

44 YEARS OF HEALTH CARE, LIFESTYLES AND DISEASES

THE PERCEPTIONS OF
THE PAKISTANI PUBLIC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
<u>PART I: HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE.....</u>	<u>6</u>
.1.1 CONCERN ABOUT HEALTH.....	10
1.2. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PERSONAL HEALTH	11
1.3. CHOICE OF TREATMENT MODALITIES.....	12
1.4. PREFERENCE FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITY	13
1.5. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PRIVATE VERSUS GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES	14
1.6. VIEWS ABOUT GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS.....	15
1.7. PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC HOSPITALS OR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES	16
1.8. CHOICE OF DOCTOR: DOES GENDER MATTER?	17
1.9. VIEWS ABOUT AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT DOCTORS	18
1.10. SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH CARE FACILITIES	19
1.11. TRUST IN DOCTORS.....	20
1.12. VIEWS ABOUT HOSPITALIZATION	21
1.13. HEALTH AWARENESS.....	25
1.14. EVER HAD A BLOOD TEST?	26
1.15. AWARENESS OF BLOOD GROUP	27
1.16. BLOOD DONATION	28
1.17. ORGAN DONATION.....	30
<u>METHODOLOGY</u>	<u>33</u>

INTRODUCTION

When we talk of health research, one might assume it constitutes studies involving patients and healthcare facilities. However, this represents just the '*tip of the iceberg*' in terms of prevalence of a health condition. WHO defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease' and understanding community perceptions on health issues is considered a vital aspect into human health and well-being. Healthcare decision-making and implementation involves both macro and micro level actors and the mutual interaction of healthcare systems and the population is necessary for the efficient delivery and uptake of healthcare services.

Health surveys are regularly conducted in different populations and countries to understand the health status of the people. The Health Survey of England, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Studies (BRFSS) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States, the Tromsø Study in Norway are just some examples. Similarly, Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) are conducted regularly in many countries across the globe, as well.

What is the situation in Pakistan?

Research is an unexplored aspect in all fields in our country especially in public health. Fortunately, the situation has improved for some subject areas in recent years. The Pakistan Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and Multiple Indicators Cluster Surveys (MICS) have been regularly conducted in the country during the last two decades. They provide valuable information on mother and child health. The **demographic shift** is evident in developing countries like Pakistan and there is an increase in the burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and other chronic conditions. Despite these changes, research is still lacking on these issues in Pakistan. Most studies are conducted on small samples and in selected populations. The data is either old and recent data is not necessarily easily accessible. If we try to find prevalence data on noncommunicable diseases, we still come across surveys from the 1990s.

Health is a multidimensional phenomenon. There is a growing realization that lifestyles and behaviors are instrumental in all aspects of health, be it preventive care or curative care. Things like what an average Pakistani eats in a day, whether people exercise or not, whether people know that the water they drink can cause any disease, whether people trust doctors and allopathic forms of treatment, whether people have even heard of the diseases discussed in the medical community, the myths surrounding the use of iodized salt etc., they might seem trivial at first, but perhaps further investigating such topics as well as other aspects can help in the prevention of disease and promotion of health. The age-old dictum that **prevention is better than cure** probably remains true even today and is definitely more cost effective. According to WHO estimates, about 70% of the burden of disease in the world can be decreased by prevention.

With this theme in mind, as Gallup Pakistan celebrates its 44th Anniversary, we plan to **disseminate** our 44 years' experience of public opinion on lifestyles, healthcare and diseases to all the stakeholders working for a **Healthy Pakistan**.

As we reorganize our organization and activities, we look forward to your valuable suggestions and comments so that our mutual collaboration can help us realize the aim of “*Health for All.*”

Below, you’ll discover a collection of survey findings of public opinion regarding “*Health and Healthcare*,” which is the **first chapter** of our larger health research report on “*Healthcare, Lifestyles and Diseases in Pakistan.*” We plan to release individual chapters given each chapter covers an extensive range of topics with data spanning 40 years.

We hope that as you read through, you’re inspired to think of the different ways in which we can collectively generate knowledge through multidisciplinary collaborations to translate research discoveries into practice and ultimately help improve population health across the country.

PART I: HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

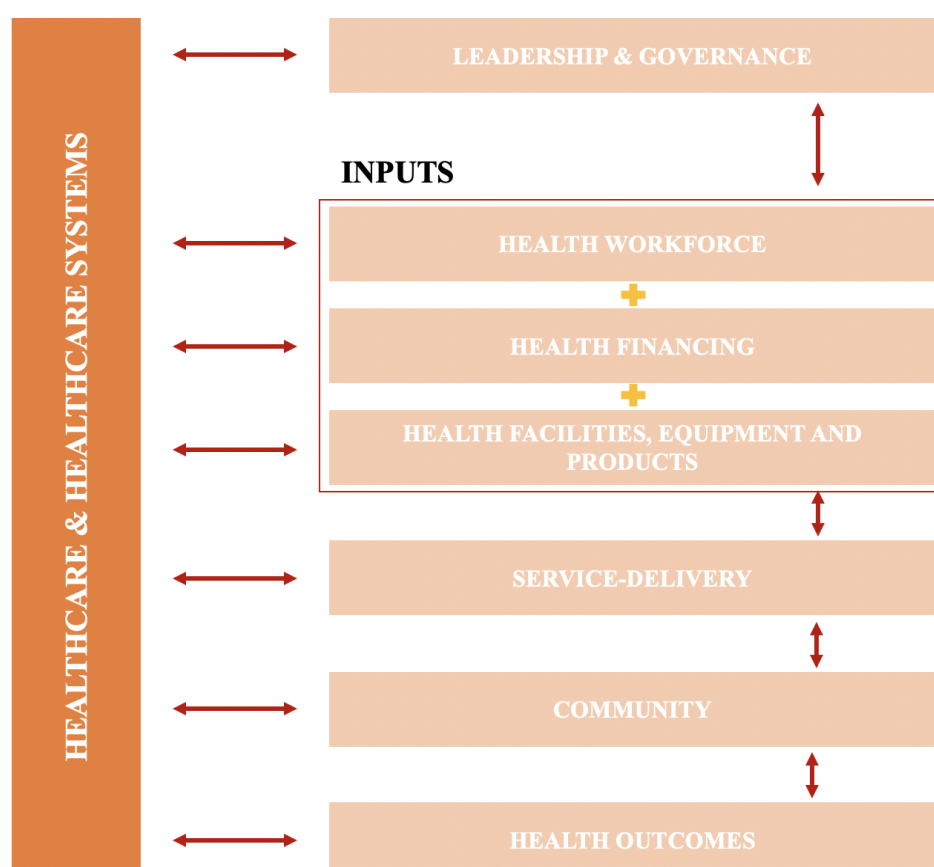


PART I: HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

At the crux of healthcare lies human health and well-being. Historically, healthcare was shaped by purely reactionary responses to illnesses. Home remedies were prepared after investigations into the medicinal properties of plants as well as experimentation through trial and error. As civilizations expanded and different eras brought significant developments and advancements, in tandem, healthcare practices evolved.

In 1978, at the Alma Ata Declaration/International Conference on Primary Healthcare, the **“Health for All”** goal was set up by the World Health Organization.¹ With over 4 decades having passed by, universally, we are still remarkably far from achieving this goal. Some countries across the world are struggling to provide basic forms of healthcare to vulnerable populations while others are moving towards rapidly changing technology-based preventive solutions.

Healthcare is and always has been a rather complex and convoluted concept and what makes it so, is the necessary involvement of various actors, each of which play an integral role from the formation of healthcare systems to the delivery of healthcare services.



*Designed and adapted from FHI360's Health System Rapid Diagnostic Tool

¹ <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/declaration-of-alma-ata>

Without the efficient functioning of any of the actors, healthcare systems struggle or collapse. In the case of Pakistan specifically, the healthcare system is fragmented and lacking in more ways than one. Healthcare delivery in Pakistan has traditionally been jointly administered by the federal and provincial governments with districts mainly responsible for implementation. It is organized through 4 main streams namely preventive care, promotive care, curative care and rehabilitative services. The health sector faces many challenges such as the burden of the rising population, limited healthcare workforce and lack of adequate funding to provide quality services.

