

Praia, Cabo Verde  
18 August 2020

## News release

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### Even before COVID-19, many Cabo Verdeans had difficulty accessing medical care, new Afrobarometer survey shows

Even before the coronavirus crisis, more than half of Cabo Verdeans who had contact with public medical facilities said they found it difficult to obtain the care they needed, a new Afrobarometer survey shows.

Poor and urban citizens were particularly likely to report difficulties in accessing health-care services. Moreover, one in three respondents said they went without needed medical care at least once during the previous year.

Survey respondents, interviewed last December, ranked health as the third-most-important problem that the government should address, trailing only unemployment and crime/security. However, very few thought the government is doing a good job in improving basic health services.

While Cabo Verde has won international praise for good governance and infrastructure development to improve living conditions, these findings reveal important gaps in the country's health system.

#### Key findings

- More than half (52%) of Cabo Verdeans who had contact with public clinics or hospitals during the previous year said they found it “difficult” or “very difficult” to obtain the necessary medical care, a 10-percentage-point increase compared to 2014 (Figure 1).
  - The poorest citizens were almost twice as likely as the economically best-off to find it difficult to get health care (66% vs. 38%) (Figure 2). Difficulty was also more common in urban areas (56%) than in rural zones (41%) and among younger citizens (55% among those aged 18-55 years) than their elders (43%).
- One-third (34%) of Cabo Verdeans said they went without medical care at least once during the previous year (Figure 3).
  - A lack of medical care was almost four times as common among citizens with no formal education as among those with post-secondary qualifications (56% vs. 15%) and was considerably more common among rural residents than urbanites (43% vs. 31%). Lack of access to health care is a key indicator of poverty and is strongly correlated with the other forms of deprivation, including going without enough food, clean water, cooking fuel, and a cash income, that make up Afrobarometer's Lived Poverty Index.<sup>1</sup>
- Health is the third-most-important problem that Cabo Verdeans want their government to resolve (cited by 44%), behind unemployment (69%) and crime/security (58%) (Figure 4).

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<sup>1</sup> For more on lived poverty, see Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 62, [Lived poverty on the rise: Decade of living-standard gains ends in Africa](#).

- Only one-third (32%) of Cabo Verdeans said the government is doing “fairly well” or “very well” in improving basic health services, while two-thirds (65%) said it is performing “fairly badly” or “very badly” in that regard (Figure 5).

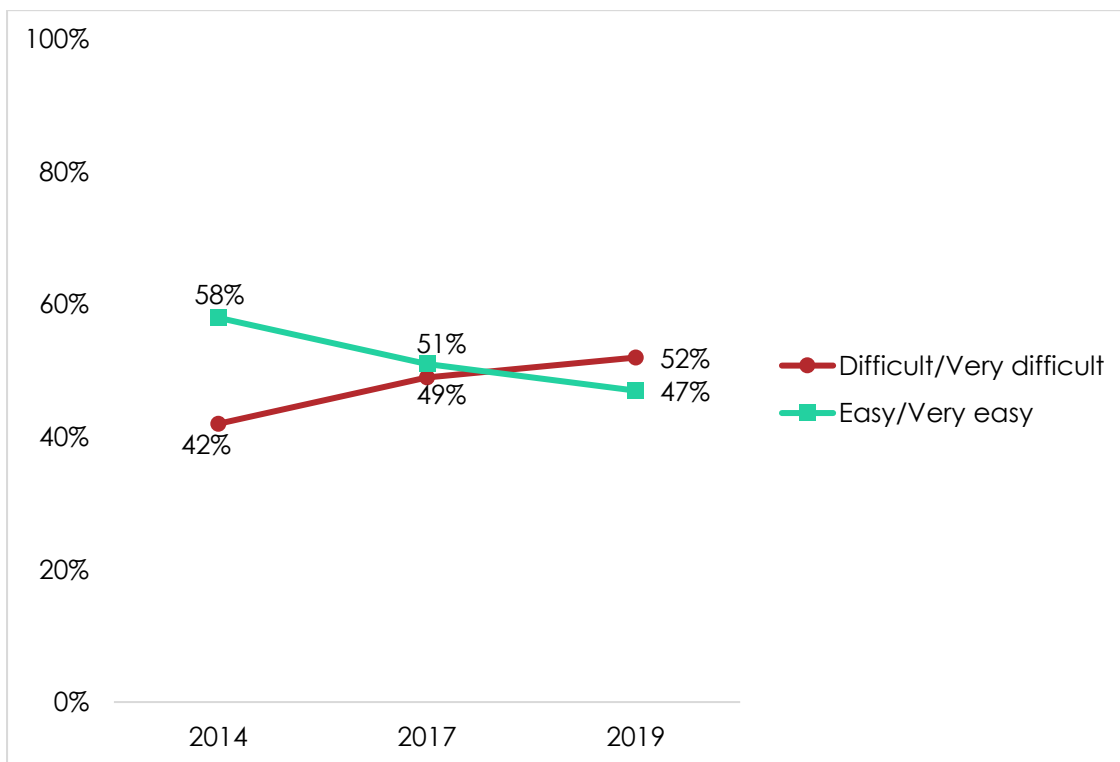
### Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, nonpartisan survey 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 in 2019/2020 are planned in at least 35 countries. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples.

