

# BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS ON COVID-19 IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Monitoring knowledge, risk perceptions, preventive behaviours and trust to inform pandemic outbreak response



# Summary: General Findings

For discussion and further analysis and interpretation



## Knowledge and Perceptions

- Knowledge regarding COVID-19, protective measures, and government policy continues to be high among the majority, but the number of those struggling with knowledge is significant
- Risk perceptions continue to be relatively low, particularly for the perceived severity of infections
- Belief in the ability to avoid infection has grown somewhat

## Individual Behaviours

- The uptake of protective behaviours remains below desirable levels and risky behaviours such as not adhering to physical distancing or avoiding social events are common
- The majority of respondents continue to express strong willingness to get vaccinated
- Recommendations from doctors and the MoH are more important to people undecided on vaccines

## Support for Policies

- A larger proportion of respondents than in Round 1 considered restrictions to be greatly exaggerated
- The acceptance of policies and restrictive measures continues to vary strongly
- Strict restrictions on travel or reintroducing the state of emergency remain highly unpopular
- Perceptions of fairness of decisions and restrictions remain low for younger respondents

## Economy and Wellbeing

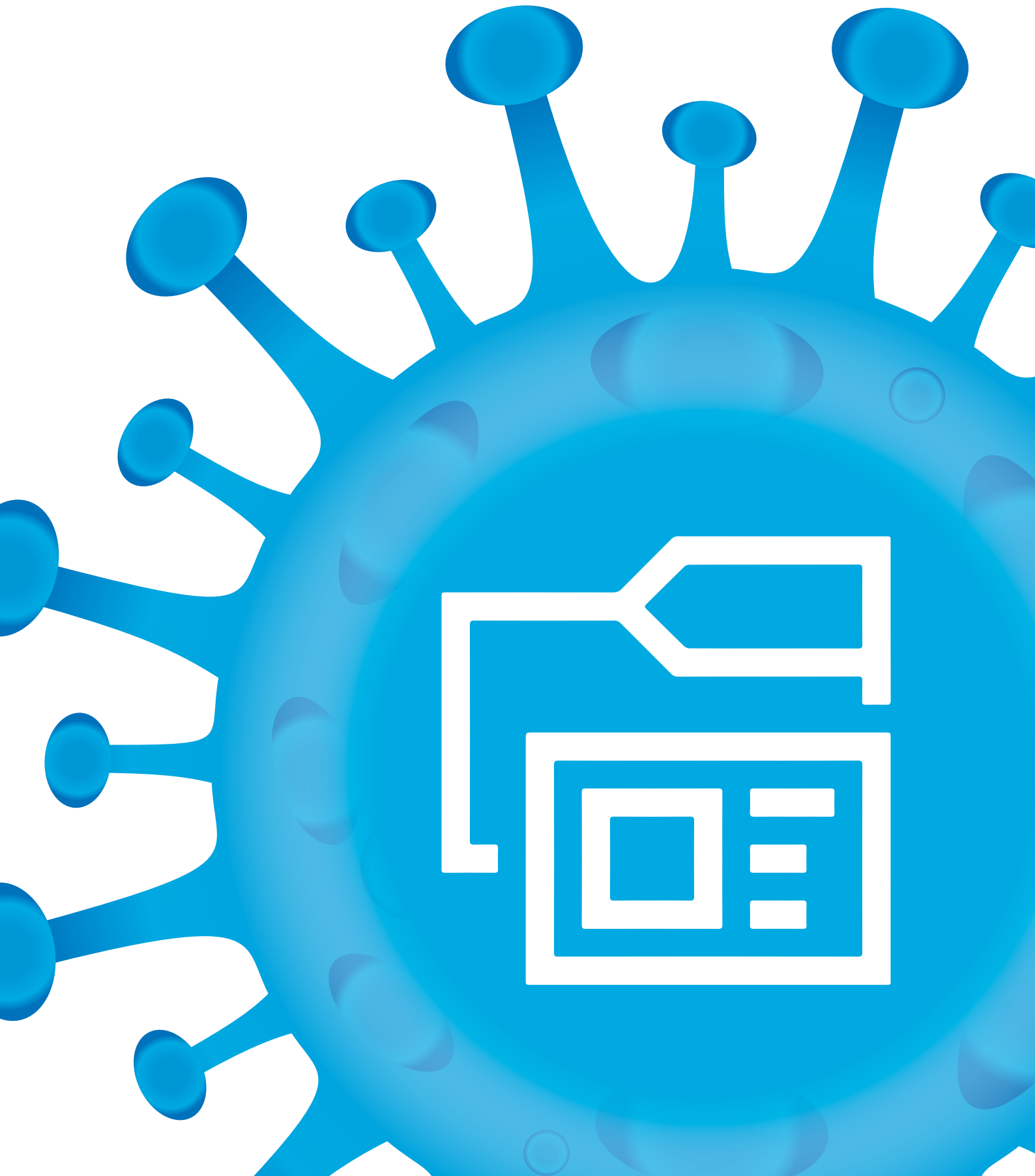
- Negative economic impacts and worries about future finances continue to be very common among the respondents
- The pandemic has had a detrimental impact on healthy lifestyles, particularly exercise and diets
- Avoiding health-care continues to be significant and can have long-term public health consequences
- Avoidance of people by ethnicity remains common

### Методология

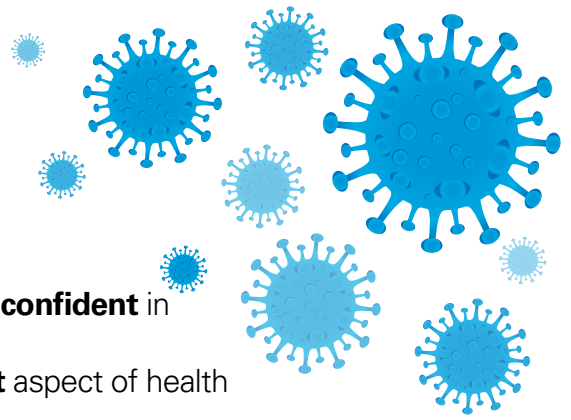
Данные собирались посредством компьютерного телефонного интервью (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing, CATI), в ходе которого было опрошено 1000 человек из всех семи областей Кыргызстана и двух основных городов - Бишкека и Оша. Сбор данных осуществлялся под руководством Министерства здравоохранения и социального развития КР и все данные, собранные в рамках этого проекта, принадлежат данному министерству.

---

# SECTION 1: Knowledge and Perceptions



# Knowledge



## Findings

- There are **no statistically significant changes** in the health literacy of respondents between rounds 1 and 2
- Around **70%** of respondents continue to feel **confident** in their ability to understand information and recommendations
- **Judging media reliability** continues to be the most **difficult** aspect of health literacy with up to **45%** reporting challenges
- **73%** of respondents continue to feel certain about knowing protective measures

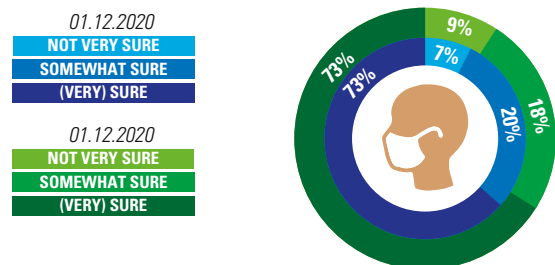
*There are no statistically significant changes in the measured variables. However, given the short time in between the data collection points, it is not necessarily a sign that messaging done after round 1 was not successful.*

## Predictors

- Respondents with **higher education** have higher health literacy
- Health literacy is **positively** correlated with **trust** in the **government** and the **medical sector** as well as perceptions of **fast viral spread**
- Perceptions of **high infection severity** and **media hype** around COVID-19 correlate with **lower** health literacy

## FEELING SURE ABOUT PROTECTIVE MEASURE TO AVOID AN INFECTION

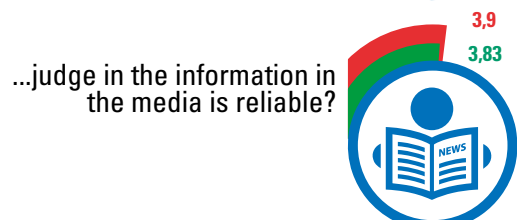
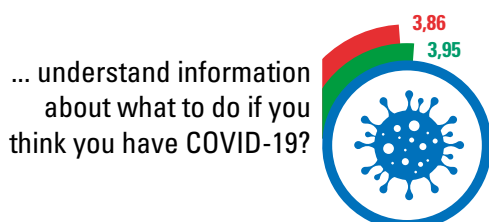
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (very unsure) to 5 (very sure).  
Mean values und 95% confidence intervals.



