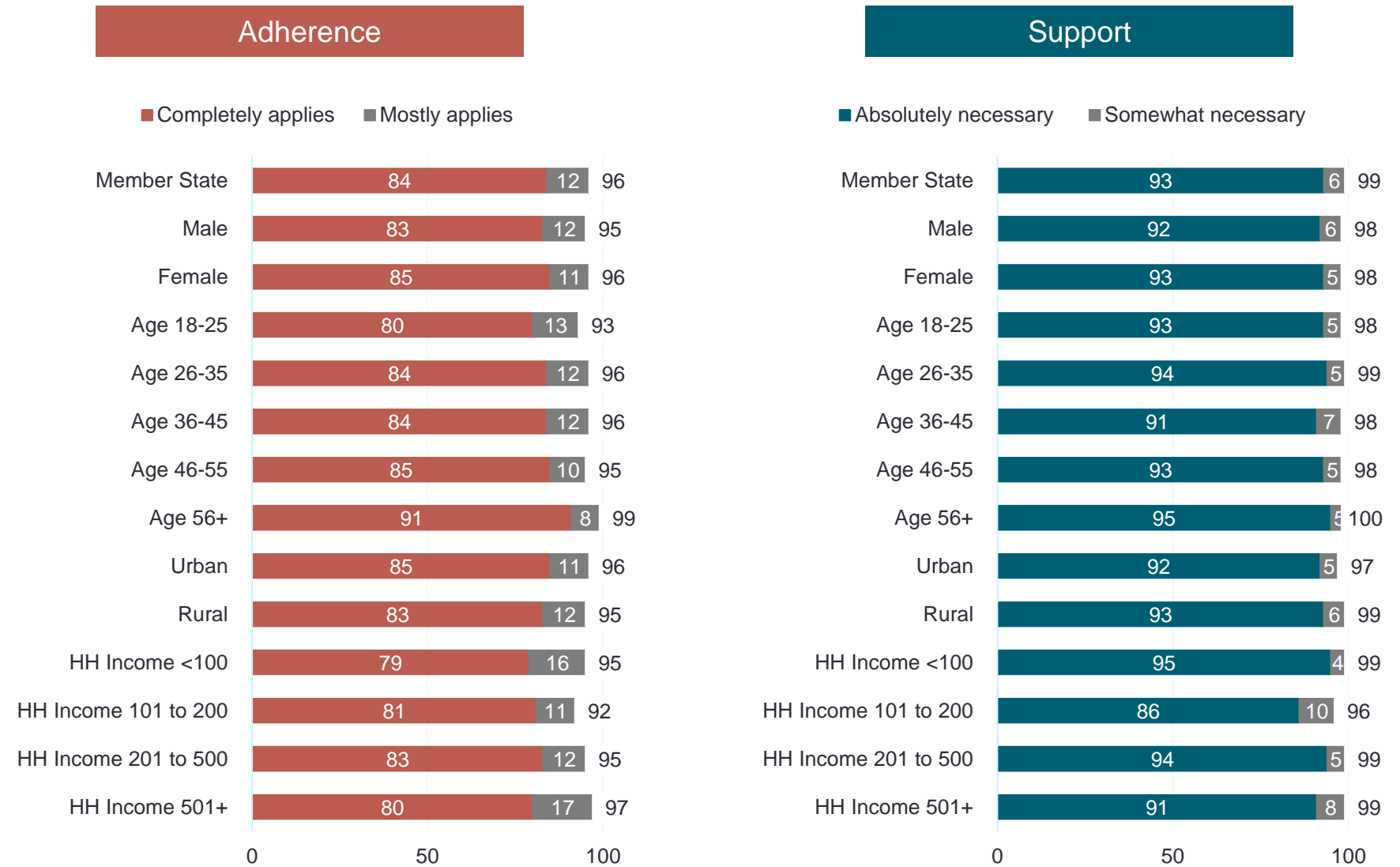
	Total	Male	Female	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	Urban	Rural	Under 100	101 - 200	201 - 500	501+
Base: All	1200	621	579	240	415	321	133	91	588	612	147	145	195	250

- The percentages reported in this document may be different from percentages reported in other PERC products and communication of this data. Differences may be reconciled by investigating the denominator used, as indicated in each instance of use.



