Behavioural insights on COVID-19 in the Kyrgyz Republic

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

Round 5 of data collection
February 2022
WHO Regional Office for Europe advises that comprehensive pandemic responses be informed by multiple sources of data, including behavioural insights (BI). To provide a tool for this, the Regional Office, supported by the University of Erfurt, Germany, launched a protocol and questionnaire for BI data collection in April 2020. As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, it is essential to continue monitoring public perceptions of risk, protective behaviors, trust, health literacy and vaccination intentions to enable health authorities and other stakeholders to implement appropriate responses.

This is a serial, cross-sectional study*. Using a questionnaire adapted from the Regional Office, data are collected by computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI), computer assisted web interviews (CAWI) or a combination of both from a representative sample of 1000 adults over 18 years of age. Data are analysed using the R Framework.

The purpose of this study is to conduct rapid and adaptive monitoring of these factors over time and to assess the relations between them. Results contribute directly to the COVID-19 response in the areas of communications and messaging, interventions, programmes and policy – alongside epidemiological and vaccination uptake data and economic, cultural, ethical, structural, political and other considerations.

* Note that the cross-sectional design will not allow the assessment of actual causal relations and will only be snapshots of a current state of the public perceptions and psychological crisis response.
## Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Methodology</th>
<th>Quantitative: Telephone (CATI) interviewing (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>February 11 to February 21, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, aged 18-74 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample design</td>
<td>Nationally representative, multistage stratified sample of 1,009 respondents aged 18+. Households are distributed proportionally in urban and rural areas and by ethnicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>1,020 respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Team</td>
<td>Online survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey administered in...</td>
<td>Kyrgyz and Russian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic structure of the respondents

Gender:
- Male: 47%
- Female: 53%

Education:
- Primary: 9%
- Secondary: 51%
- Tertiary: 41%

Age:
- 18-29: 19%
- 30-49: 7%
- 50-64: 27%
- 65-74: 47%

Chronic condition:
- Yes: 80%
- No: 20%
Summary statistics

- **73%** Find it EASY to understand recommendations about COVID-19 vaccination
  - *19 percentage point increase since March 2021*

- **69%** Worry very much about future financial consequences
  - *No change*

- **68%** Think decisions taken are fair
  - *11 percentage point increase since March 2021*

- **68%** Agree with mandatory masks in closed public spaces
  - *20 percentage point decrease since March*

- **43%** Agree with COVID passports for visiting public places
  - *Not asked previously*
Key findings

- Overall health literacy is greatly improved on all measures since March 2021.

- Information use has stayed very steady throughout the pandemic.

- Risk perception has remained steady as well, despite changes in epidemiology.

- Levels of **general wellbeing** remain fairly consistent, but a majority are very worried about the future economic impact of COVID-19.

- Nearly **half of respondents** feel the **current regulations** are exaggerated.

- **Health care workers** remain the most trusted source of information, with trust in most sources increasing slightly since 2021.

- Confidence in hospitals and the Ministry of Health have increased since 2021, with much of trust correlated to whether a respondent has a peer that has been infected.

- Among the unvaccinated, those with higher vaccination intention are more concerned over most matters risk and effectiveness than those with lower intentions.
Section 1: Health literacy and information use
COVID-19 health literacy: How easy or difficult would you say is it to...
21/02/2022

COVID-19 health literacy is higher than in 2021; with an increase in the reported ease of understanding recommendations and finding information about vaccinations; judging the reliability of information in the media continues to be a challenge.

- Similar to predictors in 2021, health literacy correlates with trust in the national health system, as well lower perceptions of infection severity
Information Use

How often do you seek information about COVID-19?
Originally rated on scales ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (several times a day). Mean values and 95% CI

- Frequency of searching for COVID-19-related information has remained consistent since 2021: 30% seeking information frequently.
### Trust in Information

How much do you trust information about COVID-19 from the following information sources?
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (very little trust) to 5 (very much trust). Mean values and 95% CI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Source</th>
<th>Mean Value</th>
<th>95% CI 1</th>
<th>95% CI 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare workers</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Hotlines</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official reports of the Republican headquarters on coronavirus</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities and Social media influencers</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trust in the health sector as an information source has generally increased since 2021, with an increase in levels of trust in healthcare workers, the Ministry of Health, reports from government offices, and COVID hotlines.
Section 2: Risk perception, emotional affect and wellbeing
Risk perceptions have remained fairly stable since 2021.
Women tend to have a higher overall risk perception than men.
Overall risk perceptions are positively correlated with those who search for information more frequently.
Risk group members perceive higher potential severity of an infection.
People with lower education levels often have higher perceptions of susceptibility.
Risk perceptions remain consistent regardless of vaccination status, with roughly two thirds of the unvaccinated population holding a medium risk perception.
Wellbeing

General wellbeing: Over the past 2 weeks...