The Afrobarometer team in Cabo Verde, led by Afrosondagem, interviewed 1,200 adult Cabo Verdeans between 8 and 22 December 2019. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Cabo Verde in 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2017.

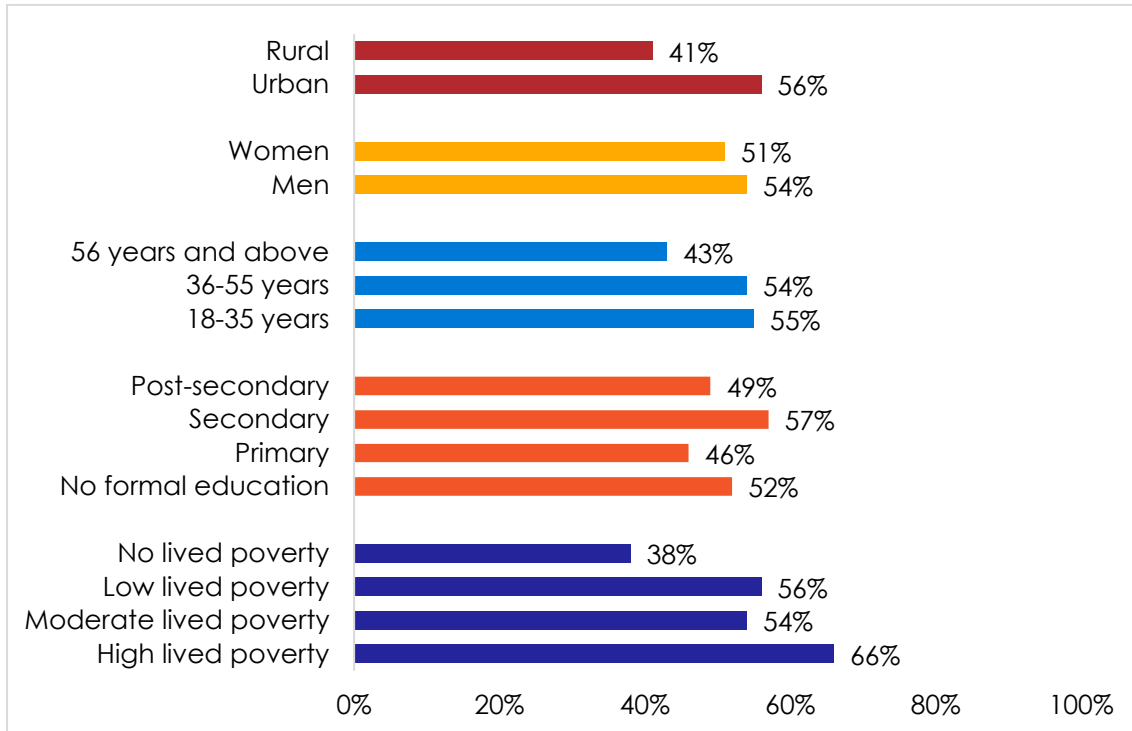
### Charts

**Figure 1: Reported ease or difficulty of access to medical care | Cabo Verde | 2019**



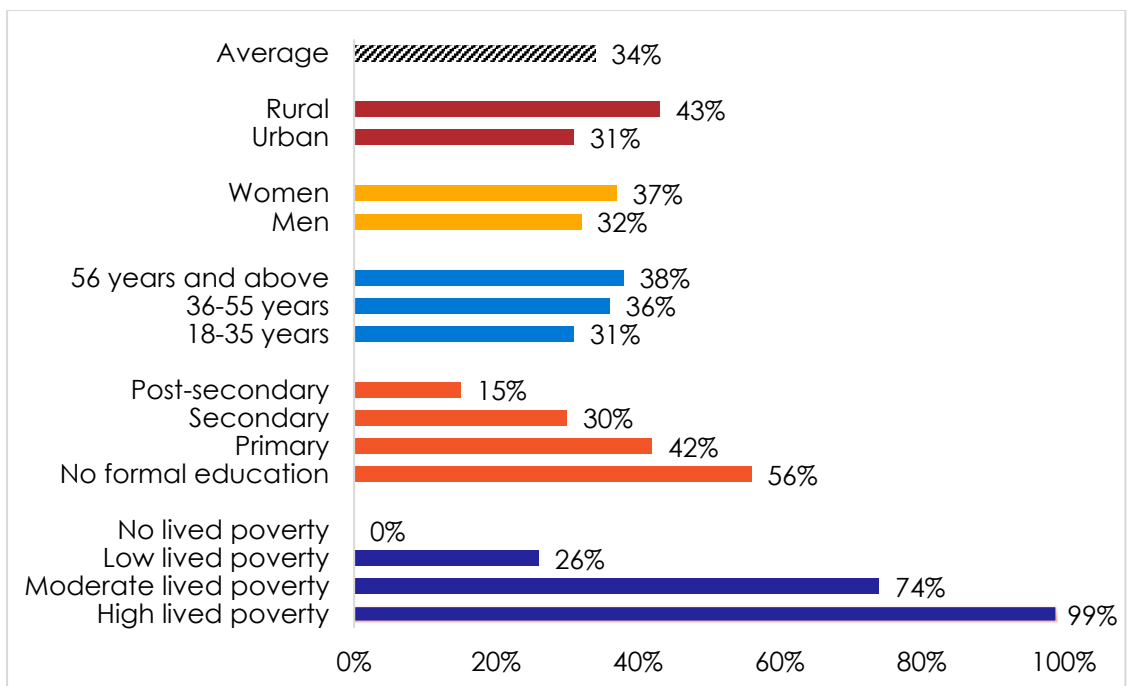
*Respondents who had contact with a public clinic or hospital during the previous year were asked: How easy or difficult was it to obtain the medical care you needed?*

