



COVID-19, NHI and healthcare in South Africa

Findings from Afrobarometer 2021 survey in South Africa



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THE INSTITUTE
FOR JUSTICE AND
RECONCILIATION

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Cape Town, South Africa

At a glance

- **Government's response to COVID-19:** Most South Africans agree that lockdown regulations and school closures were necessary, but it was difficult to comply with these restrictions.
- **Covid-19 vaccination:** A small majority of South Africans (54%) say they are either somewhat (12%) or very (42%) unlikely to get vaccinated.
- **National Health Insurance:** More than two-thirds of South Africans (69%) believe the government would be justified to increase taxes to fund the NHI.

What is Afrobarometer?



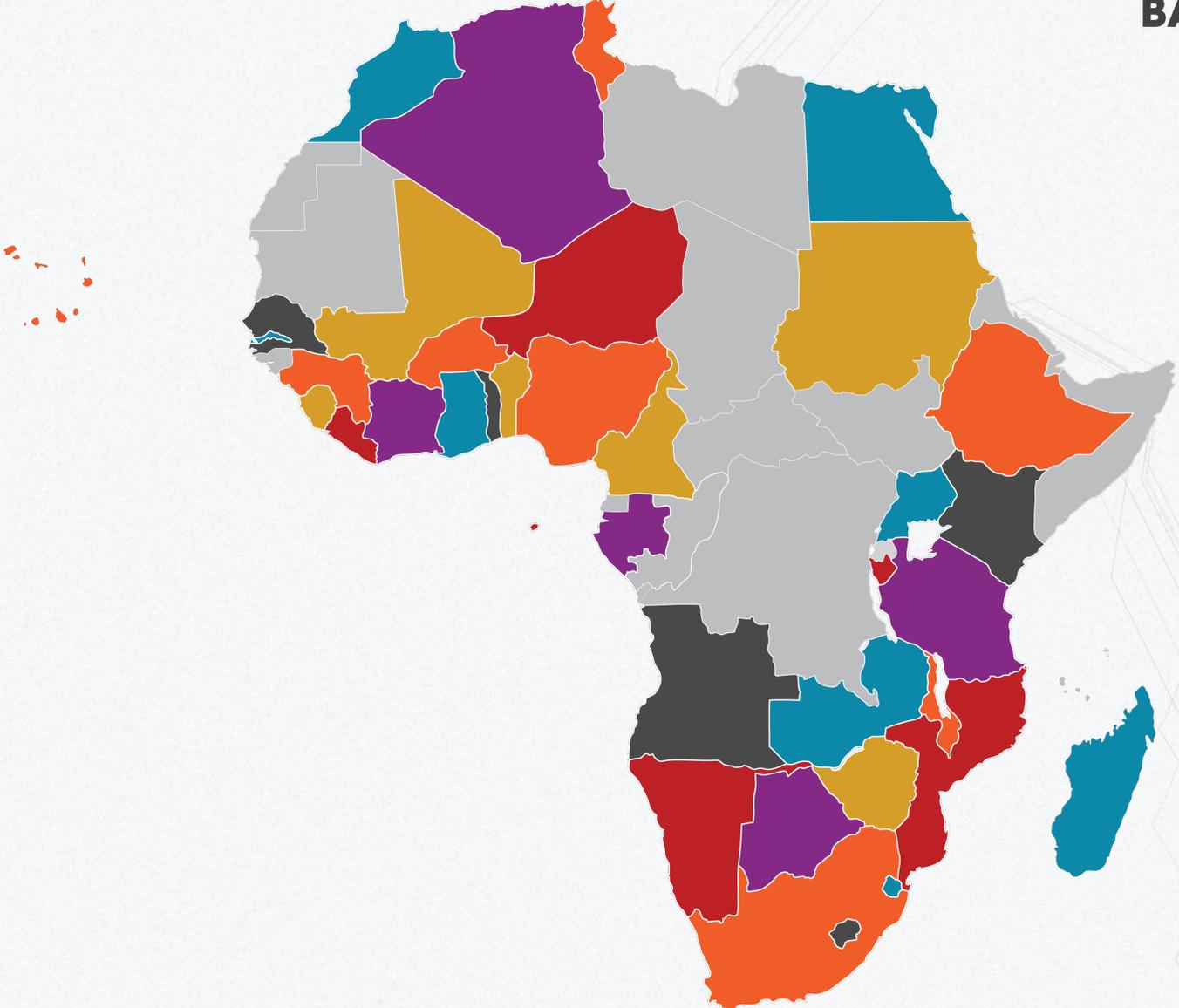
A pan-African, non-partisan, non-profit research network that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society, and other topics.

Started in 12 African countries in 1999. Round 8 surveys in 2019/2021 cover 34 countries.

Goal: To give the public a voice in policymaking by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, policy advocates, civil society organizations, academics, news media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.

A national partner in each country conducts the survey. In South Africa, the national partner is the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

Where Afrobarometer works



Methodology



Nationally representative sample of adult citizens

- All respondents are *randomly* selected.
- Sample is distributed across regions/states/provinces and urban/rural areas in proportion to their share in the national population.
- Every adult citizen has an *equal* chance of being selected.

Face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

Standard questionnaire allows comparisons across countries and over time.

Sample size in South Africa of 1,600 adult citizens yields a margin of error of +/-2.5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Fieldwork for Round 8 in South Africa was conducted between 2 May and 10 June 2021

Demographics



Gender	Women	52%
	Men	48%
Location	Urban	68%
	Rural	33%
Province	Eastern Cape	11%
	Free State	5%
	Gauteng	27%
	KwaZulu-Natal	19%
	Limpopo	10%
	Mpumalanga	8%
	North West	7%
	Northern Cape	2%
Western Cape	12%	

Education	No formal education	3%
	Primary	12%
	Secondary	60%
	Post-secondary	25%
Religion	Christian	69%
	Other	25%
	Muslim	3%