My daily life has been filled with things that interest me
I woke up feeling fresh and rested
I have felt active and vigorous
I have felt calm and relaxed
I have felt cheerful and in good spirits

General wellbeing: Over the past 2 weeks...
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (not at all) to 6 (all the time).
Mean values and 95% confidence intervals.

- Reported levels of general wellbeing have seen a modest uptick from 2021, but not always at levels that are statistically significant
- Wellbeing correlates positively with health literacy
- Wellbeing correlates negatively with being in a risk group
- Females and those in urban areas are tend to have lower general wellbeing than their counterparts
Financial Worry

Development of private financial situation over the past three months
Share of participants, 21/02/2022

- In the past 3 months, the private financial situation has worsened for 25% or respondents (down from levels in 2021 where 35% experienced a worsening financial situation)
- Worries about the future economic consequences continue to be very common among respondents, with 69% who are very worried

Worries about economic consequences
21.02.2022

I am worried that the pandemic will have economic consequences for me in the future
Section 3: Public health and social measures
**Protective behaviors**

### Uptake of protective measures

During the last 7 days, which of the following measures have you taken to prevent infection?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Mean Value 1 (Not vaccinated)</th>
<th>Mean Value 2 (Vaccinated)</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I often washed my hands with soap and water for 20 seconds</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used hand sanitizers in case of absence soap and water</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wore a mask in public places</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept a distance in public places</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated surfaces</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoided visiting social events that I wanted to attend</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Uptake of protective measures**

Rated on scales ranging from 1 (very difficult) up to 5 (very easy). Mean values and 95% CI.

Data collection: 13.12.2021

- **Handwashing** is the most frequently practiced protective behaviour.
- **There is no significant difference in uptake of protective measures** between vaccinated and unvaccinated respondents.
- **Uptake of protective behaviours** is higher among females.
- Correlates positively with trust in the medical sector and having peers who were infected.
Contact Tracing

Tracking: If you test positive for COVID-19 and are you asked to share with health authorities the names of people you have been in contact with - will you share all names?

Share of participants

- As with previous waves, the willingness to assist authorities with contact tracing remains high, at 85%
Policies

Acceptance of measures
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

I think that the restrictions currently being implemented are greatly exaggerated

Acceptance of measures
21.02.2022

The share of respondents that think current restrictions are greatly exaggerated has decreased slightly since 2020. Nonetheless, nearly half (49%) still strongly feel that restrictions are greatly exaggerated.
Agreement With Specific Decisions Taken

Agreement with decisions taken

- Mandatory wearing of mask in closed spaces:
  - No answer: 21%
  - (Strongly) disagree (≤3): 11%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 68%

- Keeping physical distancing in crowded places:
  - No answer: 23%
  - (Strongly) disagree (≤3): 11%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 65%

Agreement with decisions taken

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

- Mandatory wearing of mask in closed spaces:
  - 1/12/2020: 4.66
  - 25/12/2020: 4.61
  - 05/02/2021: 4.53
  - 31/03/2021: 4.57
  - 21/02/2022: 4.28

- Keeping physical distancing in crowded places:
  - 1/12/2020: 4.48
  - 25/12/2020: 4.44
  - 05/02/2021: 4.23
Agreement With Future Decisions

Agreement with future decisions
21/02/2022

- If the situation worsens, introduction of stricter restrictive measures
- Mandatory vaccination of health workers
- Mandatory vaccination of staff in services delivery
- Mandatory vaccination of staff in schools, universities, etc.
- Opening borders (with health certificates)
- Incentives/rewards for vaccinated people
- Restricting mass events in streets
- Lifting of all restrictions for vaccinated people
- Covid-passports and QR-codes for visiting public places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>(Strongly) agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>(Strongly) disagree</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.
Perceived fairness for COVID-19-related decisions has increased from 2021.

Fairness perceptions correlate positively with perceived susceptibility, trust in the medical sector, health literacy, and the frequency of searching for information.

