

Accra, Ghana  
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## News release

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### **World Health Day: Health overtakes unemployment as Africans' top policy priority, Afrobarometer surveys show**

Health ranks as the most important problem that Africans want their governments to address, overtaking unemployment at the top of citizens' policy agenda for the first time in at least a decade, the latest Afrobarometer [Pan-Africa Profile](#) reveals.

The new report, based on 45,600 interviews across 38 African countries in 2024/2025, shows that Africans overwhelmingly say their governments should ensure health care for all, even if doing so requires higher taxes. Most citizens do not have any form of health insurance and say they worry about their ability to obtain and afford needed medical care. About two-thirds of citizens report that they or a family member went without medicines or medical treatment at least once during the previous year.

Among respondents who had contact with a public hospital or clinic in the past 12 months, many report difficulties accessing medical care and cite shortages of medical supplies, long wait times, and high costs.

#### **Key findings**

- On average across 38 surveyed countries, 38% of respondents cite health among their top three priorities for government action, placing it ahead of unemployment (33%) as well as education, the increasing cost of living, infrastructure/roads, and water supply (all 23%) (Figure 1).
- Seven in 10 Africans (70%) say their governments should ensure that all citizens have access to adequate health care, even if that means raising taxes (Figure 2).
- On average across 36 countries, only 20% of respondents report having any form of medical-aid coverage (Figure 3).
  - Gabon stands out with the highest rate of insured respondents (83%), followed by Ghana (72%), Morocco (71%), and Tunisia (70%).
  - In Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Uganda, and São Tomé and Príncipe, fewer than one in 20 respondents say they have medical aid.
- More than half (53%) of Africans say they worry "a lot" that if they or someone in their family gets sick, they will not be able to obtain or afford needed medical care. Another 35% say they worry "somewhat" or "a little" (Figure 4).
- Almost two-thirds (65%) of Africans say that they or a family member went without needed health care during the previous year, including 26% who say this happened "many times" or "always" (Figure 5).
- Among Africans who had contact with a public clinic or hospital during the previous year:
  - Half (51%) say it was "difficult" or "very difficult" to obtain the care they needed (Figure 6).

- o Majorities report encountering a variety of other problems, including long wait times (79%), a lack of medicines or other supplies (71%), facilities in poor condition (58%), and/or absent doctors or other medical staff (56%) (Figure 7).

