MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

World Health Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Europe

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS ON COVID-19 IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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

THIS STUDY IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THROUGH THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID) AND THE WHO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE. THE CONTENTS ARE THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF USAID OR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THE WHO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE. DATA COLLECTION WAS IMPLEMENTED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC AND ALL DATA COLLECTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS PROJECT BELONGS TO THIS MINISTRY.

Summary: General Findings

For discussion and further analysis and interpretation

Knowledge and Perceptions

- Health literacy continues to decrease with all comparable variables measured lower than in the previous round of data collection
- Risk perceptions remain largely unchanged with many perceiving infection neither likely nor severe
- Levels of fear and stress remain common among respondents

Individual Behaviours

- The uptake of protective behaviours remains below desirable levels and uptake is lower than in the previous rounds of data collection for most recommended behaviours

Vaccination willingness is lower than in February with high levels of concerns regarding the safety of the vaccine

Significant majorities of respondents express willingness to get tested and provide names for testing

Support for Policies

- The acceptance of policy measures continues to vary strongly between each policy, but there is majority support for all measured policies

The majority of respondents thinks that the current restrictions are not sufficient

Younger respondents continue to see policies as more unfair

Trust in institutions remains low and confidence in hospitals has slowly but steadily declined

Economy and Wellbeing

- Negative economic impacts and worries about future finances continue to be common among the respondents

Levels of resilience continue to be at similar levels to previous rounds of data collection

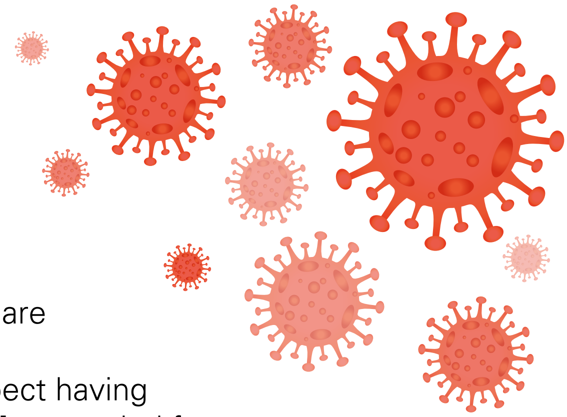
The detrimental impact of the pandemic and restrictions on lifestyles, especially exercise opportunities, and healthcare avoidance continue to be present

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

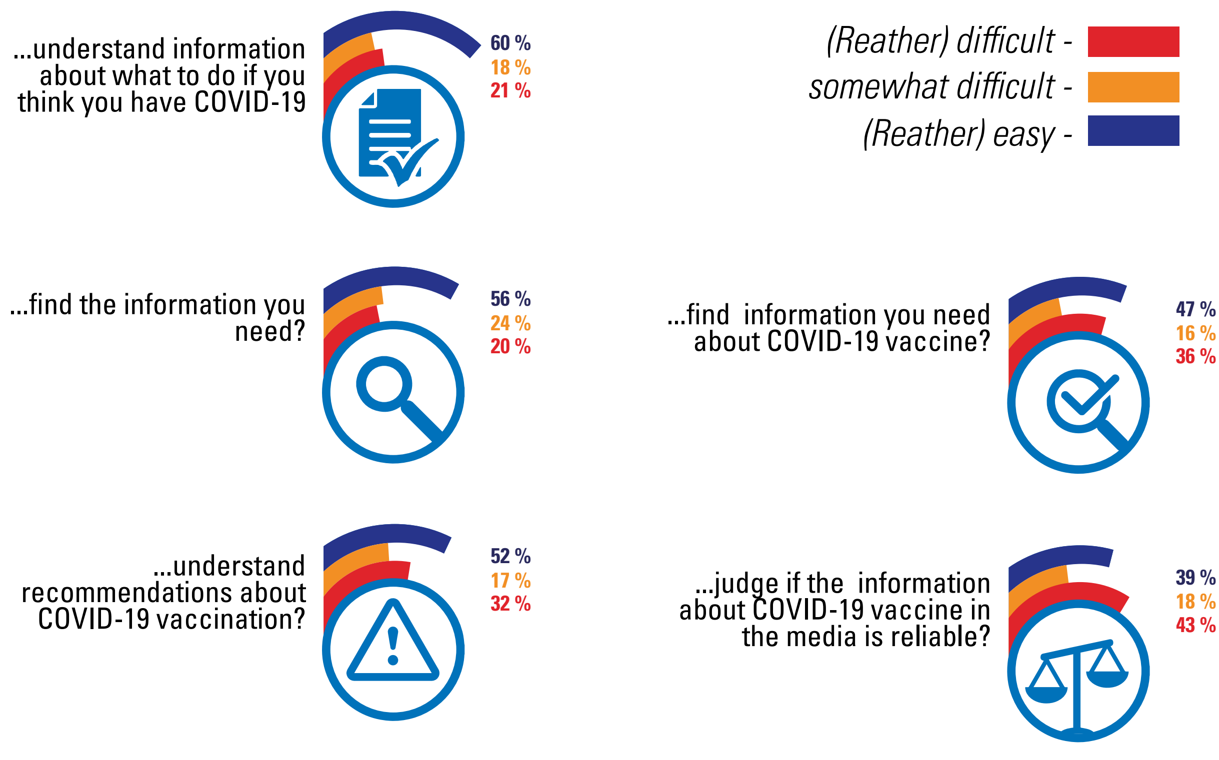
- There levels of **health literacy** for comparable questions are **lower** than in round 3
- Those who report understanding **what to do** if they suspect having COVID-19 reduced from 63% to **60%,** and **finding information** needed from 59% to **56%**
- Just over half feel **well-informed** about the **vaccine (52%)** (54% in round 2) and **understand vaccine recommendations (47%)** (52% in round 2)
- Judging **media reliability** regarding the **vaccine** was the **most challenging** aspect **(39%)**

The lower levels of health literacy measured since Round 3 are significant, especially given the relatively low starting point, and their causes are important to understand. Additional efforts into communicating about the vaccine is advisable.

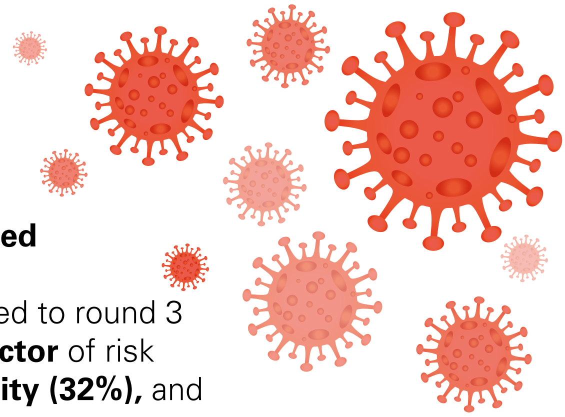
Predictors

- **Health literacy** is **lower** among respondents **living with children**
- Health literacy correlates with **higher trust** in **medical sector** and **lower** perceptions of **infection severity** and **viral closeness**
- Perceptions of **media hype** around COVID-19 correlate with **lower** health literacy

HEALTH LITERACY



Risk perceptions



Findings

- Risk perceptions **overall** continue to be **largely unchanged** since the start of data collection
- Risk perception is slighty **lower** on all measures, compared to round 3
- **Susceptibilty** to the virus continues to be the **highest factor** of risk perceptions (**45%** perceiving high risk), followed by **probability (32%),** and **severity (27%)**

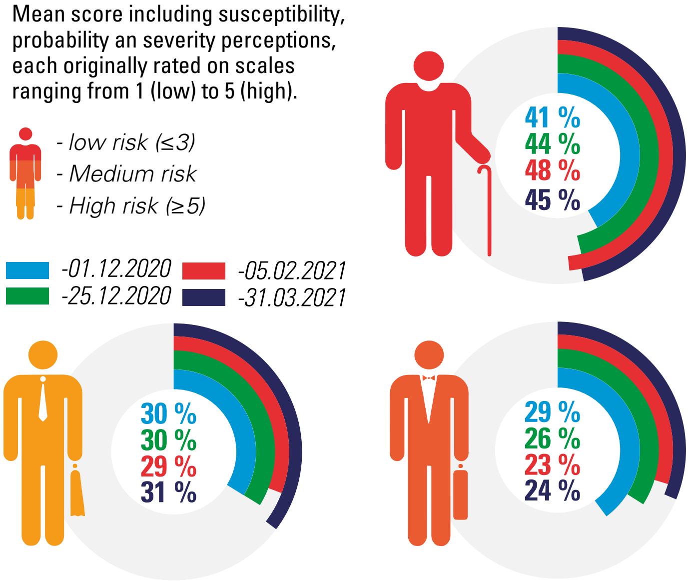
There are no significant changes in risk perceptions and almost half of the respondents continue to think infection is not likely and/or not severe.

Predictors

- Perception of **fast viral spread** and **higher media consumption** correlates positively with higher risk perception on all variables
- Respondents with **infected peers** have a **lower** perceived probability and severity of an infection
- **Higher perceived susceptibility** and **severity** of an infection was measured among respondents belonging to a **risk group**