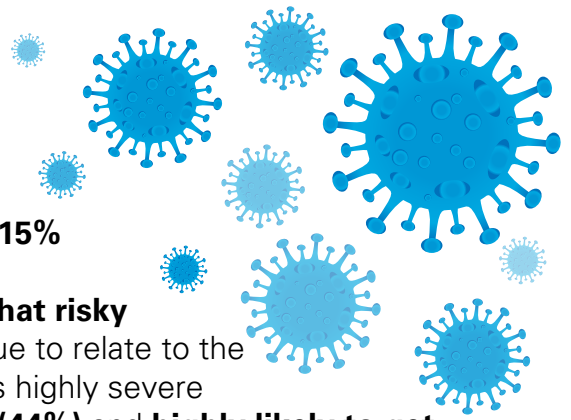
## HEALTH LITERACY

How easy or difficult would you say it is to... (1 - very difficult) (5 - very easy)

■ - 01.12.2020 - ■ - 25.12.2020



# Risk perceptions



## Findings

- Risk perceptions continue to be **relatively low** with only **15%** perceiving **high risk** from COVID-19
- The majority (**64%**) continue to see COVID-19 as **somewhat risky**
- The **lowest risk perceptions** among respondents continue to relate to the **severity of a potential infection** with only **25%** thinking it is highly severe
- Larger portions consider themselves **highly susceptible (44%)** and **highly likely to get infected (34%)**

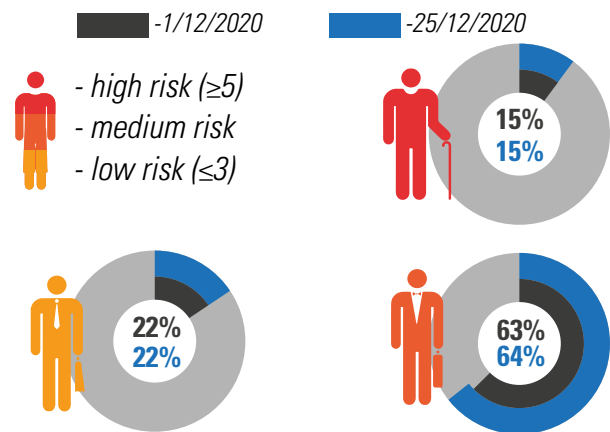
*There are no significant changes in risk perceptions and low levels continue to be driven largely by low perceived severity of infection. However, risk group members' higher risk perceptions suggest that risk factors for severe infections are somewhat understood.*

## Predictors

- Respondents who are a part of **risk groups** perceive their **susceptibility and severity** of infection as **higher**
- **Highly educated** respondents view the infection as **less severe**
- **Older** respondents think they are **more likely** to get infected
- Perceptions of **viral closeness** and **frequency of media consumption** correlate with **higher** risk perceptions

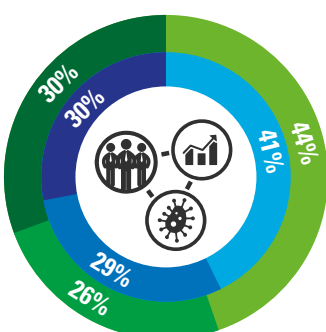
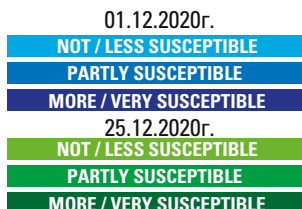
### PERCEIVED RISK OF AN INFECTION

Mean score including susceptibility, probability and severity perceptions, each originally rated on scales ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high)



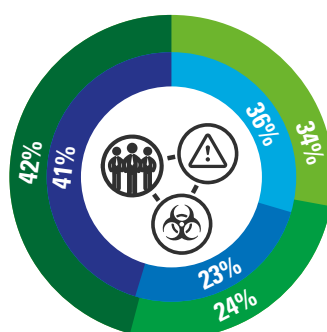
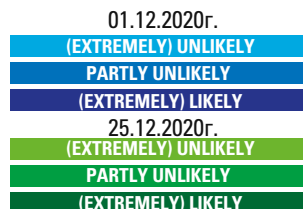
### PERCEIVED SUSCEPTIBILITY

Grouped results, originally rated on scales ranging from 1 (not susceptible) to 5 (very susceptible)



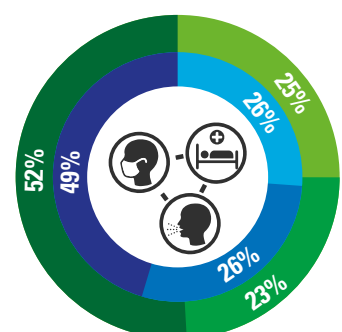
### PERCEIVED PROBABILITY OF AN INFECTION

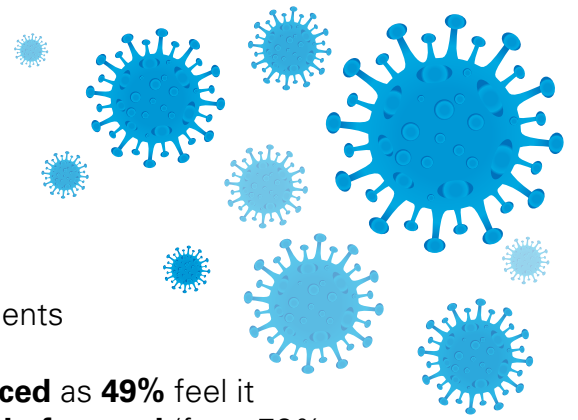
Grouped results, originally rated on scales ranging from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 5 (extremely likely)



### PERCEIVED SEVERITY OF AN INFECTION

Grouped results, originally rated on scales ranging from 1 (not severe) to 5 (very severe)





# Perceptions and emotions

## Findings

- A slightly larger proportion (from **45% to 50%**) of respondents **feels confident** in their **ability to avoid an infection**
- The perceptions of **viral closeness** have somewhat **reduced** as **49%** feel it to be **far away** (44% in round 1), as has the perceived **speed of spread** (from 72% to **68%** perceiving **fast spread**)
- **49%** of respondents feel **high levels of fear** due to the virus, up from 46% in round 1

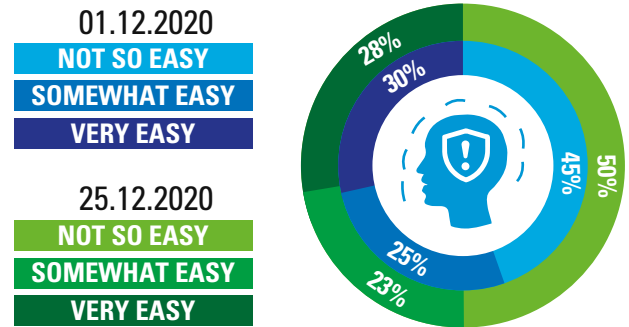
*The changes in emotionality are not large between the two data collection points. Despite perceptions of fast viral spread and closeness being high, the levels of fear and anxiety remain substantially lower, which suggests either good resilience or underestimated risks.*

## Predictors

- Negative emotions are felt more by respondents who are **female or risk group members** and have **high education levels**
- **Healthcare workers** perceive the virus as being **closer**
- Perceptions of **closeness** and negative **emotions** are **higher** with those who know **infected peers**
- The frequency of **media consumption** correlates with **higher negative emotions**

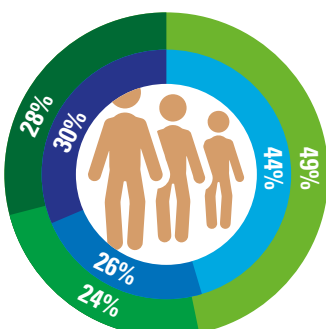
### FEELING ABLE TO AVOID AN INFECTION

Rated on scale ranging from 1 (difficult) to 5 (easy).  
Mean values und 95% confidence intrvals.



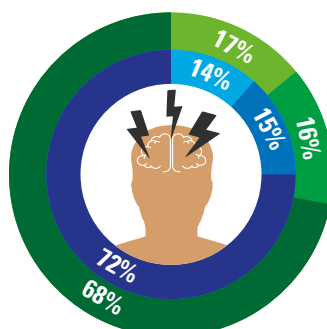
### DISTANCE

To me, novel coronavirus feels...



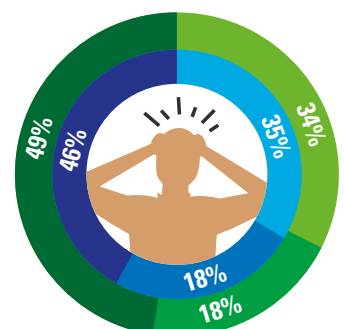
### PERCEIVING VIRUS AS SPREADING FAST

From me the Corona virus is...