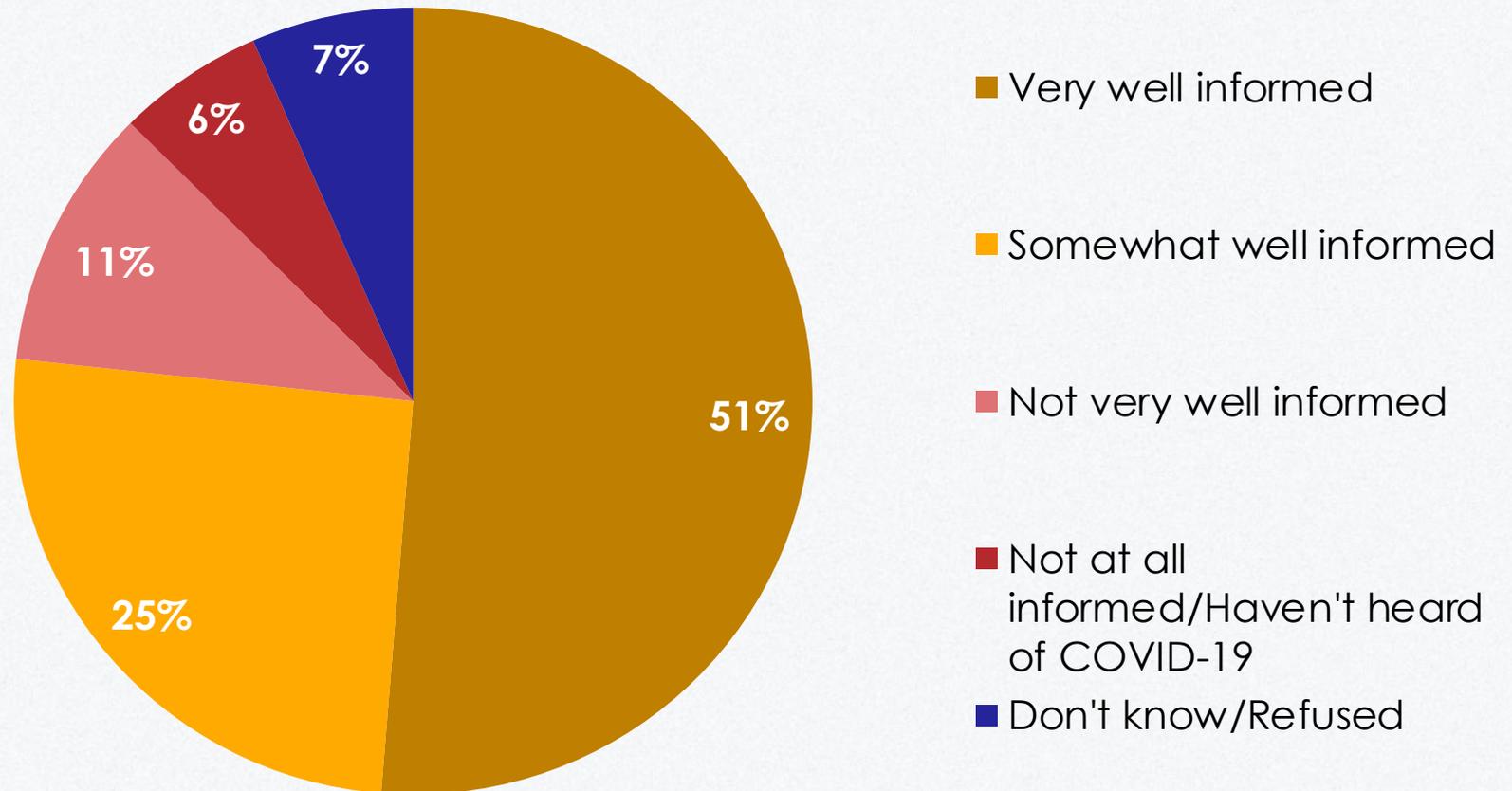


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Results

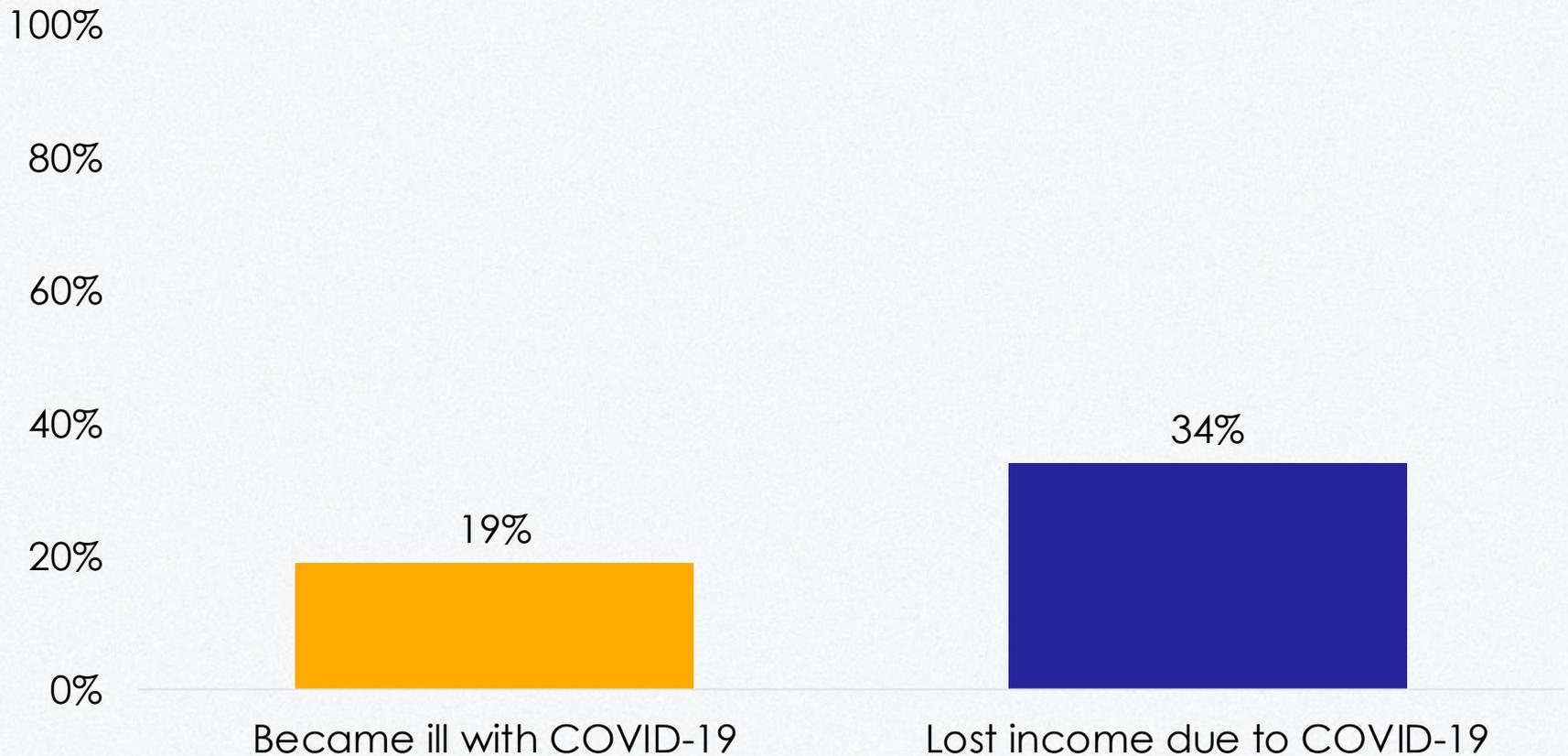
Awareness of Covid-19

Awareness of COVID-19 | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: How well informed would you say you are about the coronavirus, or the COVID-19 pandemic, and efforts to combat it? (Due to rounding, totals for combined categories may differ by 1 percentage point from the sum of sub-categories (e.g. 51% "very well informed" + 25% "somewhat well informed" combine to 77% "well informed."))

Impacts of COVID-19 | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: Please tell me if you personally or any other member of your household have been affected in any of the following ways by the COVID-19 pandemic: Became ill with COVID-19? Temporarily or permanently lost a job, business, or primary source of income?

Effects of national lockdown

Support for lockdown | South Africa | 2021



Agree/Strongly agree that lockdown/curfew restrictions were necessary

80%

Disagree/Strongly disagree

13%

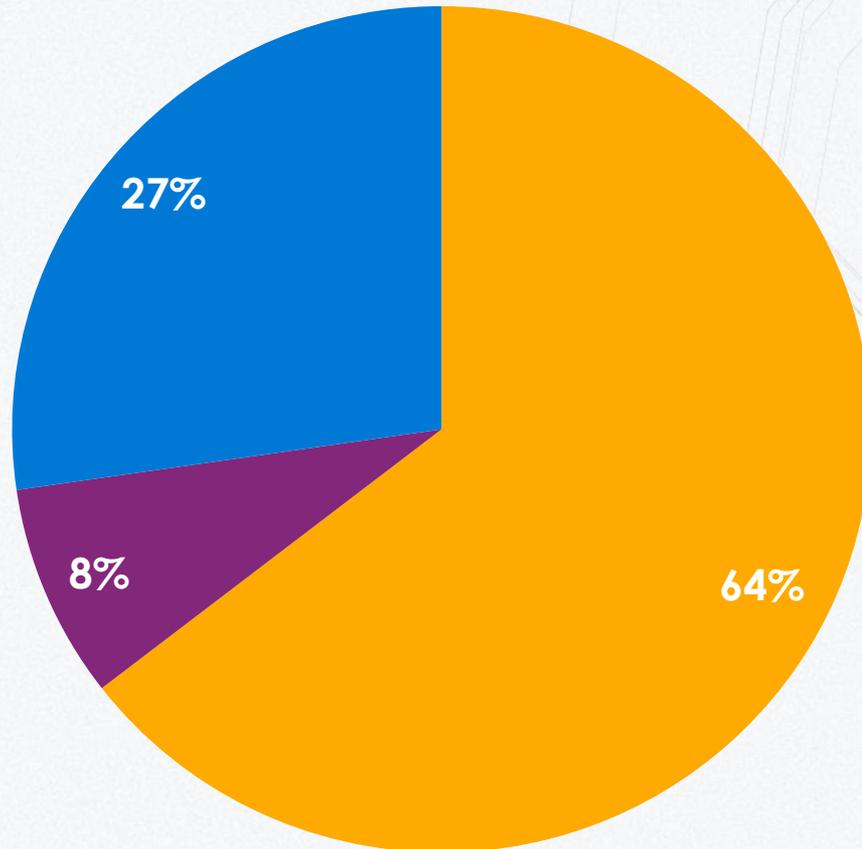
Neither/Don't know

7%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Even if the lockdown or curfew has negative impacts on the economy and people's livelihoods, it was necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19?

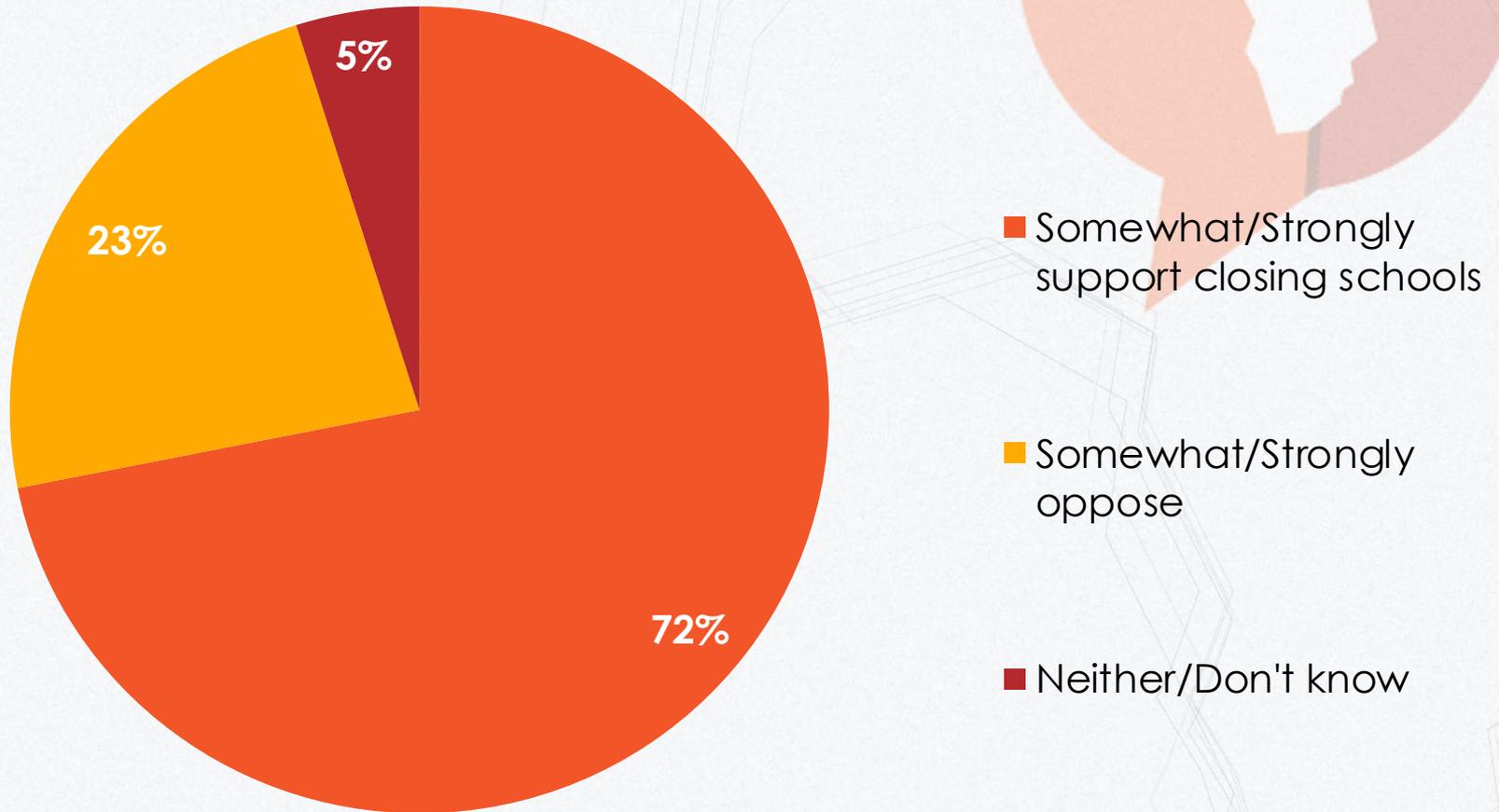
Difficulty of complying with lockdown | South Africa | 2021