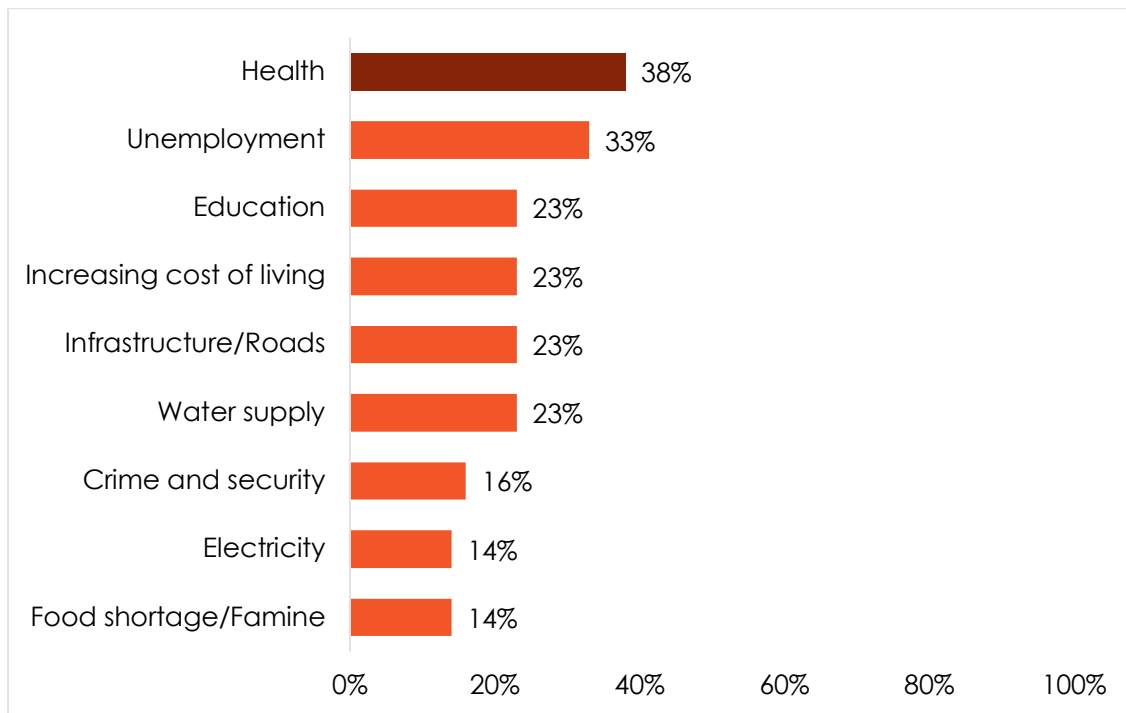
**Afrobarometer surveys**

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. Ten survey rounds in up to 45 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 10 surveys (2024/2025) cover 38 countries.

Afrobarometer's National Partners conduct face-to-face interviews with nationally representative samples of adults in the language of the respondent's choice that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