PERSONAL Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Washing my hands many times per day

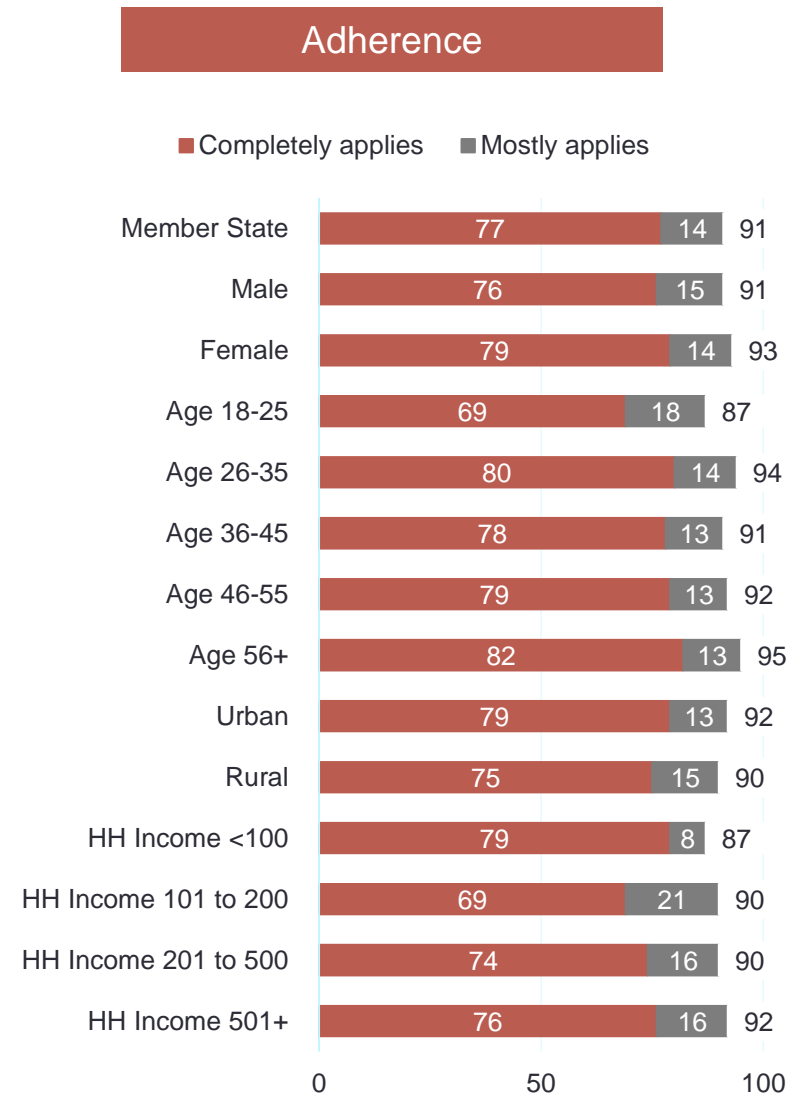


Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Washing my hands with soap or using hand sanitizer many times per day

