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Overview

This profile presents findings from the WHO national pulse survey on continuity of essential health services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

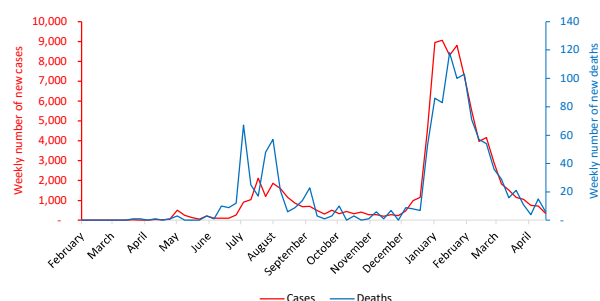
Region	African	Income Group	Lower middle income	Life Expectancy (years)	62.5
Population	18,383,956	GDP (USD per capita)	\$1,305.1	Population over 60 (%)	3.4%

Survey participation

Round 1 surveys	Submission Date	Round 2 survey sections	Submission Date
Essential Health Services	28-May-2020	Health system functions	18-Mar-2021
Noncommunicable diseases	13-May-2020	Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition	12-Mar-2021
Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders	18-Jun-2020	Immunization	13-Mar-2021
		Human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis	12-Mar-2021
		Tuberculosis	12-Mar-2021
		Malaria	13-Mar-2021
		Neglected tropical diseases	13-Mar-2021
		Noncommunicable diseases	13-Mar-2021
		Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders	13-Mar-2021

Transmissibility timeline

Weekly number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths



Peak

Cases

9,055

Deaths

118

Peak date

23/01/2021

30/01/2021

Latest

335

6

Proportion

4%

5%

Summary of disruptions

Zambia

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)	% change in disrupted services	Regional comparison (round 2)	Global comparison (round 2)
Percentage of essential health services disrupted	46%	44%	↓ -2%	42%	38%
Number of essential health services disrupted	22 out of 48 services	25 out of 57 services			

Average% of services disrupted

Denominator excludes services that were not reported on and services for which Not applicable and Do not know responses were submitted

Level of service disruption by service group

	Round 1	Round 2
Primary care	Not included in round 1	Some services disrupted
Emergency, critical, and operative care	No services disrupted	Some services disrupted
Rehabilitative, palliative and long-term care	No services disrupted	Some services disrupted
Auxiliary services	Not included in round 1	All services disrupted
Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition	Some services disrupted	Some services disrupted
Immunization	All services disrupted	All services disrupted
Communicable disease	Some services disrupted	Some services disrupted
Neglected Tropical Diseases	Not included in round 1	Some services disrupted
Noncommunicable diseases	No services disrupted	Some services disrupted
Mental, neurological, and substance use (MNS) disorders	Some services disrupted	Some services disrupted

Disruptions across service delivery channels

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)	Regional comparison	Global comparison
Primary care	Not included in round 1	Some services disrupted		
	% of countries			
Health promotion and prevention services	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	61%	53%
Routine scheduled visits	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	53%	54%
Visits for undifferentiated symptoms	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	47%	48%
Prescription renewals for chronic medications	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	47%	36%
Referrals to specialty care	Not included in round 1	5-25%	54%	48%

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)		
Emergency, critical and operative care	No services disrupted	Some services disrupted		
	% of countries			
Ambulance services at the scene	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	26%	19%
Acuity-based triage in emergency units	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	26%	18%
24-hour emergency room/unit services	Less than 5%	Less than 5%	20%	12%
Urgent blood transfusion services	Less than 5%	5-25%	23%	9%
Inpatient critical care services	Less than 5%	More than 50%	33%	19%
Elective surgeries	Not included in round 1	More than 50% ✓	71%	65%
Emergency surgeries	Less than 5%	More than 50%	31%	18%
Emergency obstetric surgeries	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	13%	13%
Emergency referrals for time-sensitive conditions	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	32%	27%

✓ Country intentionally modified services (e.g. temporary suspension or scaling back of services)

More than 50% 26 - 50% 5 - 25%

Trends in the case volume of surgical backlog during the previous 3 months	Not included in round 1	Increased
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Disruptions across service delivery channels (continued)