- Difficult/Very difficult
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Easy/Very easy

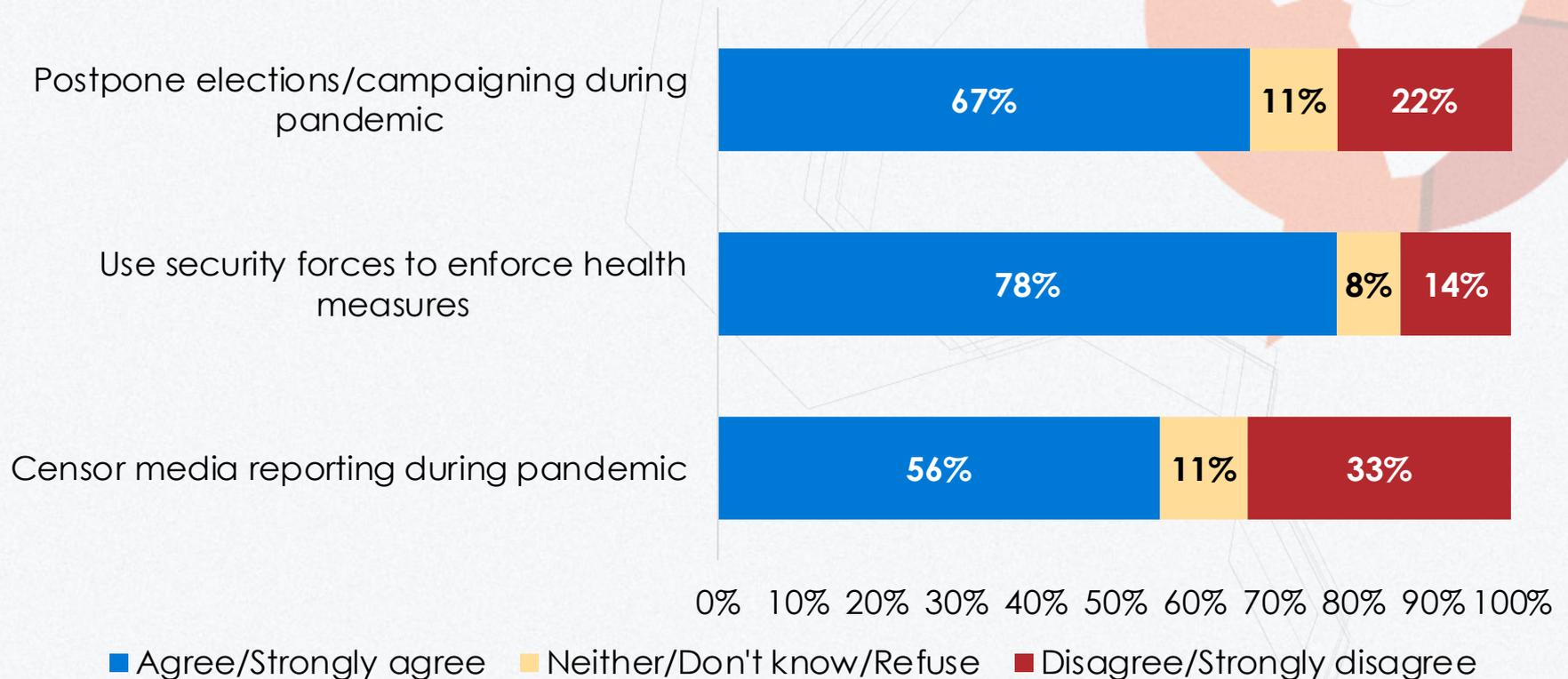
Respondents were asked: How easy or difficult was it for you and your household to comply with the lockdown or curfew restrictions imposed by the government?

Support for school closures | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: Did you support or oppose the government's decision to close schools in an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19?

Limiting democratic rights during pandemic | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: When the country is facing a public health emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic, do you agree or disagree that it is justified for the government to temporarily limit democracy or democratic freedoms by taking the following measures: Censoring media reporting? Using the police and security forces to enforce public health mandates like lockdown orders, mask requirements, or restrictions on public gatherings? Postponing elections or limiting political campaigning?

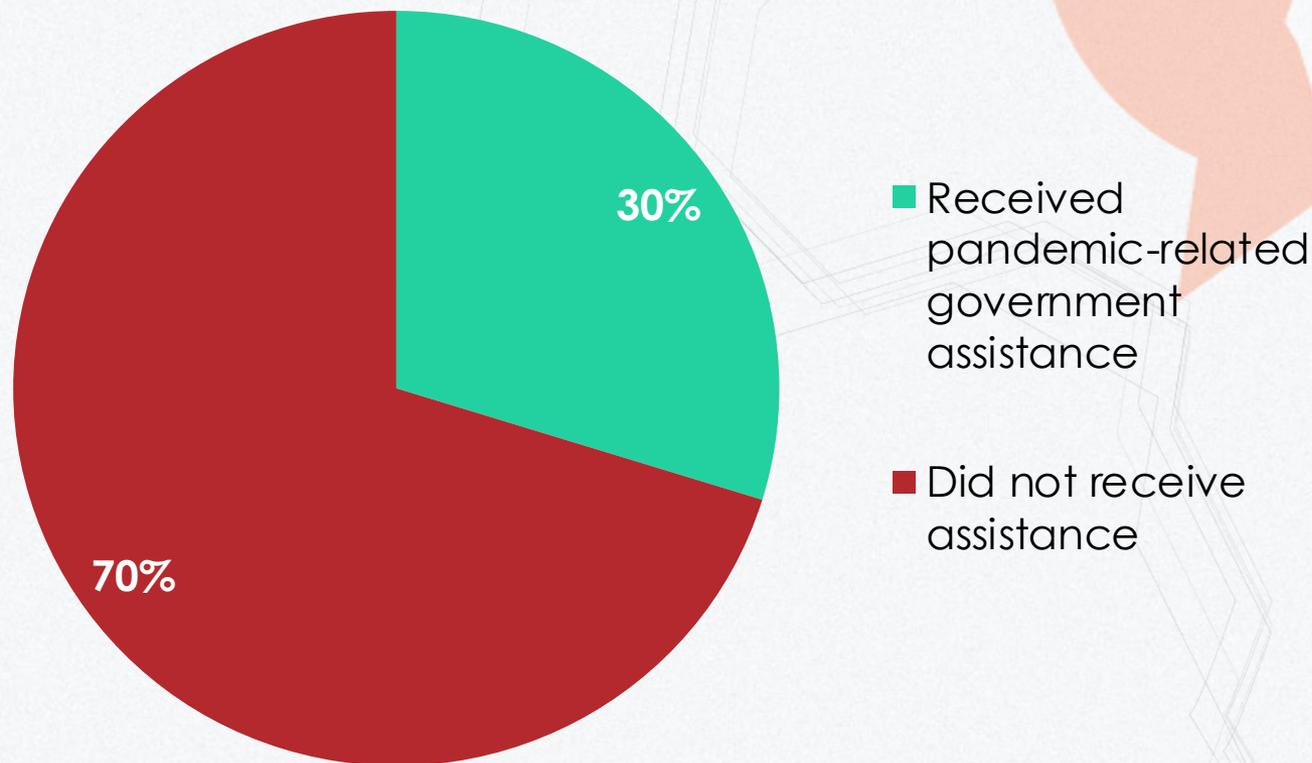


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Government assistance and performance

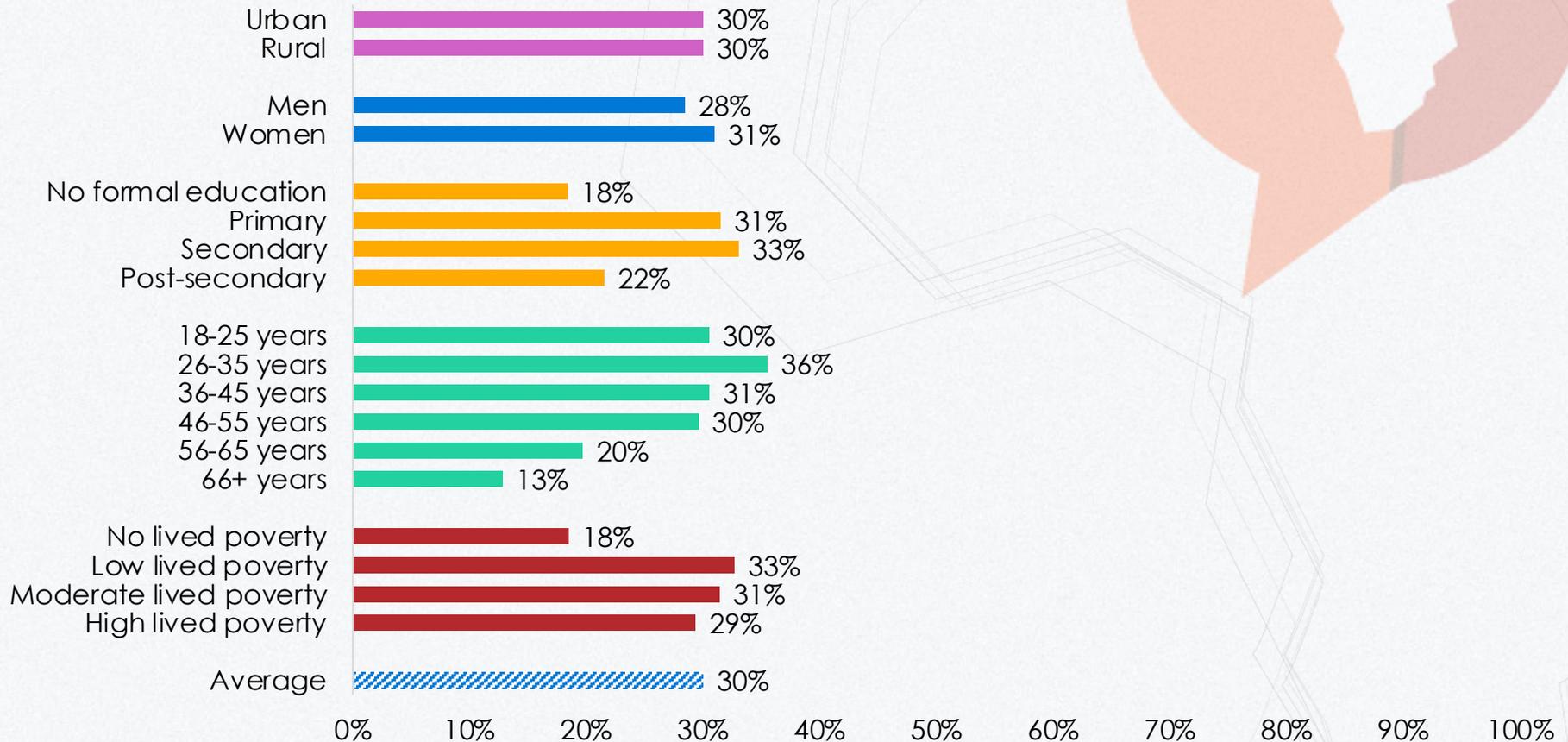
Received government assistance | South Africa | 2021