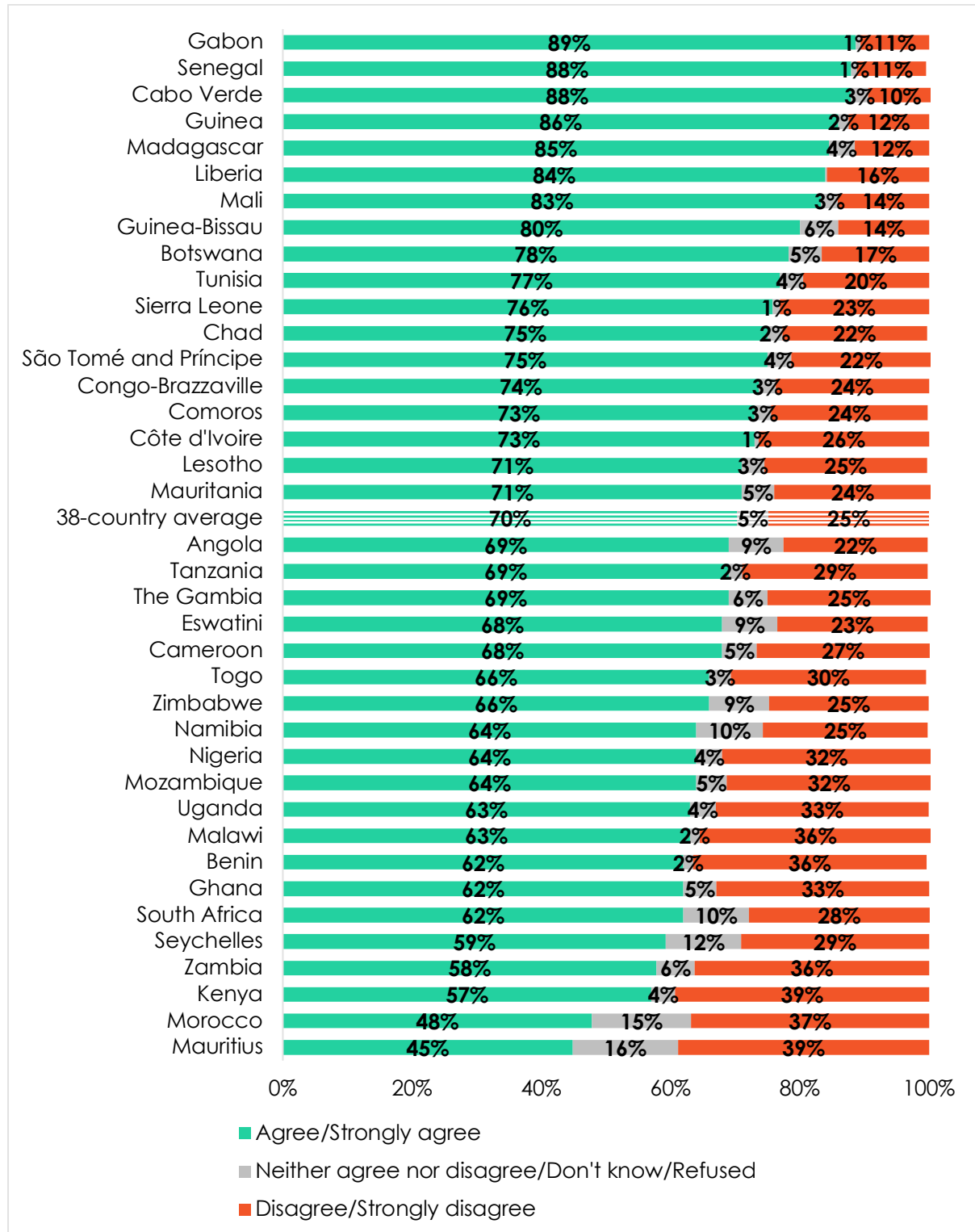
**Charts**

**Figure 1: Most important problems | 38 countries | 2024/2025**



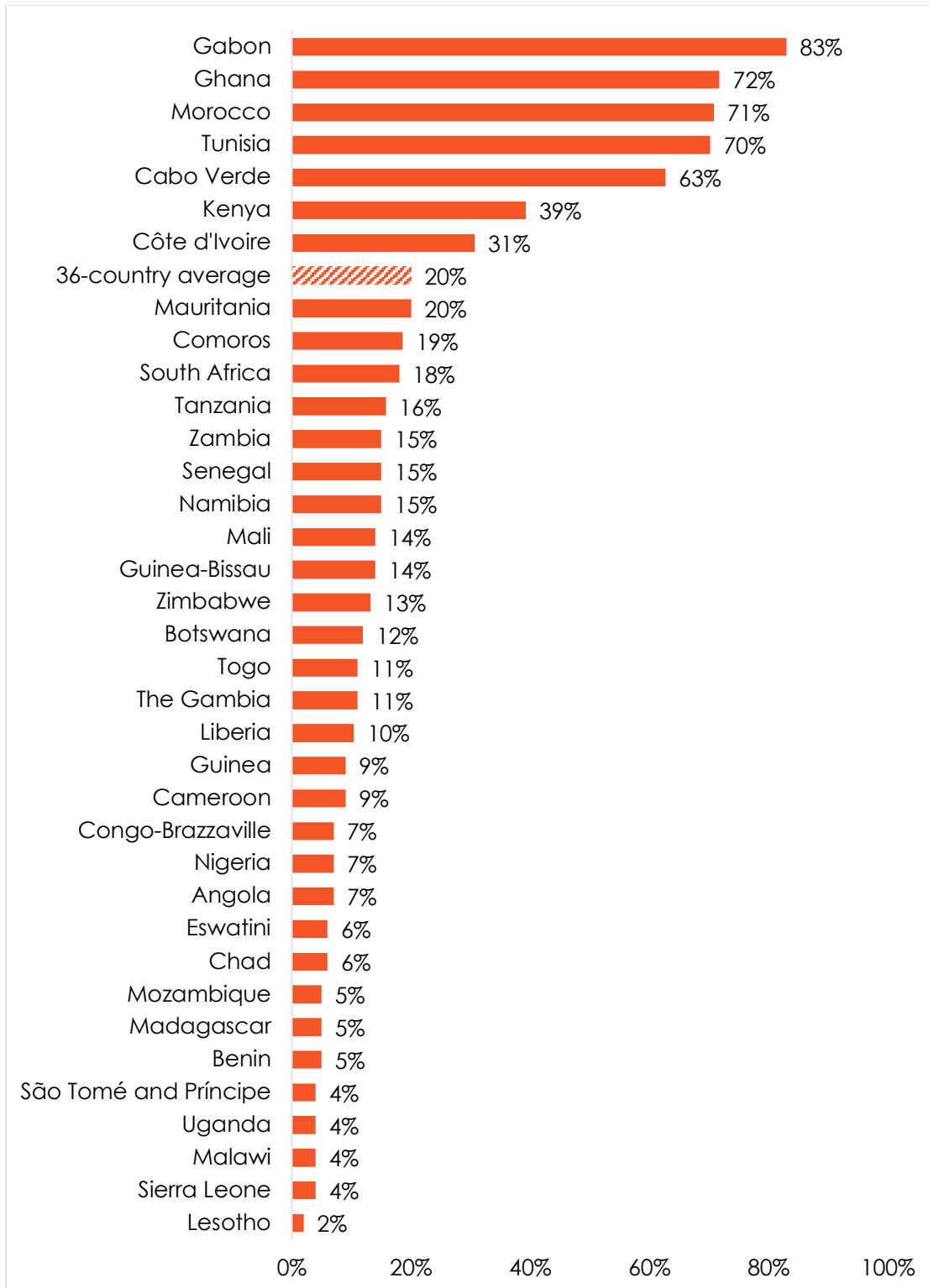
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Figure shows % of respondents who cite each problem as one of up to three priorities. The health category also includes responses coded as "illness/sickness," "HIV/AIDS," and "COVID-19.")*