Regional
comparison

Global
comparison

Rehabilitative, palliative and long-term care

No services
disrupted

Some services
disrupted

% of countries

Rehabilitation services

Less than 5%

Less than 5%

50%



53%



Palliative services

Less than 5%

Less than 5%

39%



36%



Long-term care
services

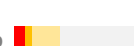
Not included in
round 1

More than 50%

35%



35%



Auxiliary services

Not included in
round 1

All services
disrupted

% of countries

Laboratory services

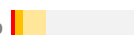
Not included in
round 1

26-50%

32%



27%



Radiology services

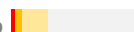
Not included in
round 1

5-25%

31%



28%



Disruptions to tracer services

Round 1
(May-Sept 2020)

Round 2
(Jan-March 2021)

Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition

Some services
disrupted

Some services
disrupted

% of countries

Family planning and contraception

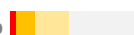
5-50%

5-25%

51%



44%



Antenatal care

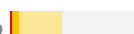
5-50%

5-25%

43%



39%



Facility based births

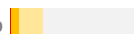
5-50%

Less than 5%

31%



25%



Postnatal care for women and newborns

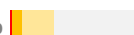
Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

32%



33%



Safe abortion and post-abortion care

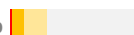
Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

30%



28%



Sick child services

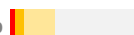
Less than 5%

5-25%

33%



34%



Management of moderate and severe
malnutrition

Less than 5%

5-25%

47%



41%



Intimate partner and sexual violence
prevention and response

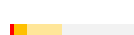
Not included in
round 1

5-25%

50%



39%



✓ Country intentionally modified services (e.g. temporary suspension or scaling back of services)

More than 50% 26 - 50% 5 - 25%

Disruptions to tracer services (continued)

Immunization

Round 1
(May-Sept 2020)

Round 2
(Jan-March 2021)

Regional
comparison

Global
comparison

Routine facility-based immunization services

5-50%

5-25%

43%

% of countries

34%

Routine outreach immunization services

5-50%

5-25%

54%

39%

Communicable diseases

Some services
disrupted

Some services
disrupted

Outbreak detection and control (for non-COVID-19 diseases)

5-50%

Less than 5%

19%

25%

HIV prevention services

Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

48%

46%

HIV testing services

Not included in
round 1

5-25% ✓

61%

49%

Continuation of established ARV treatment

Less than 5%

Less than 5%

19%

17%

Initiation of new ARV treatment

Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

18%

25%

Hepatitis B and C diagnosis and treatment

Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

40%

43%

TB case detection and treatment

5-50%

5-25% ✓

53%

51%

Malaria diagnosis and treatment

5-50%

Less than 5%

36%

39%

Campaigns for distribution of insecticide treated nets (ITN)

Less than 5%

Less than 5%

36%

39%

Malaria prevention campaigns: indoor residual spraying (IRS)

Less than 5%

Less than 5%

32%

33%

Malaria prevention campaigns: seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC)

Less than 5%

Not applicable

30%

30%

Neglected Tropical Diseases

Not included in
round 1

Some services
disrupted

Diagnosis, treatment and care for NTDs

Not included in
round 1

5-25%

48%

42%

Large scale preventive chemotherapy campaigns for NTDs

Not included in
round 1

More than 50% ✓

54%

60%

Community awareness and health education campaigns for NTDs

Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

52%

52%

Support for self-care, rehabilitation and psychosocial services for patients with chronic NTDs

Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

53%

52%

Prescriptions for NTD medicines

Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

30%

28%

Surgical procedures for NTDs

Not included in
round 1

Less than 5%

38%

30%

✓ Country intentionally modified services (e.g. temporary suspension or scaling back of services)

More than 50% 26 - 50% 5 - 25%

Disruptions to tracer services (continued)

Noncommunicable diseases

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)	Regional comparison	Global comparison
	No services disrupted	Some services disrupted		
			% of countries	
Hypertension management	Less than 5%	Do not know	55%	45%
Cardiovascular emergencies	Less than 5%	Less than 5%	29%	20%
Cancer screening	Less than 5%	Less than 5%	46%	49%
Cancer treatment	Not included in round 1	Less than 5%	44%	32%
Diabetes and diabetic complications management	Less than 5%	5-25%	48%	42%
Asthma services	Less than 5%	Less than 5%	28%	30%
Urgent dental care	Less than 5%	5-25% ✓	50%	42%