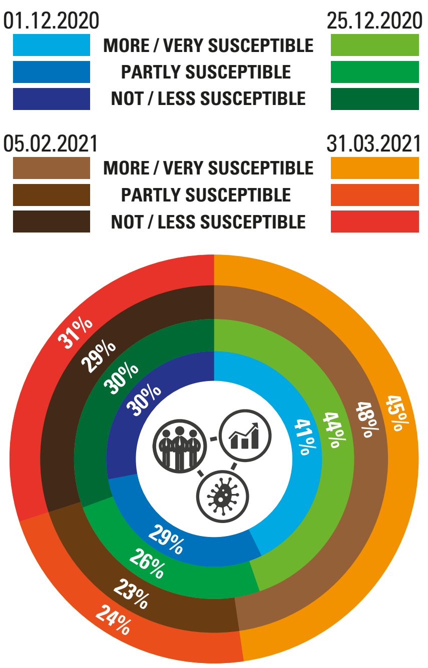
PERCEIVED SUSCEPTIBILITY

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



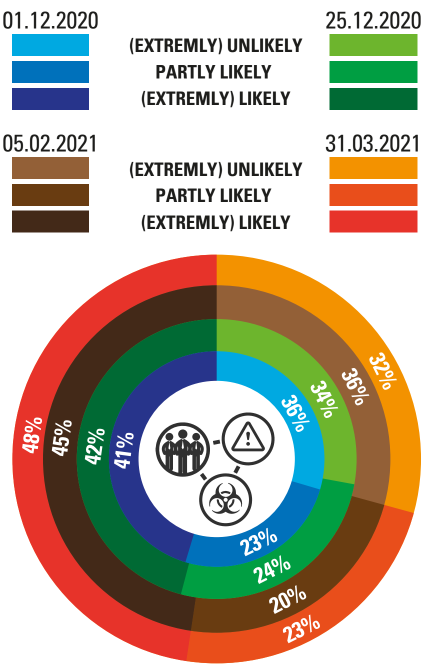
PERCEIVED SUSCEPTIBILITY

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



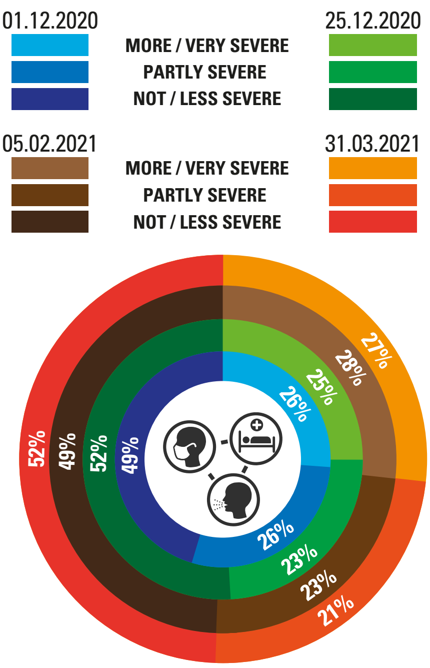
PERCEIVED PROBABILITY OF AN INFECTION

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

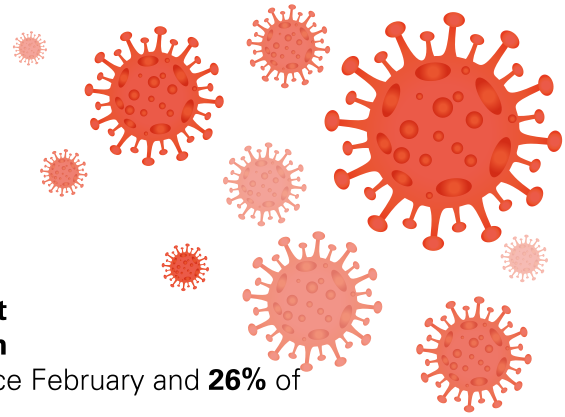


PERCEIVED SEVERITY OF AN INFECTION

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



Perceptions and emotions



Findings

- The level of **self-efficacy** towards avoiding COVID-19 is **almost identical** to February as **51%** think it's **easy to avoid an infection**
- The perceptions of **closeness to COVID-19** has **increased** since February and **26%** of respondents feel the virus is **close**
- The vast majority of respondents still think that the **virus is spreading very fast (63%),** however, this is lower than in February (69%)

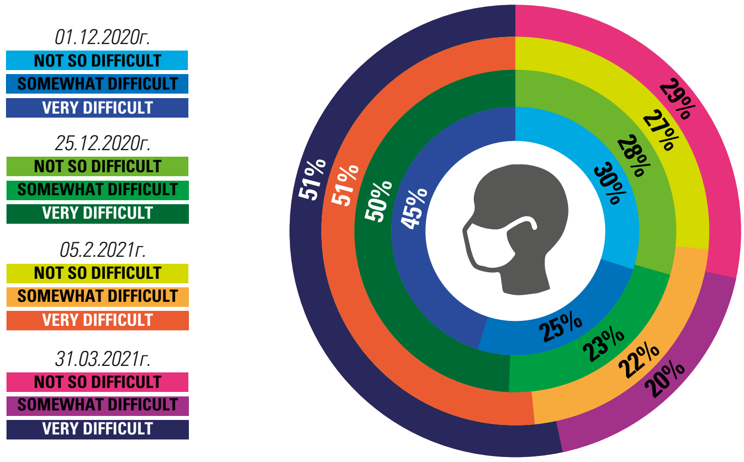
The degree emotional affect among respondents has not changed greatly since Round 3 of data collection. Despite the perceived distance to the virus being closer, other aspects such as the speed of viral spread and fear remain similar.

Predictors

- Negative emotions are felt more by **female** and **higher educated** respondents
- People **living with children** report **higher** levels of **stress**
- Perceptions of **closeness** and **negative emotions** are **higher** with those who worries about **economic consequences**
- The frequency of **media consumption** correlates with **higher negative emotions** whereas **trust in government** with **lower**

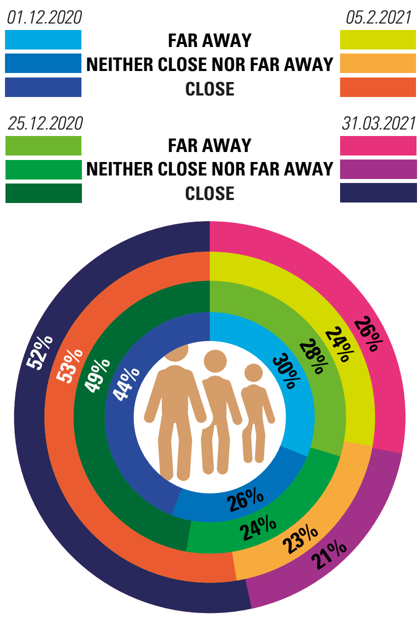
FEELING ABLE TO AVOID AN INFECTION

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



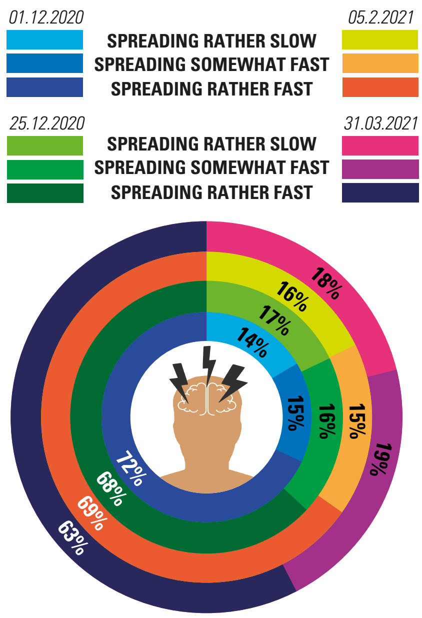
DISTANCE

To me, novel coronavirus feels...



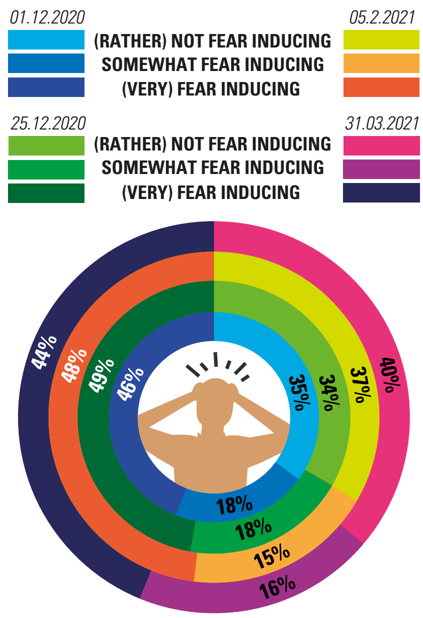
PERCEIVING VIRUS AS SPREADING FAST

From me the Corona virus is...

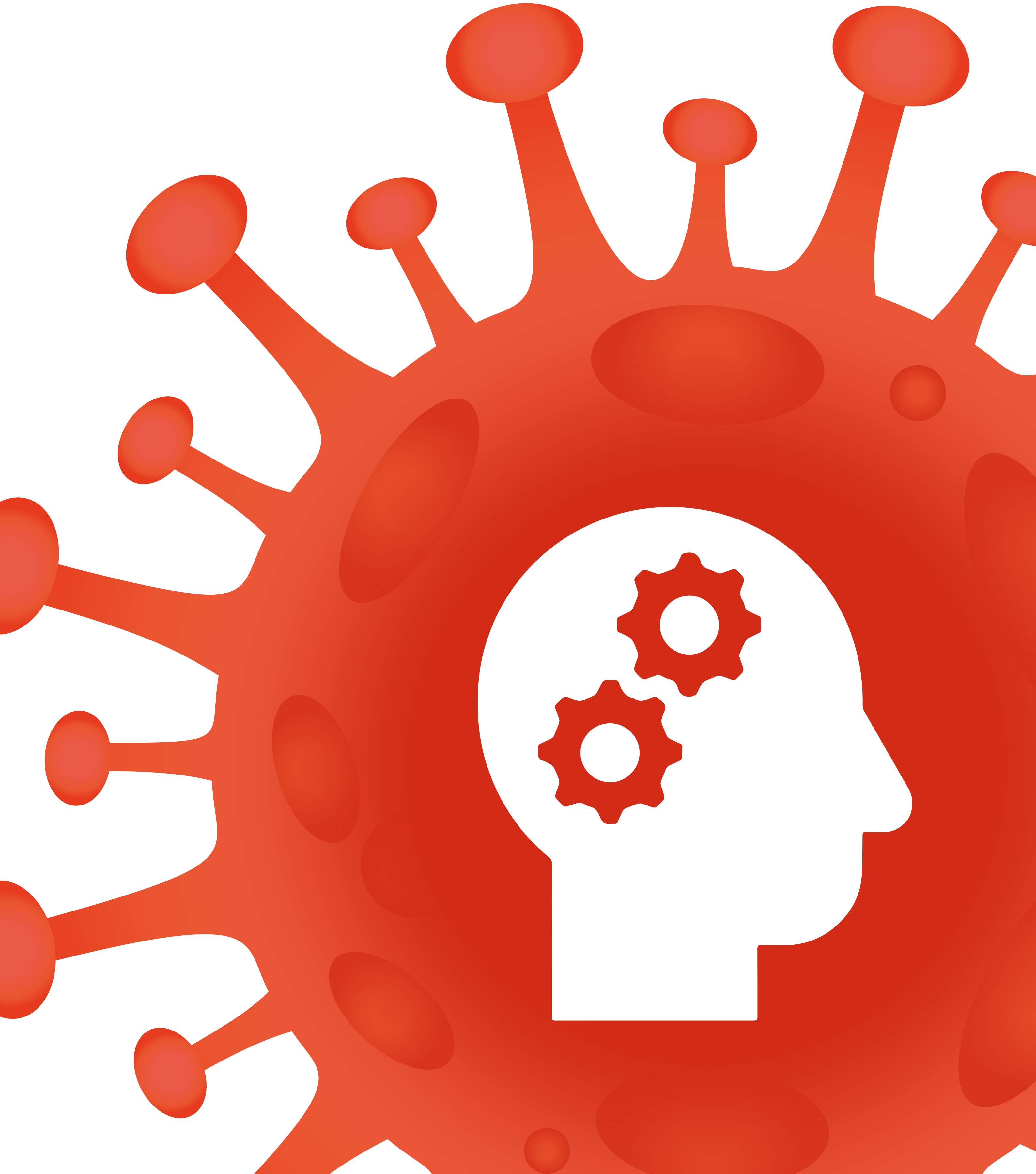


FEAR

From me the Corona virus is...



SECTION 2:
Individual Behaviours



Protective Behaviours

Findings

- Generally, **reductions** were measured on the uptake of all protective measures
- Reductions were recorded in the use of **masks** (from 75% to **67% high uptake**) and **physical distancing** (from 60% to **54% high uptake**)
- The adoption of protective behaviours in general remains **below desirable levels** as even the most adhered to behaviours (**masking, disinfectants,** and **hand sanitation**) are **not** applied by a **quarter** of the respondents
- **Staying home when sick** and **avoiding social events** continue to **not** be applied by the majority (**45%/30%**)
- Up to **19%** of respondents say they have **used antibiotics** to **prevent** COVID-19 (same as previous rounds)

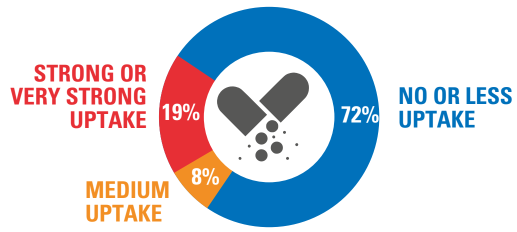
The uptake of protective behaviours remains below desirable levels and are a risk factor for a resurgence of COVID-19 cases. The reductions in self-reported uptake are of particular concern.

