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News release

Namibians worried about COVID-19 impacts but believe prayer is more effective than vaccines, Afrobarometer survey finds

Nearly all adult Namibians are worried about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their households, the country, and the future of their children, according to a telephone survey by Afrobarometer.

But a majority of citizens have concerns about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines and believe that prayer is more effective than vaccines in preventing COVID-19 infection. Only about half say they are likely to try to get vaccinated.



The survey, conducted last December-February, is Afrobarometer's first under its "AB Calling" telephone survey label.

With 54,659 COVID-19 cases and 817 deaths as of 1 June 2021 reported by the Namibia Statistics Agency, the country is facing its biggest health crisis since the start of the pandemic. About 76,500 vaccine doses have been administered, according to the World Health Organisation. Slow vaccine uptake is of great concern with a third wave of infections looming large during this winter period.

Key findings

- About nine out of 10 adult Namibians say they are "somewhat" or "very" worried that a member of their household will become sick with COVID-19 (86%) and that the pandemic will negatively affect the country's economy (94%), their household's economic situation (92%), and the future well-being of Namibia's children (94%) (Figure 1).
- Two-thirds (65%) of citizens do not trust the government to ensure that any COVID-19 vaccine that is developed or offered to Namibians is safe (Figure 2).
- Half (50%) of Namibians say they are unlikely to try to get vaccinated even if the government says the vaccine is safe (Figure 3).
- More than three out of four citizens (77%) report that they are worried that companies that make COVID-19 vaccines will try to test them on ordinary Namibians even if they have not been proven to be safe (Figure 4).
- Close to two-thirds (63%) of Namibians believe that prayer is more effective than a vaccine would be in preventing COVID-19 infection (Figure 5).

Afrobarometer "AB Calling" survey

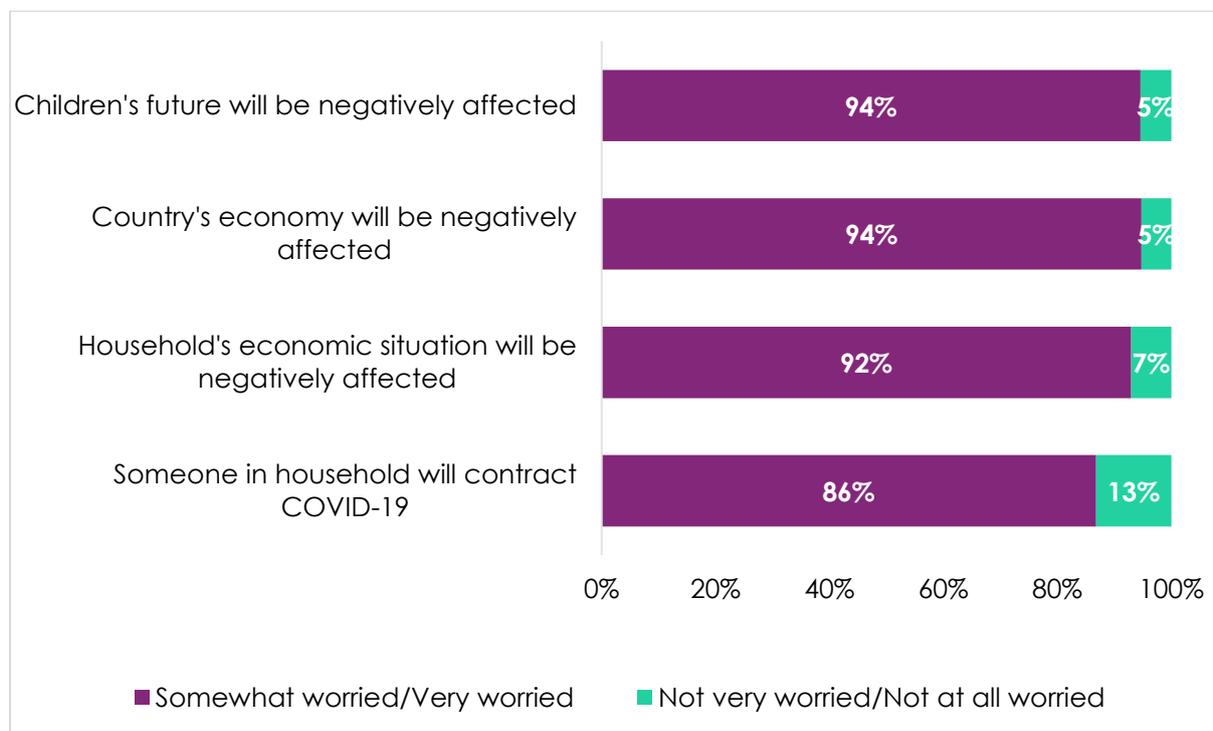
Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Seven rounds of surveys were completed in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2018. Round 8 surveys are being conducted in 34 countries during 2019/2021. Traditionally, all Afrobarometer surveys are conducted via face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice using nationally representative samples.