Mental, neurological, and substance use (MNS) disorders

	Some services disrupted	Some services disrupted		
			% of countries	
Management of emergency of MNS manifestations	Less than 5%	Less than 5%	43%	39%
Psychotherapy/counselling/psychosocial interventions for MNS disorders	Less than 5%	5-25% ✓	59%	54%
Prescriptions for MNS disorder medicines	Less than 5%	Less than 5%	38%	32%
Services for children and adolescents with mental health conditions or disabilities	More than 50%	Do not know	46%	45%
Services for older adults with mental health conditions or disabilities, including dementia	Less than 5%	5-25% ✓	48%	48%
Neuroimaging and neurophysiology	Not included in round 1	Not applicable	63%	53%
School mental health programme	More than 50%	More than 50% ✓	71%	66%
Suicide prevention programme	Less than 5%	5-25% ✓	53%	44%
Overdose prevention and management programmes	Less than 5%	Not applicable	50%	34%
Critical harm reduction services	5-50%	Not applicable	58%	39%

✓ Country intentionally modified services (e.g. temporary suspension or scaling back of services)

More than 50% 26 - 50% 5 - 25%

Reasons for disruptions

Supply-side factors

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)	Regional comparison	Global comparison
	% of countries			
Closure of outpatient services as per government directive	×	×	6%	12%
Closure of outpatient disease specific consultation clinics	✓	×	6%	16%
Closure of population level screening programmes	×	×	17%	14%
Decrease in inpatient volume due to cancellation of elective care	✓	×	33%	47%
Inpatient services/hospital beds not available	×	×	8%	19%
Insufficient staff availability (due to staff deployment to provide COVID-19 relief or other)	×	✓	44%	39%
Insufficient PPE available for health care providers to provide services	✓	×	44%	26%
Unavailability/stock out of essential medicines, medical diagnostics or other health products at health facilities	✓	✓	39%	22%
Changes in treatment policies for care seeking behaviour	✓	×	19%	35%

Demand-side factors

	% of countries			
Decrease in outpatient volume due to patients not presenting	✓	✓	56%	57%
Community fear/mistrust in seeking health care	Not included in round 1	×	64%	57%
Travel restrictions hindering access to the health facilities	×	×	42%	36%
Financial difficulties during outbreak/lockdown	✓	✓	58%	43%

Disruption to in-country supply chain system

	% of countries with disruption to in-country supply chain system			
	Not included in round 1	Yes	50%	33%

Health system and services responsiveness

National policies, plans and mechanisms to support continuity of essential health services (EHS)

Country had defined national EHS package prior to COVID-19 pandemic

Government has defined EHS to be maintained during COVID-19

Policies regarding maintenance of EHS have been updated in last three months

Country has designated a national focal point for maintaining EHS during COVID-19

Government has allocated additional funding to maintain EHS during COVID-19

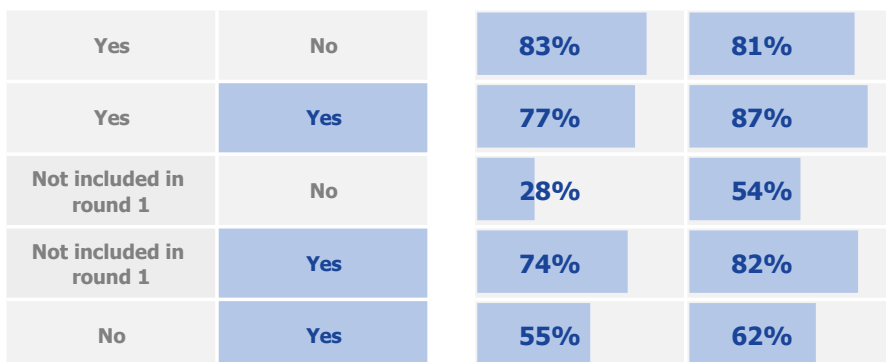
Round 1
(May-Sept 2020)