**Figure 2: Reported difficulty of access to medical care | by socio-demographic group | Cabo Verde | 2019**



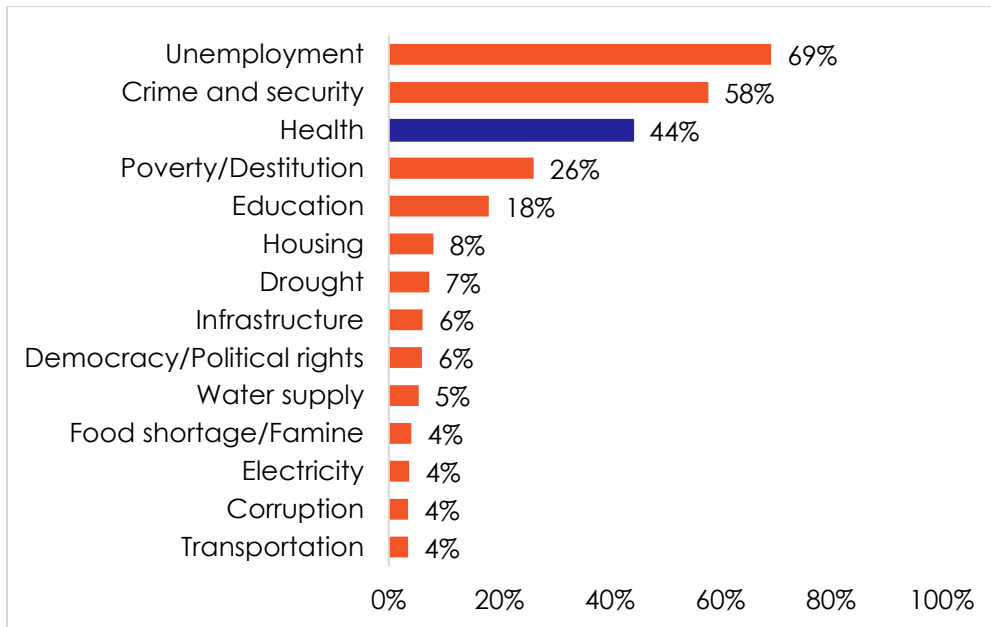
*Respondents who had contact a public clinic or hospital during the previous year were asked: How easy or difficult was it to obtain the medical care you needed? (% who said "difficult" or "very difficult")*

**Figure 3: Went without medical care | by socio-demographic group | Cabo Verde | 2019**



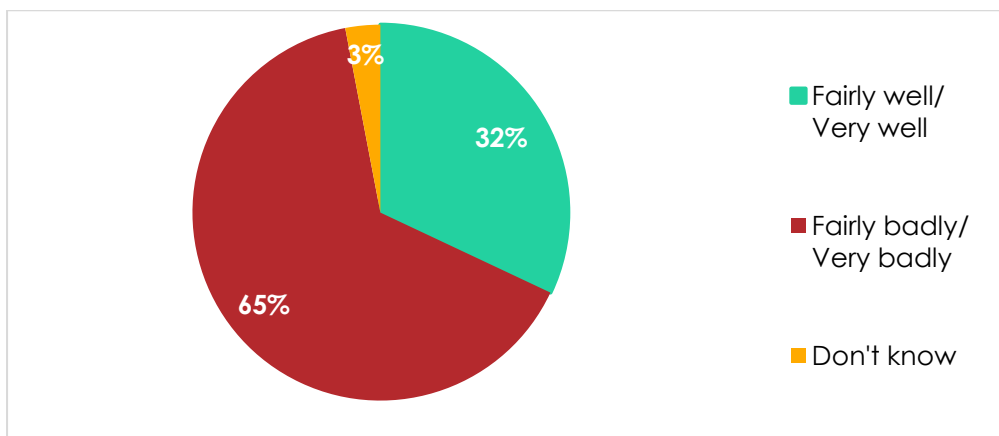
**Respondents were asked:** Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without medicines or medical treatment? (% who said "just once or twice," "several times," "many times," or "always")

**Figure 4: Most important problems | Cabo Verde | 2019**



**Respondents were asked:** In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Respondents could give up to three answers.)

**Figure 5: Government performance in improving basic health services | Cabo Verde | 2019**



**Respondents were asked:** How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Improving basic health services?

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