The AB Calling survey reported here, however, reports results of Afrobarometer’s first survey using telephone rather than face-to-face interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Via a quota system, the 1,200 interviews were distributed across regions and urban-rural areas in proportion to the share of each in the national population, as in a standard Afrobarometer survey. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Note, however, that samples achieved via phone surveys tend to be somewhat younger and somewhat more educated than those obtained in face-to-face surveys. Respondents could choose to be interviewed in English, Afrikaans, Oshikwanyama, Otjiherero, or Rukwangali.

This special (“Round 8.5”) survey, conducted by Survey Warehouse between 11 December 2020 and 10 February 2021, focused almost exclusively on experiences, evaluations, and attitudes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous face-to-face surveys were conducted in Namibia in 1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2019.

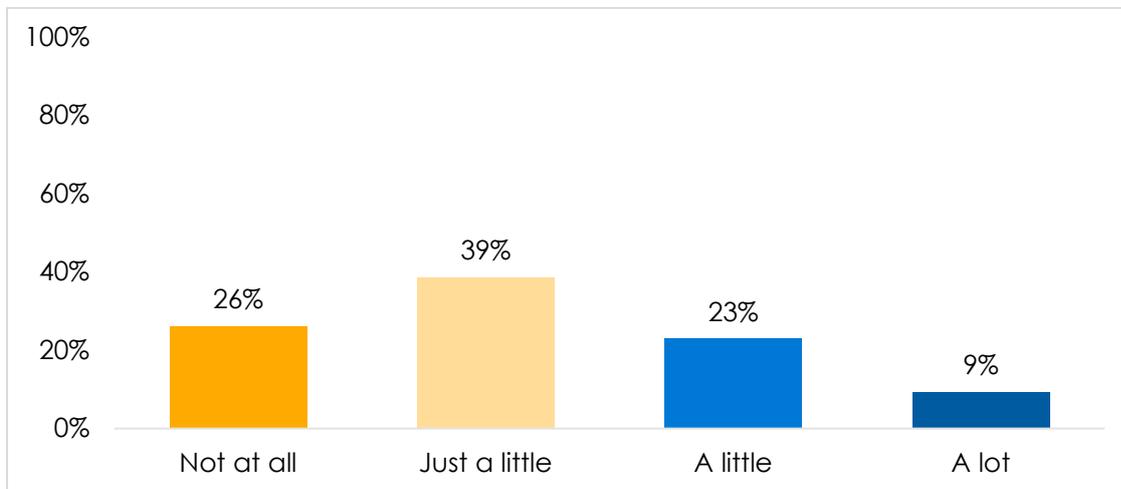
Figures

Figure 1: Worried about the impact of COVID-19 | Namibia | 2021



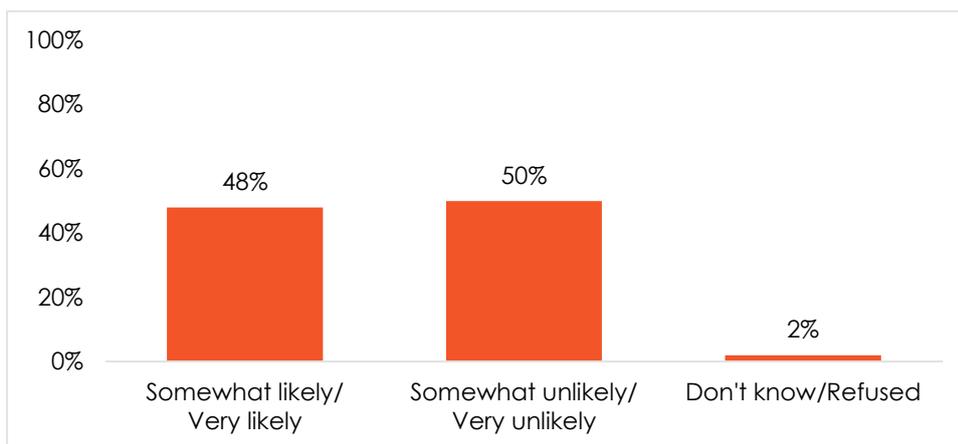
Respondents were asked: Looking ahead, how worried are you, if at all, about each of the following?
 That you or someone in your household will become sick with COVID-19?
 That your household's economic situation will be negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
 That the country's overall economic situation will be negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
 That the pandemic will have lasting negative impacts on the future well-being of Namibia's children?