Round 2
(Jan-March 2021)

Regional comparison

Global comparison

% of countries responding yes



Information tracking

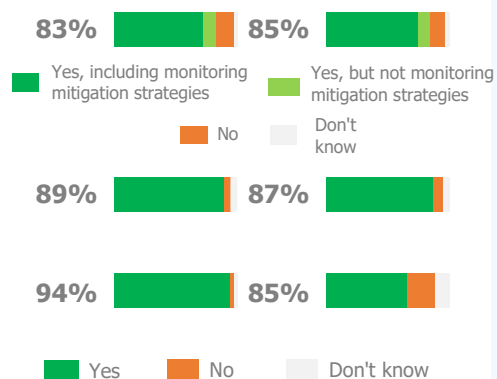
Regularly monitoring the continuity of EHS during COVID-19

Existence of team dedicated to tracking and addressing the infodemic and health misinformation during COVID-19

Collecting or collating data on comorbidities in COVID-19 patients

Not included in round 1	No
Not included in round 1	Yes, within Ministry of Health or equivalent
Not included in round 1	Yes

% of countries



Strategic changes to service delivery platform access

Outpatient services

Inpatient services

Emergency unit services

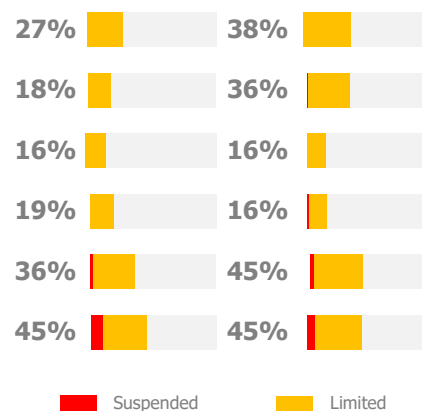
Prehospital emergency care

Community-based care

Mobile clinics















Functioning as normal	Functioning as normal
Functioning as normal	Functioning as normal
Functioning as normal	Functioning as normal
Functioning as normal	Functioning as normal
Limited access	Functioning as normal
Limited access	Functioning as normal

% of countries



Health system and services responsiveness (continued)































Strategic changes to essential public health functions and activities

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)	Regional comparison	Global comparison
Health protection population-based activities	Not included in round 1	Functioning as normal	47% 	40% 
Health promotion population-based activities	Not included in round 1	Functioning as normal	38% 	43% 
Disease prevention population-based activities	Not included in round 1	Functioning as normal	41% 	47% 
Surveillance and response	Not included in round 1	Functioning as normal	18% 	14% 
Emergency preparedness and response	Not included in round 1	Functioning as normal	15% 	12% 
Communications and social mobilization activities for health	Not included in round 1	Functioning as normal	24% 	27% 
Public health research	Not included in round 1	Functioning as normal	48% 	43% 

 Suspended

 Limited

Mitigation approaches to overcome service disruptions

			Regional comparison	Global comparison
Triaging to identify priorities	✓	✓	44% 	60% 
Redirection of patients to alternate care sites/ reorientation of referral pathways	✓	✓	42% 	54% 
Telemedicine deployment to replace in-person consults	×	×	14% 	48% 
Integration of several services into single visit	Not included in round 1	✓	25% 	29% 
Self-care interventions where appropriate	Not included in round 1	×	36% 	40% 
Provision of home-based care where appropriate	Not included in round 1	✓	36% 	51% 
Catch-up campaigns for missed appointments	Not included in round 1	×	22% 	31% 
Task shifting / role delegation	✓	×	31% 	38% 
Recruitment of additional staff	Not included in round 1	✓	53% 	56% 
Expanding facility hours	Not included in round 1	×	11% 	25% 
Novel supply chain management and logistics approaches	×	✓	22% 	31% 
Novel dispensing approaches for medicines	Not included in round 1	×	25% 	35% 
Novel prescribing approaches (e.g. tele- prescription, extended drug prescriptions)	Not included in round 1	×	22% 	40% 
Community communications (e.g. informing on changes to service delivery, addressing misinformation and community fears of infection)	×	✓	64% 	67% 
Government removal of user fees	×	×	8% 	5% 