To further demonstrate the challenges of healthcare, Gallup Pakistan's current and historical data provides some perceptive and meaningful insights from population-based research into the different dimensions of healthcare. Interestingly, surveys conducted over the last three decades reveal that consistently the majority of Pakistanis report they are concerned a lot or somewhat (**83%**) about their health and the state of healthcare in the country (*Figure 1.1.1*). However, this concern does not necessarily translate into action. Pakistan is far behind on several health indicators; The under 5 mortality rate stands at 65.18 per 1000 live births while infant mortality rate is at 54.15 per 1000 live births. Neonatal mortality rates are also alarmingly high at 40.39 per 1000 live births in the country.² In addition to child and neonatal mortality rates, ischemic heart disease and strokes are the 2nd and 3rd leading causes of death in the country.³ Despite these worrying figures, (**46%**) of Pakistanis considered their health to be better in 2022 than the previous year (*Figure 1.2.1*).

Healthcare Facilities

Pakistan has a multifaceted healthcare system with government and private facilities functioning simultaneously along with complementary and alternative medicine like Homeopathy, Hikmat, spiritual healers. The majority of Pakistanis (**69%**) prefer allopathic forms of treatment followed by Hikmat (**6%**), Home treatment (**13%**) and then Spiritual treatment (**7%**) (*Figure 1.3.1*). Over 40 years, the preference for allopathic treatment has increased substantially from (**59%**) in 1979 to (**69%**) in 2022 at the expense of traditional treatment from Hakeems (traditional physicians) (*Figure 1.3.2*).

The preference for government facilities has increased in recent years – In 2006, only (**13%**) people preferred to go to government hospitals to seek medical treatment (*Figure 1.4.1*). This has increased to (**42%**) in 2022, representing a percentage increase of **30%** (*Figure 1.4.2*). In case of an illness, there is a marginal difference in the preference for government healthcare facilities versus private healthcare facilities (**50%** versus **48%**, respectively (*Figure 1.5.1*). The bridging of this gap over nearly 2 decades (as can be seen from *Figure 1.5.2*) is in line with the healthcare realities of Pakistan as improvements have been made over time, especially in the public sector health infrastructure space.

(**44%**) Pakistanis consider the standard of government hospitals as good (*Figure 1.6.1*). This perception regarding government facilities has changed positively by (**34%**) from (**10%**) in 1991 to (**44%**) in 2022 (*Figure 1.6.2*). Although less than **50%**, at least a significant percentage of people report facing issues such as the continuous absence of doctors, the inappropriate behavior of hospital staff, the lack of medication, long queues/wait times, poor sanitation facilities and the demand for illegal payments at the hospital (*Figure 1.7.1*).

² <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/countries/country-details/GHO/pakistan>

³ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30925-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30925-9/fulltext)

The problems faced in public health facilities remain similar over the years. The issue of long waiting times has worsened over the years, which can most likely be attributed to the increased demand of these facilities (*Figure 1.7.2*). Given the socioeconomic conditions of the people, government health facilities are the number one choice for nearly half of the population. People have trust in the expertise of doctors in these facilities, but a lot of infrastructural improvement is needed to augment patient satisfaction. These are all critical elements across the patient-care continuum and perhaps this data can be utilized by healthcare facilities to address the particular challenges and improve patient care. Moreover, with the growing population there is a dire need to increase the capacity of healthcare facilities in the country.

Historically, Pakistanis felt that expert doctors were only available at private healthcare facilities (53% versus 15% in government hospitals) in 2006 but from the most recent data, this percentage is in fact, higher for government hospitals (33% versus 26% in private hospitals (*Figures 1.9.1 & 1.9.2*).

Overall, the majority of the Pakistanis (72%) are satisfied with the healthcare facilities in their areas (*Figure 1.10.1*) which represents an increase of 37% from 2005 (*Figure 1.10.2*).

Trust in Doctors:

Despite reporting problems faced at healthcare facilities, doctors enjoy a lot of trust by the public in Pakistan. In 2022, (76%) of people claimed they had a lot or a somewhat level trust in Doctors as persons (*Figure 1.11.1*). This perception could be largely influenced by reasons such as the confidence people have in doctors to provide accurate diagnoses and appropriate treatments for their health conditions, which can be critical to their health outcomes in future.

Hospitalization

Hospitalization is a traumatic time for families and individuals. It would appear that the suffering is exacerbated by cumbersome hospitalization procedures at both private and public facilities. Half (50 %) respondents had a lot or some trouble during the hospital admission process and (26%) needed a reference to get admission (*Figures 1.12.5 and 1.12.7, respectively*). The fact that (26%) needed a reference to get admission, which has decreased by (45%) in 1991, this still presents a serious issue with the healthcare system as well as the potential gaps and limitations in the ways financial structures currently operate within the healthcare system (*Figure 1.12.8*)

Blood and Organ Donation

About two thirds of Pakistanis claim having had a blood test (63%) and knew their blood group (55%) (*Figures 1.14.1 and 1.15.1, respectively*). More than a quarter (28%) have donated blood, predominantly to relatives (80%) (*Figures 1.16.1 and 1.16.3, respectively*).

There is high level of awareness about organ donation, as (50%) claimed that they had heard of people donating eyes in their lifetime (*Figure 1.17.1*). While (65%) considered it to be the right thing to do, (45%) said that they would like to donate their eyes during their lifetime if they found a person in need of them (*Figures 1.17.3 and 1.17.5, respectively*). More awareness can be created about blood and organ donation as the proportion of people willing to participate in these activities has not increased over time.

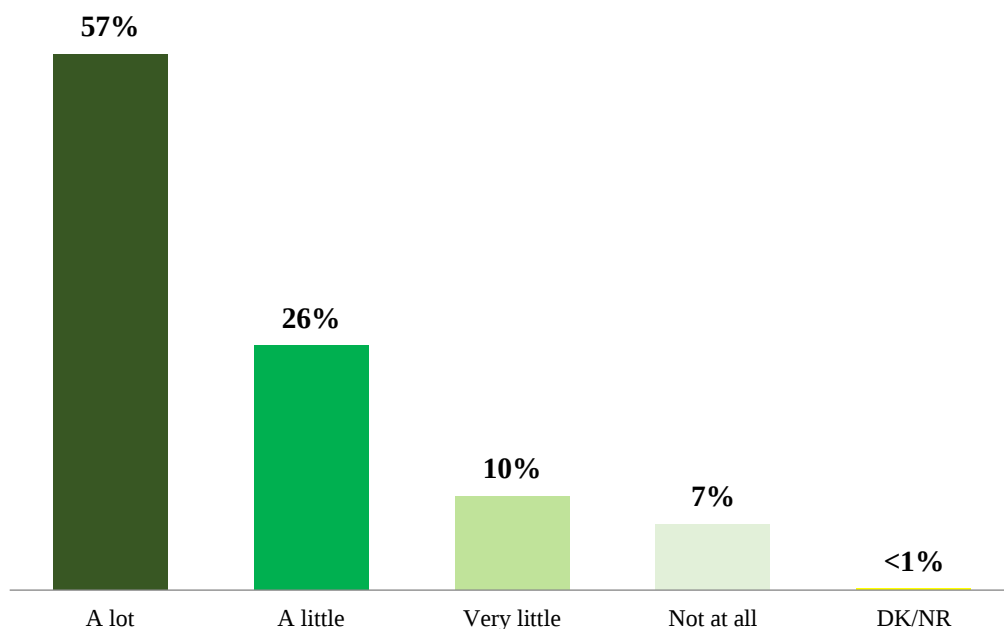
Awareness about Health Programs

The proportion of people saying that they have heard of the Lady Health Worker (LHW) program has considerably decreased over time from **(92%)** in 2008 to **(58%)** in 2022 (*Figures 1.13.1 and 1.13.2*). This indicates that more resources need to be invested in such community health programs which can provide basic health services at the doorstep and can help to reduce the burden at tertiary care hospitals. The popularity of the polio and other immunization programs remains high given the continued efforts as well as the consistent media coverage. However, awareness about other programs like smoking cessation or the hepatitis control program has decreased over time. A point to ponder is that with the changing lifestyles, improvement in life expectancy and the increase in burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), is there a need for newer health programs to promote the health of the population? The media campaigns for public health programs need to be maintained and given the increase in use of social media, the awareness programs can be restructured to improve their uptake.