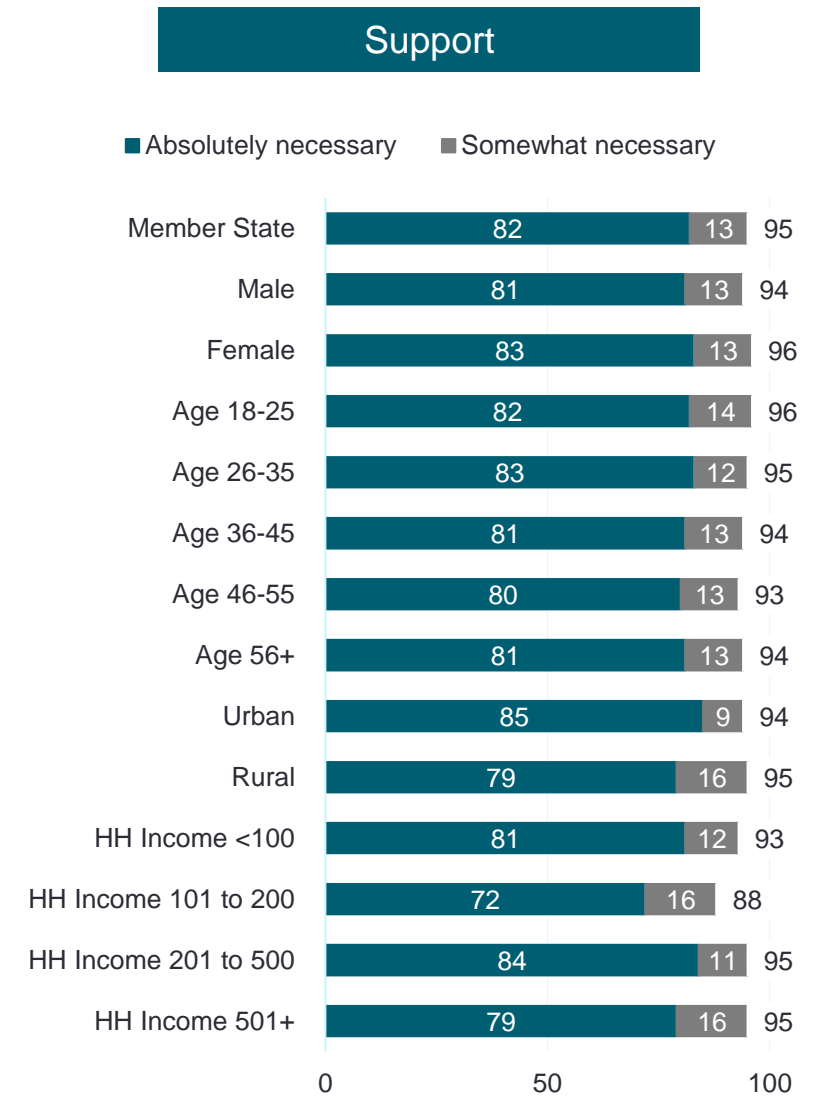
Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?: ...wash their hands with soap or use hand sanitizer more often than they used to

PERSONAL Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Avoiding handshakes and physical greetings