Health system and services responsiveness (continued)

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)	Regional comparison	Global comparison
Strategies for reaching vulnerable populations			% of countries	
Identifying vulnerable groups of primary concern	Not included in round 1	×	39%	64%
Use of proactive governmental strategies to reach out to vulnerable groups	Not included in round 1	✓	56%	60%
Use of existing networks or organization to reach out to vulnerable groups	Not included in round 1	×	58%	58%

Health system and services responsiveness: Use of telehealth technologies

Services for which telehealth technologies are being used to support service delivery

			% of countries	
Pharmacy and medication refills	Not included in round 1	×	11%	43%
Scheduling appointments	Not included in round 1	×	17%	49%
Imaging diagnostics	Not included in round 1	×	8%	28%
Emergency care consultations	Not included in round 1	×	8%	30%
Primary care consultations	Not included in round 1	×	19%	49%
Family planning counselling	Not included in round 1	×	0%	22%
Prenatal care consultations	Not included in round 1	×	6%	28%
Child health consultations	Not included in round 1	×	6%	32%
Mental health consultations	Not included in round 1	×	3%	37%
Chronic care consultations	Not included in round 1	×	17%	40%
Eye care consultations	Not included in round 1	×	8%	17%
None	Not included in round 1	✓	33%	24%

Health system and services responsiveness: Use of telehealth technologies (continued)

Barriers to use of telehealth technologies

Round 1
(May-Sept 2020)

Round 2
(Jan-March 2021)

Regional
comparison

Global
comparison

% of countries

Lack of funding to set up and implement programmes

Not included in round 1

✓

53%

44%

Limited organizational or technical capacities to transition to use

Not included in round 1

×

58%

59%

Limited awareness/knowledge of patient and/or providers regarding telehealth technologies

Not included in round 1

✓

44%

54%

Limited access to telehealth technologies for patients and/or providers

Not included in round 1

×

69%

68%

Security and privacy concerns

Not included in round 1

×

8%

21%

Legal or regulatory barriers

Not included in round 1

×

3%

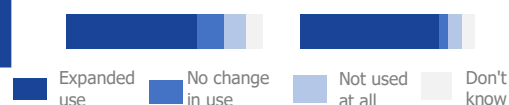
19%

Use of eLearning or digital learning for training or supervision of health workforce

Not included in round 1

Expanded use

% of countries



Priority needs and technical assistance requirements from WHO

Technical areas

✓ Monitoring and evaluation capacities

Request

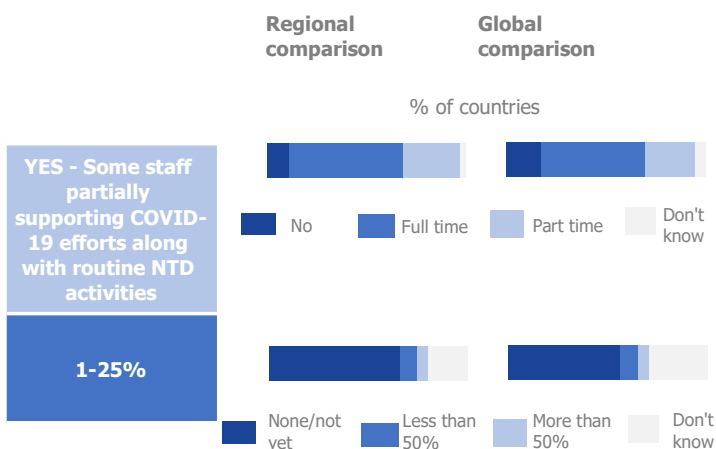
Conducting Health facility service availability and readiness assessment; developing M&E framework to monitor continuity of essential health services and improvement in essential health service; and Mobilize financial and technical resources for health service capacity assessment (resilience assessment)

In-depth profiles: Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)

Infrastructure and activities

Government staff responsible for NTDs have been reassigned/deployed to COVID-19 response

Percentage of government funds for NTDs that have been reassigned to non-NTD services due to COVID-19 response efforts



