13 March 2025
Gaborone, Botswana

News release

Batswana overwhelmingly lack medical aid, but willing to pay higher taxes in exchange for universal public health care

Medical aid coverage is extremely limited among Batswana: Only about one-tenth of adults say they have insurance that helps pay their medical bills if they get sick, a new Afrobarometer survey reveals.

Among those who lack medical aid coverage, more than eight in 10 say it is because they cannot afford it.

More than three-fourths of citizens indicate that government should ensure that all citizens have access to adequate health care, even if that means raising taxes.

Key findings

- Only about one-tenth (12%) of Batswana say they have medical aid coverage, while an overwhelming majority (87%) say they do not (Figure 1).
- Citizens who are especially unlikely to have health insurance include adults with secondary schooling or less (91%-97%), respondents experiencing moderate or high lived poverty (92-94%), and rural (94%) and semi-urban dwellers (90%) (Figure 2).
- Among Batswana who do not have medical aid coverage, more than eight in 10 (82%) say it is because they cannot afford it (Figure 3).
- Almost eight in 10 Batswana (78%) agree that the government should ensure universal access to adequate health care, even if it means paying higher taxes (Figure 4).

Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys were launched in January 2024. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Botswana, led by Star Awards, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Batswana between 6 July and 19 July 2024. 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 Botswana in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2022.

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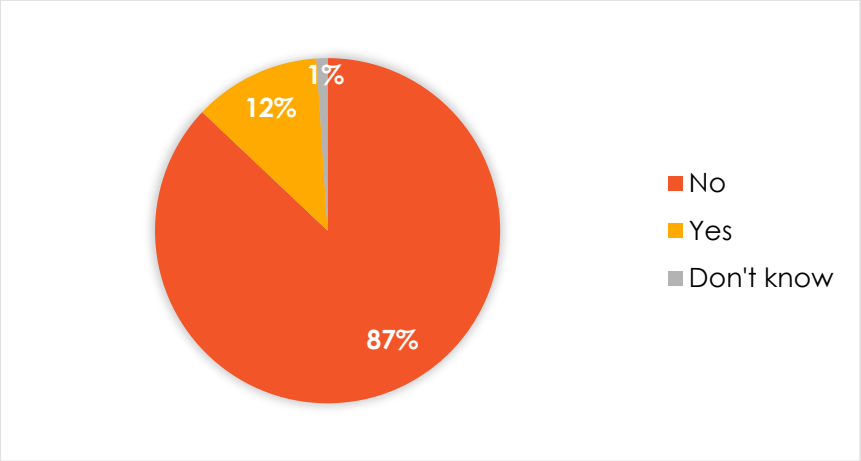
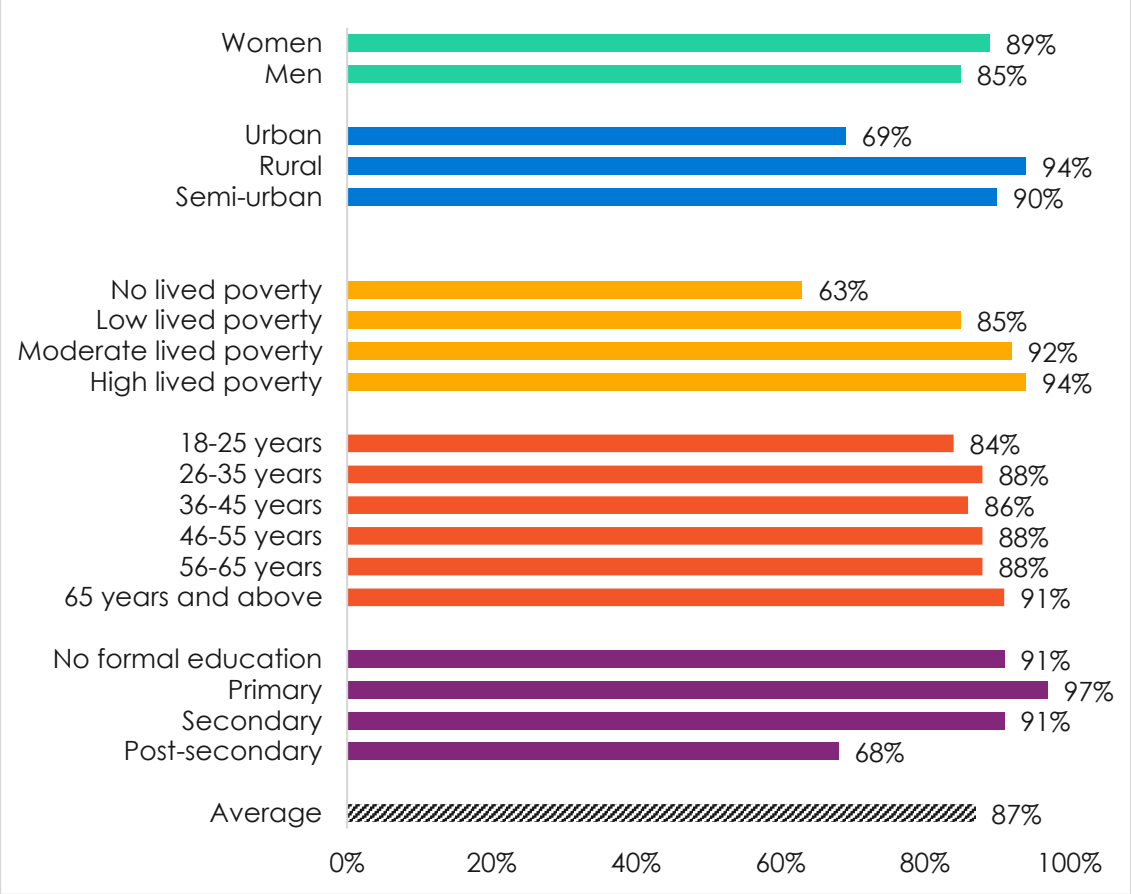
Charts