Living in an urban area correlates with lower fairness views.
Trust in institutions

How much confidence do you have that the following can handle the COVID-19 challenge well?
Rated on scales ranging from 1 (very low confidence) to 5 (very high confidence).
Mean values and 95% confidence intervals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Mean Value</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City administration</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>2.98 - 3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary and Epidemiological Station</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.94 - 3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family doctor</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.06 - 3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your employer</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.18 - 3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School, Universities, Kindergartens</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.31 - 3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.38 - 3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.40 - 3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.51 - 3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family doctor</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.56 - 3.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Respondents are most confident in hospitals, a level which has increased from 2021.
- Confidence in the Ministry of Health and the Sanitary and Epidemiological Station have also increased slightly from 2021.
- Those who live in urban areas have lower confidence; female respondents tend to have higher confidence.
- Having peers that have been infected correlate positively with confidence in family doctors, hospitals, and MoH.
COVID-19 Vaccination Status and Intentions

Vaccination intentions
21/02/2022

Vaccination intentions for a COVID-19 vaccine:
Intentions with already vaccinated participants included. Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

40% of respondents report having been fully vaccinated (Mar 2022), with another 6% who have received one dose
- Younger (18-29) males are more likely to be vaccinated than females in the same age group
- In the whole population, negative intentions toward vaccination remained decreased, but 19% still say they definitely would not vaccinate
Factors that affect vaccination uptake:

**Social processes**
- Influential others support vaccination
- Workplace norms
- Decision and travel autonomy
- Trust in vaccine providers
- Self-confidence in answering questions

**What people think and feel**
- Confidence in vaccine benefits
- Confidence in vaccine safety
- Perceived risk - self
- Perceived risk - others
- Seeing negative information

**Motivation**
- Intention to get a COVID-19 vaccine
- Willingness to recommend a COVID-19 vaccine

**Practical issues**
- Know where vaccine is available
- Previous uptake of adult vaccination
- Ease of access
- Preferred site
- Availability of on-site vaccination

**Vaccination**
- Receives recommended vaccines

*Construct is exclusive to health worker survey

What People Think and Feel: Overall Safety

- Many of those who are already vaccinated say their decision was affected by the effectiveness and type of vaccine.
- Those with low intention to vaccinate are generally less persuaded by common motivations to be vaccinated.
- Those with high intentions to vaccinate are generally more affected in their decision by almost all motivators.
- Those with higher vaccination intention are more concerned over most matters, risk and effectiveness than those with lower intentions.

**Effectiveness of the vaccine**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.46
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.47
- Already vaccinated: 3.87

**The possibility of serious side effects**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.56
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.32
- Already vaccinated: 3.31

**Whether the vaccine has been in use for a long time**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.3
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.19
- Already vaccinated: 3.56

**Vaccine manufacturing company**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.41
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.35
- Already vaccinated: 3.61

**Types of vaccine**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.28
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.26
- Already vaccinated: 3.7

**The country in which the vaccine offered to me is produced**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.62
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.37
- Already vaccinated: 3.71

**Risk of getting infected with COVID-19 at the time when the vaccine is available**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.53
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.23
- Already vaccinated: 3.53

**Whether the vaccine is used in other countries**
- Low intention to vaccinate: 3.04
- High intention to vaccinate: 4.08
- Already vaccinated: 3.41
What People Think and Feel: Side Effects and Trust

How concerned are (were you) you that a COVID-19 vaccine could cause you to have a serious reaction?
Share of participants with different concerns.
Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

Unvaccinated individuals: Safety and trust in vaccines
21/02/2022

- A substantial proportion of both high and low intention respondents have concerns about possible side effects of a vaccine.
- Among the unvaccinated, Sputnik is the most trusted vaccine producers, but the majority distrust producers such as Johnson & Johnson, Sinopharm, Sinovac, Moderna, and AstraZeneca.
What People Think and Feel: COVID Risk and Vaccine Effectiveness

Covid-19 vaccination context: Covid risk and vaccination effectiveness
Rated on my: “My decision to get vaccinated against COVID-19 was affected by:” 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so).
Mean values and 95% confidence intervals

Those with high intention are more strongly influenced by both the perceived effectiveness of the vaccine and their own risk of infection than those with low intention.

COVID risk and vaccine effectiveness:
Low intention 21/02/2022

COVID risk and vaccine effectiveness:
High intention 21/02/2022
What People Think and Feel: Importance of vaccination

I believe vaccination can help control the spread of COVID-19

Share of participants with different concerns
Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

How important do you think getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is for your health?
Share of participants with different concerns. Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

- Among the unvaccinated, those with low versus high intentions hold significantly different views on vaccination
- One third of the low intentioned believe that vaccination will **NOT** help control the spread of COVID-19, while approximately four-fifths of the high intentioned believe that it will control spread
- Nearly 30% of the low intentioned people say that getting vaccinated against COVID-19 is **NOT** important for their health, while the majority of those with high intentions feel it is important for their health
Social Processes

- Those already vaccinated were motivated in part by being able to travel and attend social events again, as well as visiting family and friends.
- A recommendation from MoH or from the family doctor was significantly more motivating for those unvaccinated but with high intention than for those already vaccinated or those unvaccinated with low intention.