Planned NTD government activities that have been postponed

None

Advocacy and resource mobilization for NTD programme

Training and capacity-building activities (in-person or virtual) related to NTDs

Surveys/population screening/surveillance for active case finding

Survey postponed:

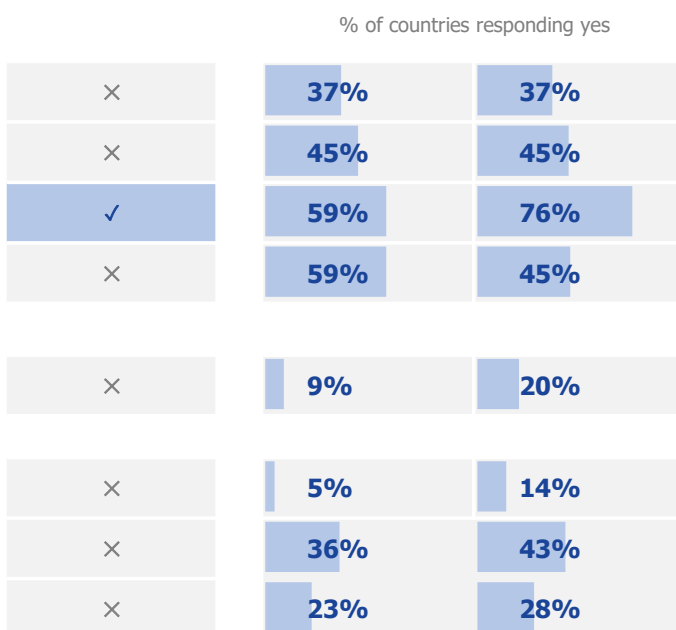
Integrated vector management

Vector postponed:

Animal health/control of zoonotic NTDs

Monitoring, evaluation and research

Information reporting on NTDs



Perceived impact of COVID-19 on NTD outcomes and activities

Mortality related to NTDs

Funding for related NTD activities

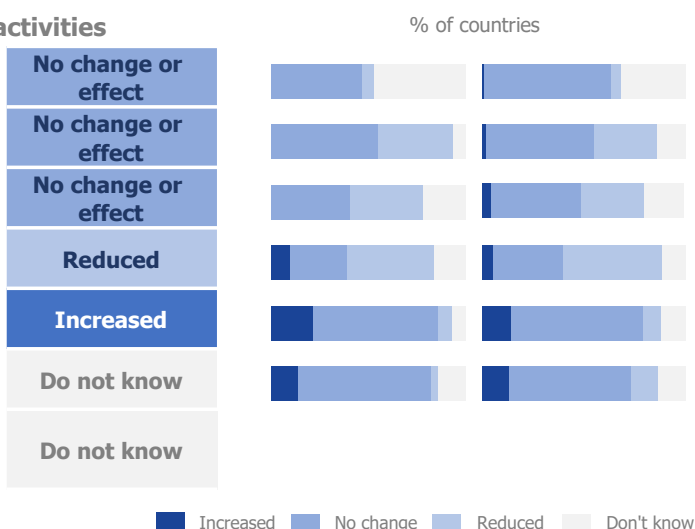
Visibility of population at risk for NTDs