Predictors

- Uptake of protective behaviours is lower among **female** respondents
- Frequency of **media consumption,** trust in the **medical sector,** and **MOH** correlate with **lower** uptake
- Maladaptive **antibiotic** use is more common among **older and lower educated** respondents

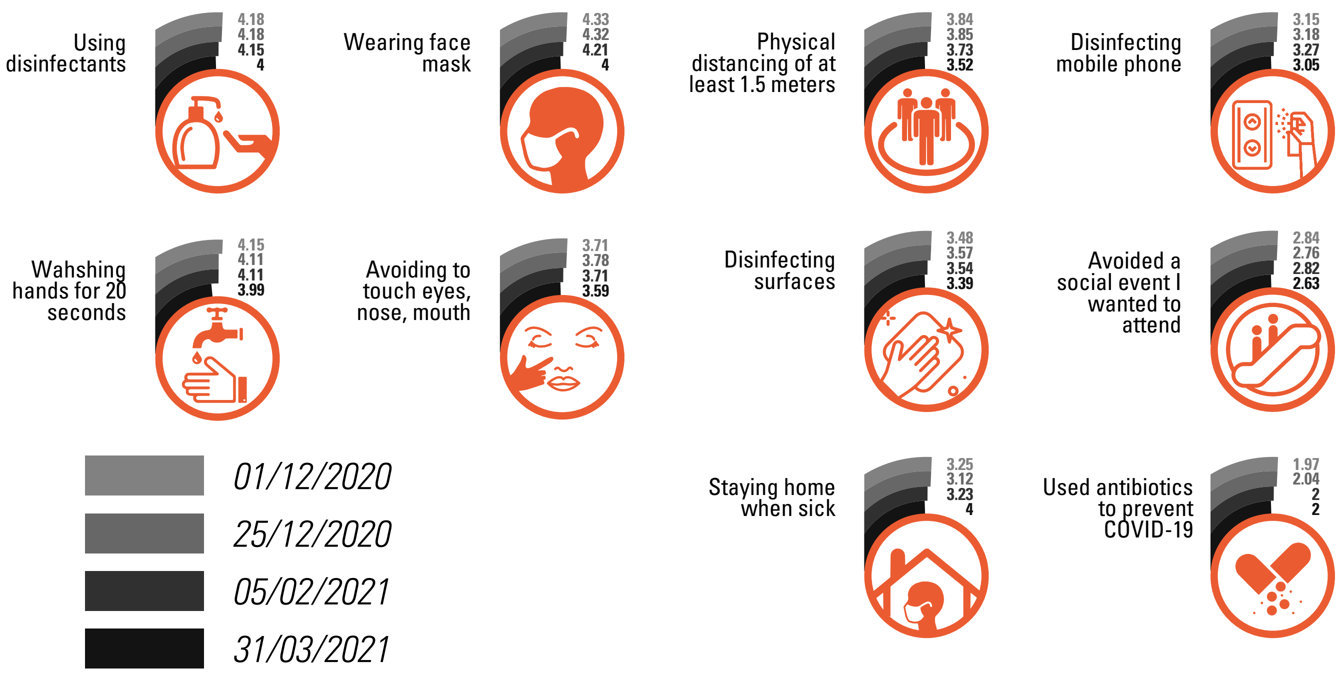
MALADAPTIVE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS

Used antibiotics prevent COVIS-19

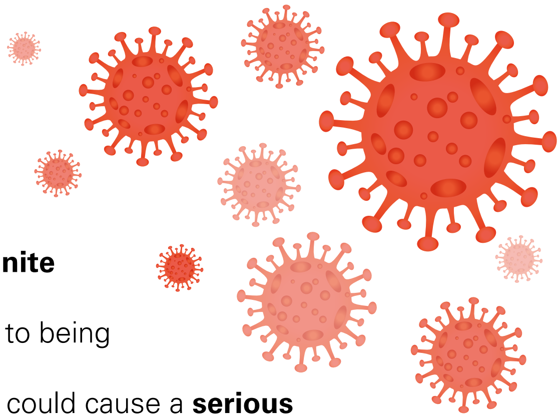


UPTAKE OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES

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



Vaccinations



Findings

- **Vaccine hesitancy** is higher than in the previous round of data collection with **less than half** of respondents expressing **definite willingness to get vaccinated (40%)**
- The proportion of respondents expressing **definite opposition** to being vaccinated is **37%** (29% in February)
- **More than half** of respondents are concerned that the vaccine could cause a **serious reaction (66%)**
- **53%** think that their **friends and family** would want them to be vaccinated
- The proportion of respondents expressing **negativity** towards the **national vaccination schedule** was also **higher** than in February (**31%** vs 26%)

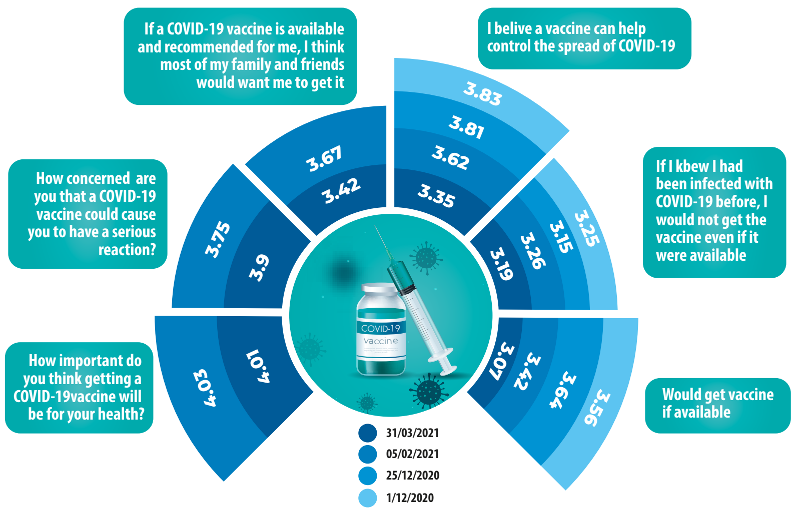
The higher levels of vaccine hesitancy and lower support for the national vaccination schedule are concerning and should be further studied to formulate the best communications response.

Predictors

- Women, **urban residents,** and respondents **living with children** are more **negative** towards the vaccination
- Higher **trust** in the vaccine's **safety** and higher **perceived severity of infection** correlate with **higher** vaccine intentions
- Vaccination willingness correlates **positively** with **trust in government** and worries about future **economic consequences**

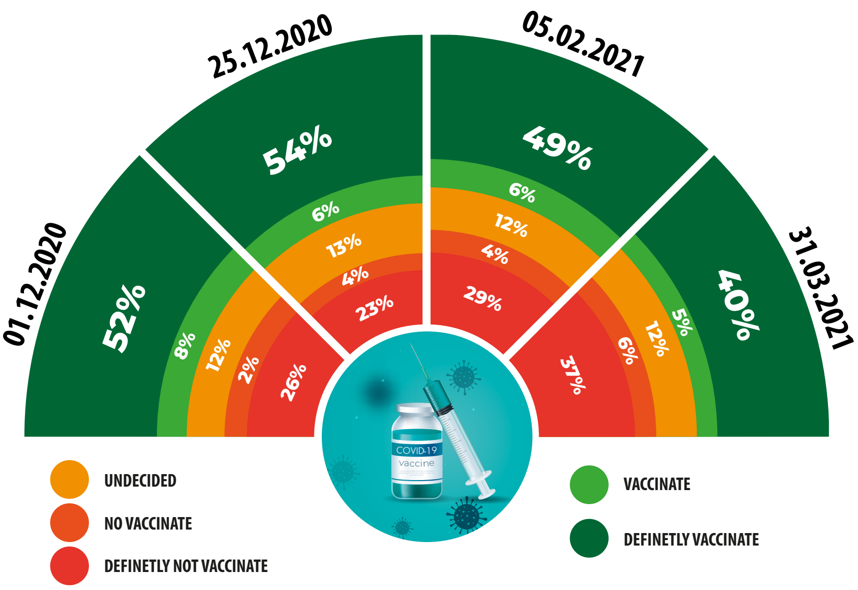
PLEASE SHARE YOUR POSITION ON POTENTIALFUTURE COVID-19 VACCINE:

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



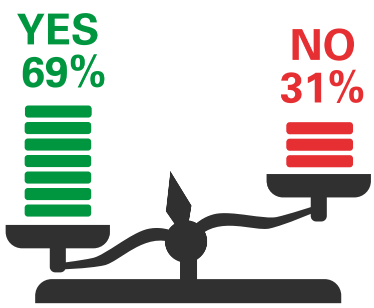
VACCINATION INTENTIONS FOR A COVID-19 VACCINE

Share of participaants with different vaccination intentions.
Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