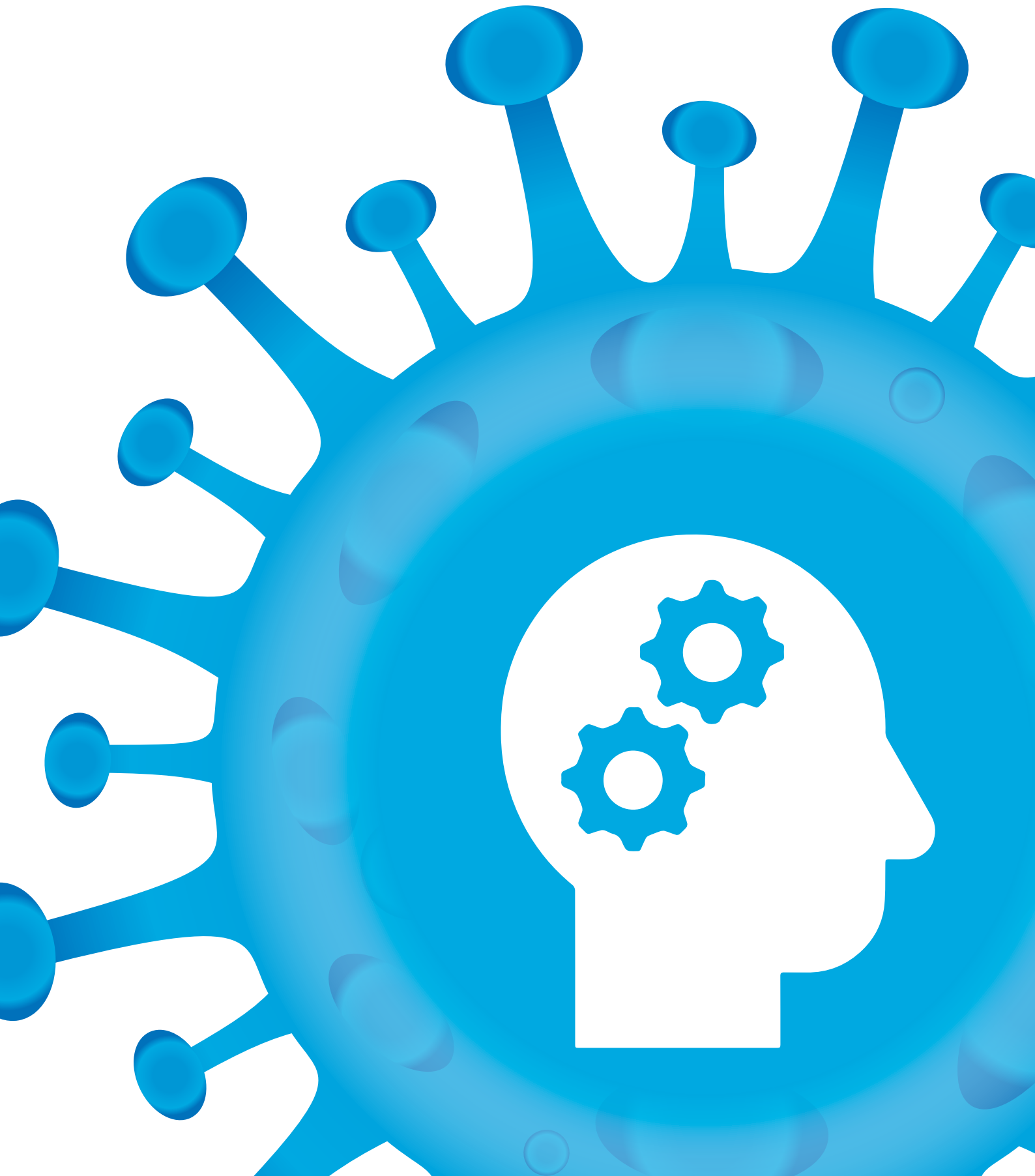
### FEAR

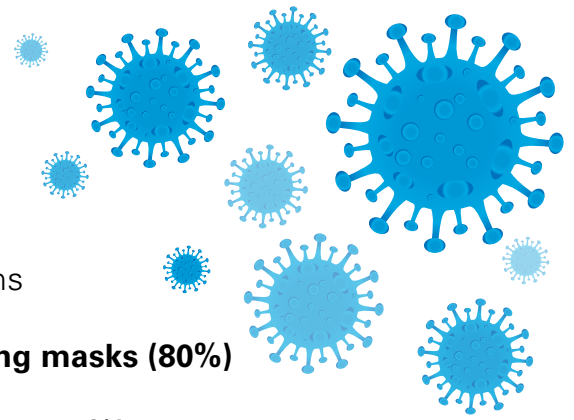
From me the Corona virus is...





## **SECTION 2:** **Individual Behaviours**





# Protective Behaviours

## Findings

- There are **no statistically significant changes** in the uptake of **protective behaviours** and their adoption remains **below desirable levels**
- Highest levels of compliance were measured with **wearing masks (80%)** and **hand sanitation (77%)**
- Lowest compliance relate to staying **home while sick (3.12/44%)** and the **avoidance of social events (2.76/32%)**
- Up to **18%** of respondents say they have **used antibiotics** to prevent or treat COVID-19 (same as round 1)

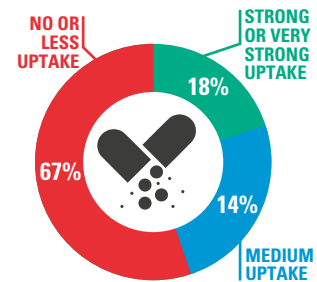
*The uptake of protective behaviours continues to leave room for improvement as risky behaviours such as not adhering to physical distancing combined with not avoiding social events create large potential for viral transmission. Despite relatively high levels, the goal for adherence to wearing masks and hand sanitation should be higher than the current levels. Lower trust in institutions among those reluctant to adopt protective behaviours creates challenges for communications.*

## Predictors

- Compliance with protective behaviours is higher among **older** and **female** respondents
- Uptake correlates **positively** with the **frequency of media consumption, trust in the government and medical sector, and perceptions of fast viral spread**
- Perceptions of **media hype** around COVID-19 correlate with **lower** uptake of protective behaviours
- Respondents who have **infected peers** are less likely to maintain **physical distance**

## MALADAPTIVE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS

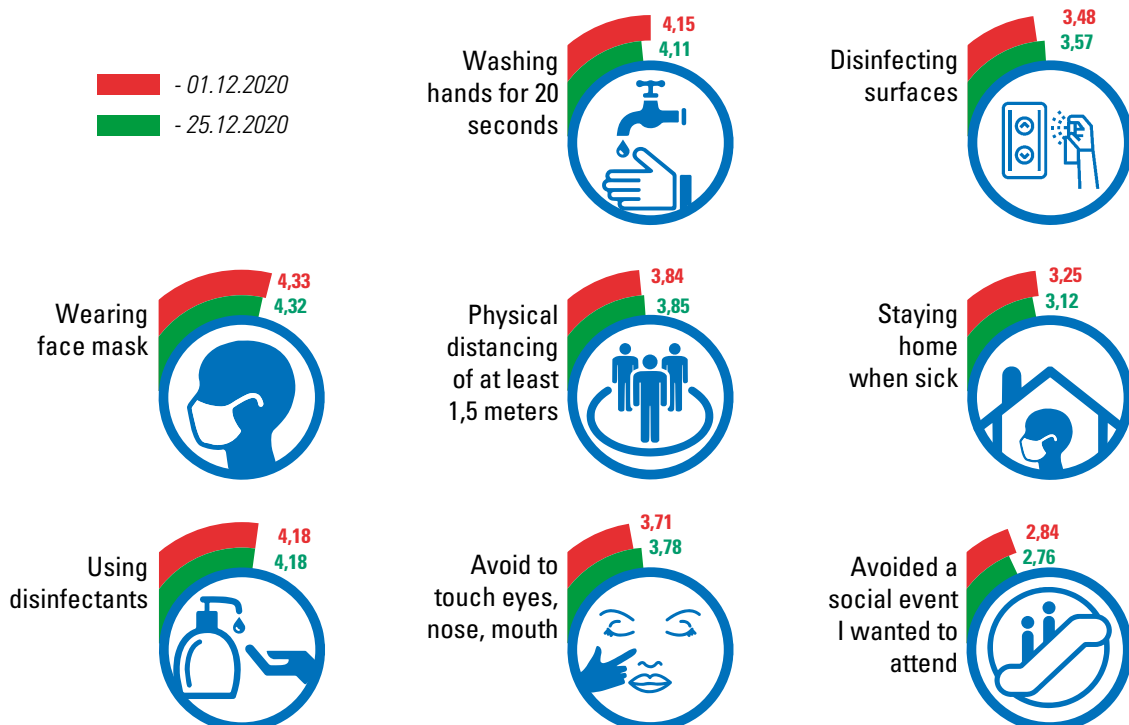
Used antibiotics to prevent or treat COVID-19