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.1. CONCERN ABOUT HEALTH

1.1.1. To what extent are you concerned about your health?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

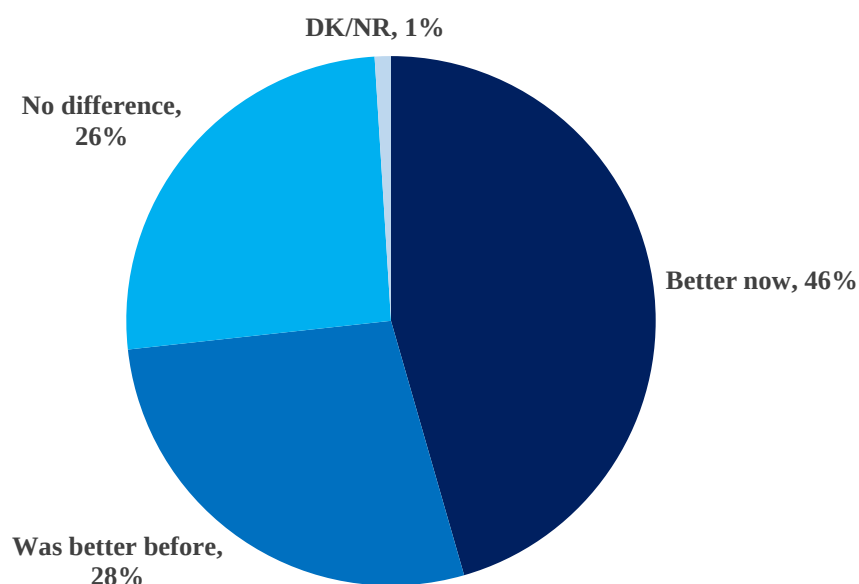
1.1.2. Trend Data

	2000	2001	2003	2004	2005	2008	2009	2011	2013	2022
A lot	36%	30%	31%	36%	30%	28%	36%	25%	31%	57%
A little	34%	36%	34%	37%	50%	42%	26%	48%	39%	26%
Very little	13%	18%	-	15%	-	14%	19%	-	19%	10%
Not at all	17%	15%	35%	11%	20%	15%	18%	27%	10%	7%
Don't Know / No Response	-	1%	-	1%	-	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.2. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PERSONAL HEALTH

1.2.1. How is your health during this year compared to the previous year?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

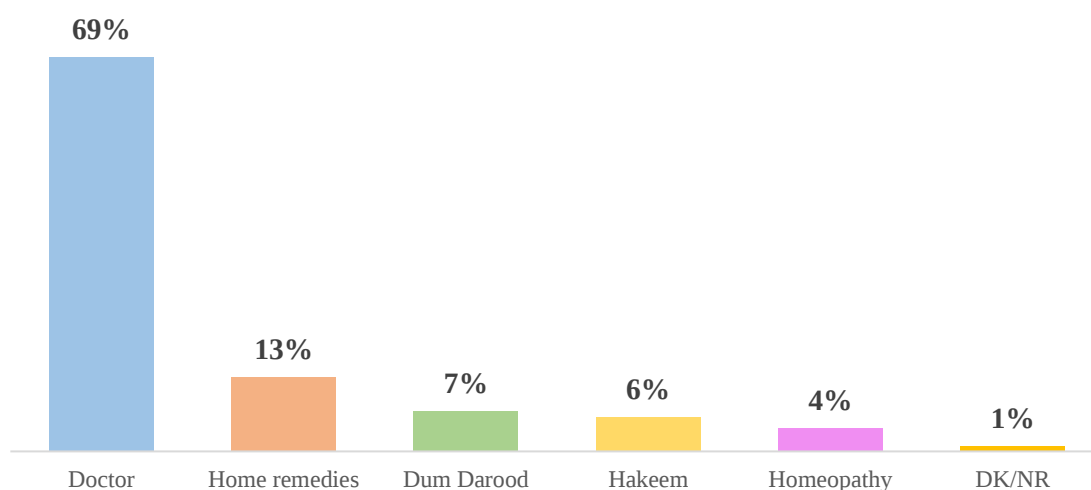
1.2.2. Trend Data

	1998	2006	2007	2008	2009	2022
Better now	45%	40%	40%	28%	25%	46%
Was better before	29%	24%	25%	23%	30%	28%
No difference	26%	33%	30%	41%	44%	26%
Don't Know / No Response	-	3%	5%	8%	1%	1%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.3. CHOICE OF TREATMENT MODALITIES

1.3.1. Which form of medical treatment do you usually like?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

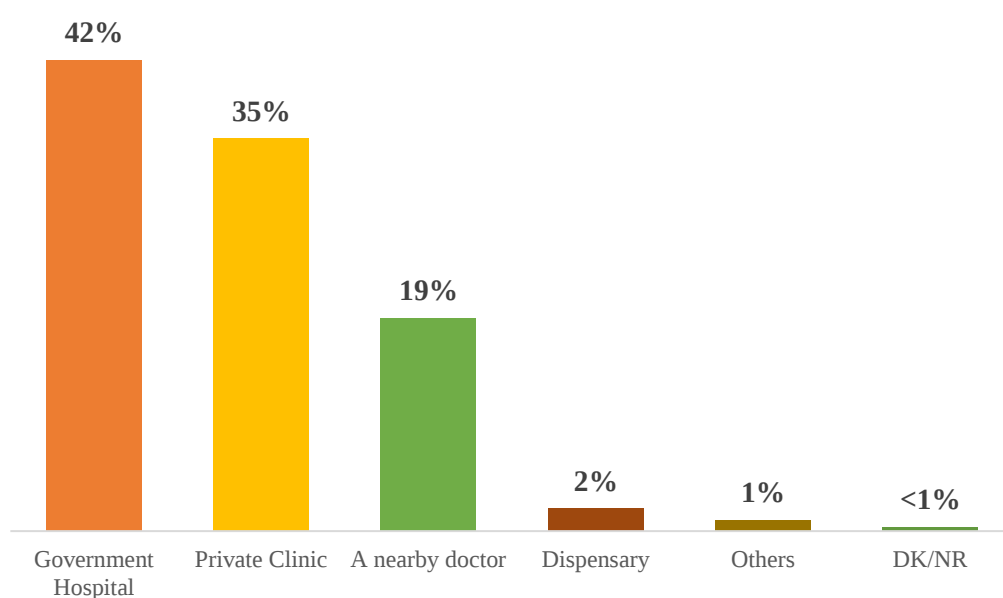
1.3.2. Trend Data

	1979	2001	2009	2011	2019	2022
Doctor	59%	71%	72%	77%	66%	69%
Hakeem	27%	14%	13%	9%	13%	6%
Homeopathy	4%	9%	6%	5%	12%	4%
Home remedies	3%	4%	7%	6%	4%	13%
Dum Darood	5%	2%	1%	2%	4%	7%
Don't know / No response	2%	-	1%	-	1%	1%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.4. PREFERENCE FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITY

1.4.1. *If God forbid, someone falls ill in the household, from where do you seek medical treatment?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