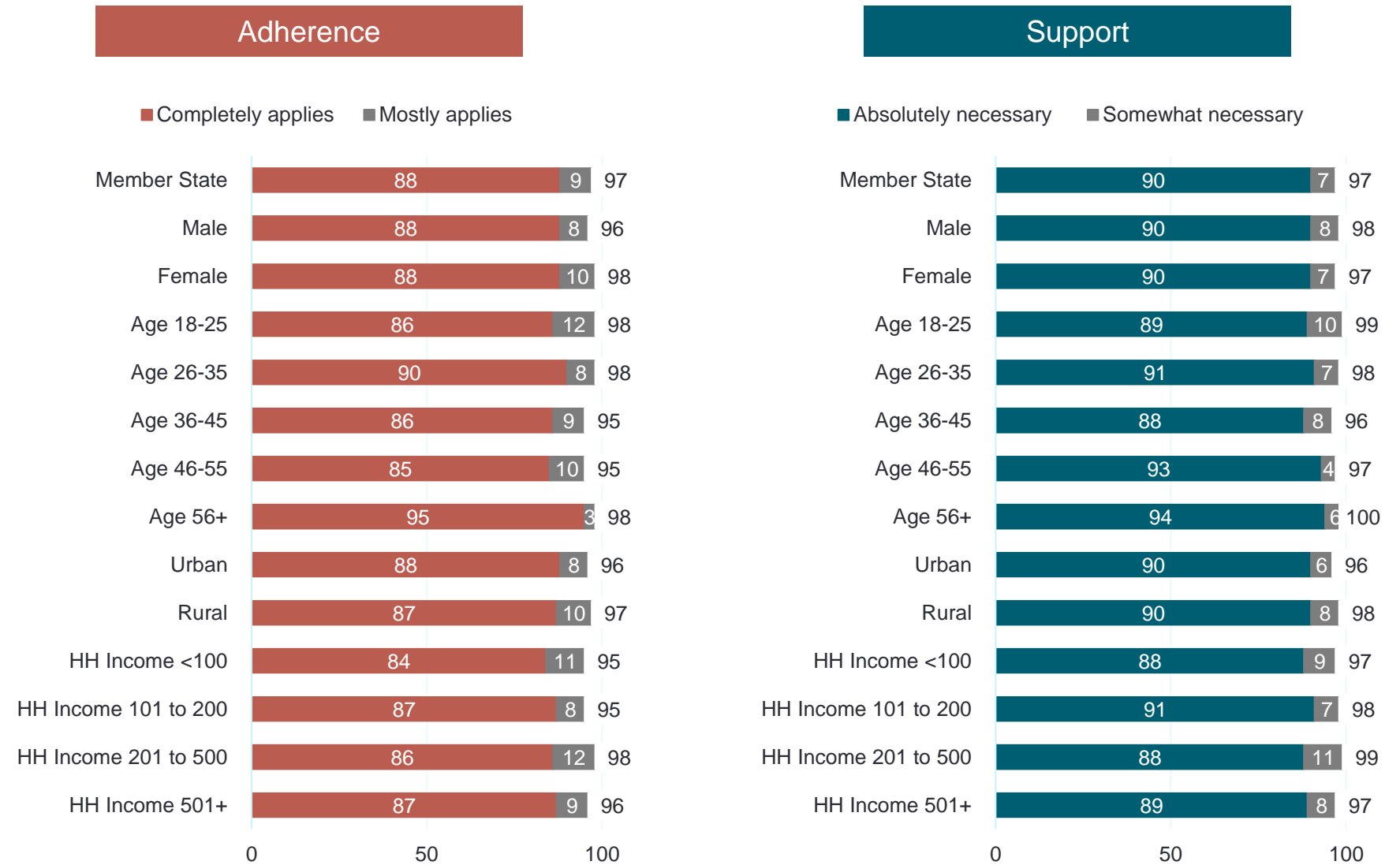
Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Avoiding handshakes and physical greetings



Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?: Avoiding handshakes and physical greetings

PERSONAL Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Wearing a face mask in public when near others