**Figure 2: Government should ensure health care for all, even if taxes must go up**  
 | 38 countries | 2024/2025



**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 health care, even if that means raising taxes.

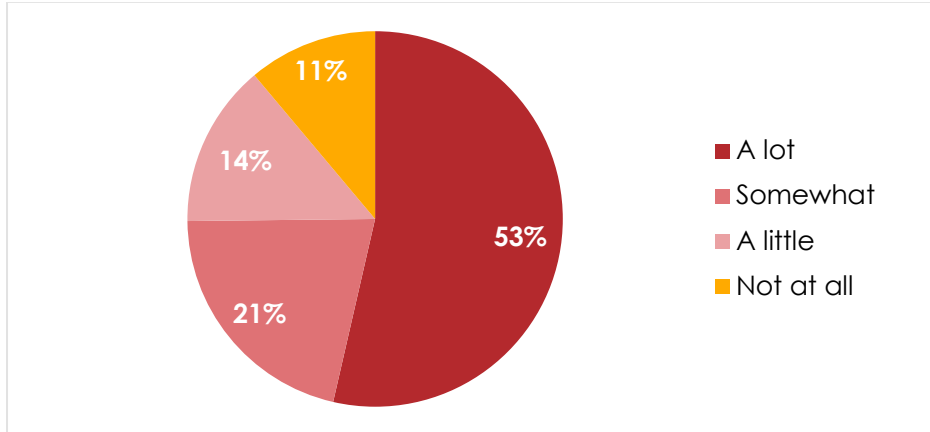
**Figure 3: Medical-aid coverage | 36 countries\* | 2024/2025**



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

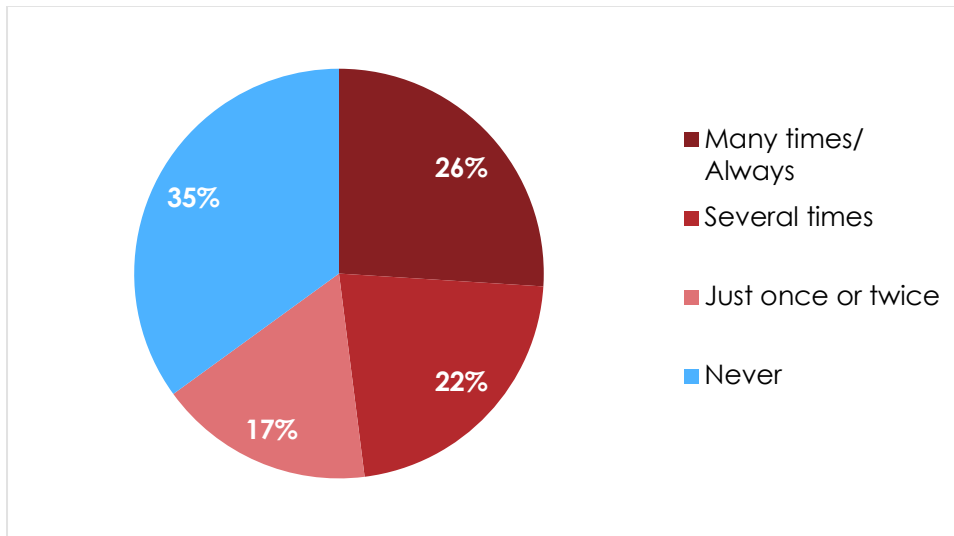
\*Does not include Mauritius and Seychelles, which provide universal access to free public health services.