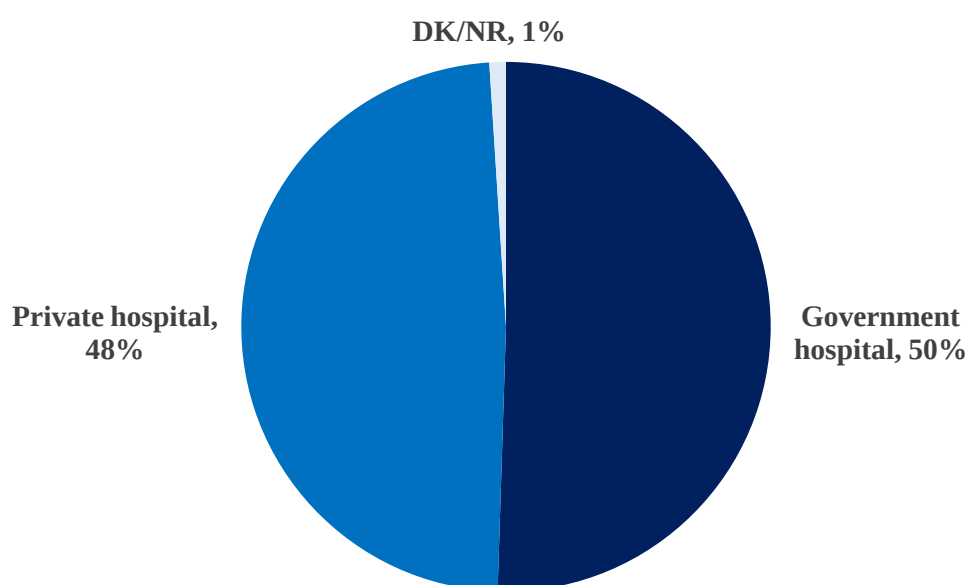
1.4.2. Trend Data

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2012	2014	2022
Government Hospital	13%	24%	24%	20%	18%	29%	42%
A nearby doctor	54%	38%	44%	47%	41%	47%	19%
Private Clinic	28%	32%	24%	28%	36%	21%	35%
Dispensary	4%	6%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%
Don't know / No response	1%	-	2%	1%	-	1%	0%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.5. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PRIVATE VERSUS GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES

1.5.1. *In case of an illness in the household, would you prefer **Private or Government Health care facility** for seeking help?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

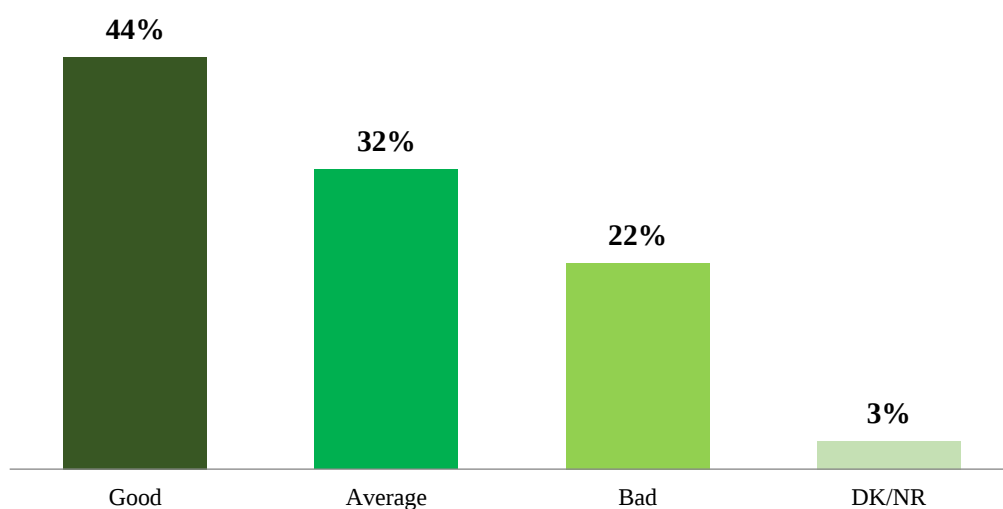
1.5.2. Trend Data

	2005	2022
Government hospital	44%	50%
Private hospital	55%	48%
Don't Know / No Response	-	1%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.6. VIEWS ABOUT GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS

1.6.1. What is your opinion regarding the *standard* of Government Hospitals?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

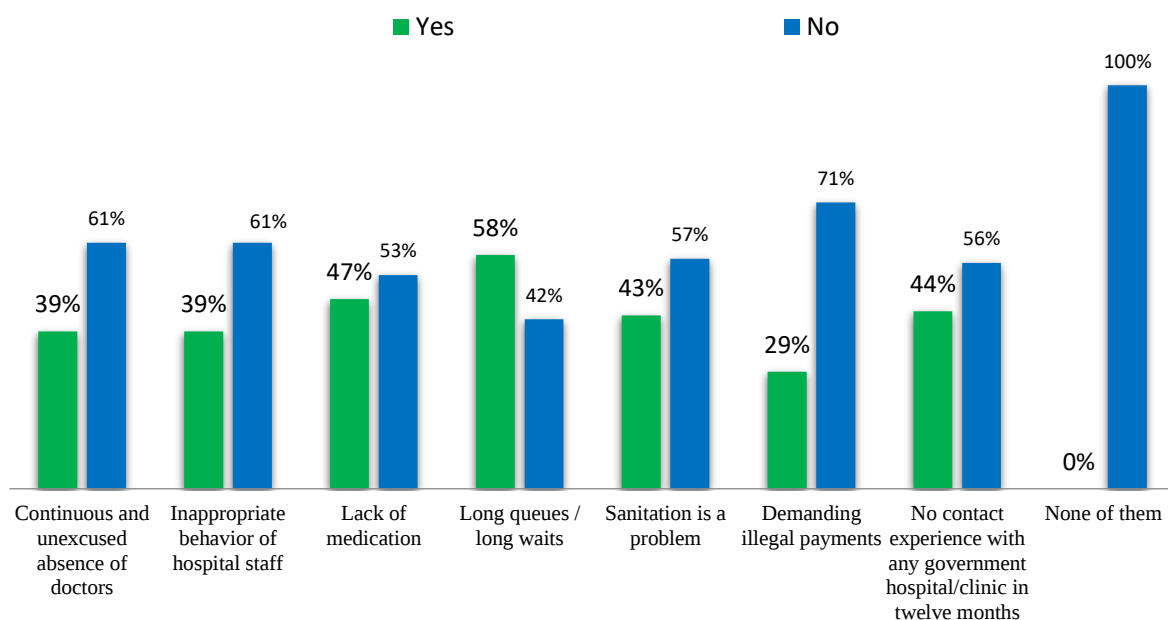
1.6.2. Trend Data

	1991	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2015	2022
Good	10%	19%	33%	35%	21%	9%	18%	19%	44%
Bad	63%	36%	29%	27%	37%	48%	42%	35%	22%
Average	21%	40%	31%	32%	33%	37%	37%	36%	32%
Don't Know / No Response	6%	5%	7%	6%	9%	6%	3%	10%	3%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.7. PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC HOSPITALS OR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

1.7.1. What problem did you encounter at a Public Health care facility during the last 1 year?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

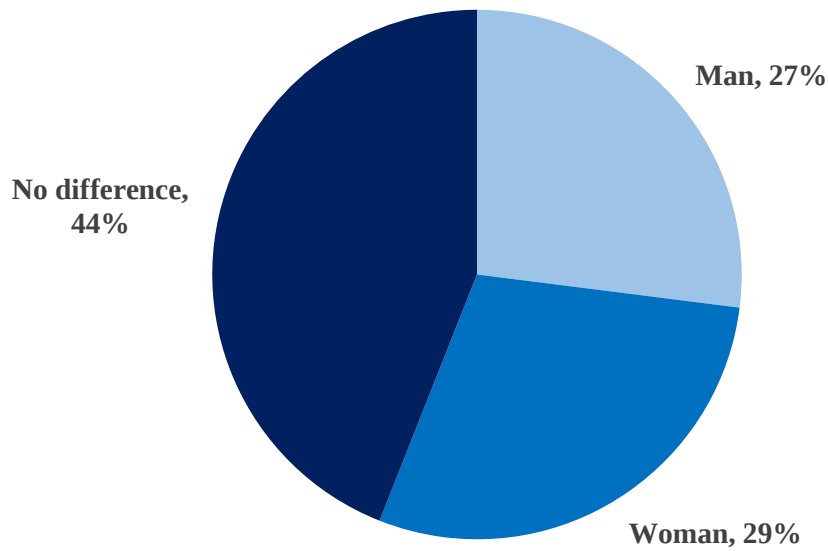
1.7.2. Trend Data

	2000		2022	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Continuous and unexcused absence of doctors	35%	65%	39%	61%
Inappropriate behavior of hospital staff	45%	55%	39%	61%
Lack of medication	50%	50%	47%	53%
Long queues / long waits	48%	52%	58%	42%
Sanitation is a problem	44%	56%	43%	57%
Demanding illegal payments	33%	67%	29%	71%
No contact experience with any government hospital/clinic in twelve months	49%	51%	44%	56%
None of them			-	100%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.8. CHOICE OF DOCTOR: DOES GENDER MATTER?