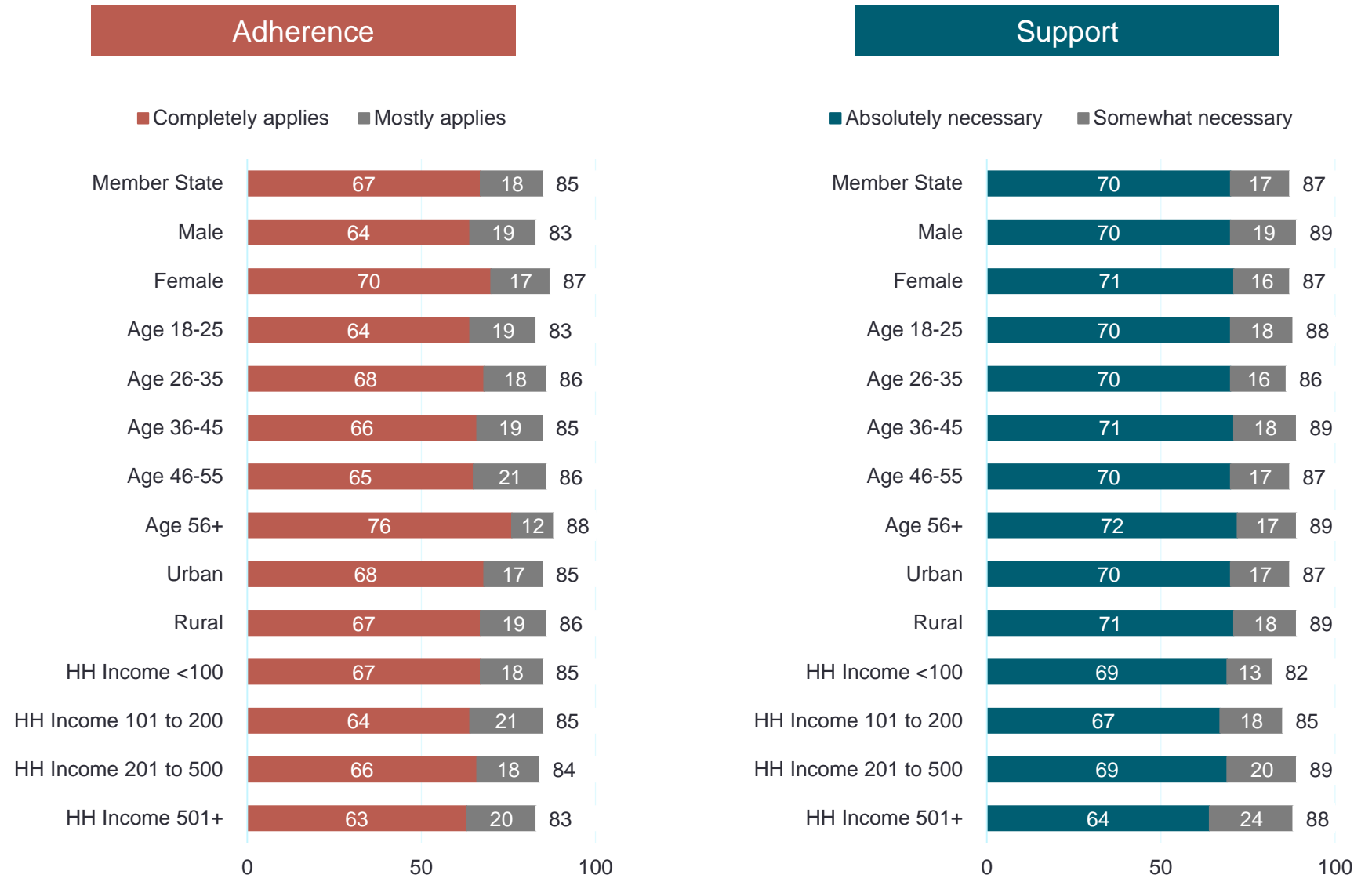


Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Wearing a face mask in public when near others

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?: Wearing a face mask in public

PUBLIC GATHERING Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Avoiding the church/mosque