## UPTAKE OF PROTECTIVE MESURES

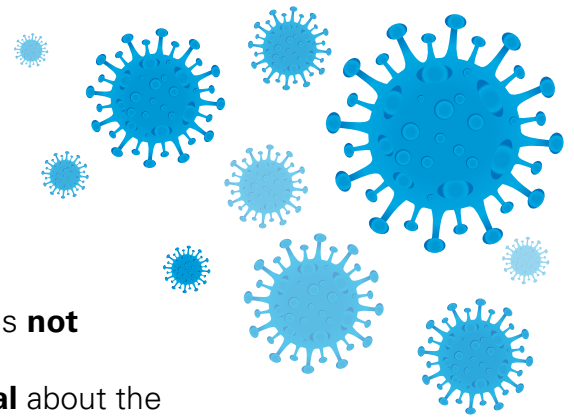
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).  
Mean values and 95% confidence intervals

█ - 01.12.2020  
█ - 25.12.2020





# Vaccinations



## Findings

- A slightly higher majority than in Round 1 (**60%** vs 59%) **express willingness to get vaccinated** whereas **27%** are **strongly against** it (29% in round 1), though the difference is **not** statistically significant
- Around **one third** of respondents continue to be **skeptical** about the **effectiveness** of the vaccine
- **Around a half** of respondents would **not get vaccinated** if they had already had **COVID-19** or if **others were vaccinated**
- **17%** of respondents express **general distrust and lack of support** towards **vaccines** in the national schedule

*The sustained majority willingness to get vaccinated is highly supportive for any planned vaccination campaigns, particularly as willingness is higher among older respondents who are likely to be vaccinated first.*

## Predictors

- Respondents more critical towards vaccines tend to be **younger** and **living without children**
- Vaccination **willingness** correlates with **health literacy, risk perceptions, economic worries, and trust** in the **medical sector**
- Respondents against vaccines in general are more likely to be **young, male, higher educated, living without children**, and have **lower health literacy, media consumption, and trust**
- Perceptions of **media hype** correlate with lower vaccination willingness and general anti-vaccination views

## REASONS FOR FUTURE COVID-19 VACCINE ACCEPTANCE

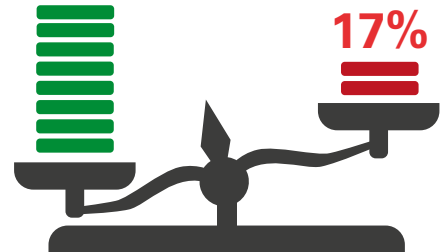
Apart from COVID-19, I think everyone should be vaccinated according to the national vaccination schedule

**YES**

**83%**

**NO**

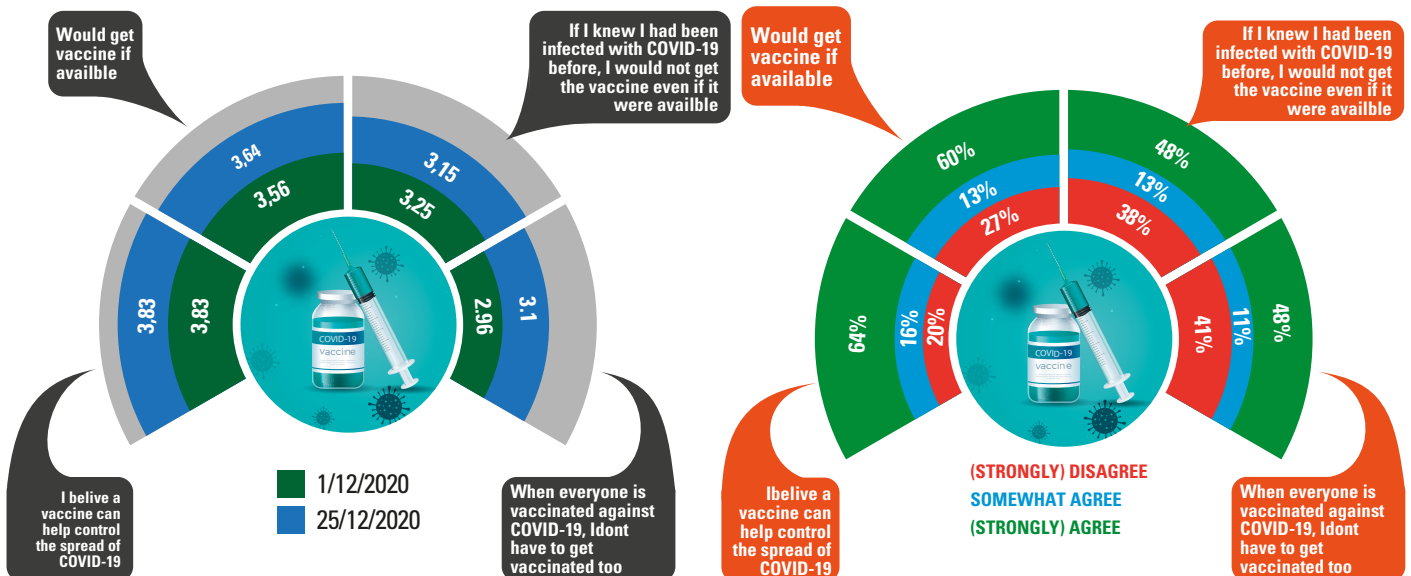
**17%**



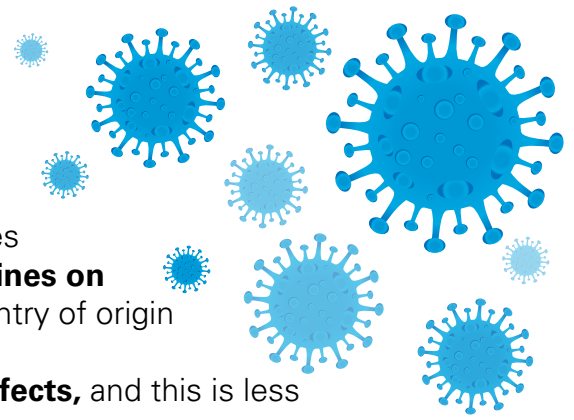
## PLEASE SHARE YOUR POSITION ON A POTENTIAL FUTURE COVID-19

Current data collection. Scale 1 (strongly disagree) - 5 (strongly agree)

## PLEASE SHARE YOUR POSITION ON A POTENTIAL FUTURE COVID-19



# Vaccination concerns



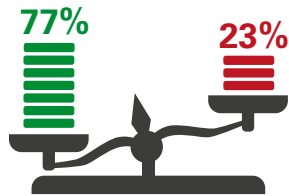
## Findings

- **No measured concerns receive high levels** of responses among undecided people in the survey. The **impact of vaccines on restrictions** is the largest concern (**23%**) as opposed to country of origin in Round 1 (then at 31%, now **21%**)
- **13%** of undecided respondents are worried about **side-effects**, and this is less important to them than the overall respondents (22%)
- For undecided respondents, the **recommendations** from both **doctors** and the **MoH** are **more important** than to the respondents overall (**21%/21%** for undecided, 17%/12% in general)

## Predictors

- **Recommendations** from either family doctors or the MoH are more important to **older**, **urban**, and **female** respondents
- Recommendations from the MoH are less important to **risk group members**
- The **ease of access** to vaccines is more important to female respondents and those with higher perceptions of **susceptibility**, **trust**, and **viral closeness and spread**

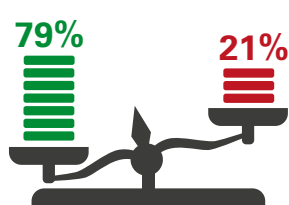
Whether a high vaccination uptake would lift restrictions on movement and gathering in groups



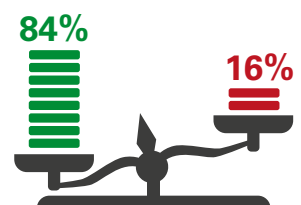
## REASONS FOR FUTURE COVID-19 VACCINE ACCEPTANCE

● YES ● NO

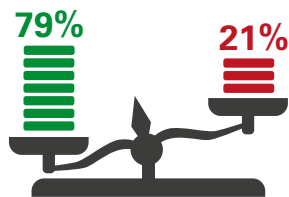
Recommendation of the Ministry of Health; labour and Social Protection/National Agency for Public Health



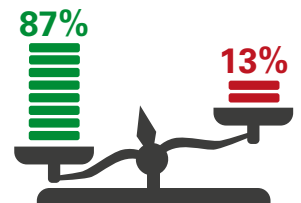
Risk of getting infected with COVID-19 at the time when the vaccine is available



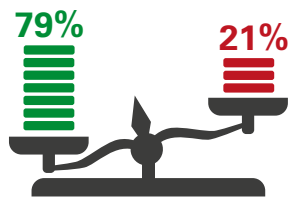
Recommendation from my family doctor



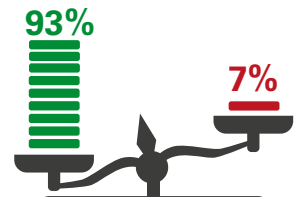
Whether the vaccine has been in use for a long time with no serious side-effects