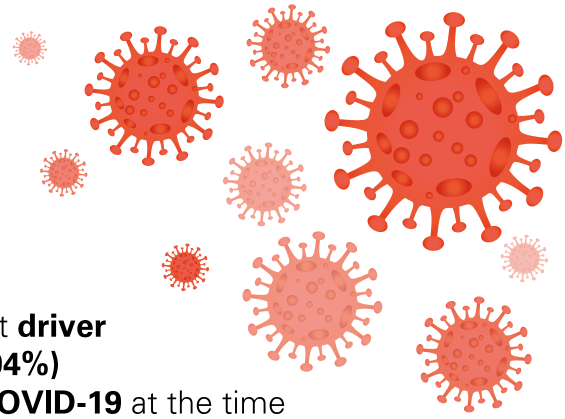


GENERAL VACCINATION ATTITUDE

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



Vaccination concerns

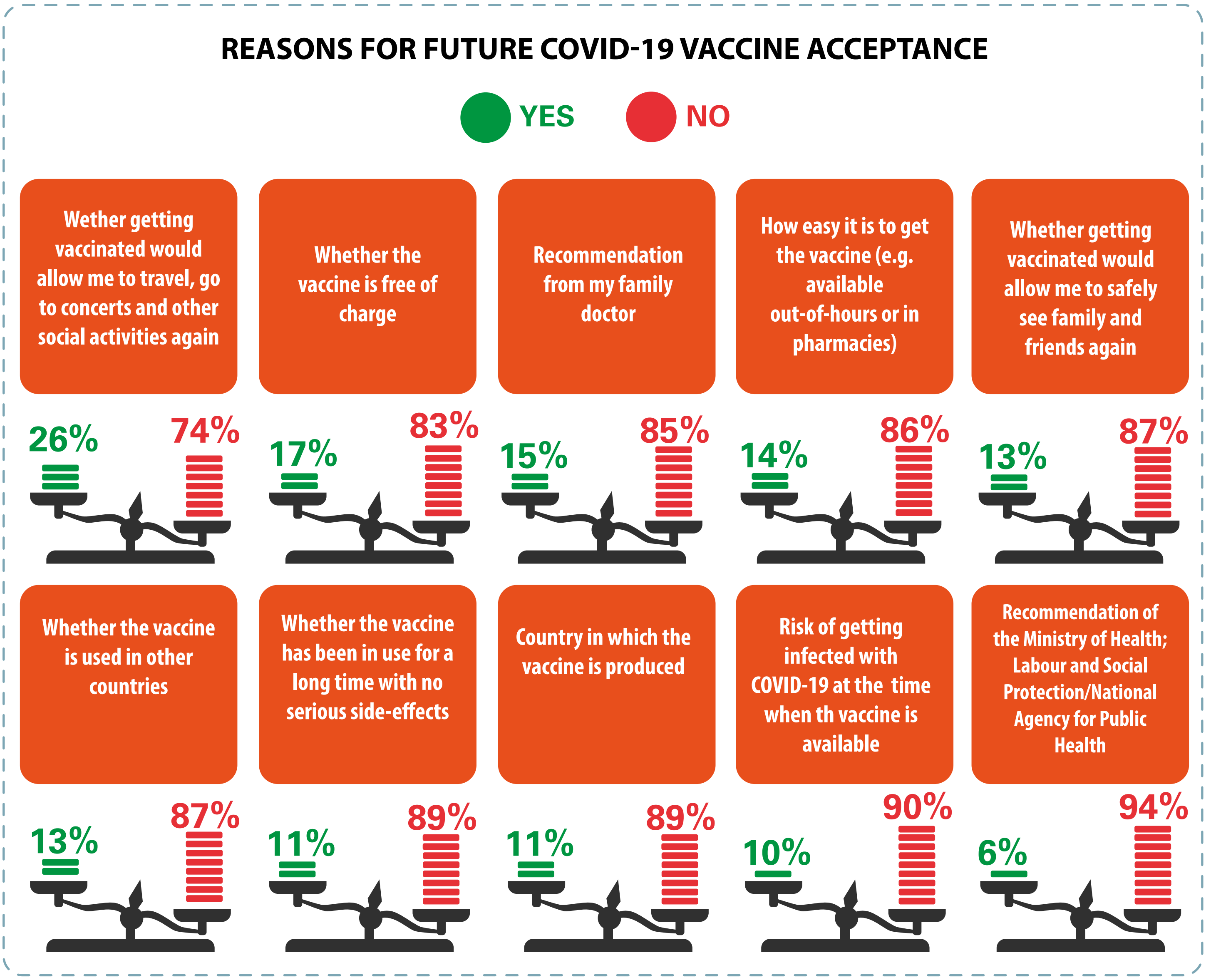


Findings

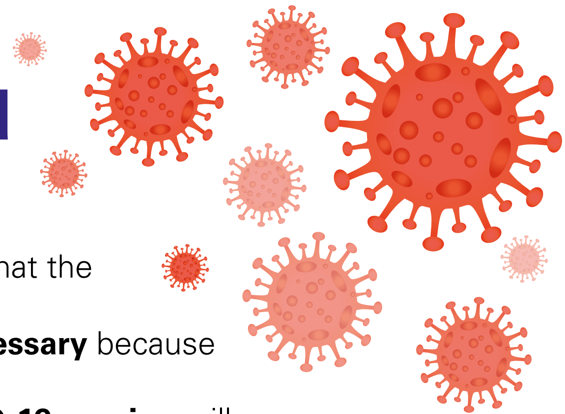
- The **recommendation of the government** is the highest **driver** for **vaccine acceptance** for those who remain **undecided (94%)**
- Proven **safety, production contry,** and **risk of getting COVID-19** at the time are all listed by approx. **89%** of undecided respondents as important in decision-making
- The possibility of safely **seeing family and friends again** was also important for **87%** of undecided respondent
- **Travel, concerts,** and other **social activities** were the **least cited concern,** but were nonetheless mentioned as important by the **vast majority (74%)**

Predictors

- **Recommendations** are **more important** for those with **trust in government** and the **medical sector**
- **Family doctor recommendations** and **recommendations of MOH** are **less important** to respondents with **higher educations**

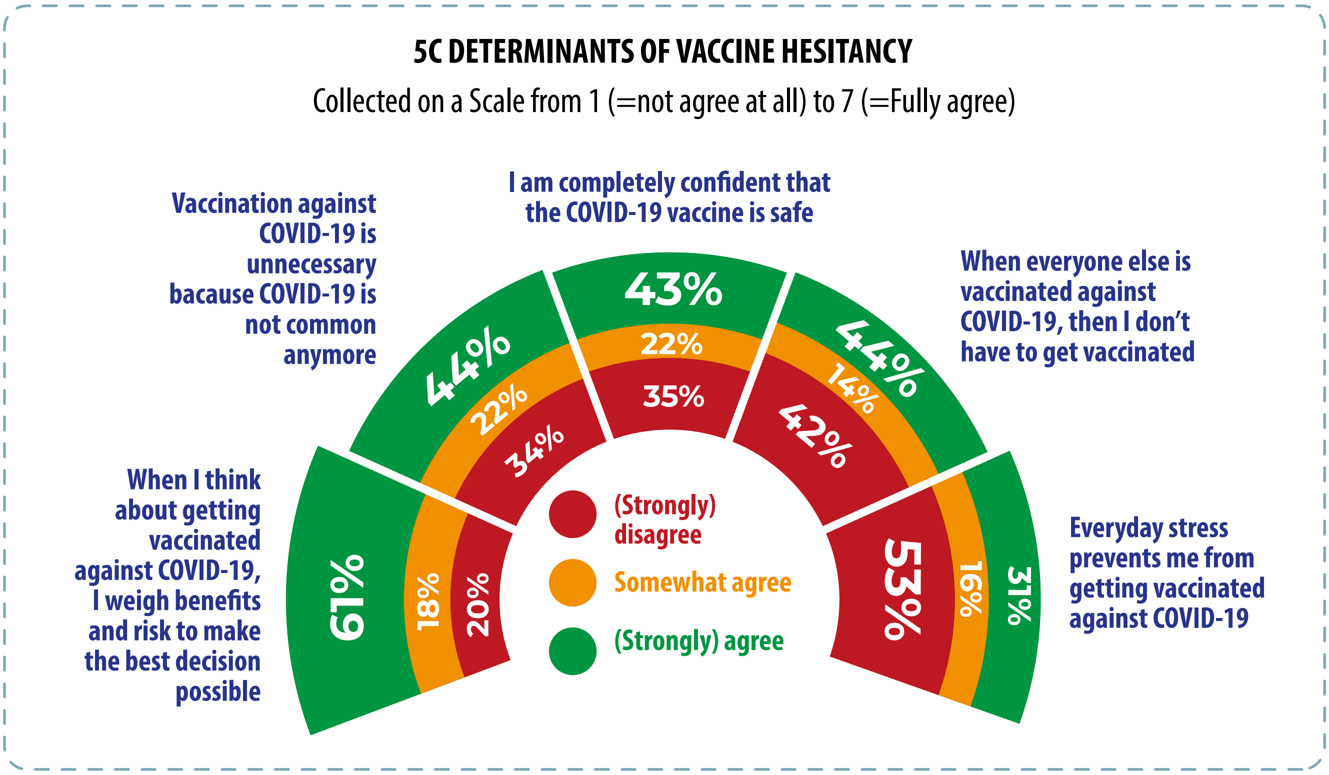


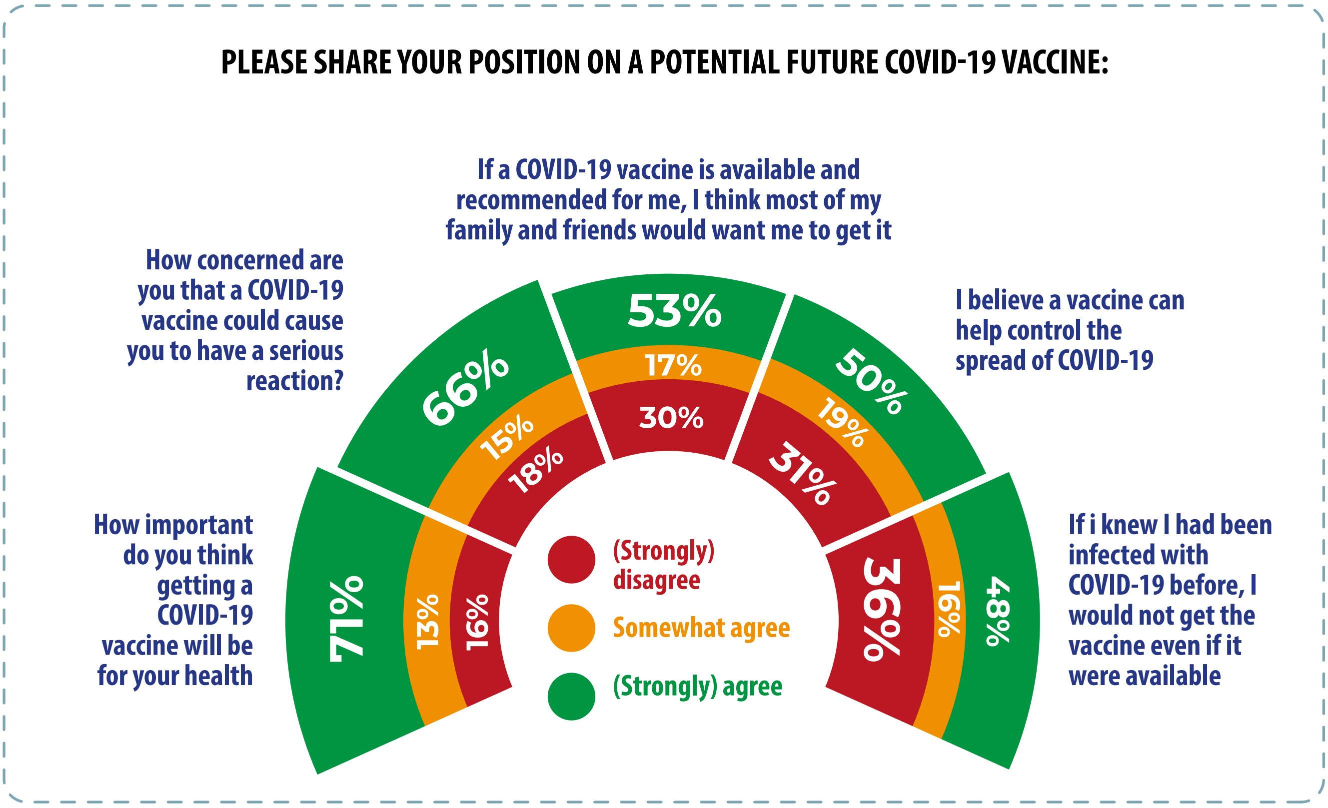
Vaccinations continued



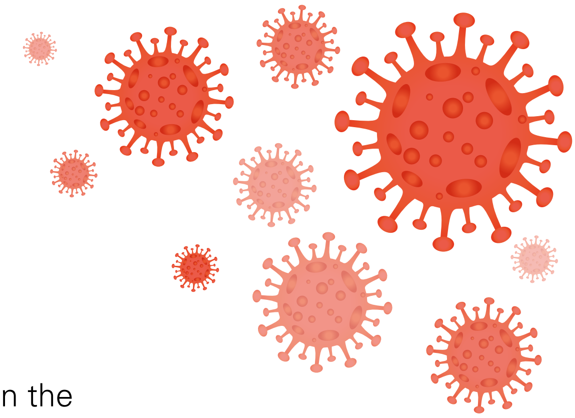
Findings

- Only **43%** of the respondents are completely **confident** that the COVID-19 **vaccine is safe**
- Up to **44%** of respondents consider **vaccinations unnecessary** because **COVID-19** is **no longer common**
- **66%** of respondents are highly concerned that the **COVID-19 vaccine** will cause a **serious reaction** for them
- **50%** of respondents **express** some **doubts** that the **vaccine**(s) can help **control the spread** of COVID-19