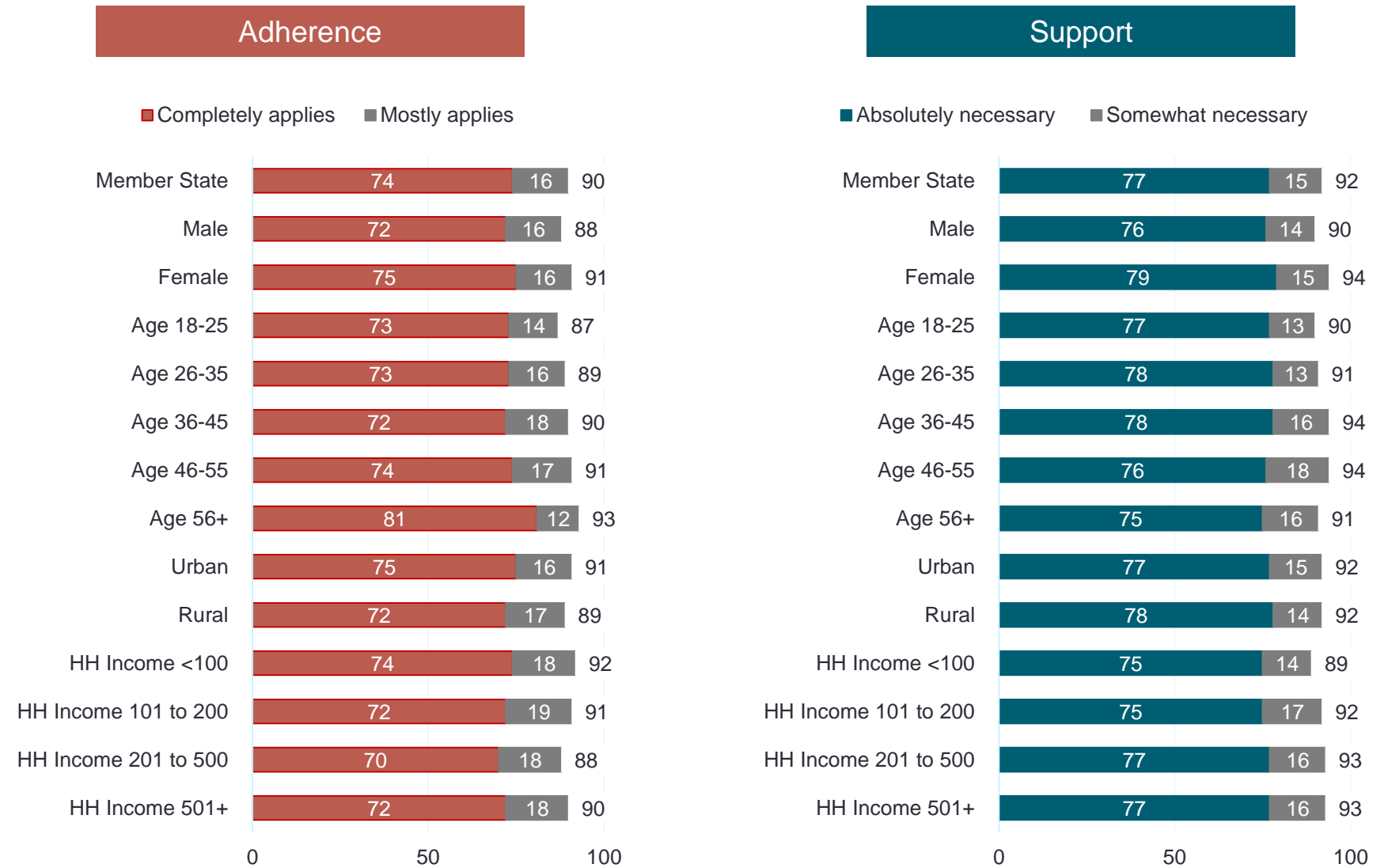


Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Avoiding the church/mosque

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?: Avoiding the church/mosque

PUBLIC GATHERING Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Avoiding public gatherings and places of entertainment