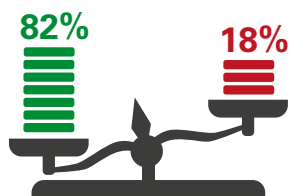
Country in which the vaccine is produced



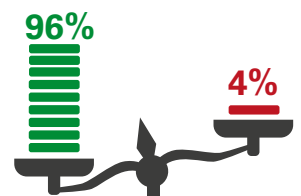
How easy it is to get the vaccine (e.g. available out-of-hours or in pharmacies)



Whether the vaccine is free of charge

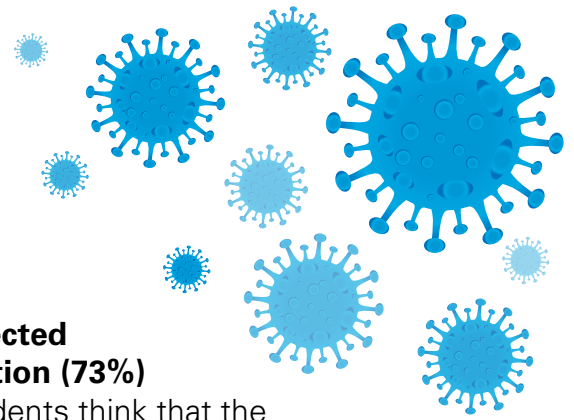


Whether the vaccine is used in other countries



## **SECTION 3:** **Support for policies**





# General policy perspectives

## Findings

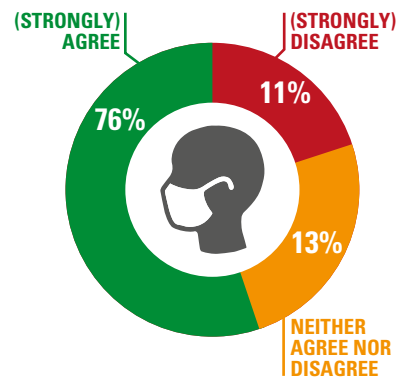
- Strong support continues for enforced **isolations for infected individuals (78%)** and for **increased testing in the population (73%)**
- However, up to **54%** (up from 46% in round 1) of respondents think that the **current restrictions are greatly exaggerated**
- **69%** of respondents accept **avoidance of people based on ethnicity** (62% in round 1)
- Up to **76%** would **continue to follow restrictions** after the peak of infection even after they are no longer formal requirements (77% in round 1)

*The growth of the proportion of respondents who think restrictions are exaggerated is concerning and should be better understood to ensure that support for and adherence to government policies needed to address the pandemic continues.*

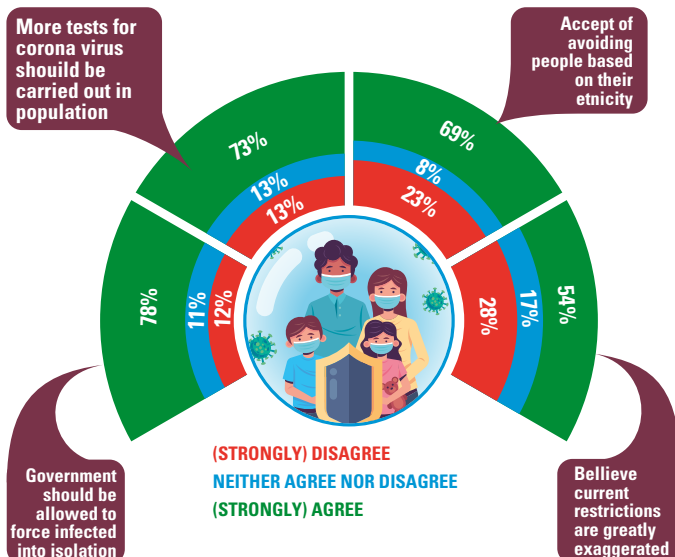
## Predictors

- Respondents who are **older, urban**, and have **lower education** are more likely to think the restrictions are **exaggerated**
- Perceiving restrictions as exaggerated correlates with **probability of infection**, perceptions of **fast viral spread**, and **trust in government**
- **Enforced isolation** is more strongly supported by **older** and **less educated** respondents
- Supporting enforced isolation correlates with **media consumption**, **trust in the medical sector**, and perceived **fast viral spread**

## VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE

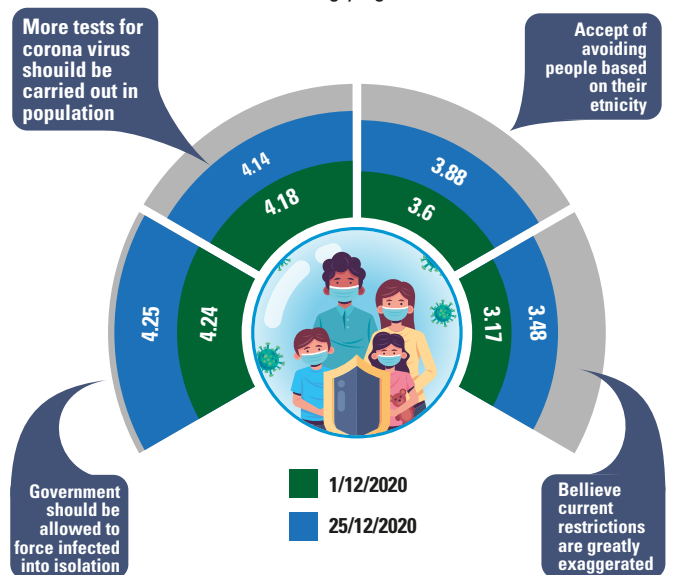


## ACCEPTANCE IF MEASURES

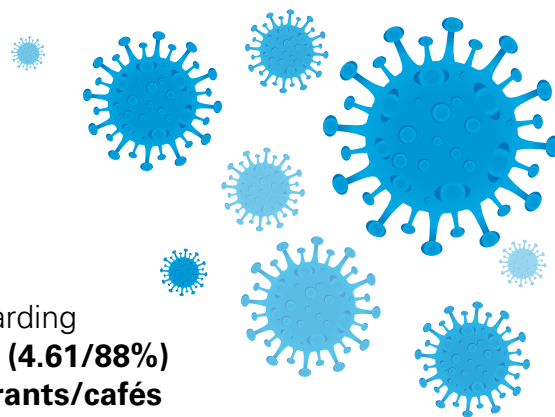


## ACCEPTANCE IF MEASURES

Rated on scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)



# Support for specific policies



## Findings

- **No statistically significant changes** were observed regarding decisions taken. **Mask mandates** remain with **vast support (4.61/88%)**
- Smaller majorities continue to support **reopening restaurants/cafés (3.79/63%)** and **schools/kindergarten facilities (3.58/59%)**
- Support for **reopening schools in general** grew from 3.83 to **3.99 (70% strongly support)**
- Support **remains low and stable** for **bans on interregional public transport (2.58/30%)** and reintroducing a **state of emergency (2.45/28%)**

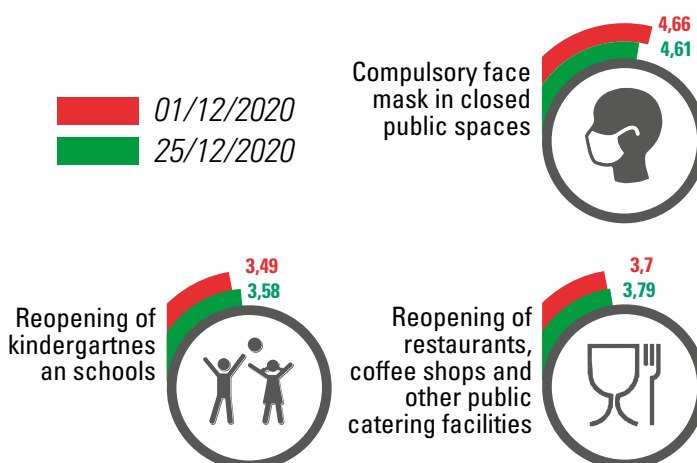
*Support continues to vary greatly between the different policies with slightly higher risk appetite expressed regarding reopening schools. Support is very low for more extreme measures such as travel bans and a state of emergency.*

## Predictors

- Mask mandates are more popular among **female** and **urban** respondents
- Those with **infected peers** are more likely to **support mask mandates** and **resist reopening schools**
- **Trust** in the **government** and the **medical sector** correlates with higher support for policies
- **Risk** and **viral spread** perceptions correlate with support for mask mandates
- **Perceptions of media** hype correlate with lower support for **mask mandates** and higher support for **opening schools**
- **Older** respondents are more likely to support **opening schools**