Testing and tracing



Findings

- The vast of respondents **are willing** to **get tested** if given the opportunity **(75.6%)** and **share names** for tracing **(86.3%)**

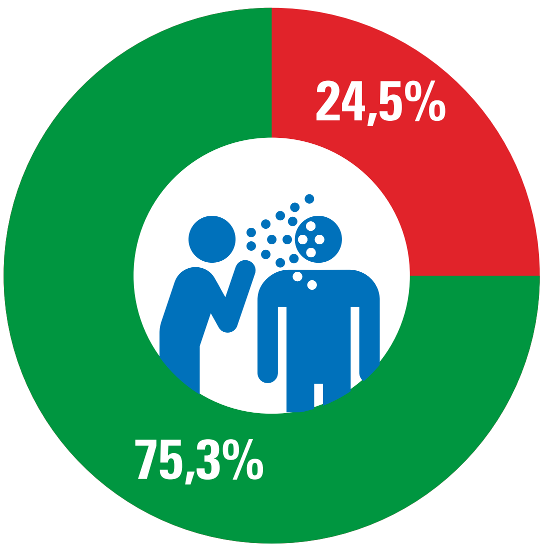
Testing and tracing are accepted by the majority of respondents, which supports strategies of test-and-trace, though further understanding the minority of respondents reluctant to get tested is advisable

Predictors

- **Testing** willingness is higher among **higher educated** respondents
- Sharing of names for tracing is positively correlated with **trust in medical** sector and **heath literacy**

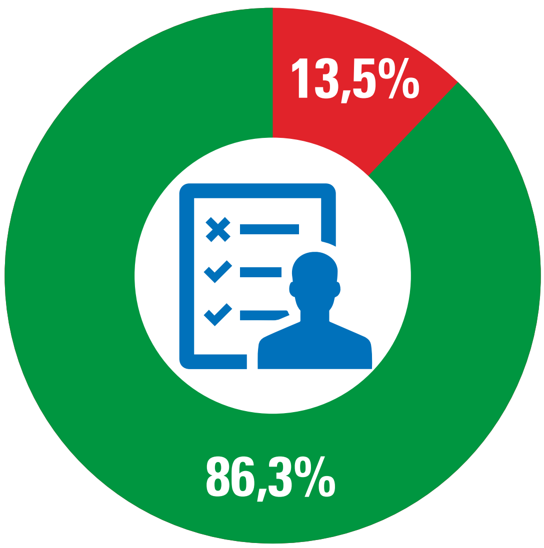
If you have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and have on symptoms yourself – will you get tested if you have the opportunity?

YES NO



If you test positive for COVID-19 [..] will you share all names?

YES NO



SECTION 3:
Support for policies

General policy perspectives

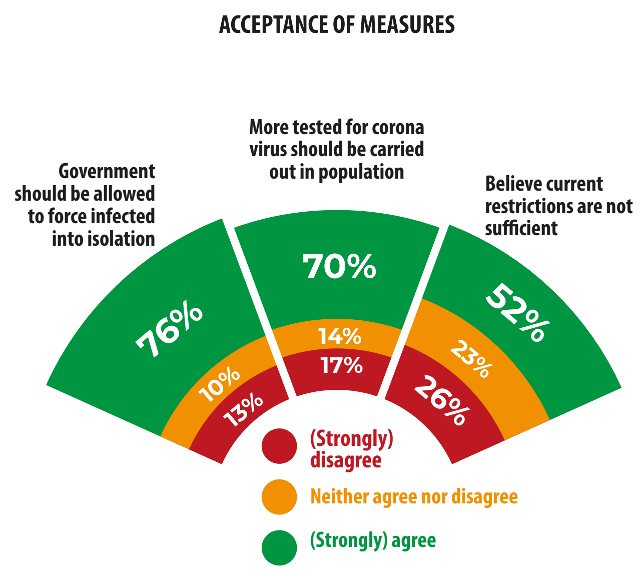
Findings

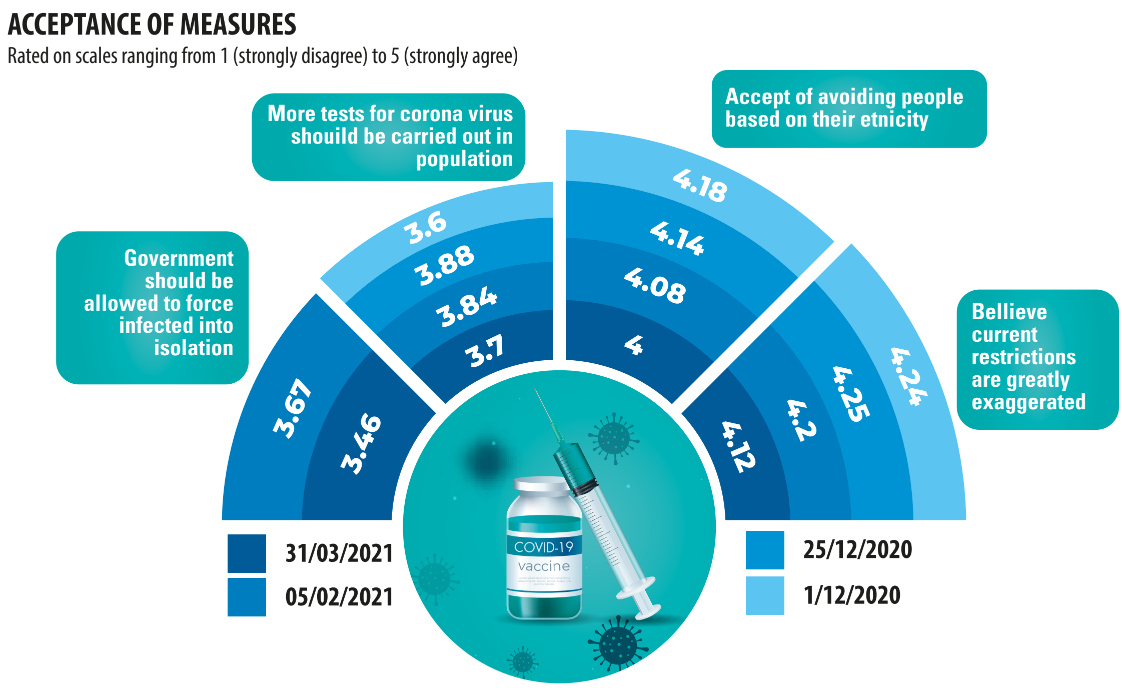
- There are **no substantial differences** in the general policy support since February
- The **majority** continues to think that **enforced isolations** for **infected individuals** should be allowed (**4.19/76%**) and that **more tests** should be carried out in the population (**4.0/70%**)
- A smaller majority thinks that the current **restrictions** are **not sufficient** (**3.42/52%**), however, this group is reduced since February (60%)

There are no substantial changes in the general policy perspectives in the sample. Support for named measures continues to be strong.

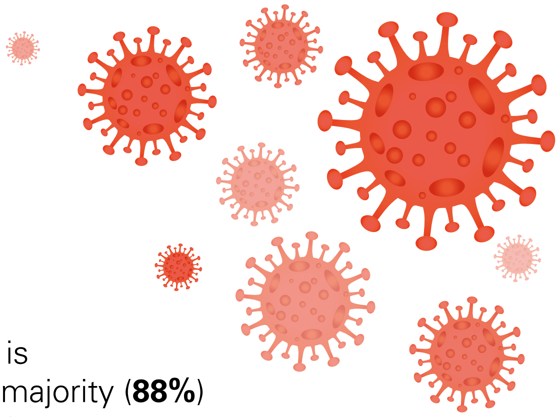
Predictors

- **Risk group members** are **more likely** to think the current **restrictions** are **insufficient**
- Thinking current **restrictions** are **not sufficient** correlates **positively** with **worries** about future **economic consequences, trust** in the medical sector, and frequency of **media consumption,** and **negatively** with perceptions of **media hype**
- Respondents with **worries about financial situation** are **more likely** to support **enforced isolations** for infected people, while respondents working in **health care** are **less** so
- Support for **enforced isolations** correlates positively with **frequency of media consumption,** higher perceived **severity of an infection,** and **trust in government and medical sector**