1.8.1 *If you get sick, would you prefer your doctor to be male or female or does it make no difference?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

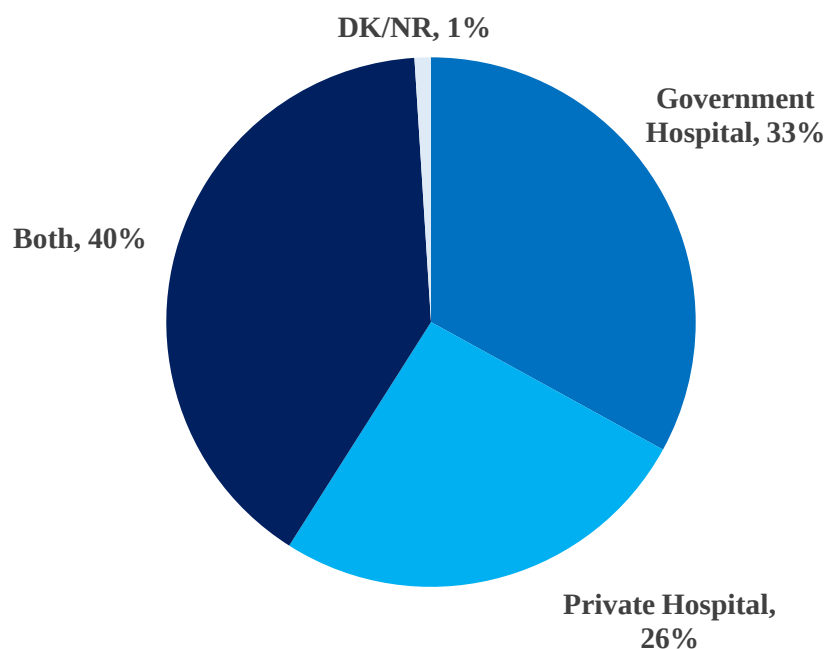
1.8.2. Trend Data

	2001	2005	2017	2022
Man	48%	37%	27%	27%
Woman	16%	24%	31%	29%
No difference	35%	38%	42%	44%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.9. VIEWS ABOUT AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT DOCTORS

1.9.1. *Do you think that expert doctors are available only in Government Hospitals or only in Private hospitals or both?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

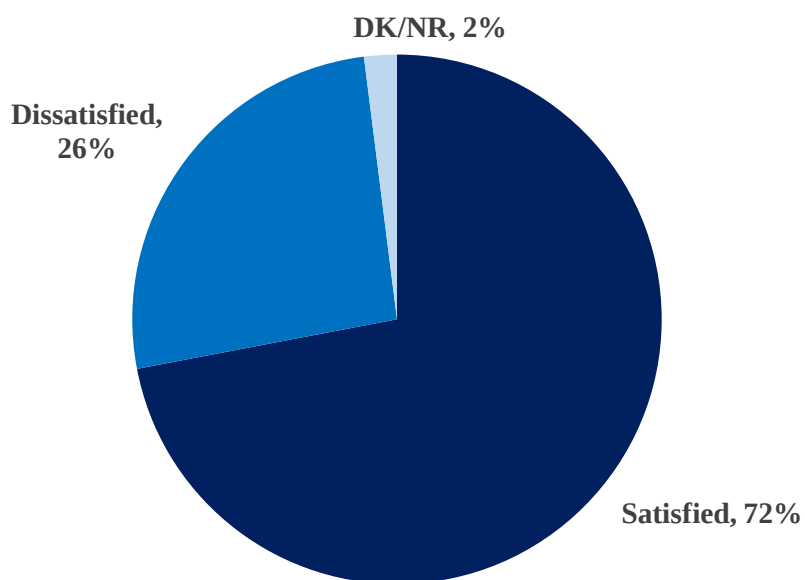
1.9.2. Trend Data

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2012	2022
Government Hospital	15%	23%	17%	16%	19%	33%
Private Hospital	53%	36%	38%	41%	40%	26%
Both	32%	41%	44%	43%	40%	40%
Don't Know / No Response	-	-	1%	-	1%	1%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.10. SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

1.10.1. *Are you satisfied with the health care facilities available in your area?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

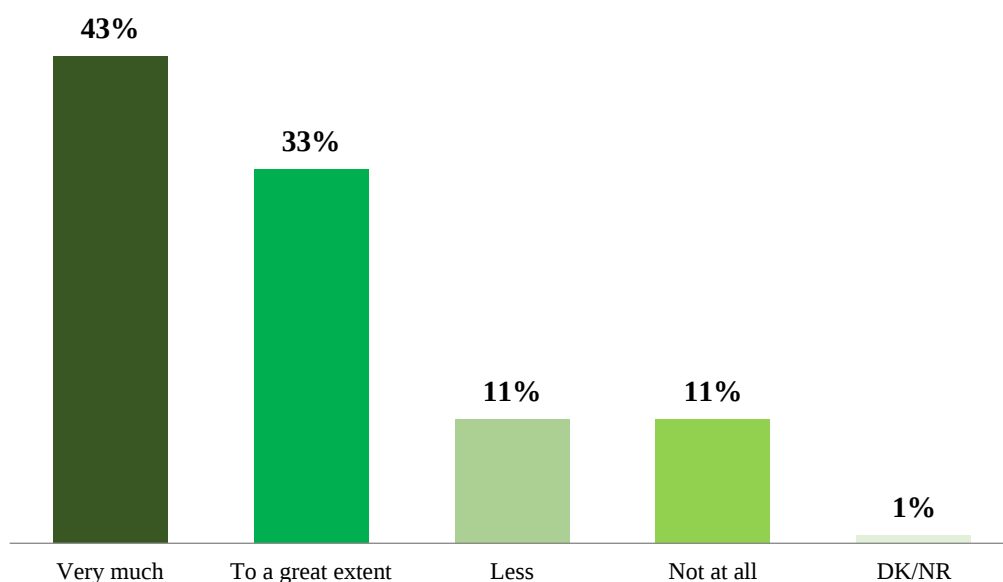
1.10.2. Trend Data

	2005	2008	2009	2012	2022
Satisfied	35%	32%	41%	32%	72%
Dissatisfied	62%	61%	50%	62%	26%
Don't Know / No Response	3%	7%	9%	6%	2%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.11. TRUST IN DOCTORS