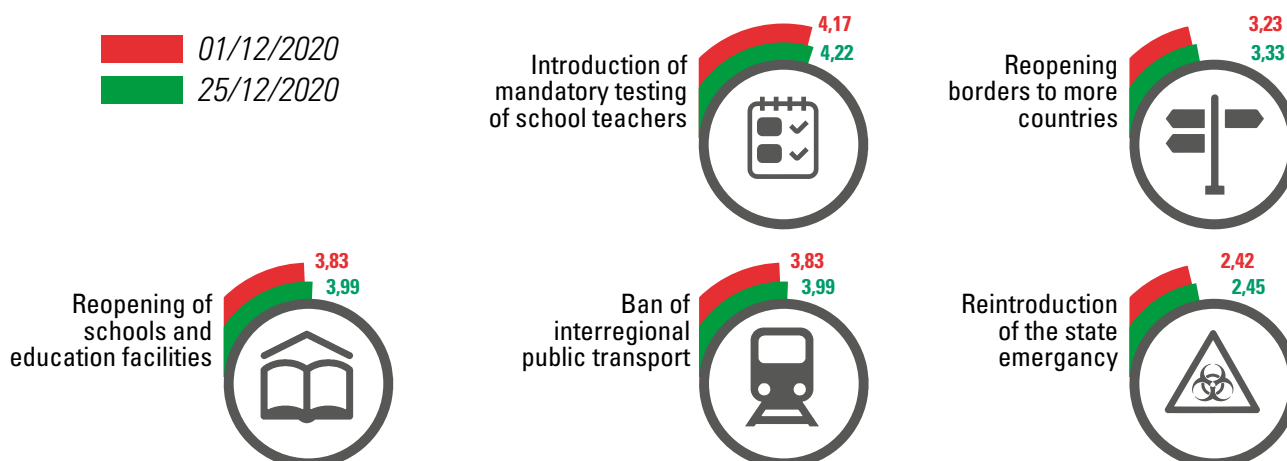
### AGREEMENT WITH DECISIONS TAKEN

Rated on scale ranging from 1 (no support at all) to 5 (strong support). Mean values and 95% confidence intervals.

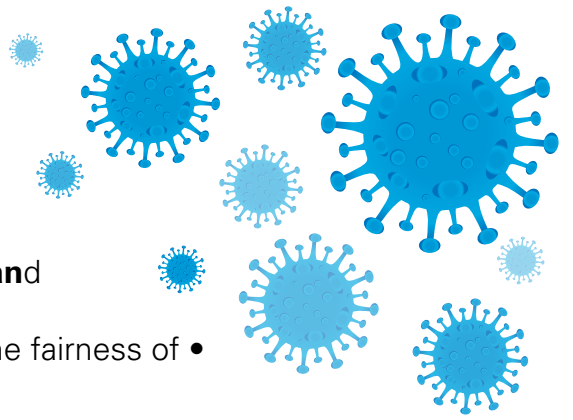


### ACCEPTANCE FOR FUTURE RESTRICTIONS

Level of agreement (Scale 1 not at all - 5 strong support)



# Fairness



## Findings

- Perceptions regarding the fairness of policies have **slightly increased** and up to **65%** now **consider them fair and 66%** would **convince others** that they are
- Only **14%/15%** of respondents **disagree strongly** with the fairness of decisions (17%/18% in Round 1)

*The perceptions on fairness continue to be positive in the majority. However, particularly younger people without families continue to view the decisions as unfair. Understanding their concerns and addressing them as appropriate may help improving perceptions and support.*

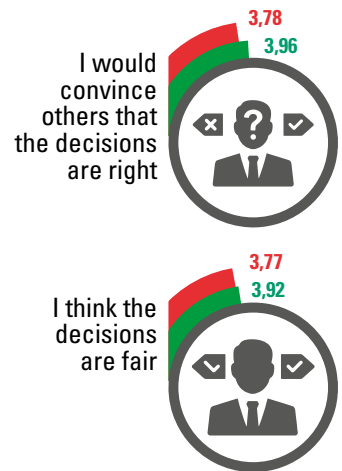
## Predictors

- **Fairness** perceptions are lower among **younger** respondents living in **rural areas**
- Fairness correlates positively with perceptions of **risk, viral spread, and trust in government and the medical sector**

## FAIRNESS

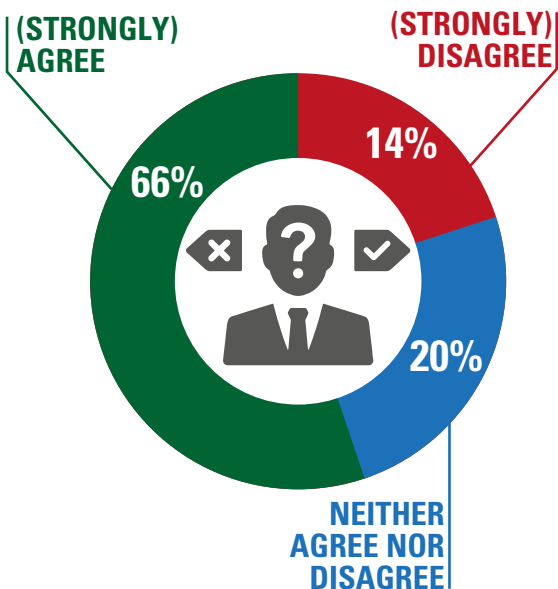
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Mean values and 95% confidence intervals

01/12/2020  
25/12/2020

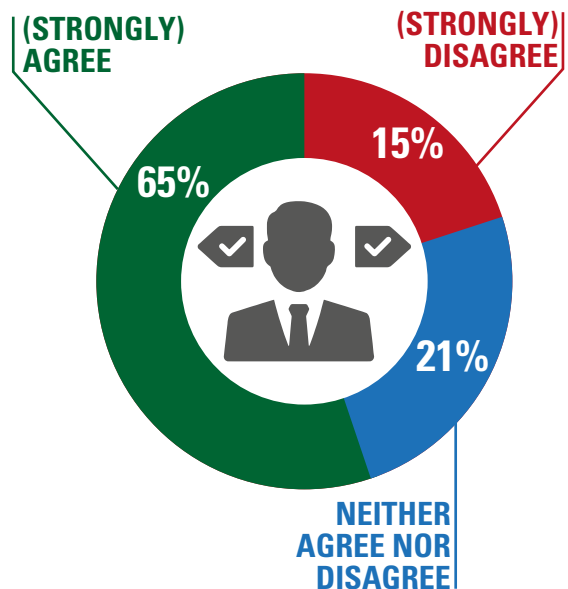


## FAIRNESS

I WOULD CONVINCe OTHERS THAT THE DECISIONS ARE RIGHT

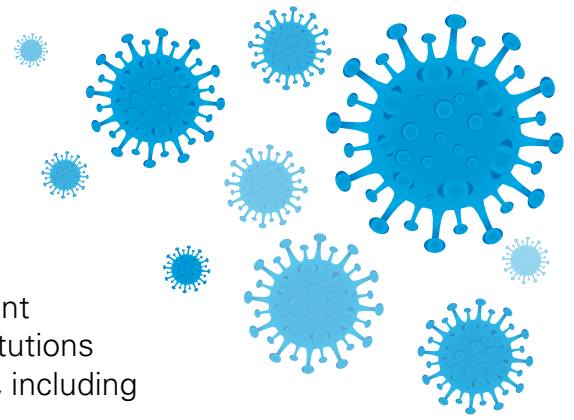


I THINK THE DECISIONS ARE FAIR





# Trust in institutions



## Findings

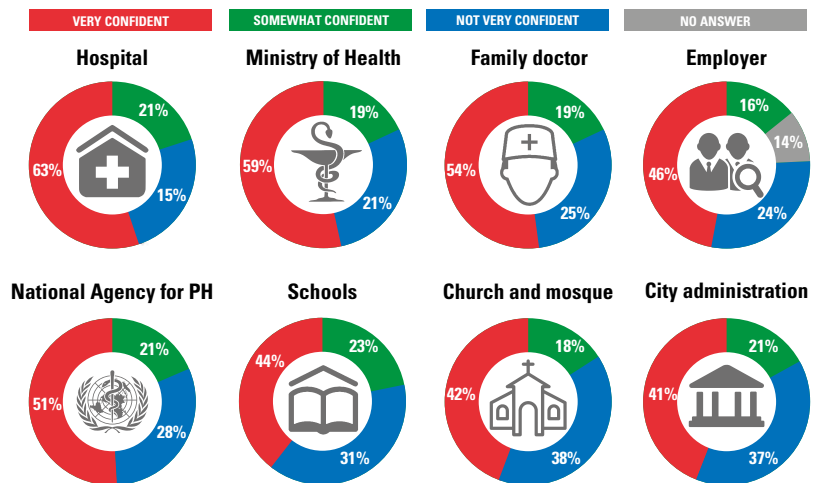
- There are **no statistically significant changes** in trust towards institutions to handle COVID-19 well, and a significant degree of distrust continue to be expressed towards all institutions
- The **medical sector** continues to enjoy the **highest trust**, including **hospitals (63%), MoH (59%), and doctors (54%)**
- Despite small improvements, the **lowest levels of trust** continue to be expressed towards **city administrations (41%), churches/mosques (42%), and schools (44%)**