Support for specific policies



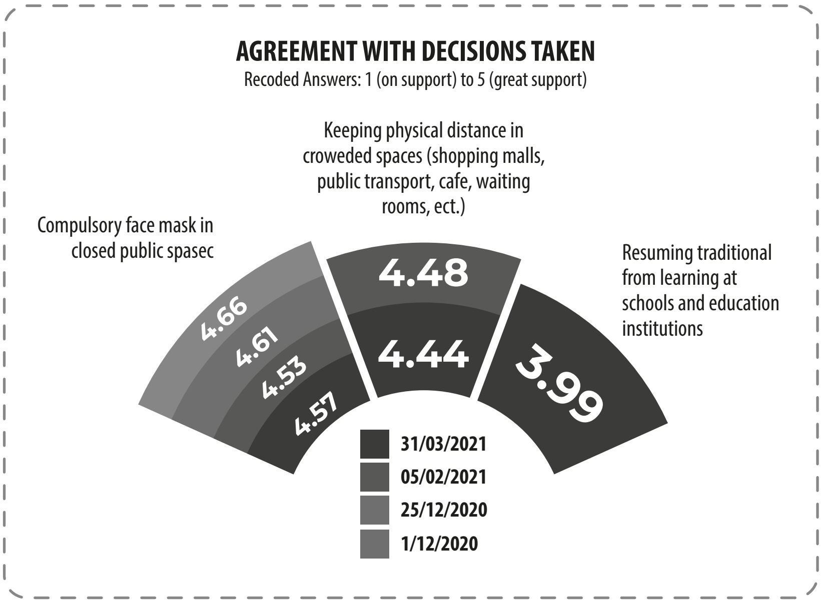
Findings

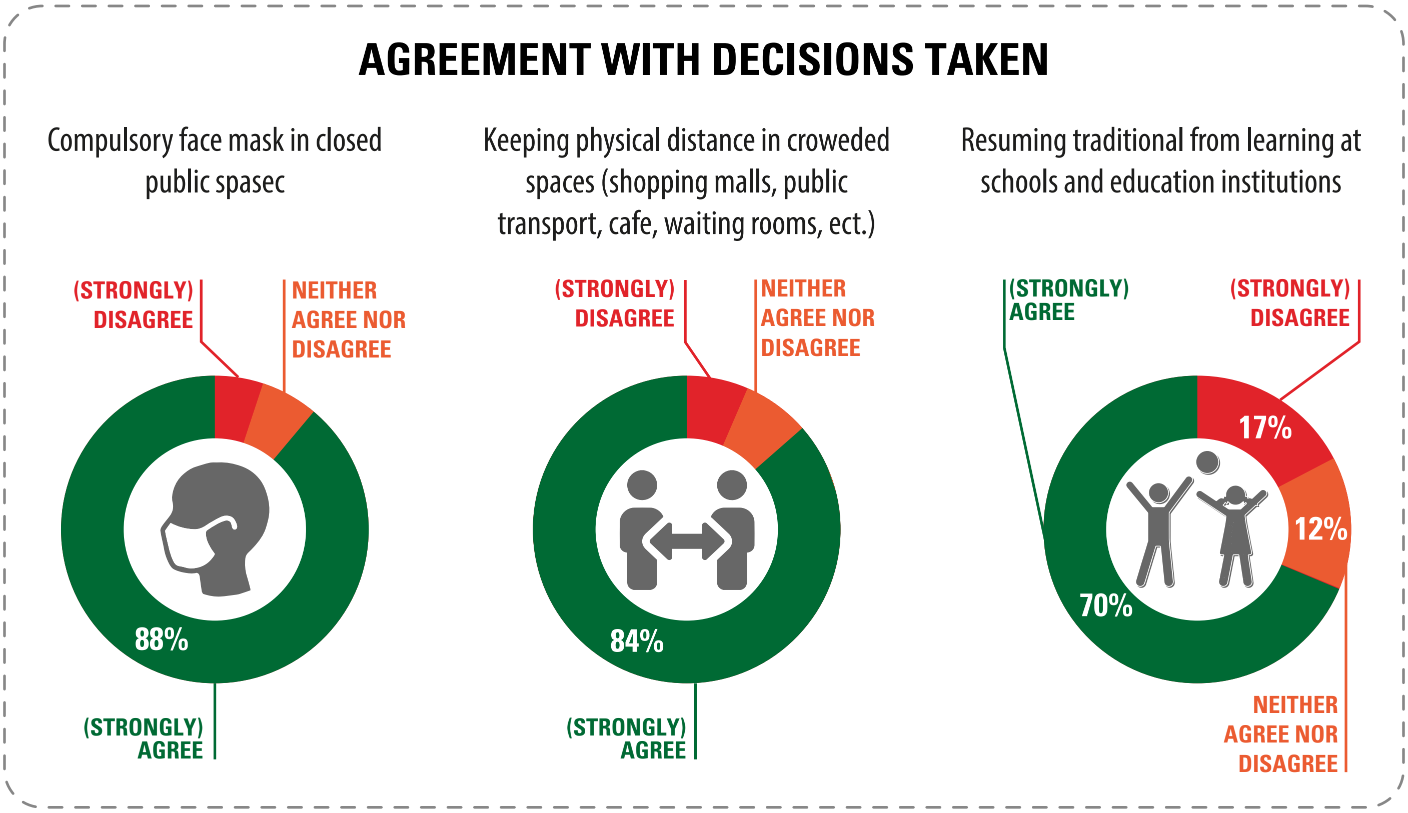
- The support for **mask mandates** in **closed public spaces** is **comparable** to previous rounds – and supported by the vast majority (**88%**)
- A **majority** of respondents support **resuming traditional form learning at schools (70%)**

Support continues to vary strongly by policy, which suggests a good level of consideration by respondents towards individual policies. This can support the success of communicating reasoning for policies and restrictions.

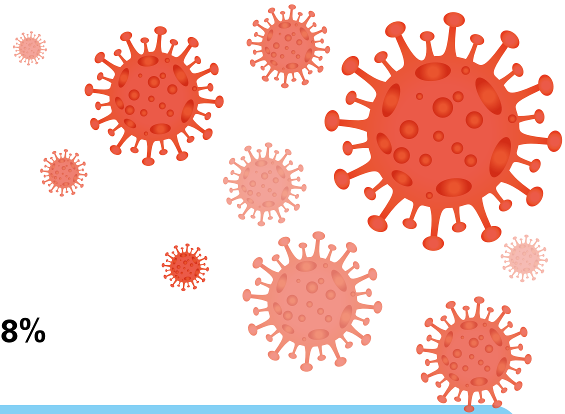
Predictors

- **Mask mandates** in **closed public spaces** are more likely to be supported by **women,** as well as those who perceive **infection severity** to be **higher,** think the virus is **close,** and **trust the government**
- **Reopening schools** is supported more by **older** and **rural** respondents, and those who **trust the government**





Fairness



Findings

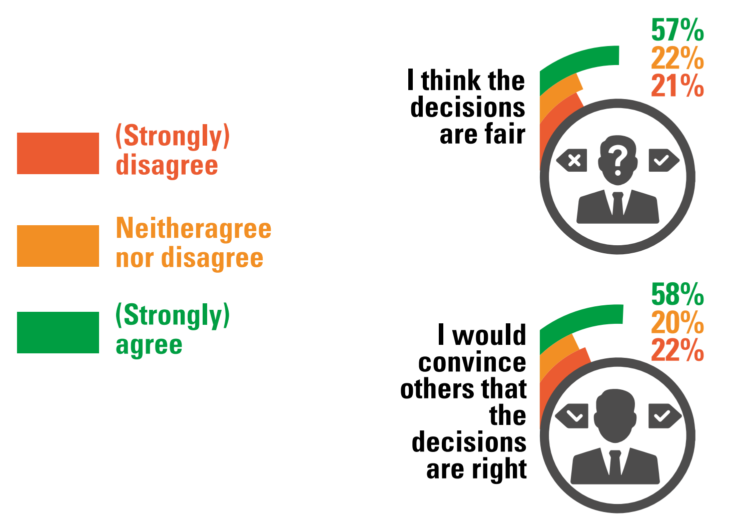
- Perceptions regarding the **fairness** of policies are **slightly lower** than in **Round 3**
- **57%** of respondents consider the policies to be **fair** and **58%** would **convince others** of this

The perceptions on fairness are at slightly lower levels compared to prior rounds. The lower levels of fairness among younger respondents continues to be significant and understanding their concerns may be useful.

Predictors

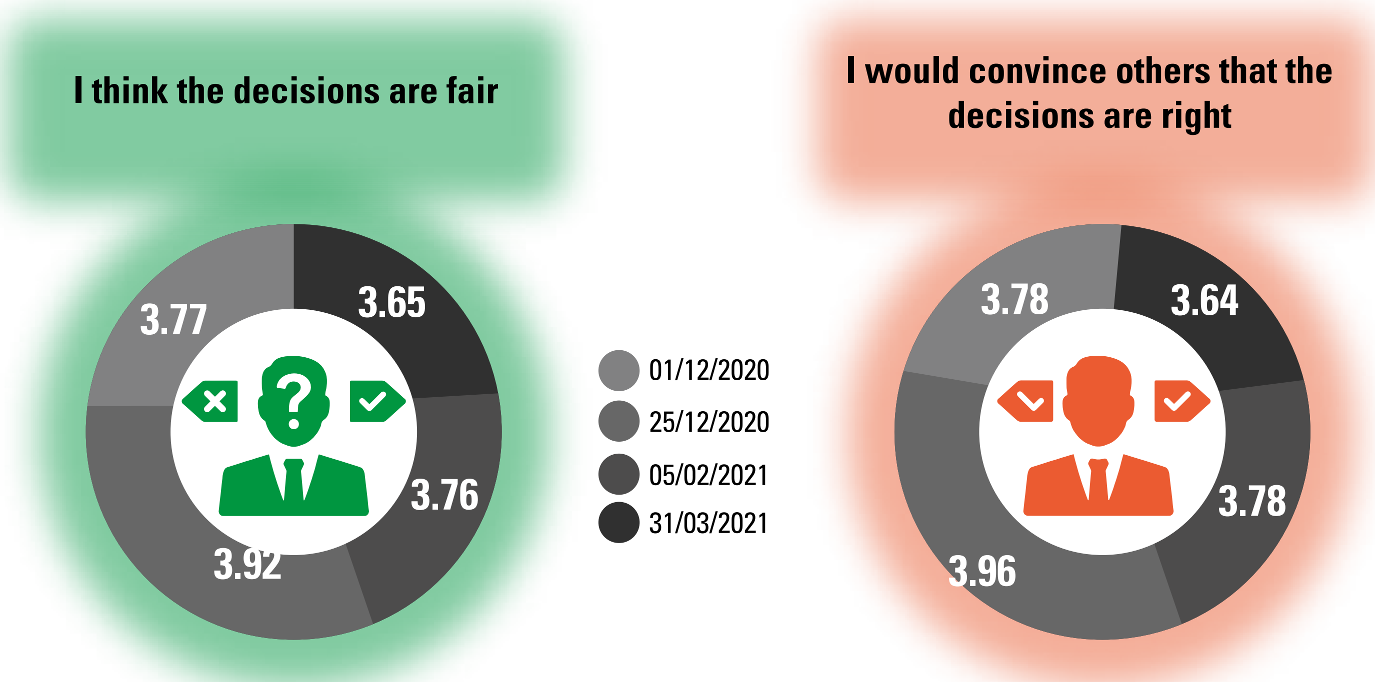
- **Fairness** perceptions are **lower** among **younger** respondents
- Perceptions of **fairness** correlate **positively** with perceived **financial worries,** perceived **severity of an infection,** as well as **trust in government** and the **medical sector**
- Those who perceive **media hype** around COVID-19 have **lower fairness** perceptions

FAIRNESS

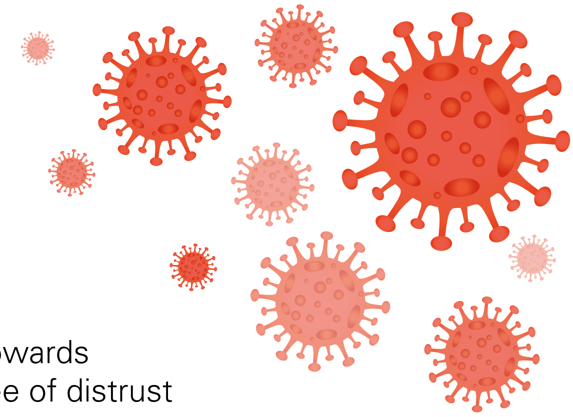


FAIRNESS

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



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 most institutions
- The **medical sector** is **most trusted,** including **hospitals (3.68/60%), family doctors (3.59/56%),** and the **MoH (3.57/54%)**
- Although still most trusted, **confidence in hospitals** has **steadily declined** over the data collection rounds
- **City administrations** are still **least trusted (2.94/37%)**