Figure 2: Trust government to ensure vaccines are safe | Namibia | 2021



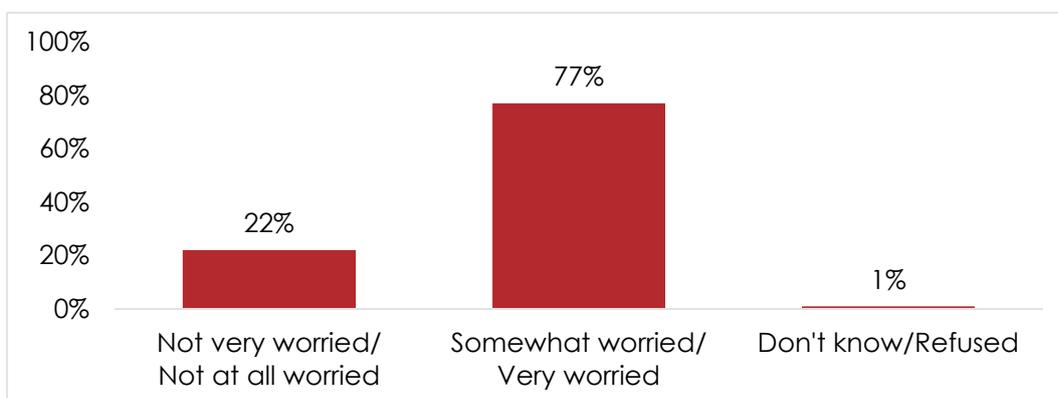
Respondents were asked: How much do you trust the government to ensure that any vaccine for COVID-19 that is developed or offered to Namibian citizens is safe before it is used in this country?

Figure 3: Likelihood of getting vaccinated | Namibia | 2021



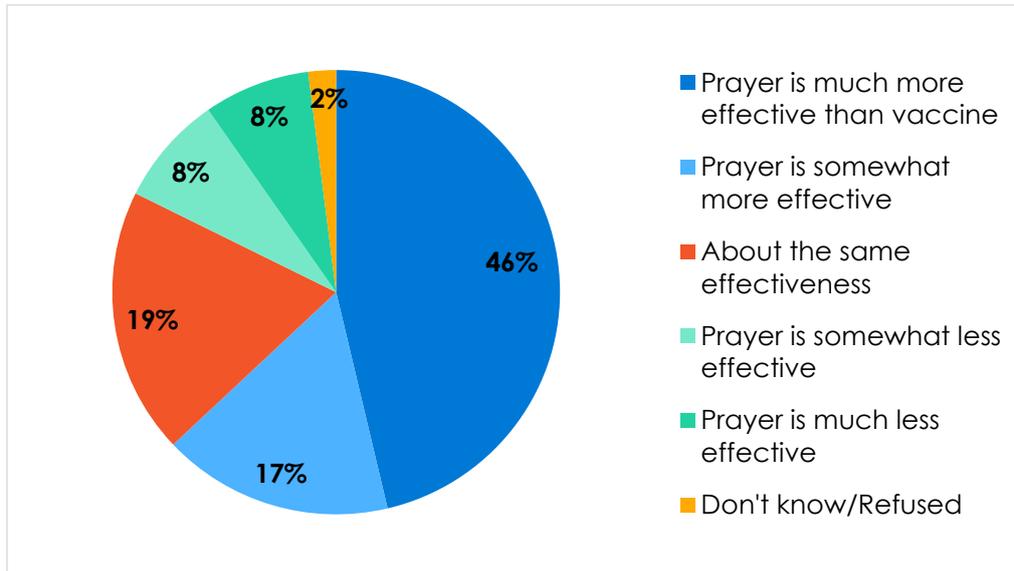
Respondents were asked: If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available and the government says it is safe, how likely are you to try to get vaccinated?

Figure 4: Worried that unsafe vaccines will be tested on Namibians | Namibia | 2021



Respondents were asked: How worried are you, if at all, that companies that make vaccines for COVID-19 will try to test them on ordinary Namibians even if they have not been proven to be safe?

Figure 5: Prayer vs. vaccine: Which is more effective? | Namibia | 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?

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