1.11.1. How much trust do you have in doctors as persons?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

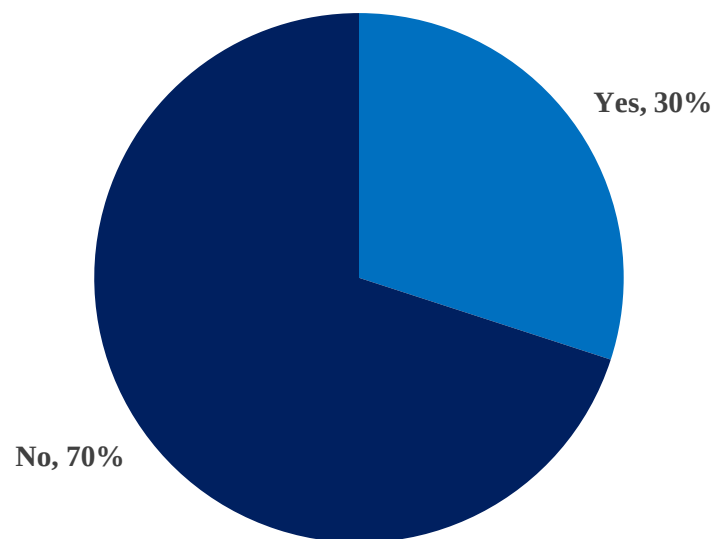
1.11.2. Trend Data

	1996	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2014	2016	2017	2019	2022
Very much	41%	33%	44%	44%	43%	40%	43%	47%	42%	59%	37%	36%	48%	41%	32%	37%	43%
To a great extent	28%	39%	36%	32%	38%	39%	42%	44%	49%	27%	26%	43%	36%	41%	45%	36%	33%
Less	18%	19%	14%	15%	13%	10%	10%	7%	6%	7%	11%	16%	12%	13%	18%	16%	11%
Not at all	9%	7%	4%	5%	6%	9%	5%	2%	3%	6%	14%	5%	3%	4%	5%	10%	11%
DK/NR	4%	2%	2%	4%	-	2%	0%	0%	-	1%	12%	0%	1%	1%	-	1%	1%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.12. VIEWS ABOUT HOSPITALIZATION

1.12.1. *Did anyone of your household need Hospitalization during last 1 year?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

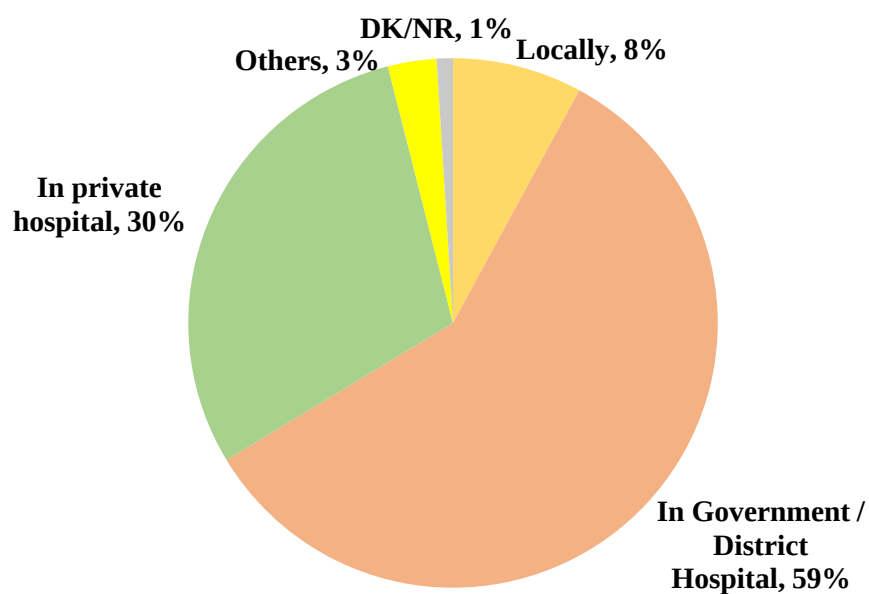
1.12.2. Trend Data

	1991	1998	2001	2015	2022
Yes	21%	24%	16%	13%	30%
No	78%	74%	84%	87%	70%
Don't know / No response	1%	2%	-	-	-

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.12. VIEWS ABOUT HOSPITALIZATION

1.12.3. *If anyone needed hospitalization, where was he/she admitted?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

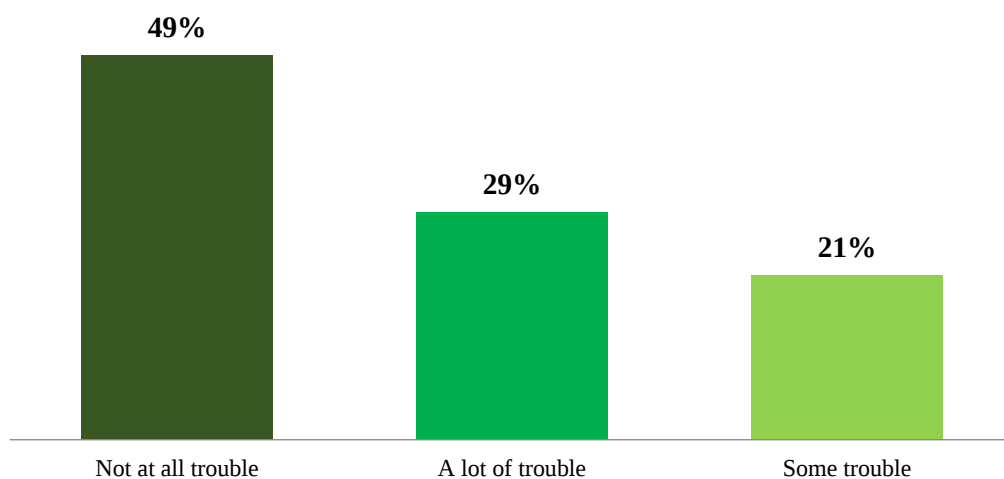
1.12.4. Trend Data

	1991	1998	2001	2015	2022
Locally	9%	11%	12%	24%	8%
In Government / District Hospital	56%	52%	50%	45%	59%
In private hospital	26%	35%	37%	31%	30%
Others	9%	1%	1%	-	3%
Don't know / No response	-	1%	-	-	1%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.12. VIEWS ABOUT HOSPITALIZATION

1.12.5. *During Hospitalization, did you face any trouble / difficulty?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

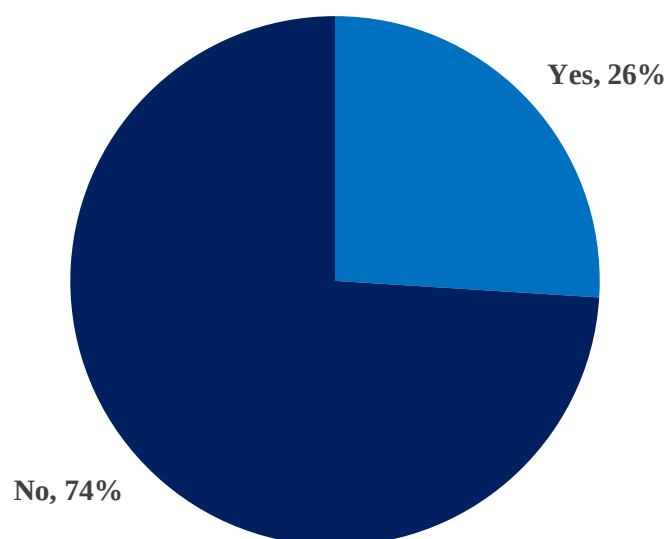
1.12.6. Trend Data

	1991	1998	2001	2015	2022
A lot of trouble	32%	66%	23%	23%	29%
Some trouble	14%	25%	23%	51%	21%
Not at all trouble	48%	9%	51%	23%	49%
Don't know / No Response	6%	-	3%	3%	-

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.12. VIEWS ABOUT HOSPITALIZATION

1.12.7. *Did you need any Reference to facilitate Hospitalization procedure?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

