



GALLUP PAKISTAN

Infectious Diseases Surveillance Survey

Injection Use, Needle Safety Practices and HIV Awareness in Pakistan

Wave 1 | September 2024 – February 2025

N = 1,000+ | Nationally Representative | CATI Methodology

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Injection Use, Needle Safety & HIV Awareness in Pakistan

IDS Survey Wave 1 (N=1,000+, Sep 2024–Feb 2025); Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Opinion Polls (Jan & Feb 2025)

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Gallup Pakistan Research Team

1. Purpose

This memo synthesizes findings from three Gallup Pakistan research outputs relating to injection use, needle safety, and associated infectious disease risks in Pakistan. The data draw on the Infectious Diseases Surveillance Survey (IDS) Wave 1 and two Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Opinion Polls released in January and February 2025. Together, they provide a nationally representative picture of injection exposure, risky needle-related behaviors, and public awareness of HIV/AIDS.

2. Injection Exposure Among the General Population

A Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Opinion Poll (Feb 13, 2025; N=1,042) asked respondents whether they had received an injection within the past year:

Indicator	Result
Received an injection in the past year (national)	23%
Women who received an injection in the past year	25%

Indicator	Result
Men who received an injection in the past year	21%
Did not receive an injection in the past year	76%
Don't know / No response	1%

Women were 4 percentage points more likely than men to have received an injection in the past year. Survey conducted via CATI methodology with a $\pm 2\text{--}3\%$ margin of error at 95% confidence.



3. Attitudes Toward Syringe Reuse

A Gallup & Gilani Pakistan Opinion Poll (Jan 8, 2025; N=3,048) measured public acceptance of reusing syringes within the household — a key transmission risk for Hepatitis B/C and HIV:

Subgroup	Agree: No Problem Reusing Syringes
National average	9%
Rural residents	10%
Urban residents	8%
Less than 12 years of education	10%
More than 12 years of education	5%
Disagree (national)	86%
Don't know / No response	5%

While 86% of Pakistanis correctly identify syringe reuse as problematic, 9% — equivalent to approximately 11.7 million adults nationally — believe it is acceptable. This belief is twice as prevalent among those with less than FA-level education (10%) compared to higher-educated respondents (5%).



4. Self-Reported Needle Safety Behaviors

The IDS Survey Wave 1 assessed actual needle-related risk behaviors as part of a broader risky health behaviors module:

Risky Needle Behavior	Engage Regularly
Re-using injection needles / syringes	5%
Not disposing of used injection needles properly	3%

Risky Needle Behavior	Engage Regularly
Blood transfusion from an unverified / risky source	3%

For context, 7% regularly share a toothbrush and 5% share a razor. Overall, 68% of respondents reported engaging in none of the listed risky behaviors. Contact with infected persons was the most commonly reported risk factor at 21%.



5. Population-Level Projections

The table below projects survey percentages onto Pakistan's adult population (18+), estimated at approximately 130 million based on Census 2023 data. Highlighted rows indicate behaviors with direct infection transmission risk.

Indicator	Survey %	Est. Adults (millions)
Adults who received an injection in the past year	23%	~30.0 million
Women who received an injection in the past year	25%	~16.3 million
Men who received an injection in the past year	21%	~13.7 million
Adults who regularly re-use injection needles	5%	~6.5 million
Adults who fail to dispose of needles properly	3%	~3.9 million
Adults who see no problem with household syringe reuse	9%	~11.7 million
Adults unaware of HIV infection	55%	~71.5 million
Adults who perceive stigma around HIV	83%	~107.9 million
Adults who personally know someone with HIV	10%	~13.0 million

Note: Adult population base of 130 million is estimated from Pakistan Census 2023 (total population ~240.5 million) applying an 18+ share of approximately 54%. Figures are rounded. Gender-specific projections assume an approximately equal male-female split (~65 million each). Highlighted rows indicate behaviors with direct infection transmission risk.



6. HIV Awareness and Stigma

Given that unsafe injections are a primary HIV transmission route in Pakistan, the IDS Survey also captured public awareness of and attitudes toward HIV:

HIV Awareness Indicator	Result
Have heard of HIV infection that causes AIDS	43%
Have NOT heard of HIV	55%
Believe there is stigma associated with HIV in Pakistan	83%
Do not believe there is stigma	10%
Not sure	7%
Personally know someone affected by HIV	10%

Among those who acknowledged HIV-related stigma, the perceived consequences were:

- 30% — social isolation for affected individuals
- 23% — reduced willingness to seek treatment
- 13% — limited access to healthcare
- 12% — discrimination at work or in public
- 5% — mental health issues

The low HIV awareness rate (43%) is notable given that unsafe injections are a documented transmission pathway. High stigma perception (83%) is a further barrier to testing and treatment-seeking.



7. Key Takeaways

- Roughly 30 million Pakistani adults received an injection in the past year, making injection safety a public health issue of substantial scale.
- An estimated 6.5 million adults regularly reuse injection needles; 11.7 million do not regard household syringe reuse as a problem — both represent large at-risk populations.
- Education and rurality are significant determinants: less-educated and rural respondents show higher tolerance for unsafe needle practices.
- HIV awareness is low (43%) and highly stigmatized (83%), creating conditions where unsafe injection practices are less likely to be linked to HIV risk in the public mind.
- At the population scale, even small survey percentages translate to millions of individuals exposed to preventable infection risk through needle-related behaviors.



8. Methodological Note

All three data sources use CATI methodology on nationally representative samples covering all four provinces of Pakistan. The IDS Survey Wave 1 (N=1,000+, Sep 2024 to Feb 2025) provides behavioral data; the Opinion Polls (N=1,042 and N=3,048) provide attitude and exposure data. Margin of error is

±2–3% at 95% confidence across all surveys. Self-reported data on stigmatized behaviors may be subject to social desirability bias, meaning actual rates of needle reuse could be higher than reported.



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