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Respondents were asked: Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or your household received any assistance from government, like food, cash payments, relief from bill payments, or other assistance that you were not normally receiving before the pandemic?

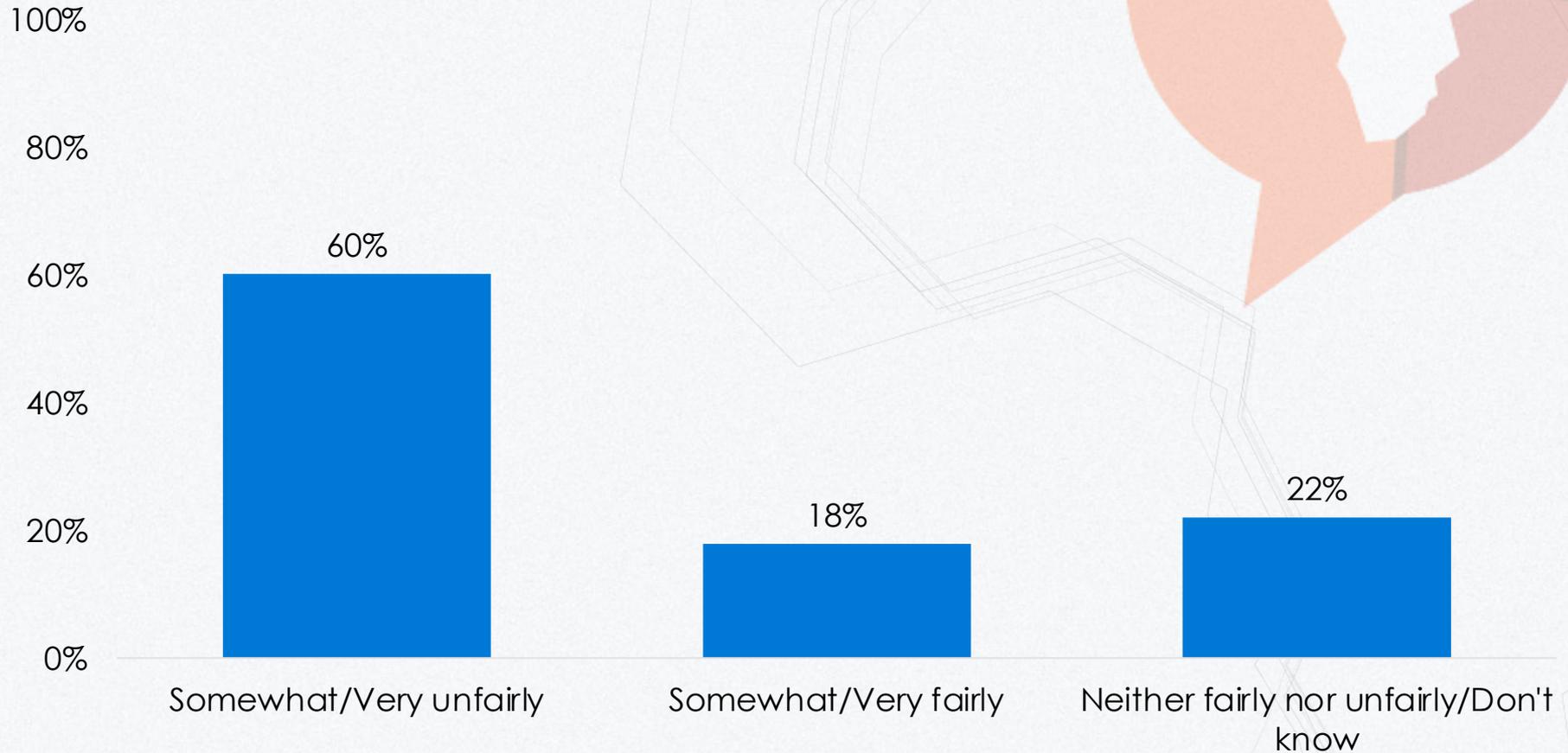
Received government assistance | by socio-demographic group | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, have you or your household received any assistance from government, like food, cash payments, relief from bill payments, or other assistance that you were not normally receiving before the pandemic?

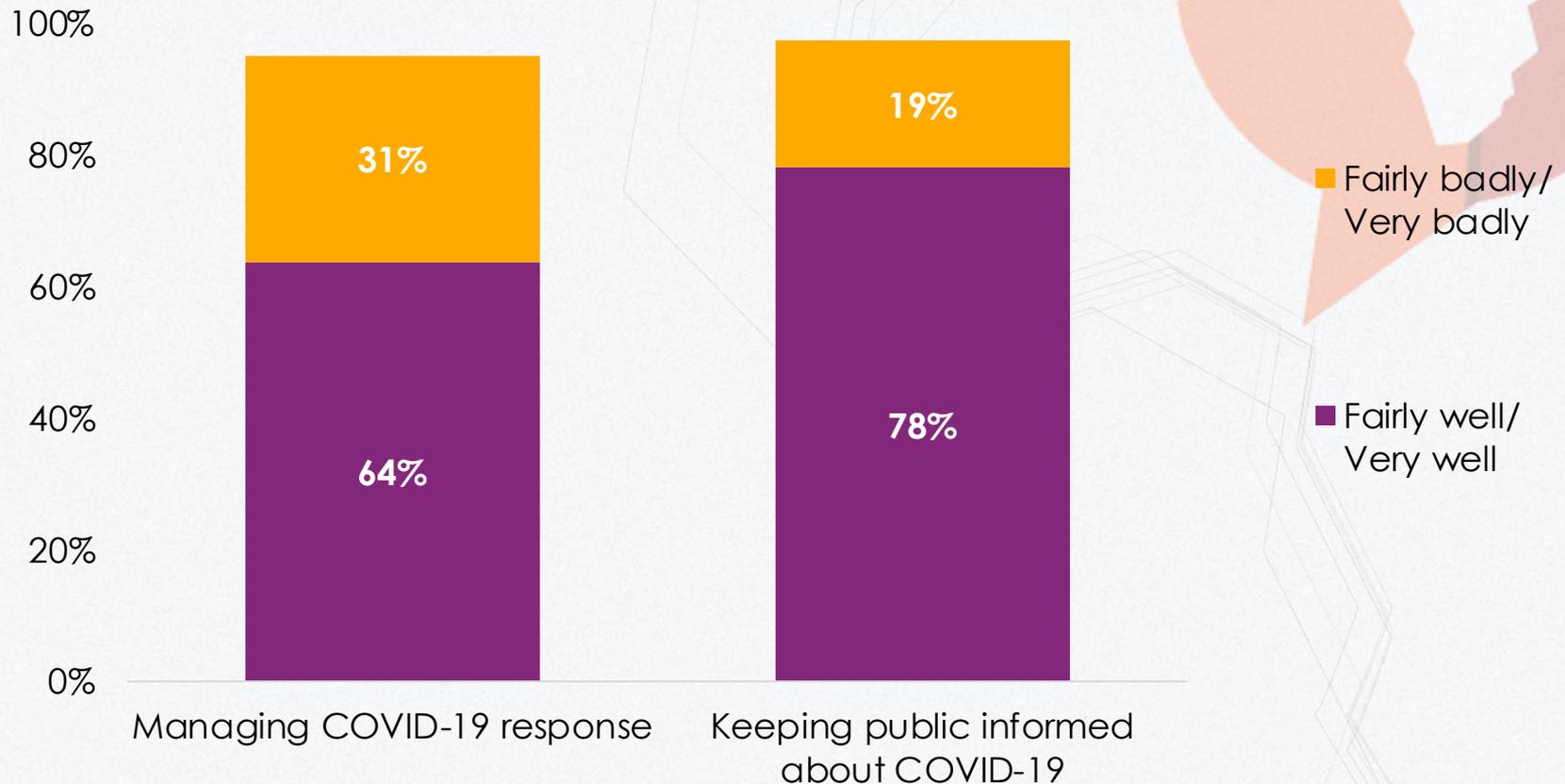
Fairness of government assistance

| South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: Do you think that the benefits of government programs to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example through food packages or cash payments, have been distributed fairly, or that the distribution was unfair, for example by favoring certain groups or regions?