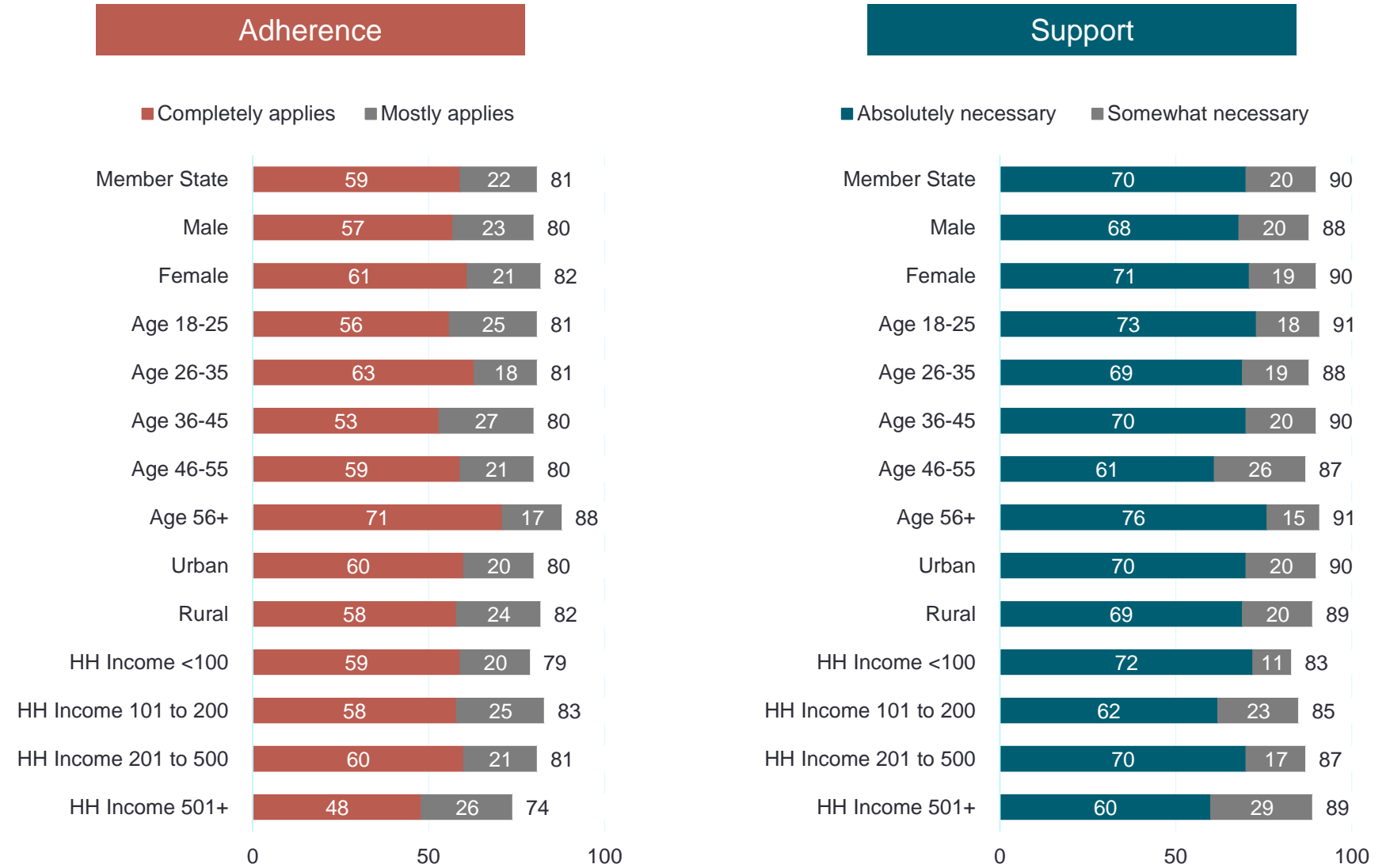


Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Avoiding public gatherings and places of entertainment

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?: Avoiding public gatherings and places of entertainment