Prioritization of NTD activities

Expiration of NTD medicines and diagnostics

Stock out of NTD medicines and diagnostics

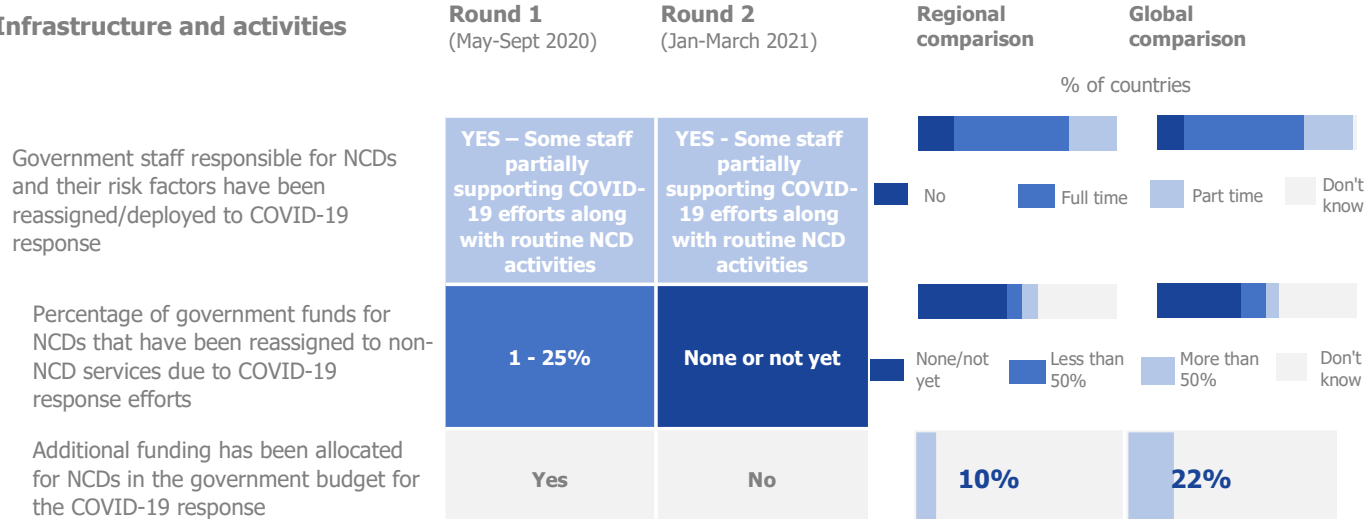
Other



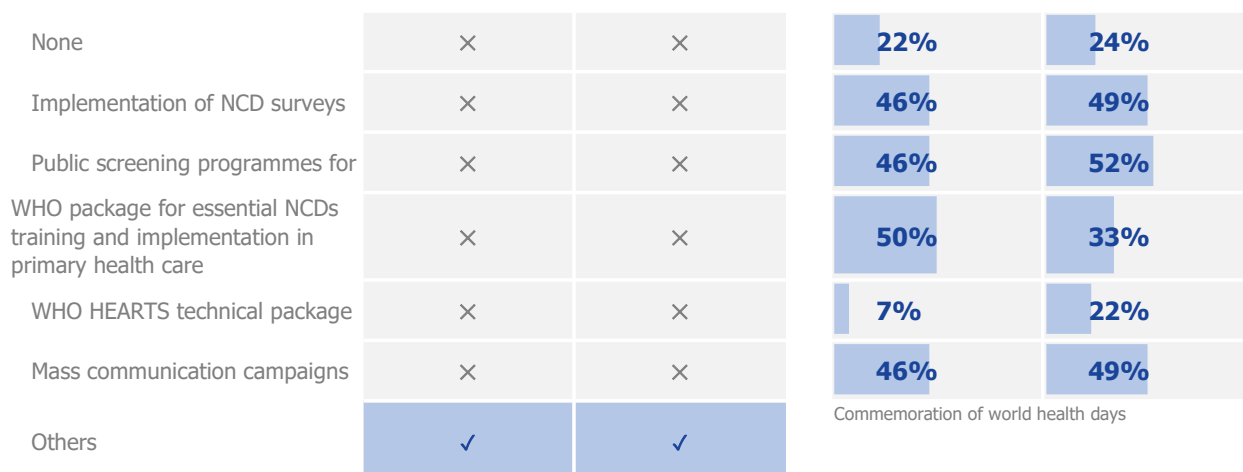
Legend: Increased, No change, Reduced, Don't know

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)