**Figure 4: Worry about being unable to obtain or afford medical care | 38 countries | 2024/2025**



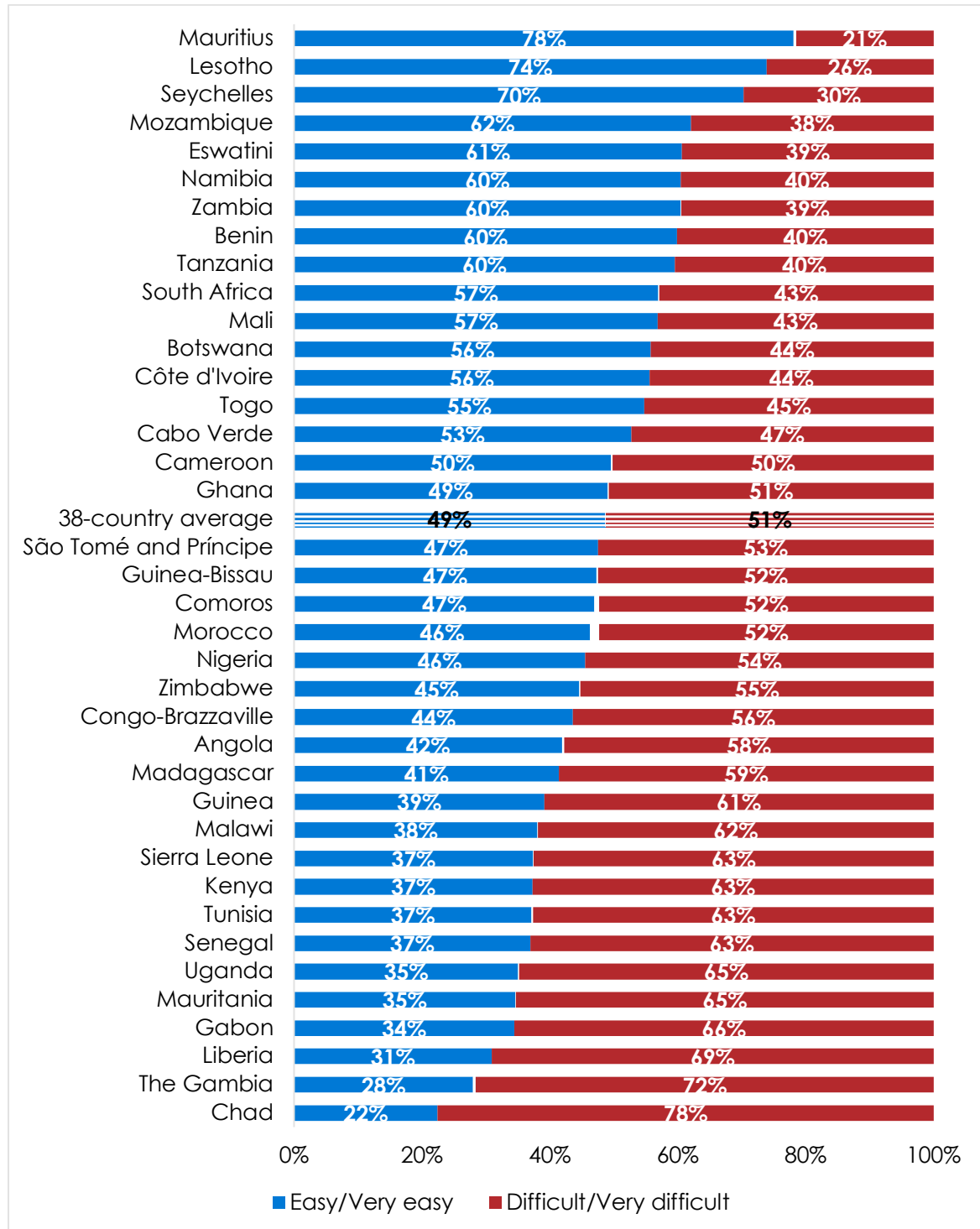
**Respondents were asked:** How much do you personally worry that you or someone in your family will get sick and will be unable to obtain or afford needed medical care?