Assessment of government response to COVID-19 | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government has handled the following matters since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Trust official COVID-19 statistics | South Africa | 2021

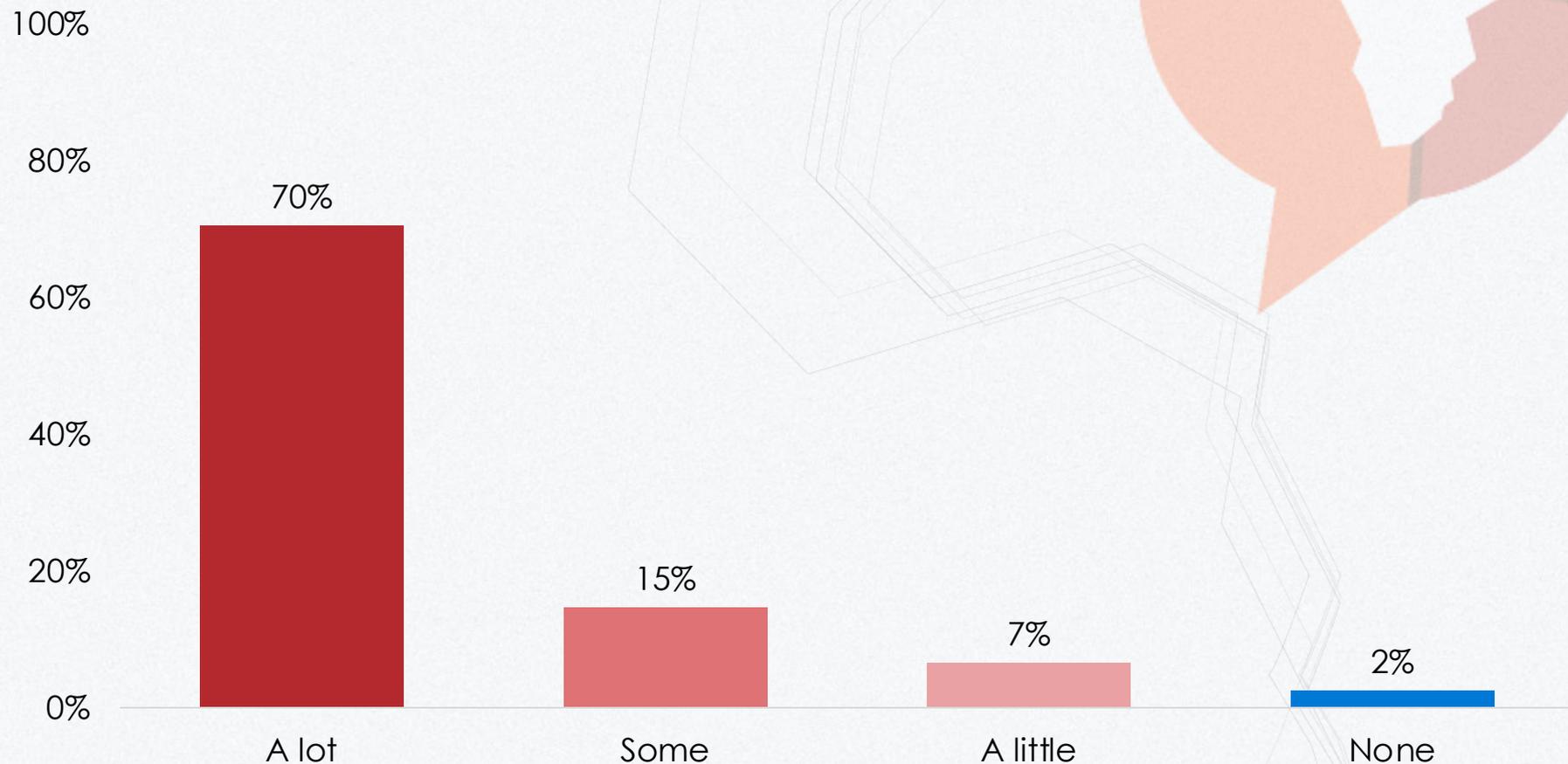


0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Not at all ■ A little bit ■ Somewhat ■ A lot

Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Even if the lockdown or curfew has negative impacts on the economy and people's livelihoods, it was necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19?

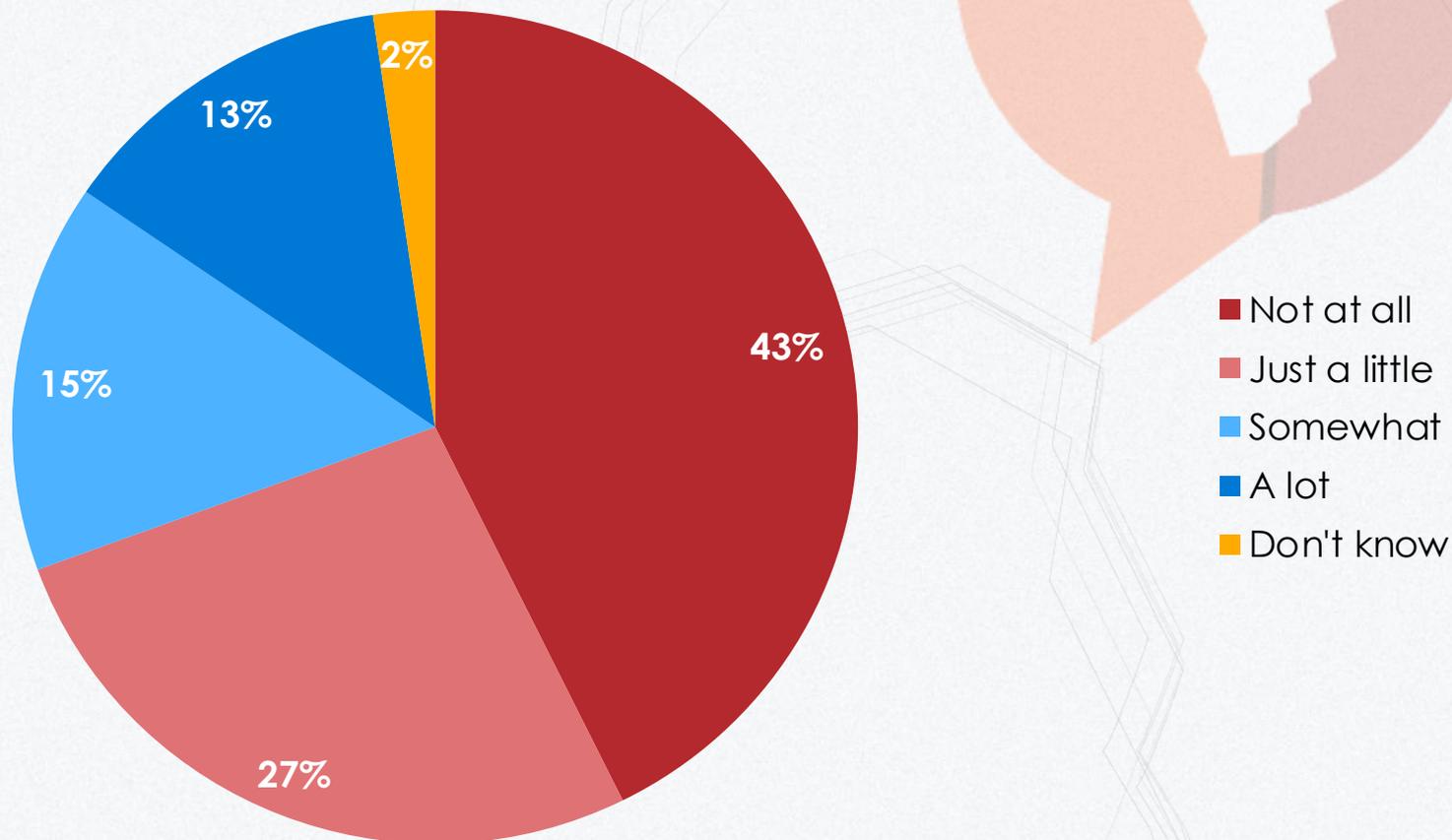
Level of COVID-19 corruption | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: Considering all of the funds and resources that were available to the government for combating and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, how much do you think was lost or stolen due to corruption among government officials?