Infrastructure and activities

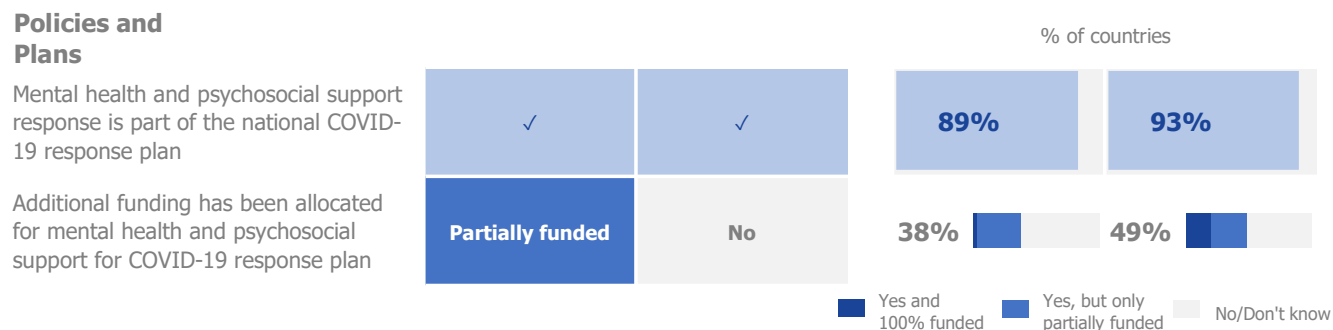


Planned NCD government activities that have been postponed



Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders (MNS)

Policies and Plans



Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders (MNS) (continued)

	Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)	Regional comparison	Global comparison
Activities that have been implemented as part of the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) response plan for COVID-19			% of countries	

Orient responders to mental health and psychosocial aspects of COVID-19

Not included in round 1

✓

81%

82%

Establishment of inter-sectoral referral pathways and contextualization for limited physical distancing

Not included in round 1

×

47%

56%

Distribution of timely and accessible information on general and MHPSS services, coping strategies and updates

Not included in round 1

✓

63%

78%

Provide MHPSS to people in COVID-19 treatment centres, isolation and quarantine

Not included in round 1

✓

91%

79%

Protection of mental health and well-being of all responders, ensuring access to mental health and psychosocial care

Not included in round 1

✓

69%

73%

Provide care and address the basic needs and mental health care needs of those with existing MNS conditions induced or exacerbated by COVID-19

Not included in round 1

✓

66%

71%

Address the mental health needs of older adults, people with disabilities and other vulnerable persons

Not included in round 1

✓

38%

60%

Targeted risk communication strategies and campaigns to address social stigma

Not included in round 1

✓

66%

63%

Establish opportunities for the bereaved to mourn from a distance. Integrate response activities into existing services.

Not included in round 1

✓

47%

42%

Ensure that risk of infection for people with mental health conditions in mental health hospitals are minimized

Not included in round 1

✓

66%

71%

Mental, neurological, and substance use disorders (MNS) (continued)

Functioning multisectoral mental health and psychosocial coordination platform for COVID-19 response exists

Round 1 (May-Sept 2020)	Round 2 (Jan-March 2021)
No response	×

Regional
comparison

Global
comparison

% of countries



Ministries and bodies that are part of the platform

Ministry of Health

No response

Not applicable

100%

99%

Ministry of Social/Family Affairs

No response

Not applicable

75%

61%

Ministry of Education

No response

Not applicable

70%

58%

Ministry of Labour

Not included in round 1

Not applicable

20%

22%

Ministry of Finance

No response

Not applicable

25%

20%

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

No response

Not applicable

10%

8%

United Nations Agencies

No response

Not applicable

60%

54%

Governmental entity responsible for substance use

No response

Not applicable

30%

42%

Non-governmental organizations

No response

Not applicable

60%

62%

Service user representatives

No response

Not applicable

20%

26%

National professional associations/societies

Not included in round 1

Not applicable

55%

57%

National disaster management authority

Not included in round 1

Not applicable

45%

37%

Strategic changes MNS services access at primary, secondary and tertiary levels

Mental health services at mental hospitals

Not included in round 1

Services are open

10%

13%

Mental health services at general hospitals

Not included in round 1

Services are open

10%

16%

Neurology/brain health services at health facilities

Not included in round 1

Services are open

14%

21%

Services for substance use disorders at health facilities

Not included in round 1

Services are open

24%

28%

Community-based services for MNS disorders

Not included in round 1

Services are open

24%

23%

Services are partially open Services are closed

Information tracking

Collecting or collating data on MNS disorders or manifestations in people with COVID-19

✓

×

45%

53%

Planned or ongoing study on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health/brain health/substance use

Mental health impact

No response

✓

94%

95%

Neurological disorders or brain health

No response

×

24%

19%

Substance use impact

Not included in round 1

×

29%

28%

No

✓

×

48%

34%