*Trust in institutions overall is quite low, but the higher trust with the medical sector is positive considering their importance in dealing with and communicating messages regarding the pandemic.*

## Predictors

- Trust in institutions is stronger among **female respondents, healthcare workers,** and those who **consume media frequently**
- **Higher education, living in rural areas, and knowing infected peers** correlate **negatively** with trust in national institutions
- Perceptions of **media hype** around COVID-19 correlates with lower trust in institutions

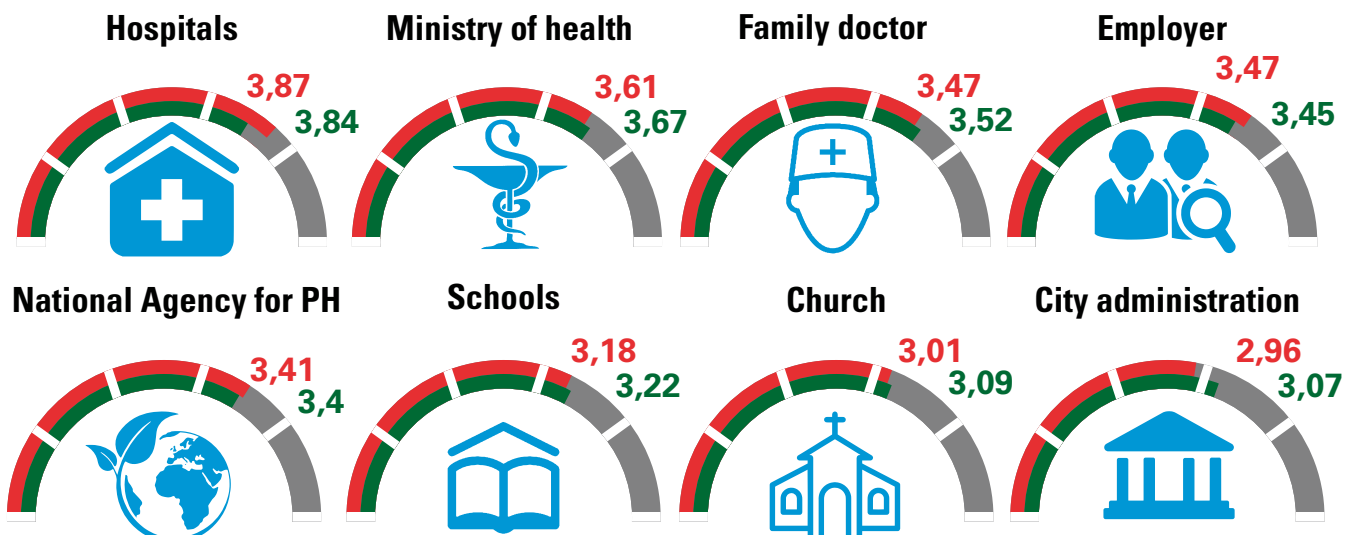
## CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS



## CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

Rated on scales ranging from 1 (very low confidence) to 5 (very high confidence).  
Mean values and 95% confidence intervals

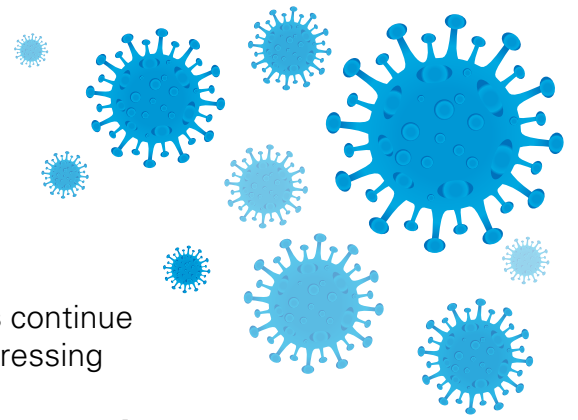
1/12/2020 (red)      25/12/2020 (green)



---

## **Section 4: Economy and wellbeing**





# Economic impacts

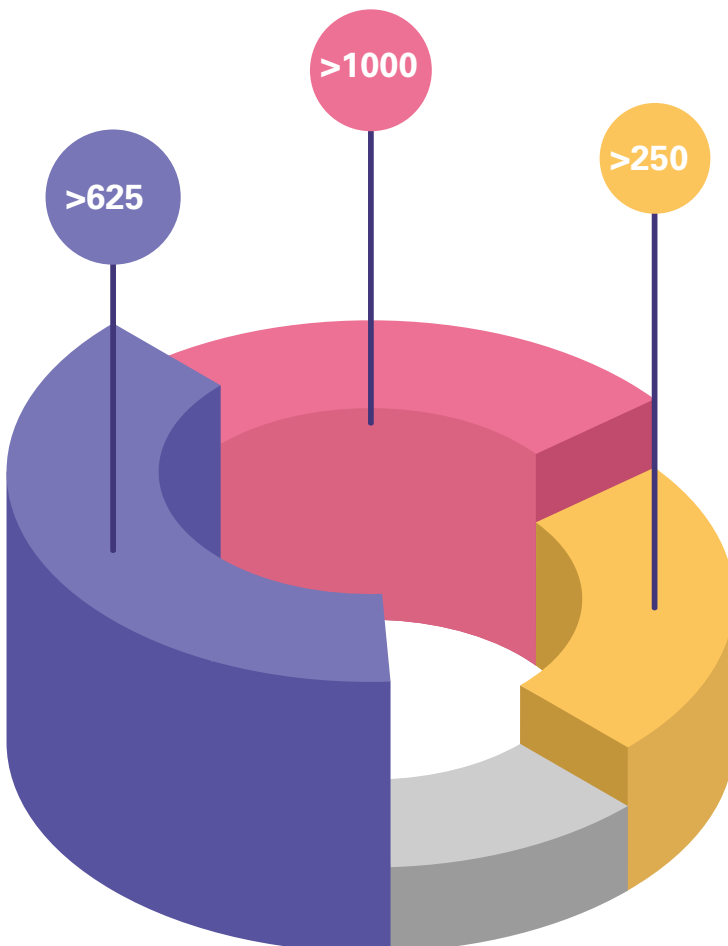
## Findings

- The **worries about the future economic consequences** continue to be very common among respondents with up to **72%** expressing **strong worry** (69% in round 1)
- Only **16%** of respondents are **not worried about future economic consequences** (17% in round 1)
- Around a third of respondents have already suffered economic hardship due to COVID-19

*Worries about the future economic situation continue to be extremely common, and many have felt economic impacts already. Data from other countries suggests that suffering financial hardship can negatively impact uptake of protective behaviours and support for policies. As such, it is important to understand and address impacts as much as possible not only to protect livelihoods but also to tackle the pandemic.*

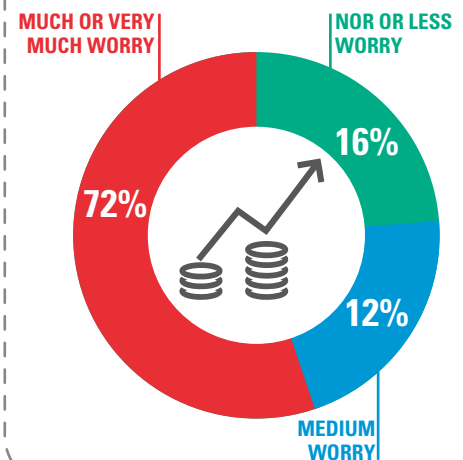
## Predictors

- Respondents who are **older**, have had **peers infected**, and **consume media frequently** are **more likely to** worry about economic consequences



## WORRIES

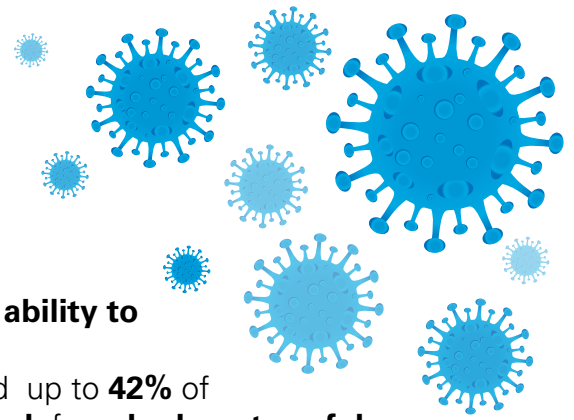
Worries about future economic consequences



## Private financial situation over last three month



# Resilience



## Findings

- The **majority** of respondents continue to express a good **ability to recover** from stressful events (**57%**)
- However resilience has decreased on other indicators and up to **42%** of respondents say they find it **hard to get through** or **snap back** from **bad or stressful events**

*The reductions in resilience expressed is concerning as maintaining good levels of resilience is important for people to cope with the stress of COVID-19 and the impacts of restrictions, as well as to preserve or rebuild livelihoods.*

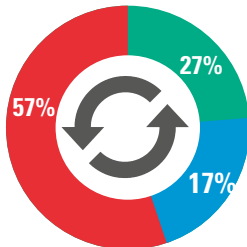
## Predictors

- Resilience is lower among older respondents and those with higher health literacy

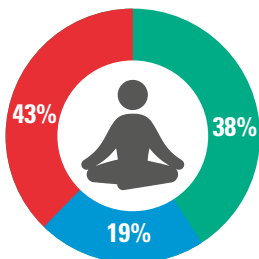
### RESILIENCE



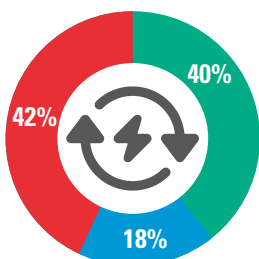
**It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event**



**It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens**



**I have a hard time making it through stressful events**



### RESILIENCE

Rated on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Mean values and 95% confidence intervals.