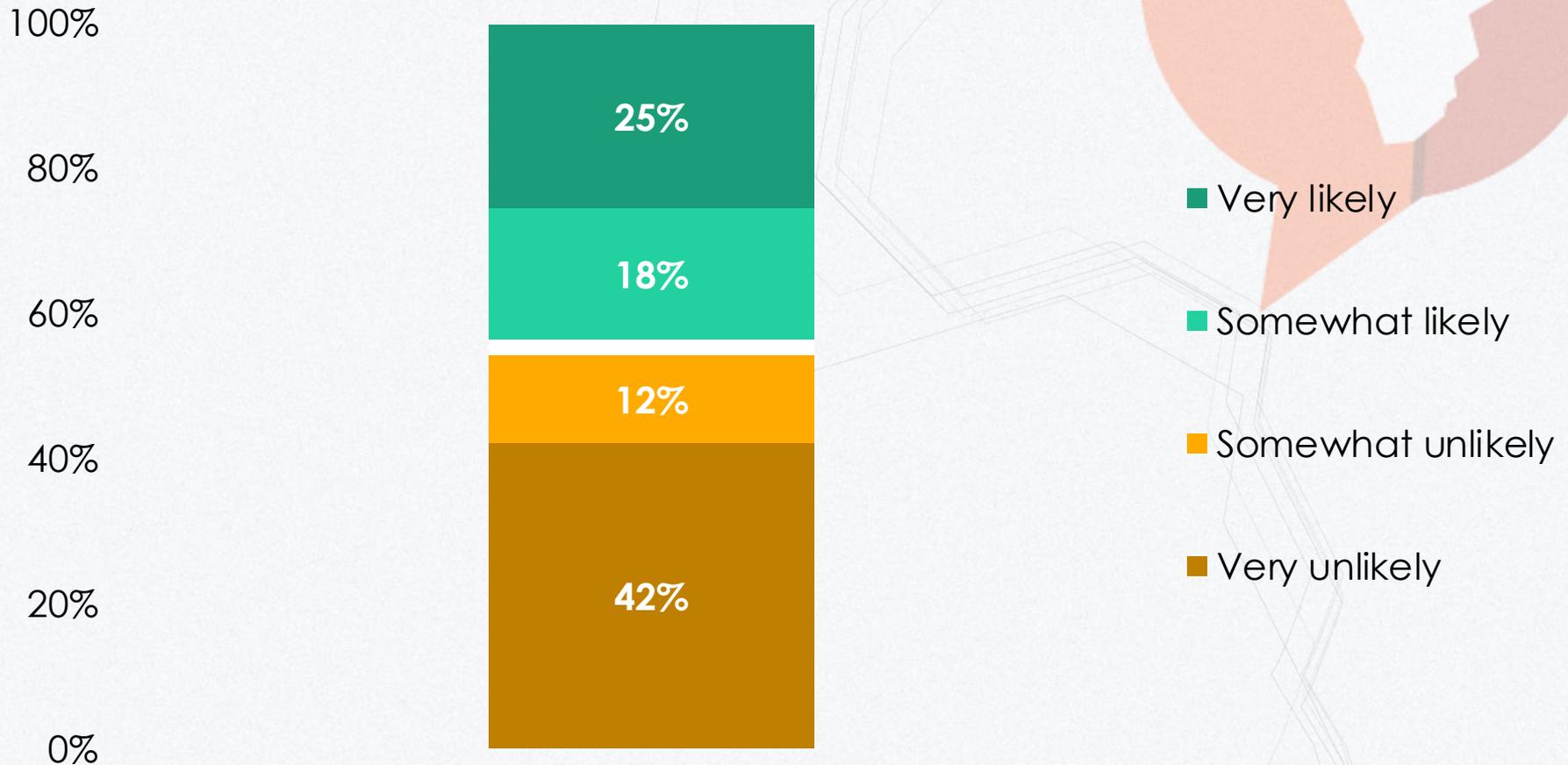
Covid-19 vaccines

Trust government to ensure safety of COVID-19 vaccine | South Africa | 2021



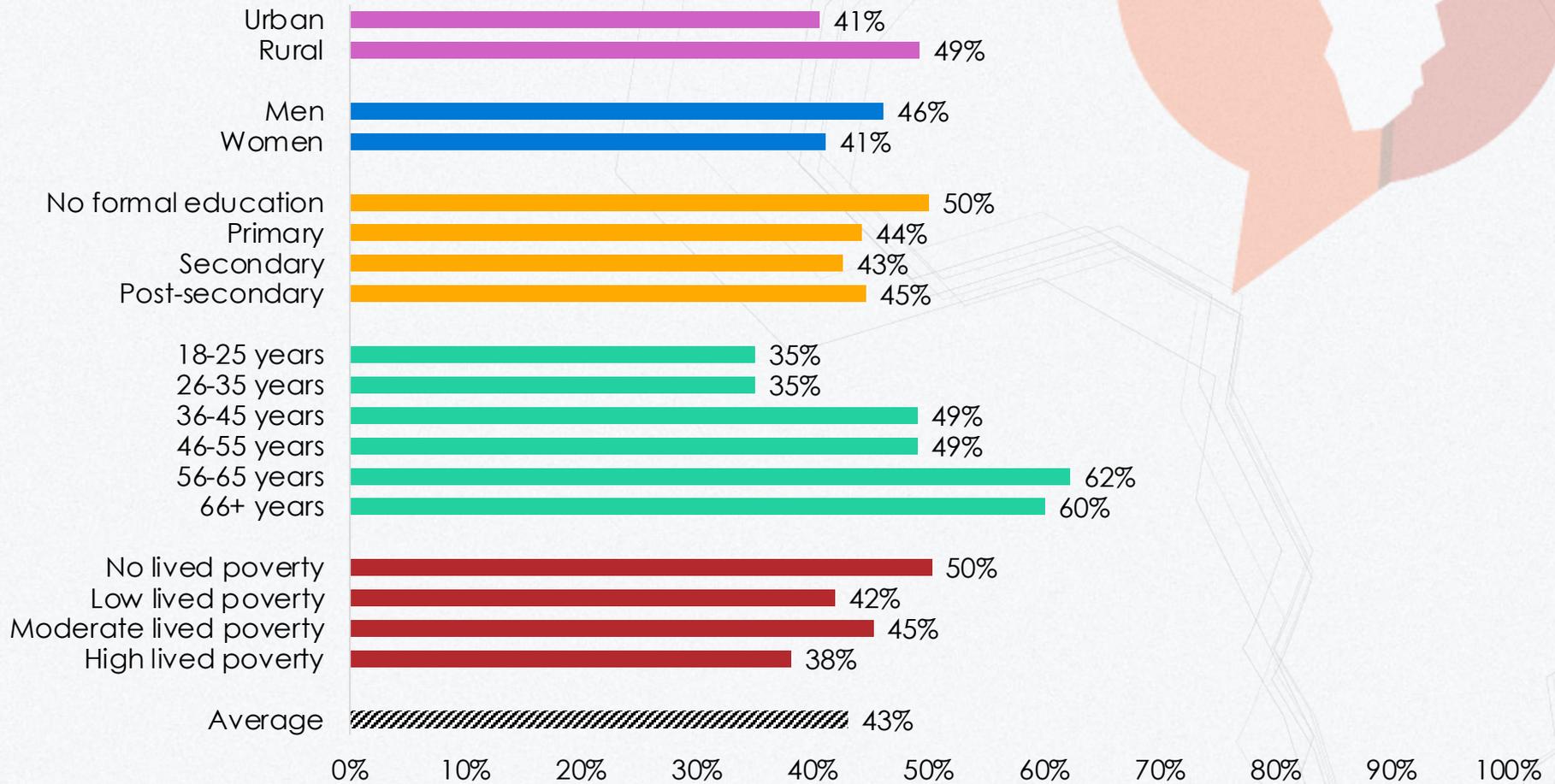
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust the government to ensure that any vaccine for COVID-19 that is developed or offered to South African citizens is safe before it is used in this country?

Likelihood of trying to get COVID-19 vaccination | South Africa | 2021



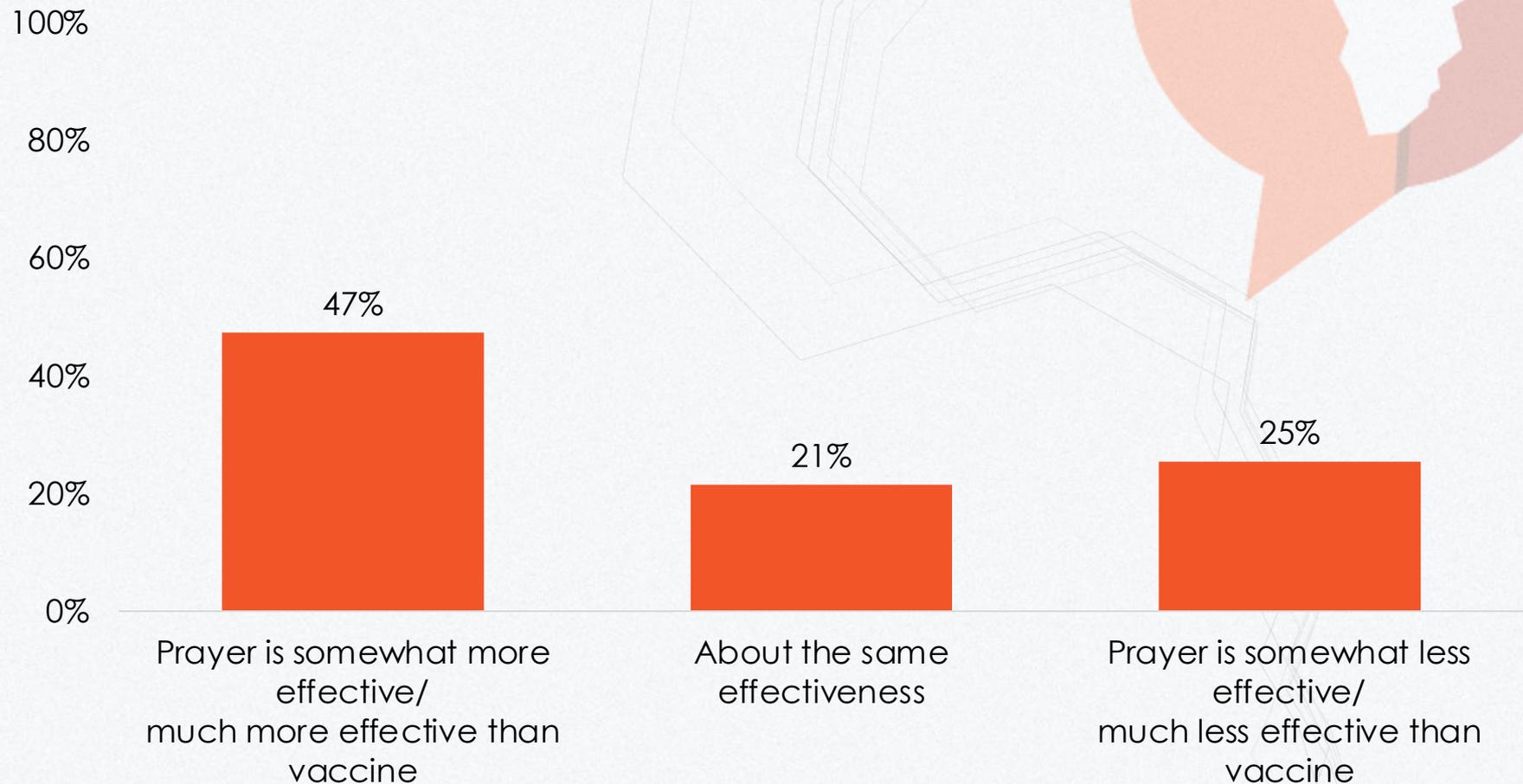
Respondents were asked: If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available and the government says it is safe, how likely are you to try to get vaccinated?