MOBILITY Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities

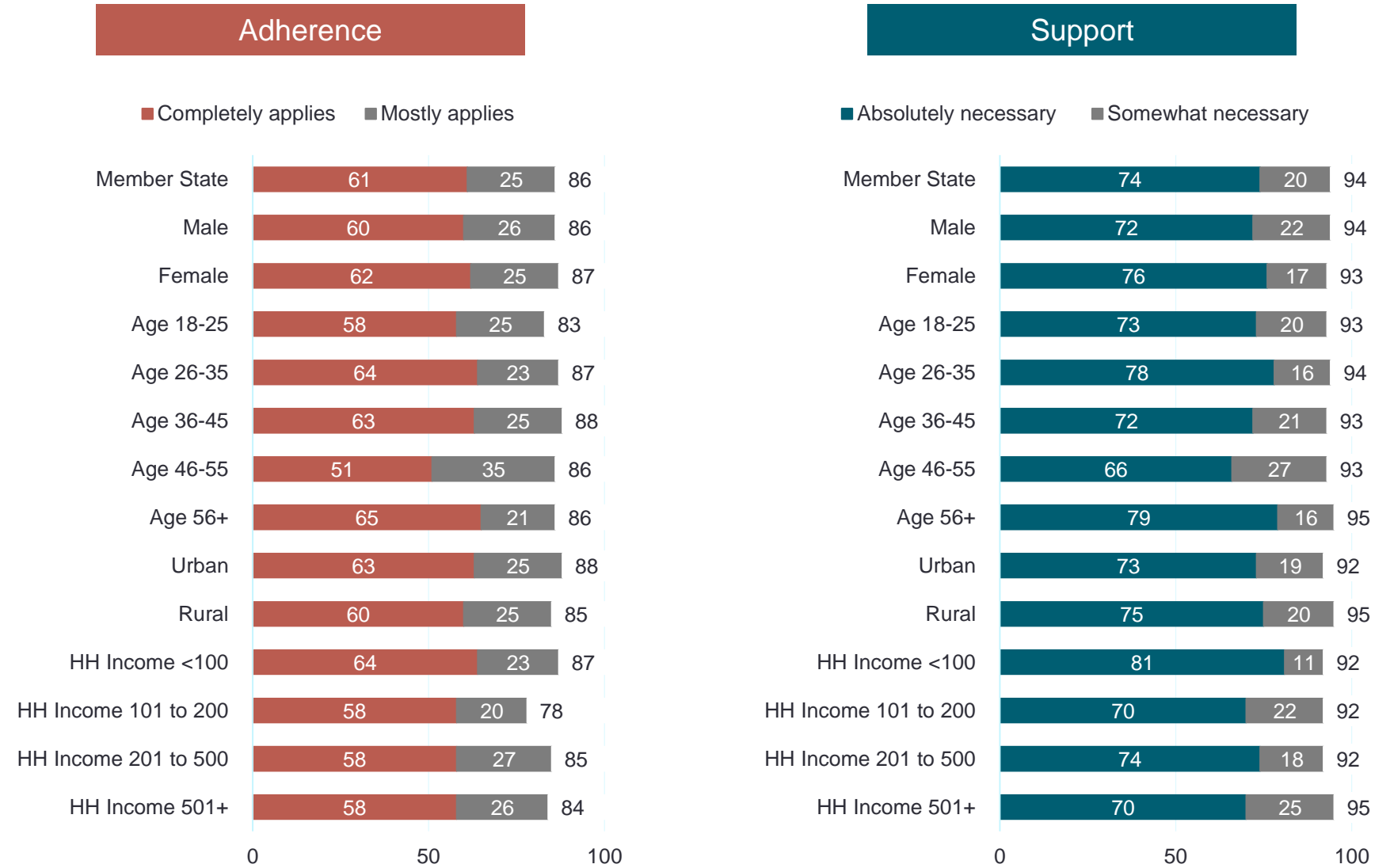


Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?: Staying home instead of going to work, school or other regular activities

MOBILITY Public health and social measure (PHSM)

Reducing the number of times I go to the market or grocery store



Q13. Over the past seven days, to what extent do each of the following describe you personally?: Reducing the number of times I go to the market or grocery store

Q14. Thinking of the last four weeks, was asking people to do each of the following absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not really necessary to limiting the spread of COVID-19 in South Africa?: Reducing the number of times I go to the market or grocery store