Figure 1: Medical aid coverage | Botswana | 2024



Respondents were asked: *Do you have any medical aid coverage that helps pay your medical bills if you get sick?*

Figure 2: Lacking medical aid coverage | by demographic group | Botswana | 2024



Respondents were asked: *Do you have any medical aid coverage that helps pay your medical bills if you get sick? (% who say "no")*

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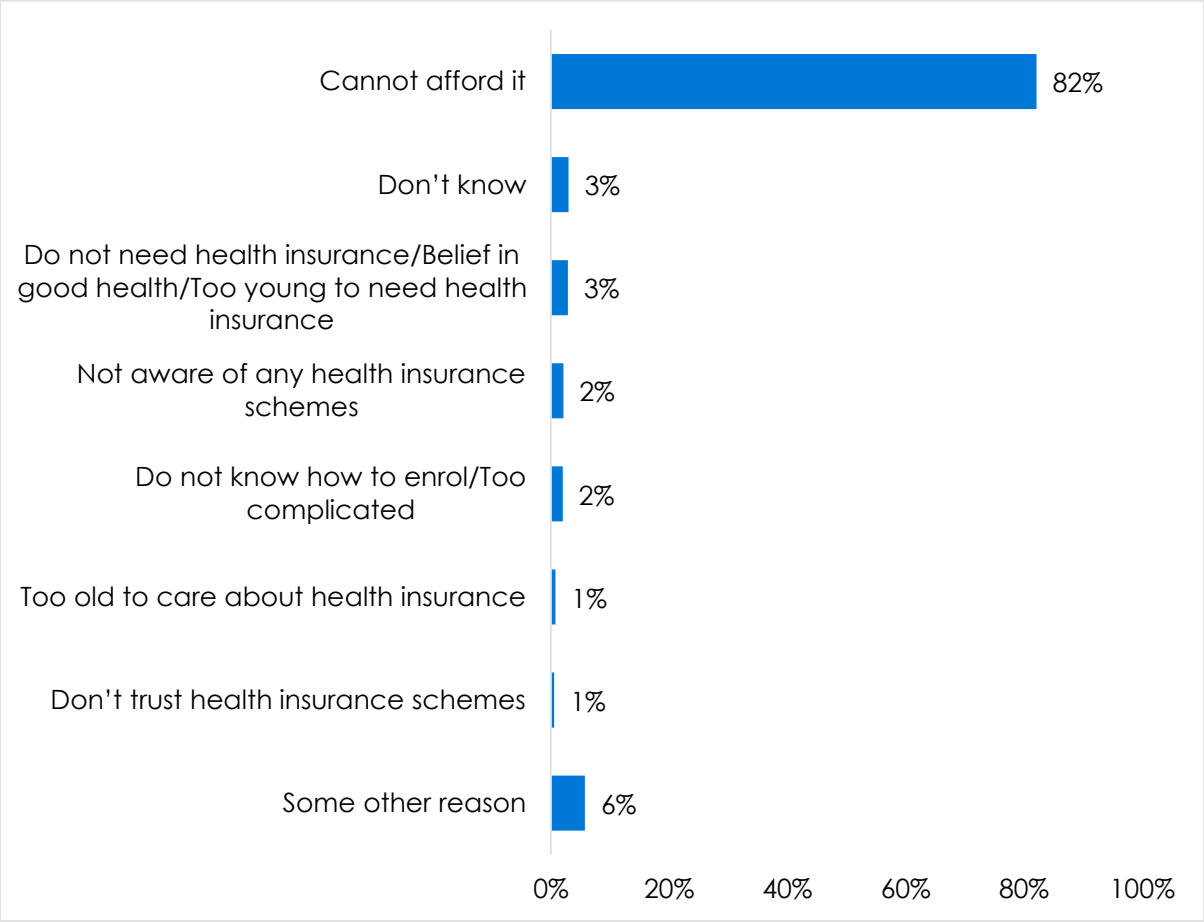
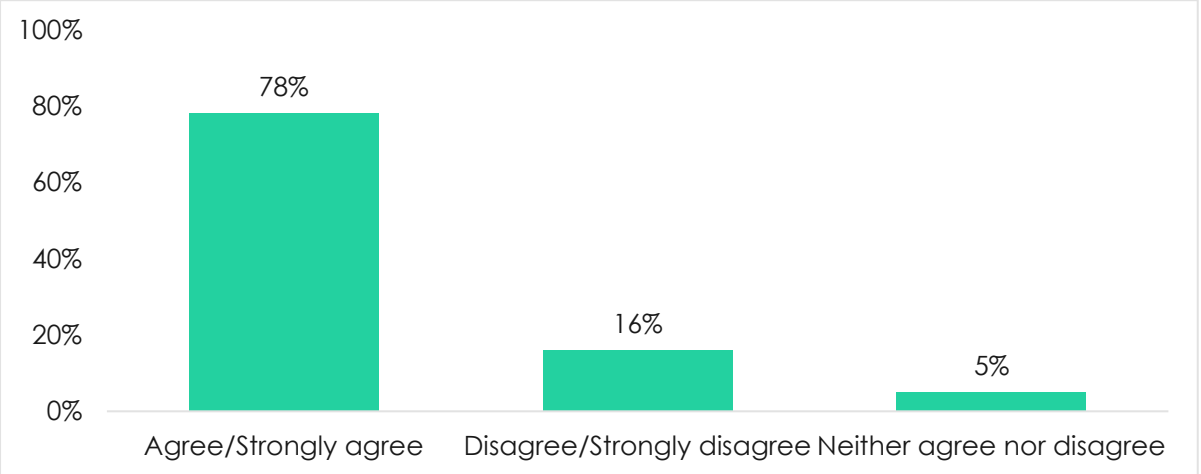
Figure 3: Main reason for not having medical aid coverage | Botswana | 2024



Respondents who do not have medical aid coverage were asked: *What is the main reason you don't have medical aid coverage? (Respondents who have medical aid coverage are excluded.)*

Figure 4: Support universal health care for higher taxes? | Botswana | 2024



Respondents were asked: *Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Government should ensure that all citizens have access to adequate healthcare, even if that means raising taxes.*

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