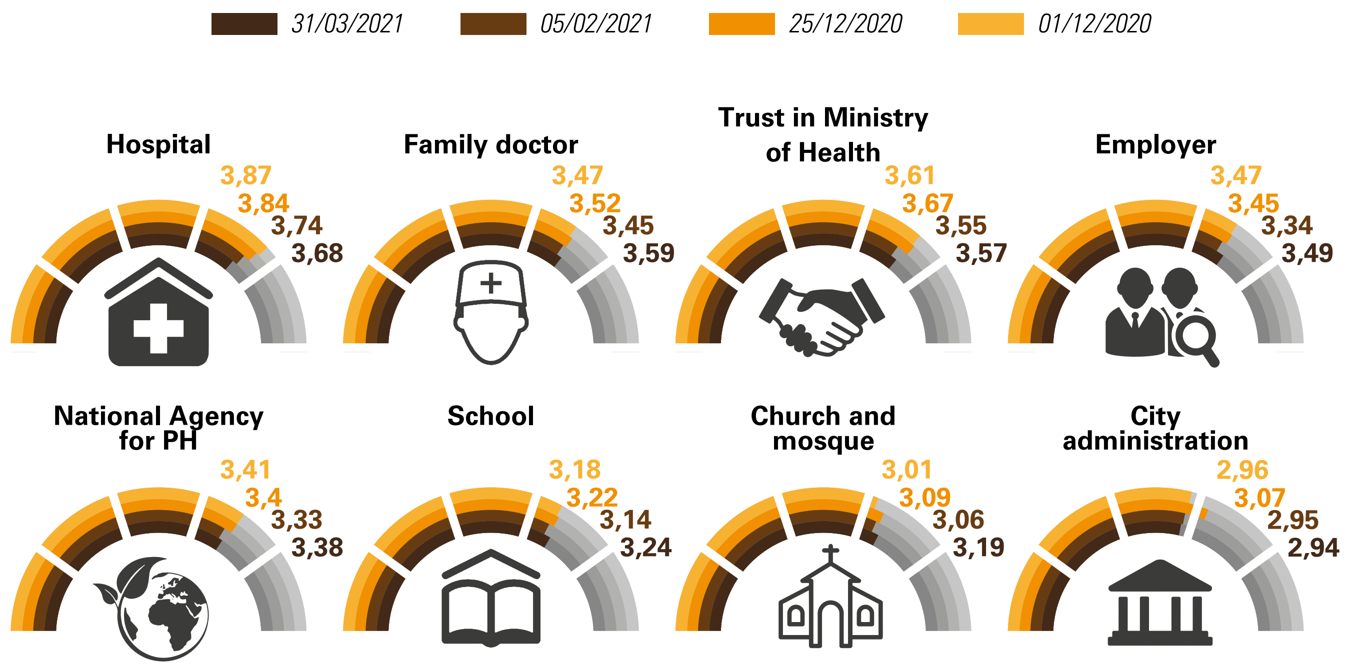
Trust in institutions overall remains quite low. The low trust expressed towards city administrations may be significant as it may be indicating lacking capacities at those levels.

Predictors

- Trust in the **medical sector** is **lower** among **highly educated** respondents
- Trust in **family doctors** is **lower** for **rural** respondents
- **Media consumption frequency** correlates **positively** with **trust 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



SECTION 4:
Economy and wellbeing

Economic impacts

Findings

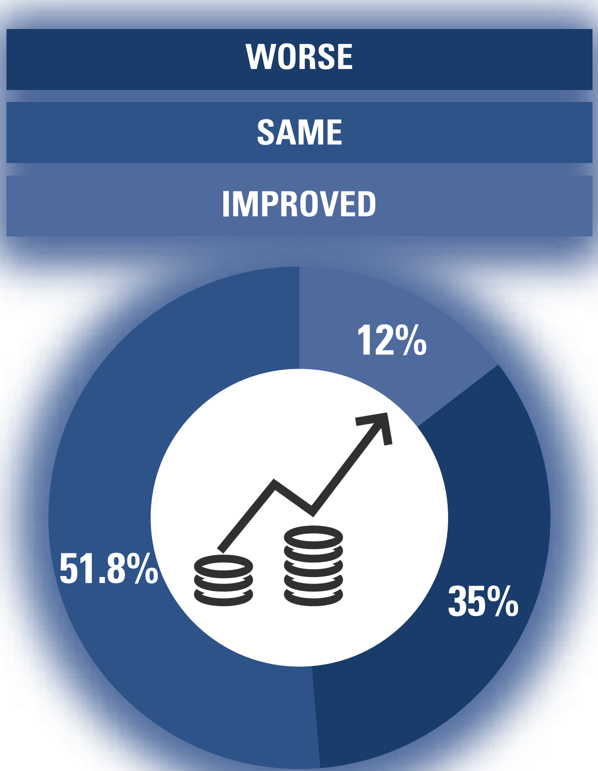
- The **worries about the future economic consequences** continue to be **very common** among respondents with **68%** expressing **strong worry** (reduced from72% in round 3)
- Only **20%** of respondents are **not worried about future economic consequences** (17% in round 3)
- 35% of respondents report **worsening financial situation** over last three months

The economic impacts of COVID-19 continue to be prominent both in worsening conditions that have already occurred as well as worry about future situations. Across COVID-19 analyses, economic issues tend to correlate with other negative behaviours and attitudes, and as such can have negative indirect consequences beyond worsening finances at the household level.

Predictors

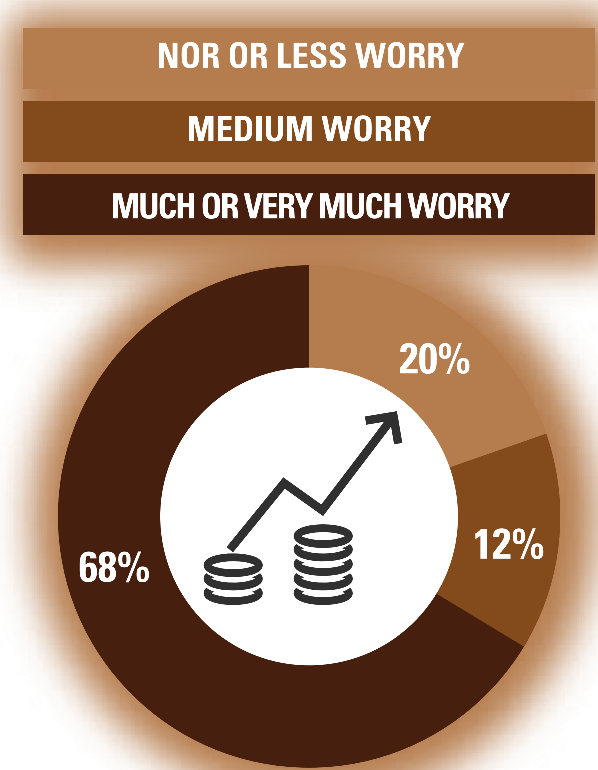
- **Male** respondents and those whose **financial situation has worsened** are **more likely** to **worry** about future economic consequences
- Economic worries correlate positively with perceived **closeness** of **virus**

PRIVATE FINANCIAL SITUATION OVER LAST THREE MONTHS



MORRIES

Worries about future economic concequences



Resilience

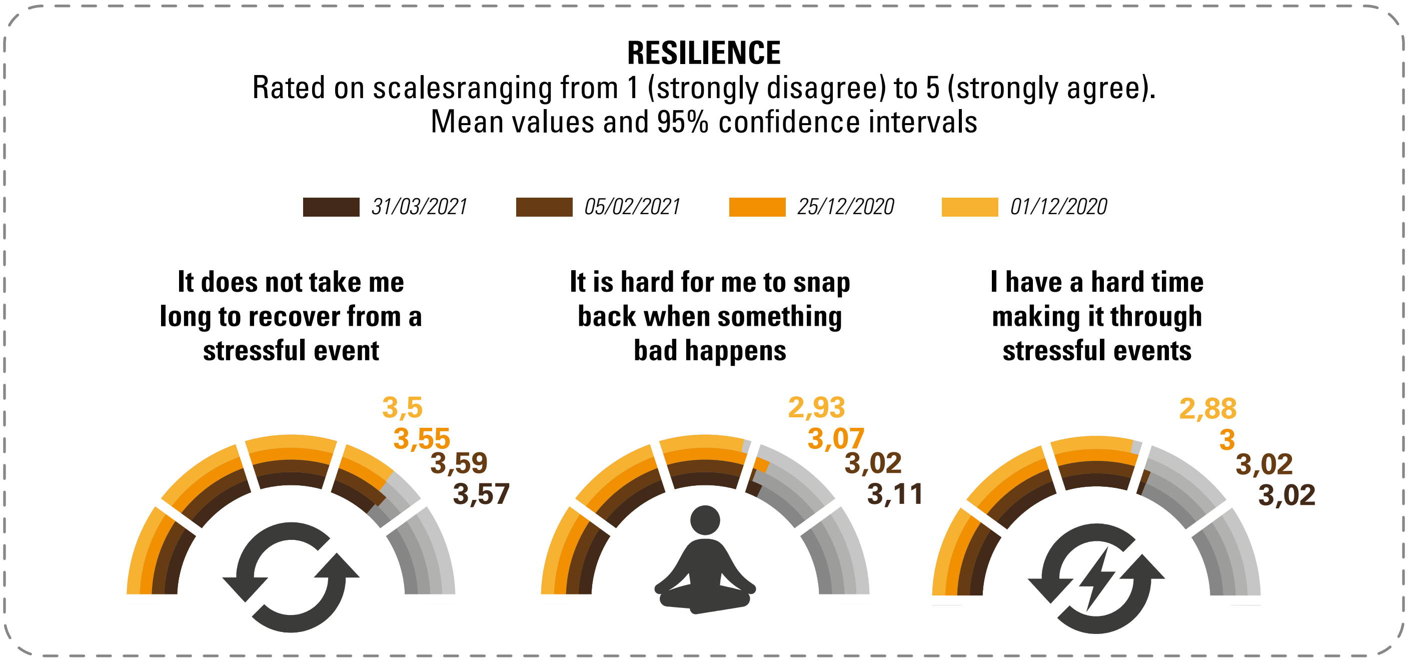
Findings

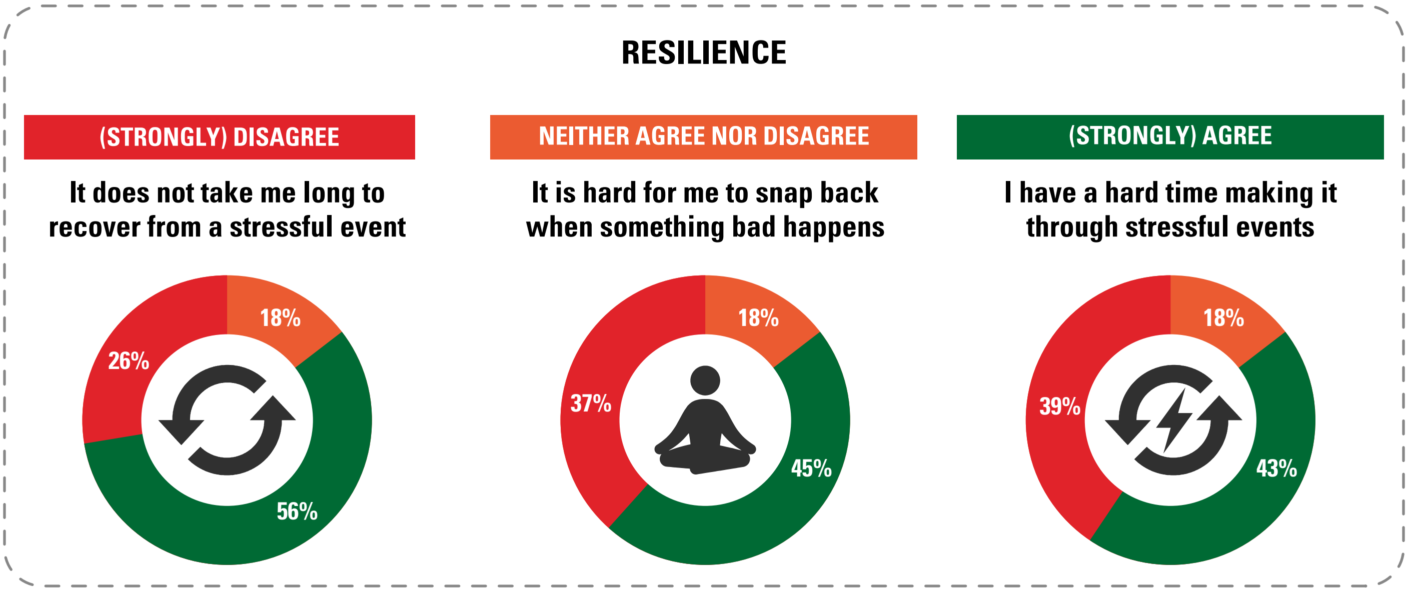
- The levels of resilience have not changed significantly through the data collection period
- **Around a half** of respondents continue to report **some issues** with resilience, particularly on **making it through stressful events** (57%)

Issues with resilience continue to be present among the respondents. Working towards improving these is important for the ability of people to sustain the ongoing hardship as well as bounce back, especially those affected by COVID-19.