**Figure 5: Went without medical care | 38 countries | 2024/2025**



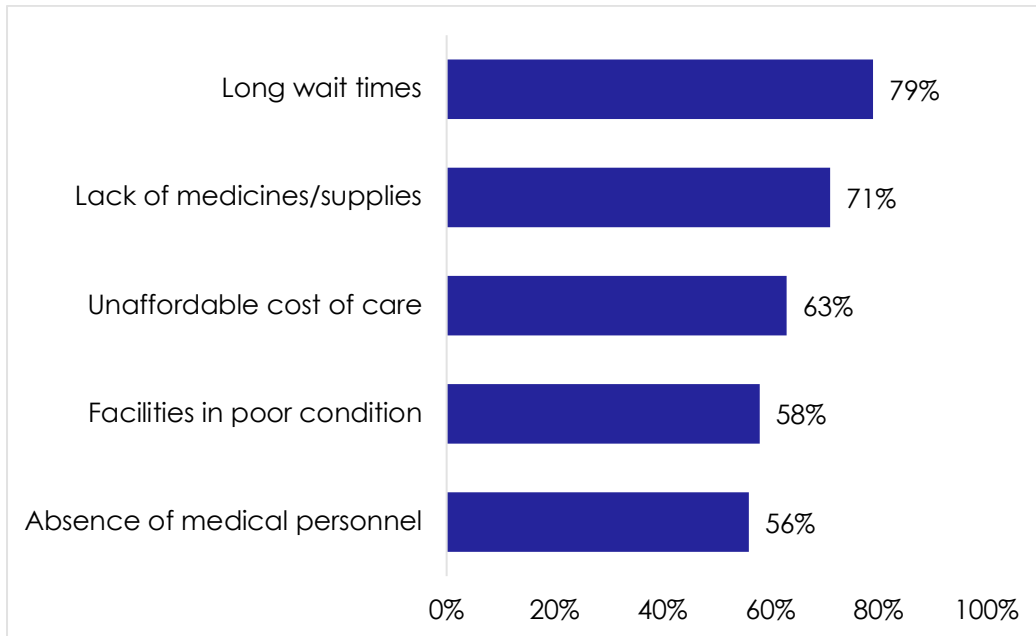
**Respondents were asked:** Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without medicines or medical treatment?")

**Figure 6: Ease of obtaining medical care at public health facilities | 38 countries**  
 | 2024/2025



**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 or services you needed? (Respondents who did not have contact with a public clinic or hospital are excluded.)**

**Figure 7: Poor service quality encountered at public health facilities | 38 countries\***  
 | 2024/2025



**Respondents who had contact with a public clinic or hospital during the previous year were asked:** And have you encountered any of these problems with a public clinic or hospital during the past 12 months: Lack of medicines or other supplies? Absence of doctors or other medical personnel? Long waiting times? Poor condition of facilities? High cost that prevented you from getting the care or medicines you needed? (% who say "once or twice," "a few times," or "often") (Respondents who did not have contact with a public clinic or hospital are excluded.)

\*Question about unaffordable cost of care was not asked in Mauritius.

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