Likely to try to get vaccinated | by socio-demographic group | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available and the government says it is safe, how likely are you to try to get vaccinated? (% who say "somewhat likely" or "very likely")

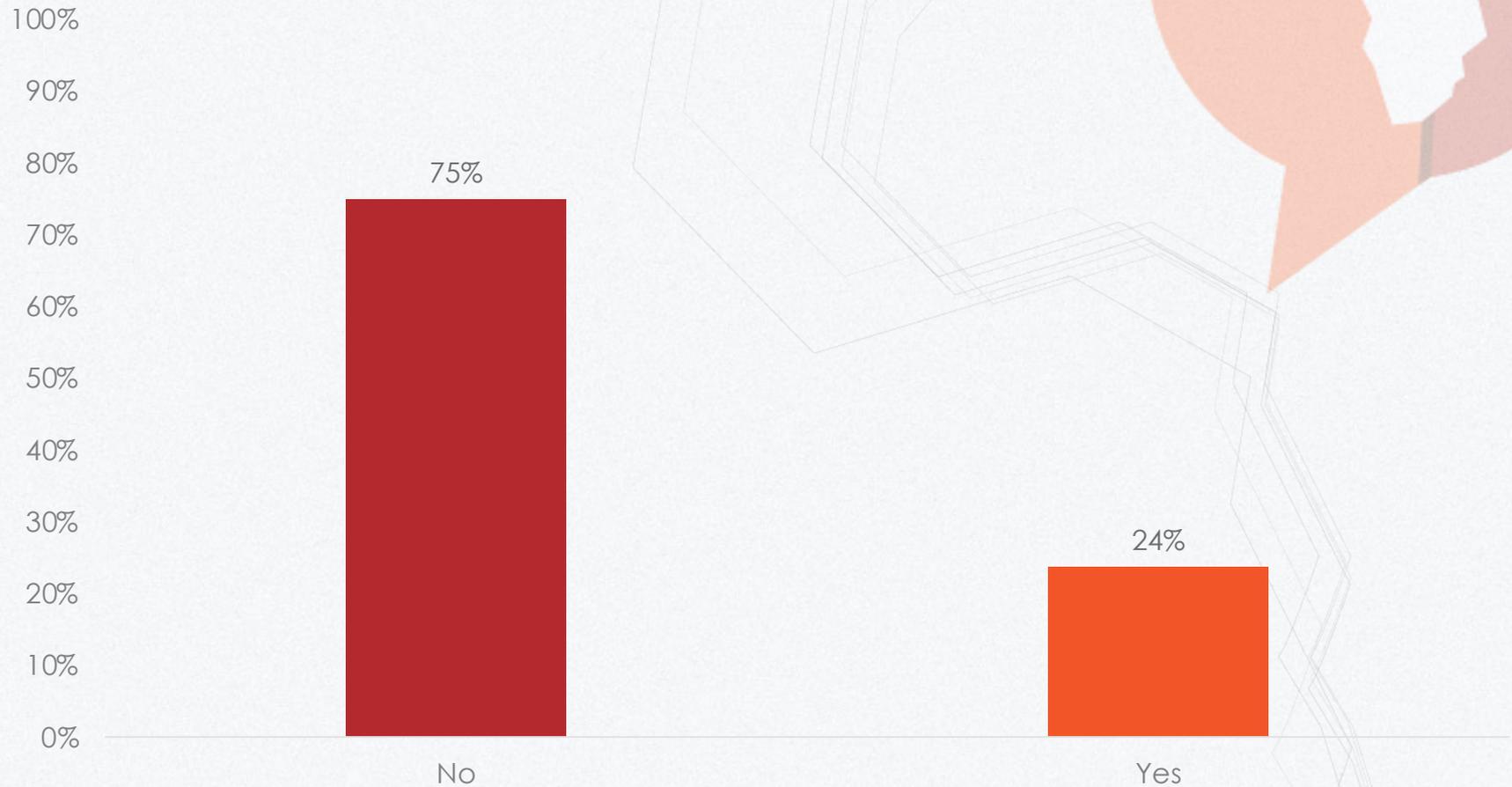
Is prayer more effective than COVID-19 vaccine? | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: Some people think that prayer is an effective way to alter events in the world. Others put more faith in science to solve problems. Some people believe in both. What about you? Do you think that prayer is more effective or less effective than a vaccine would be in preventing COVID-19 infection?

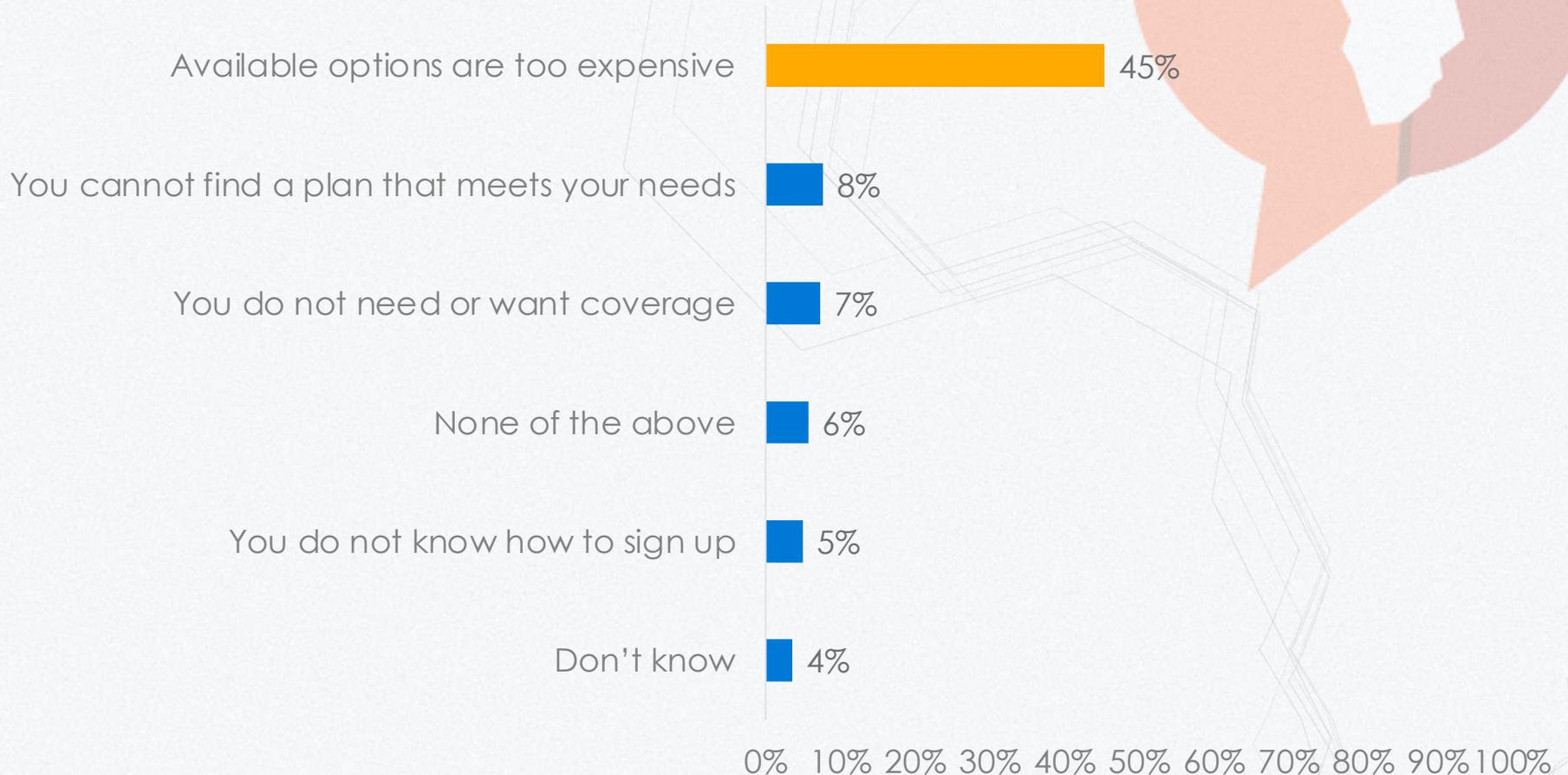
National Health Insurance

Covered by health insurance | South Africa | 2021



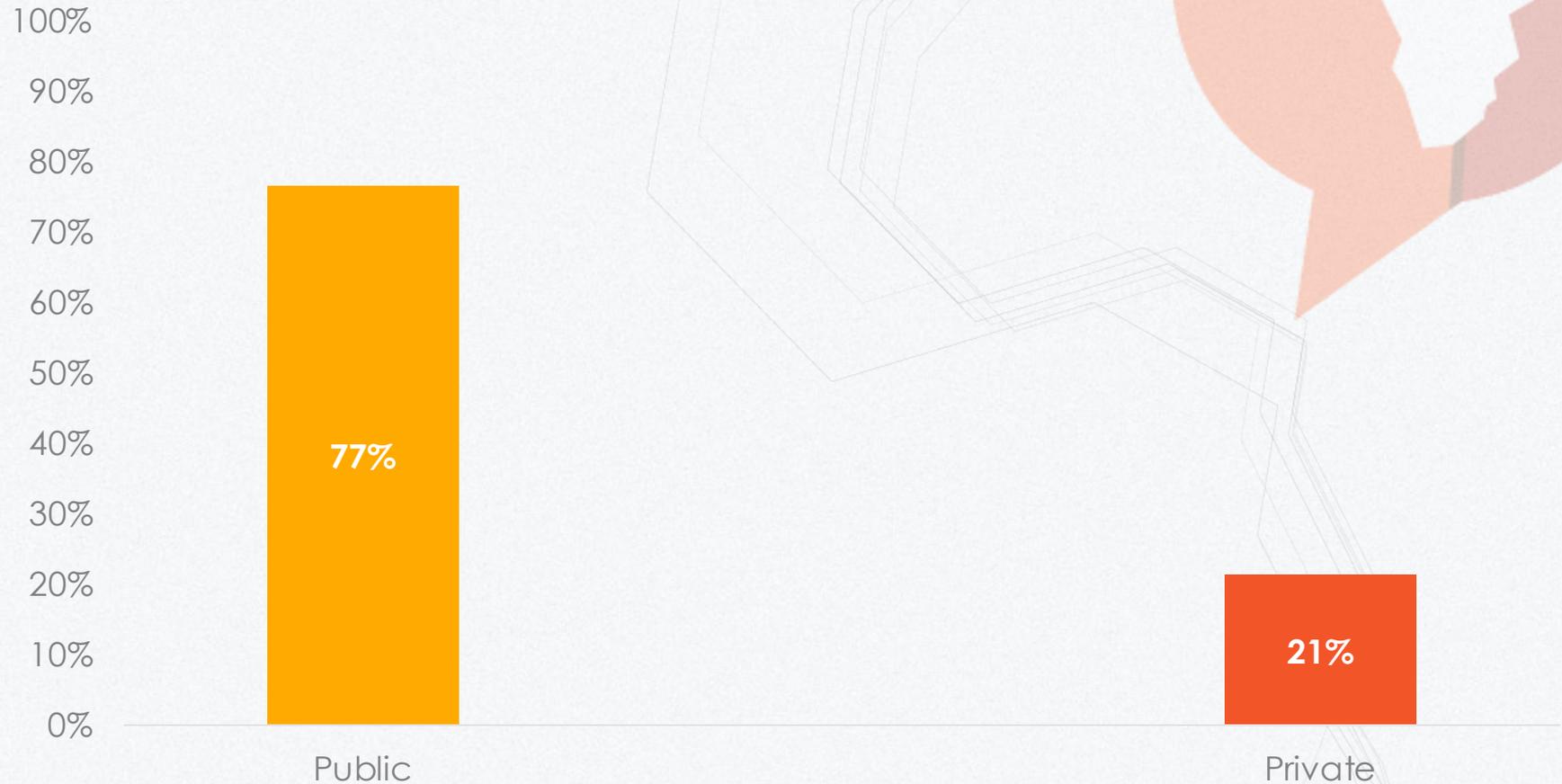
Respondents were asked: Are you currently covered by any kind of health insurance or some other kind of health care plan?