**Rated on:** “My decision to get vaccinated against COVID-19 was affected by: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so).”

Mean values and 95% confidence intervals

- Whether high vaccination uptake would lift restrictions on movement and gathering in groups
  - Low intention: 3.08, 95% CI: 3.82
  - High intention: 3.28, 95% CI: 3.96
  - Already vaccinated: 4.25

- Whether getting vaccination would allow me to travel, go to concerts and other social activities again
  - Low intention: 3.36, 95% CI: 4.49
  - High intention: 3.32, 95% CI: 4.48
  - Already vaccinated: 3.77

- Whether getting vaccinated would allow me to see family and friends again
  - Low intention: 3.41, 95% CI: 4.63
  - High intention: 3.74, 95% CI: 4.63
  - Already vaccinated: 4.18

- Recommendation of the Ministry of Health
  - Low intention: 3.32, 95% CI: 4.48
  - High intention: 3.77, 95% CI: 4.48
  - Already vaccinated: 4.48

- Recommendation of my family doctor
  - Low intention: 3.41, 95% CI: 4.63
  - High intention: 3.74, 95% CI: 4.63
  - Already vaccinated: 4.63
Social Processes: Trust and Collective Responsibility

How much do you trust the health care providers who would give you a COVID-19 vaccine?
Share of participants with different concerns. Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

- **High intentions**
  - Very much so: 67%
  - Undecided: 13%
  - Not at all: 13%

- **Low intentions**
  - Very much so: 24%
  - Undecided: 26%
  - Not at all: 9%

How much do you think getting a COVID-19 vaccine for yourself will protect other people in your community from COVID-19?
Share of participants with different concerns. Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

- **High intentions**
  - Very much so: 77%
  - Undecided: 8%
  - Not at all: 8%

- **Low intentions**
  - Very much so: 30%
  - Undecided: 22%
  - Not at all: 26%

- Those with high intentions are more confident that a vaccine will protect themselves and others than those with low intentions, although nearly half of those with low intentions do believe it will protect people in their community.

- Trust in health care providers who provide the vaccines is higher among those with high intentions than low.
Social Norms

If a COVID-19 vaccine is available and recommended for me, I think most of my family and friends would want my to get it
Share of participants with different concerns. Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

![Bar chart showing percentage of participants with different concerns](chart1)

If a COVID-19 vaccine is available and recommended, I think that other people whose opinions I value would want me to get it
Share of participants with different concerns. Unlabeled Stacks below 5%

![Bar chart showing percentage of participants with different concerns](chart2)

- Among the unvaccinated, those with high intentions are more open to normative dimensions of vaccination than those with low intentions.
Practical Issues

Practical Issues: Low intention
21/02/2022

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

- 49% (Strongly) disagree
- 21% Neither agree nor agree
- 30% (Strongly) agree

Practical Issues: High intention
21/02/2022

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

- 85% (Strongly) disagree
- 0% Neither agree nor agree
- 15% (Strongly) agree

Where would you prefer to get the vaccine?
Multiple answers could be selected. Unvaccinated participants only.

- At your family doctor
  - Yes: 28%
  - No: 72%
- At the pharmacy
  - Yes: 18%
  - No: 82%
- At a mobile vaccination centre
  - Yes: 11%
  - No: 89%
- I don’t want the vaccine
  - Yes: 11%
  - No: 90%
- At your home
  - Yes: 2%
  - No: 98%
- At your workplace
  - Yes: 2%
  - No: 98%

- Practical issues for obtaining a vaccine are of great interest for those with high intention.
- Roughly half of those with low intention say that practical issues of obtaining a vaccine are important to them, which may present an opportunity for outreach.
Motivation: Agreement With Routine Immunization

1 = agree with routine immunization
2 = disagree with routine immunization

Vaccination according to the schedule:
Low intentions

Vaccination according to the schedule:
High intentions

More people with high intention to vaccinate against COVID-19 support routine immunization.
1. **Confidence**: safety, trust, knowledge and attitude towards vaccination
2. **Complacency**: COVID-19 risk perception, belief in the need for vaccine/that it can prevent the spread of the virus
3. **Calculation**: Efforts made to inform oneself, weighing pros and cons
4. **Constraints**: access and convenience of services
5. **Collective responsibility**: sense of protecting others, alignment with religious and other beliefs

- People with low intentions spend less effort to inform themselves and calculate pros and cons of vaccination.
- Those with high intentions tend to consider the constraints (access, convenience) more in their decision.
- There is no statistically significant difference among intention levels in regards to complacency or collective responsibility.