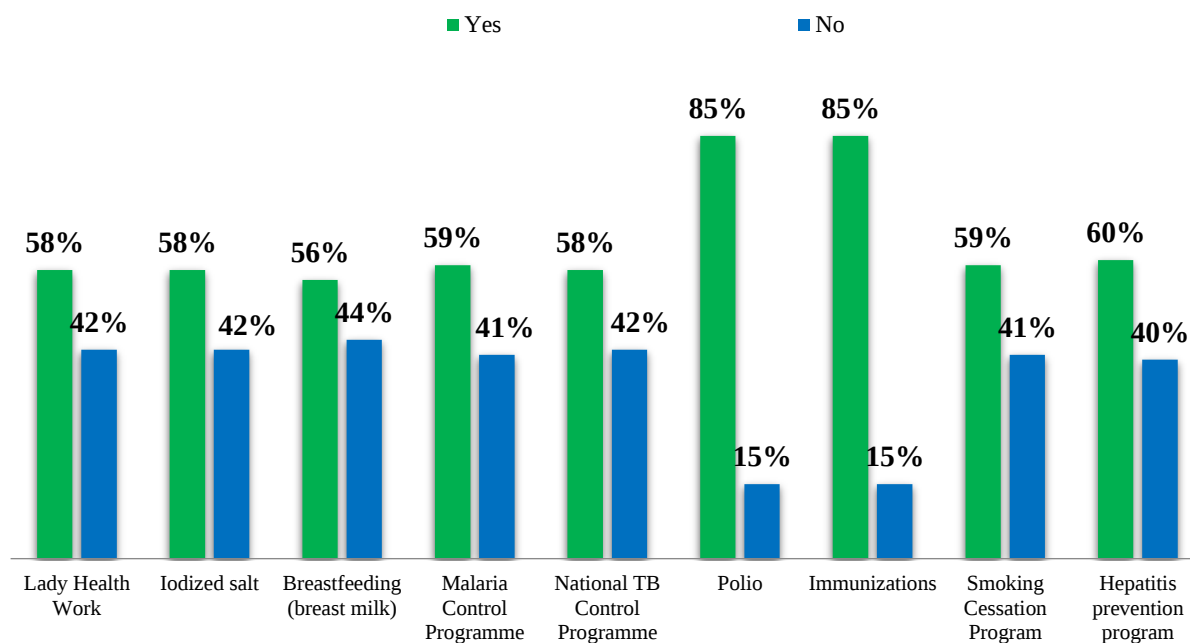
1.12.8. Trend Data

	1991	1998	2001	2015	2022
Yes	71%	56%	24%	19%	26%
No	18%	40%	76%	78%	74%
Don't Know / No Response	11%	-	-	3%	-

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.13. HEALTH AWARENESS

1.13.1. Have you heard/read about following programs related to health?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

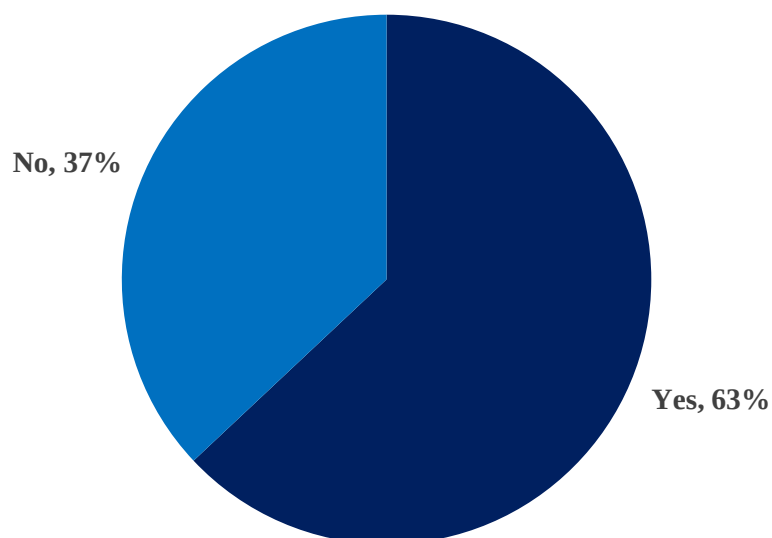
1.13.2. Trend Data

	2008			2022	
	YES	NO	DK/NR	YES	NO
Lady Health Worker Program	92%	7%	0%	58%	42%
Iodized salt	89%	11%	1%	58%	42%
Breastfeeding (breast milk)	80%	20%	1%	56%	44%
Malaria Control Program	74%	26%	0%	59%	41%
National TB Control Program	77%	23%	0%	58%	42%
Polio	95%	5%	0%	85%	15%
Immunizations	81%	19%	0%	85%	15%
Smoking Cessation Program	75%	24%	0%	59%	41%
Hepatitis prevention program	65%	34%	0%	60%	40%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.14. EVER HAD A BLOOD TEST?

1.14.1 Have you ever had a Blood test?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

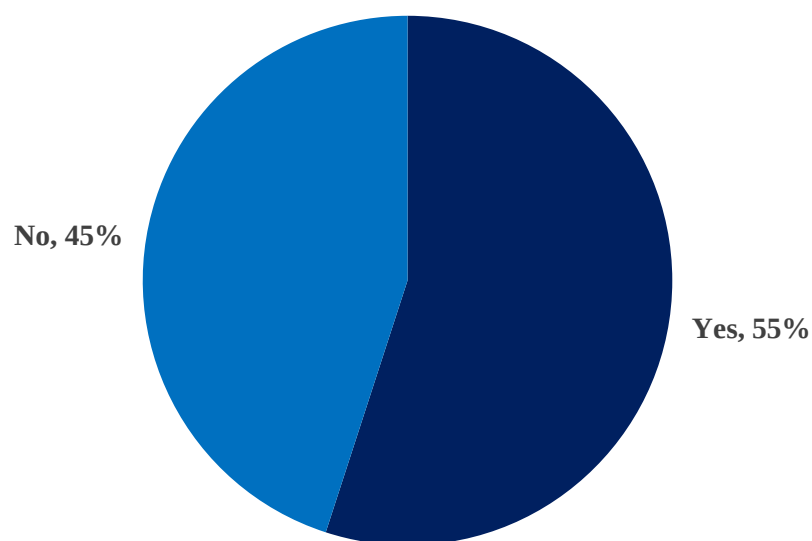
1.14.2. Trend Data

	2001	2007	2022
Yes	65%	67%	63%
No	35%	33%	37%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.15. AWARENESS OF BLOOD GROUP

1.15.1. Do you know your Blood group?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

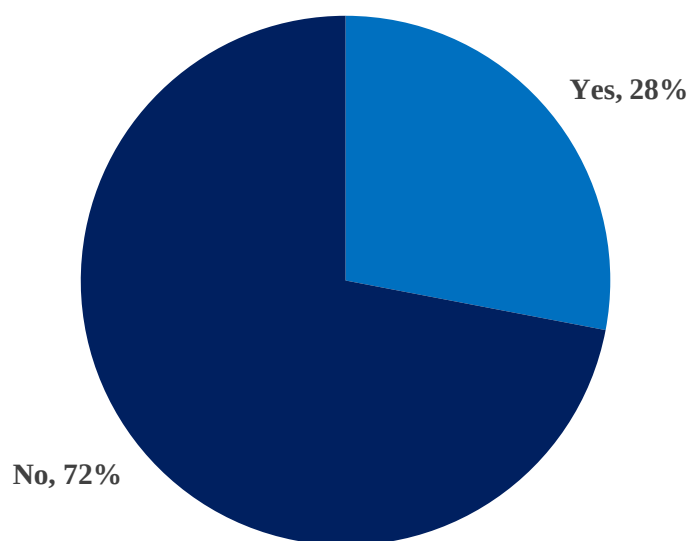
1.15.2. Trend Data

	2007	2011	2014	2022
Yes	61%	47%	57%	55%
No	39%	53%	43%	45%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.16. BLOOD DONATION