01.12.2020 25.12.2020

**It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event**



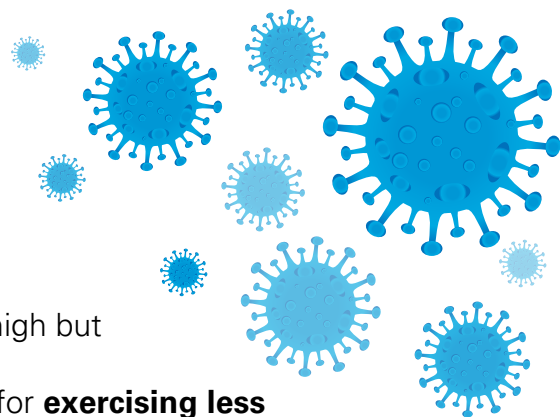
**It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens**



**I have a hard time making it through stressful events**



# Negative pandemic behaviours



## Findings

- The levels of **negative pandemic behaviours** are quite high but have remained stable since round 1
- Issues with less healthy lifestyles are present, especially for **exercising less** than normal (**47%**) and eating a **worse diet (20%)**
- The **avoidance of people based on ethnicity** continues to be very common (**43%**)
- **Postponing or avoiding vaccinations (28%)** and **doctors visits (23%)** remain engaged in by significant minorities

*Negative pandemic behaviours continue to be high both in relation to less healthy lifestyles and health-seeking. These may have negative impacts on public health in the long term.*

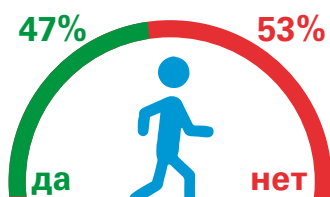
## Predictors

- **Drinking** and **smoking** more than usual is **more common** among **male** respondents
- Drinking is more common with those with **lower education**
- Unhealthier diets are more common in **urban areas**
- **Frequent media consumptions** and **trust in government** correlate with **less exercise**

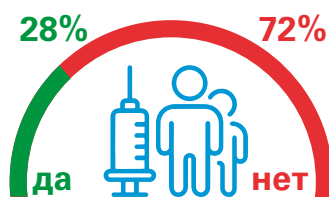
## PANDEMIC BEHAVIOR

Results from recent survey.

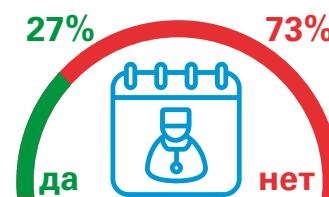
Exercise less than usual



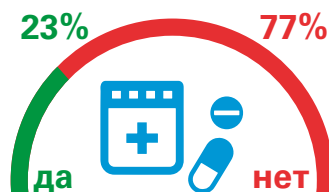
Postponed vaccination for myself or my child



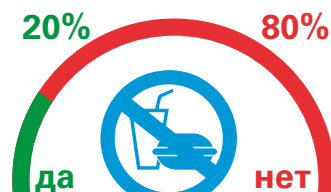
Avoid going doctor



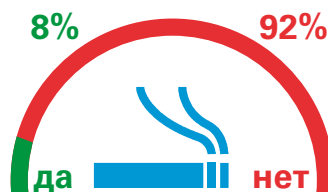
Buy drugs i heard helping againts COVID-19



Eat more unhealthy food than usual



Smoked more



Drink more alcohol than usual

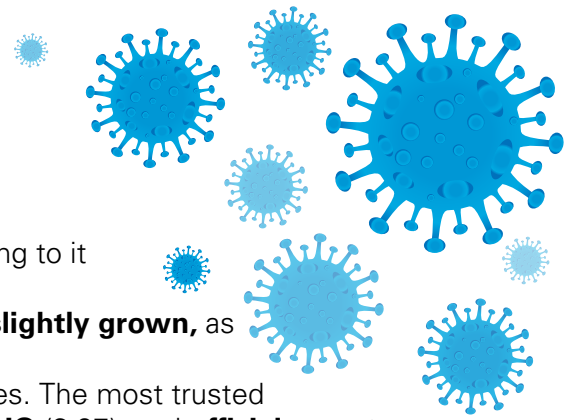


# SECTION 5: Media use and trust





# Information sources



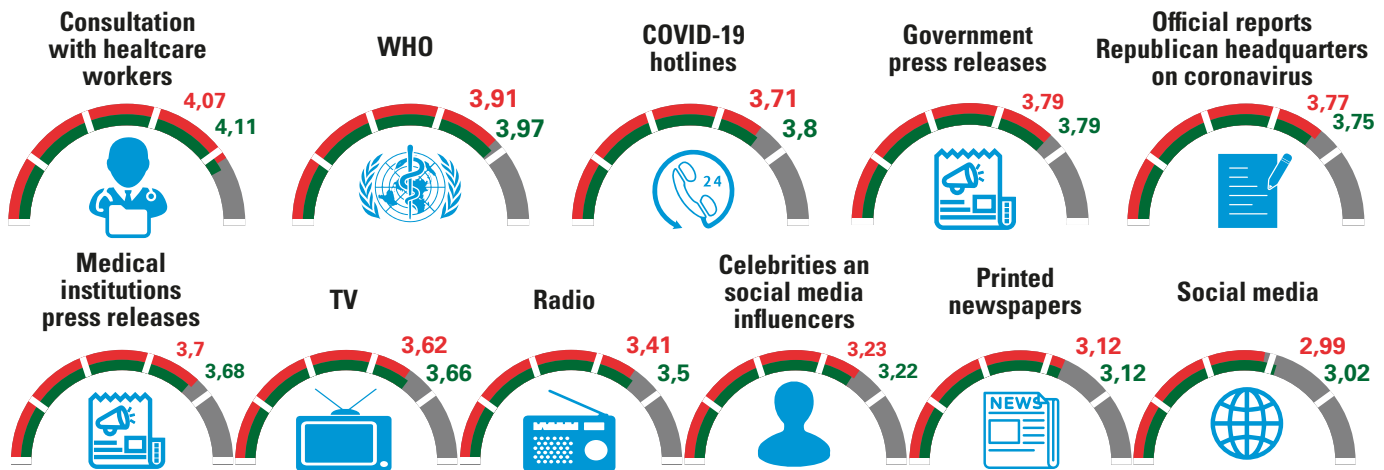
## Findings

- **Active interest** in COVID-19 is reducing as the **majority** of respondents (**51%**) **never or rarely search for information** relating to it (46% in round 1)
- Perceptions that there is **media hype** around COVID-19 have **slightly grown**, as **44%** consider there to be a **lot of hype** (40% in round 1)
- No large changes were observed in trust for information sources. The most trusted sources of information include **healthcare workers** (4.11), the **WHO** (3.97), and **official reports and press releases** (3.75/3.79)
- The trust in the **COVID-19 hotline** has **increased** slightly (3.71->3.8)
- The **least trusted** sources continue to be **social media** (3.02), **newspapers** (3.12), and **celebrities/influences** (3.22)

## TRUST IN INFORMATION SOURCES

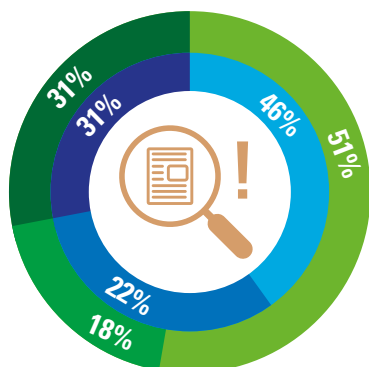
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (very little trust) to 5 (great deal of trust).  
Mean values and 95% confidence intervals

01/12/2020 25/12/2020



## FREQUENCY SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CORONA VIRUS / COVID-19

Mean values und 95% confidence intervals



## MEDIA HYPE

Mean values und 95% confidence intervals