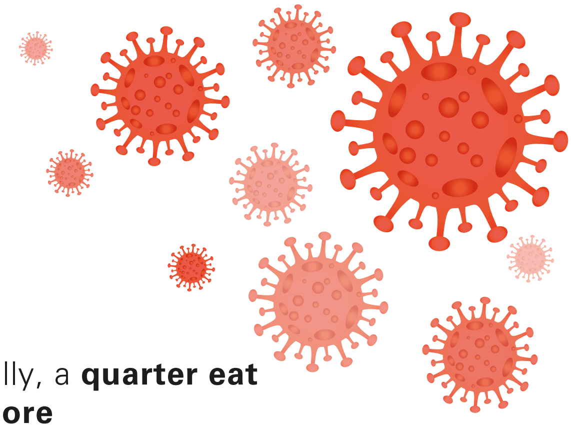
Predictors

- **Resilience** is higher among **older** respondents
- **Resilience** correlates negatively with **financial worries,** perception of **severity,** and **media consumption**





Negative pandemic behaviours



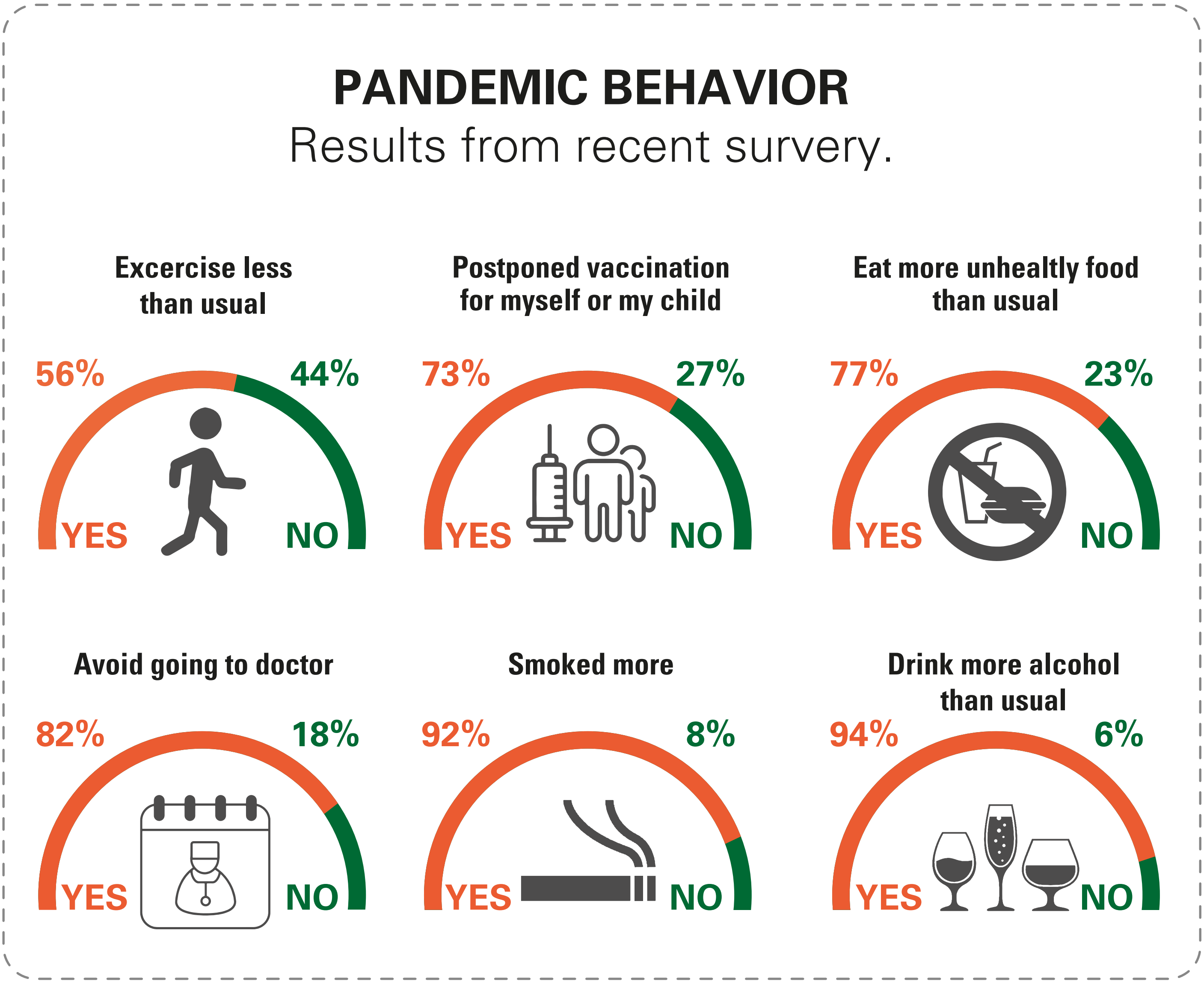
Findings

- **Almost half** of respondents **exercise less** than normally, a **quarter eat less healthy,** and **less than a tenth smoke** and **drink more**
- Though lower than before, **health service avoidance** remains present for a **significant minority** as **27%** have **postponed vaccinations** and **18%** have **avoided the doctor** (32% and 22% respectively in round 3)

Negative pandemic behaviours continue to be high both in relation to less healthy lifestyles and health-seeking. Both may have negative impacts on public health as well as the economy in the longer term.

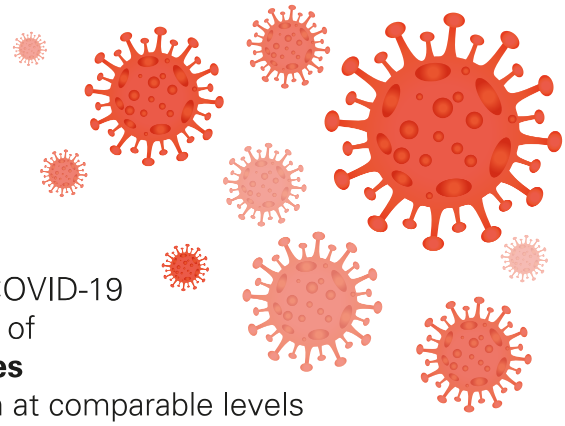
Predictors

- **Women** are more likely to consume **more alcohol** and **cigarettes**



SECTION 5:
Media use and trust

Information sources

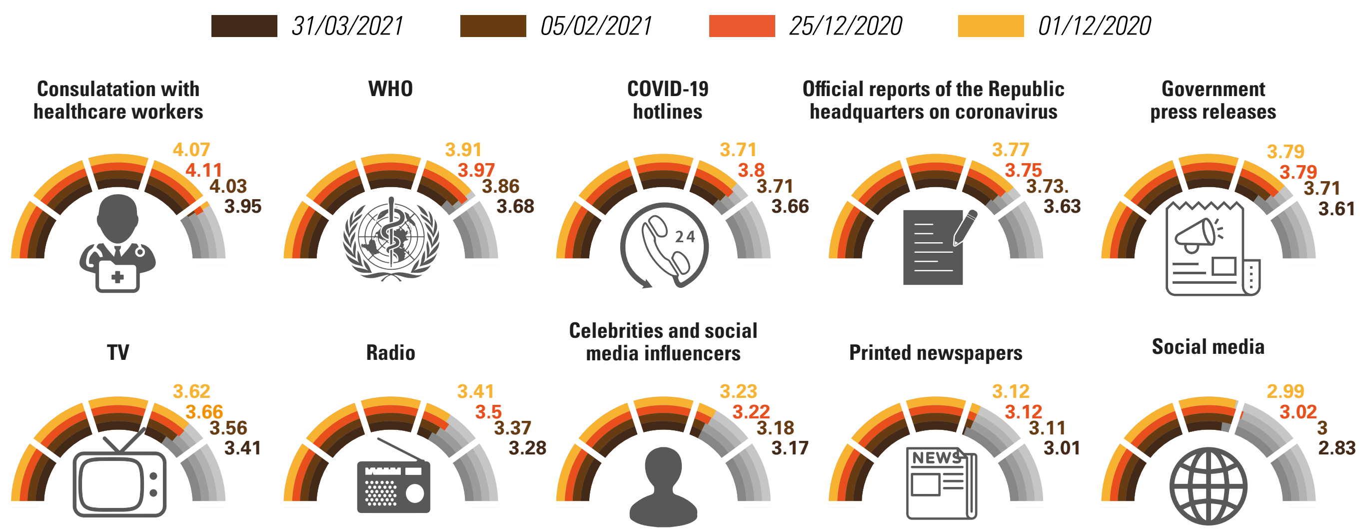


Findings

- Levels of **active interest** and **information searches** on COVID-19 remain at similar levels to previous rounds with approx. **50%** of respondents **searching for information often or sometimes**
- Perceptions of **media hype** around COVID-19 also remain at comparable levels with **45%** seeing **high levels of hype**
- **Trust in the WHO** is **lower** compared to February (from 3.86 to **3.68**)
- **Despite this,** the **WHO** continue to be among the **most trusted** sources together with **healthcare workers,** and **official reports,** while **social media, printed newspapers,** and **celebrities/influencers** the **least** trusted

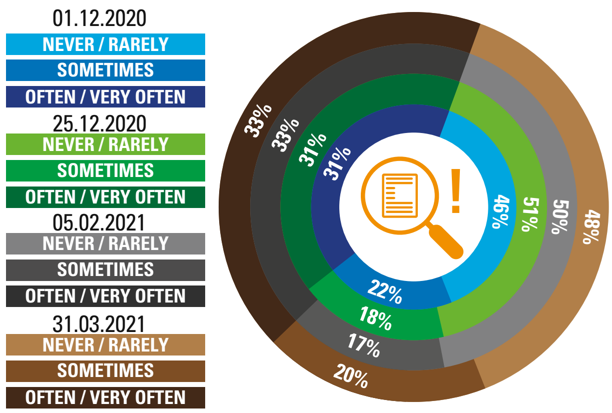
TRUST IN INFORMATION SOURCES

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



FRENQUENCE SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CORONA VIRUS / COVID-19

Mean values and 95% confidence intervals



MEDIA HYPE

For me the Corona virus is ...