1.16.1. Have you ever donated Blood?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

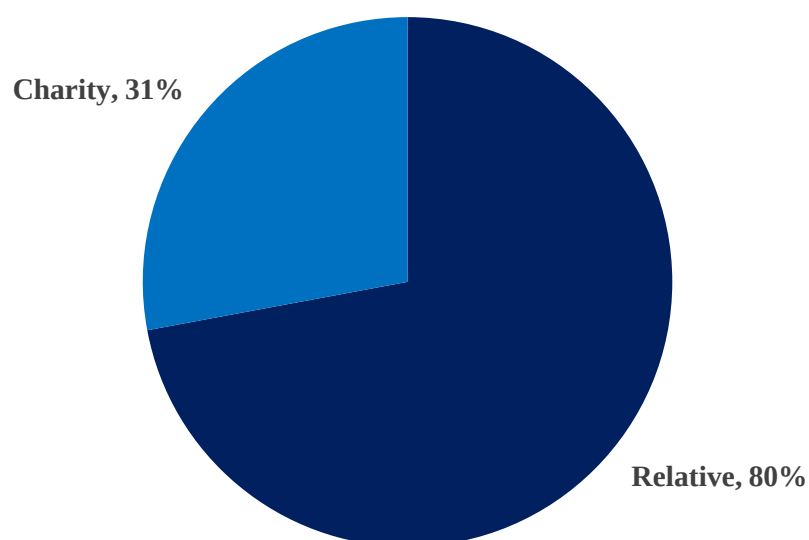
1.16.2. Trend Data

	2001	2004	2007	2016	2022
Yes	31%	25%	25%	16%	28%
No	68%	75%	75%	84%	72%
Don't Know / No Response	1%	-	-	-	-

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.16. BLOOD DONATION

1.16.3. Where did you donate your blood?



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

1.16.4. Trend Data

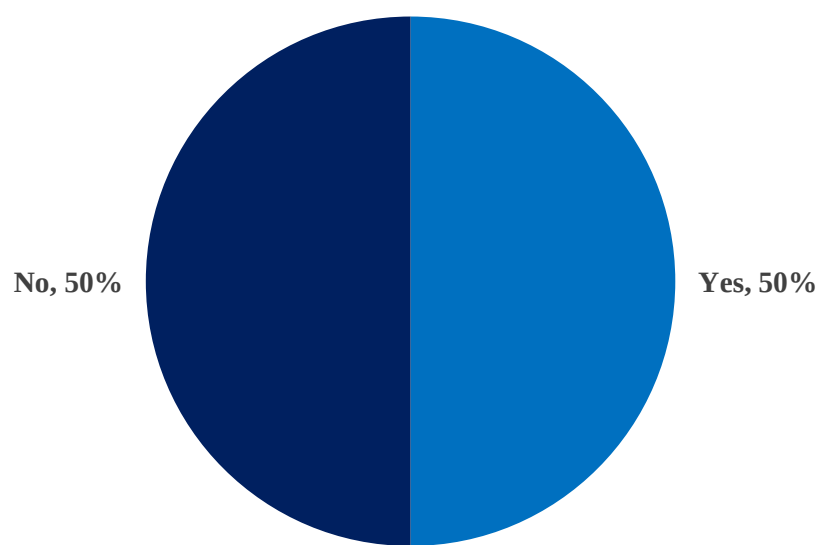
	2001	2004	2016	2022
Relative	87%	93%	90%	80%
Charity	8%	7%	11%	31%
Don't Know / No Response	5%	-	-	0%

*Of those who had ever donated Blood.

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.17. ORGAN DOATION

1.17.1. *Have you heard that some people donate their eyes during their life?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

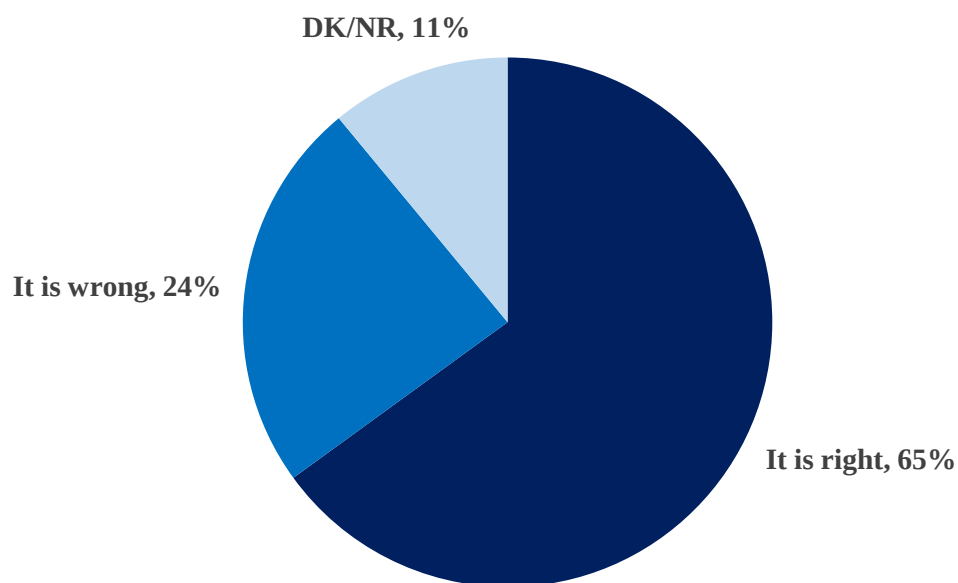
1.17.2. Trend Data

	2001	2004	2022
Yes	78%	77%	50%
No	20%	22%	50%
Don't Know / No Response	2%	1%	-

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.17. ORGAN DONATION

1.17.3. *Do you think is it Right or Wrong to donate one's eyes during his / her life time?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

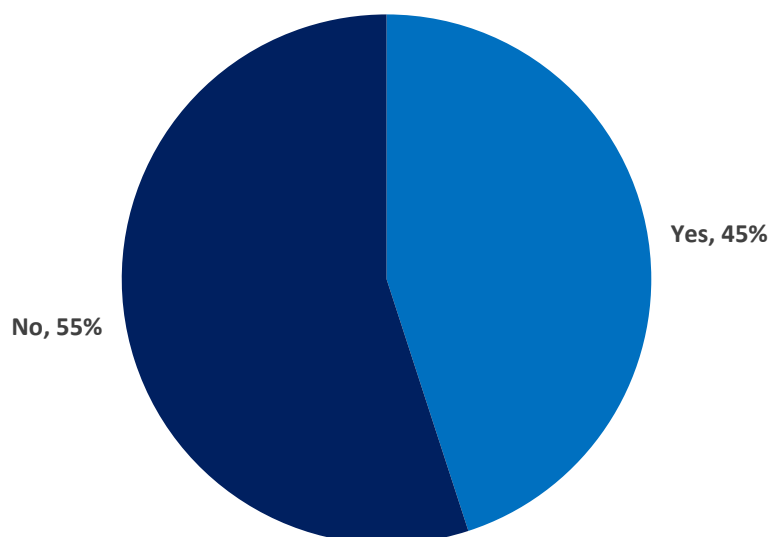
1.17.4. Trend Data

	2001	2004	2022
It is right	60%	67%	65%
It is wrong	38%	31%	24%
Don't Know / No Response	2%	1%	11%

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

1.17.ORGAN DONATION

1.17.5. *If ever you get a chance, would you like to donate your eyes to a needy person?*



Source: Gallup Survey, 2022

1.17.6. Trend Data

	2001	2004	2022
Yes	48%	51%	45%
No	50%	75%	55%
Don't Know / No Response	2%	-	-

METHODOLOGY

The results presented in this Book are from multiple *nationwide household surveys* carried out by Gallup Pakistan over the last four decades.

- **SAMPLE PROFILE**

The respondents in these surveys range from 1000-2500 men and women aged 18 and above, spread across the rural and urban areas of the four provinces of the country. They represent different age groups, education statuses and socio-economic profiles.

- **INTERVIEWING MODE**

Face to face or Telephonic interviews.

- **SAMPLING METHODOLOGY**

Multi-stage random area probability sampling.

- **SAMPLING ERROR**

The error margin is estimated to be $\pm 2-3\%$ at 95% Confidence level.

- **WEIGHTING**

The data have been weighted to correspond with the census distribution of the population for the rural and urban areas of all four provinces.

- **SURVEY DATES**

The respective year in which these surveys were carried out has been mentioned at the bottom of all charts and tables.

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