Reasons for not being insured | South Africa | 2021



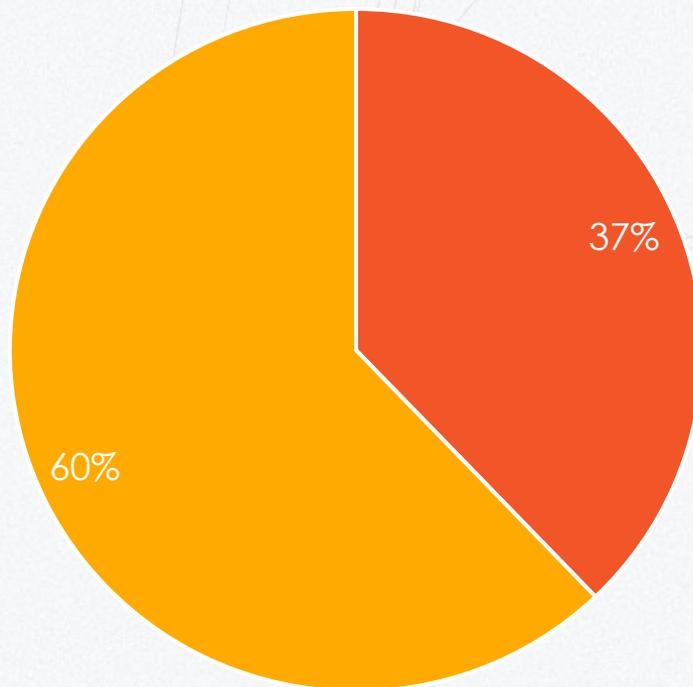
Respondents were asked: If no, there are many reasons that people do not have health insurance coverage. Would you say that you are currently uninsured because...

Healthcare facilities used | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: When you need medical assistance, do you predominantly use public or private healthcare facilities? Which option do you use the most frequently?

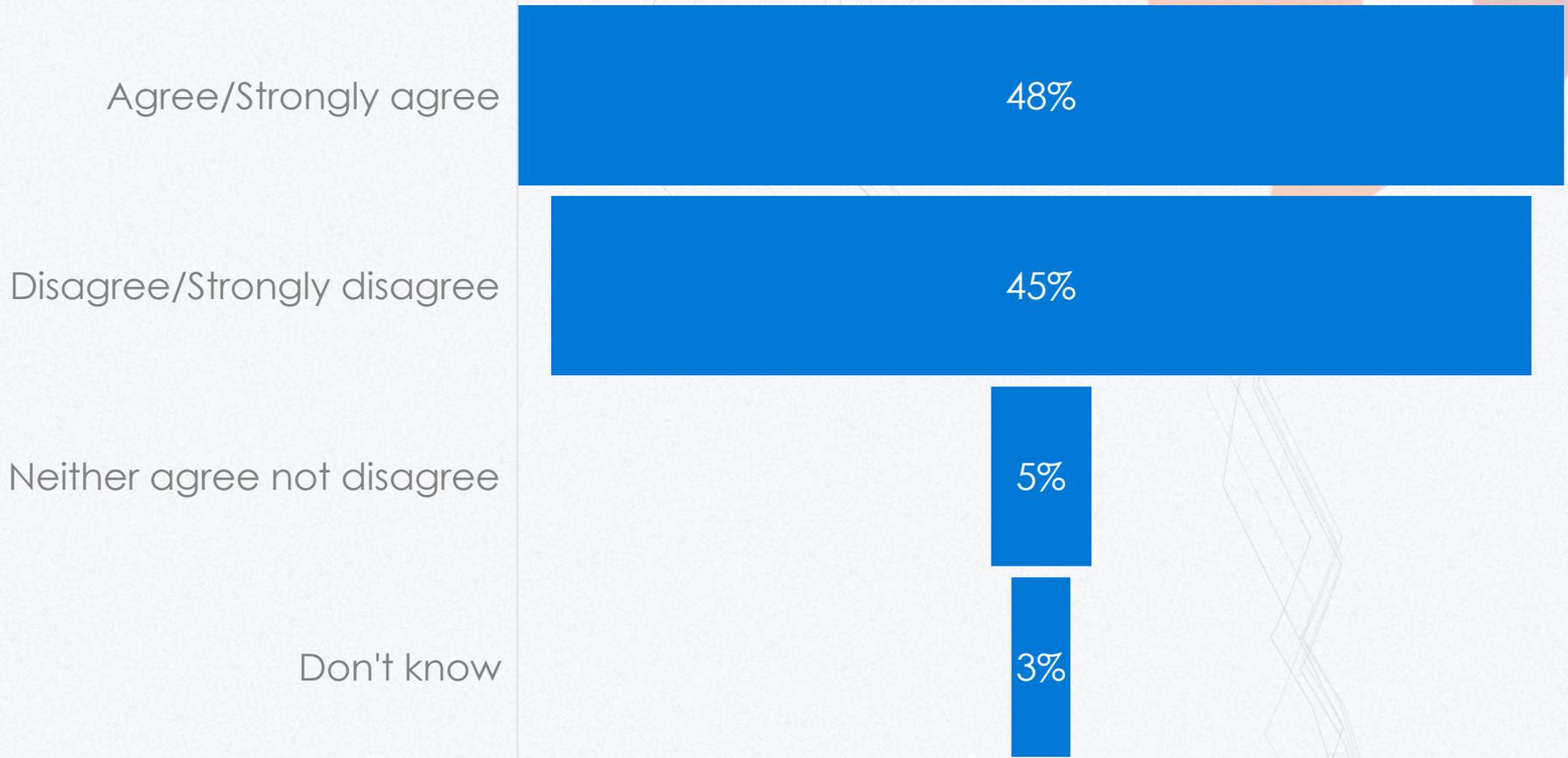
Satisfaction with healthcare | South Africa | 2021



■ No ■ Yes

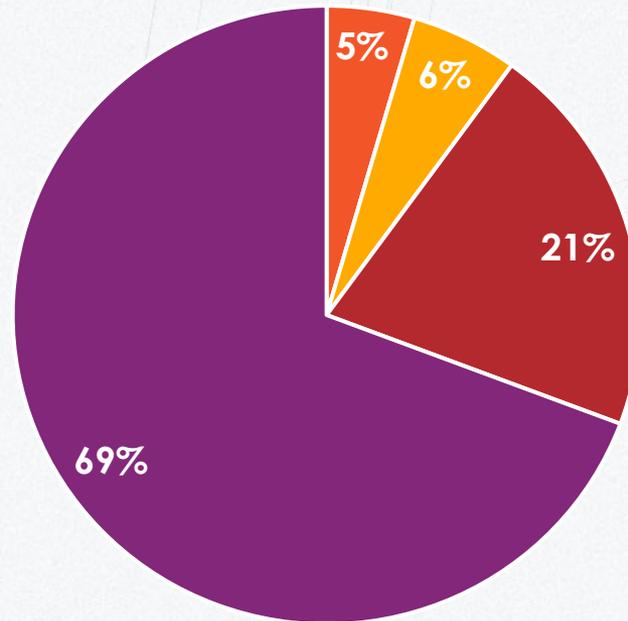
Respondents were asked: Are you happy with the level of care you receive in [public or private] healthcare facilities?

Healthcare affordability | South Africa | 2021



Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree. The quality of healthcare should be based on what one can afford, even if this means people having different quality of services.

Government justified to levy taxes for NHI | South Africa | 2021



- Don't know
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree/Strongly disagree
- Agree/Strongly agree

Respondents were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree. Government would be justified to levy additional taxes to fund the National Health Insurance, in order to provide better quality healthcare services for all.

Conclusions

Conclusions

- Most South Africans believe that they are well informed about COVID-19 and that the government is handling the response to the pandemic well.
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of South Africans say the lockdown restrictions were difficult to comply with and 72% believe schools were closed for too long. But most respondents agree these were necessary restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Three in ten South Africans received government assistance for the first time since March 2020, but most respondents believe that assistance was unfairly distributed and a lot of funds were lost to corruption.
- South Africans do not have a high degree of trust in their government to ensure the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine. A small majority report that they are unlikely to get vaccinated.
- A majority of South Africans believe it would be justified for the government to raise taxes to fund the National Health Insurance to provide better healthcare services for all.



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