

Center for Economic and Social Research

Understanding America Study Survey Topline

Methodology and Sample

Sample information

A total of 5,414 adult U.S. residents participated in the ongoing survey from March 10 to March 16, 2020. Participants are members of the Center for Economic and Social Research's Understanding America Study (UAS) probability-based internet panel. The sample includes 89 respondents who started but did not yet complete the survey.

The overall margin of sampling error is +/-2 percentage points for all residents. Factors other than sampling error may affect results of any survey, including question wording, question order, mode, sample type, population coverage, and impact of current events. Sampling error calculations are at the 98% confidence level.

This document provides an overview of survey-specific methods and information. For panel methods, including weighting details; panel sampling procedures; recruitment protocols, survey and recruitment response rates; panel attrition rates; panel management protocols; and microdata files (including nonresponse and paradata), please visit the Understanding America Study website at <https://UASdata.usc.edu>.

Survey and Data

The full survey wording and question text are provided in this release. For most questions, we rotated the order of response options, and/or questions to average out order effects. Respondents participated via computer, mobile device or tablet, at any time of day or night during the field period. Results from Spanish-speaking respondents will be included in the final data release.

The survey was still ongoing at the time of this release. Microdata associated with this release is immediately available to registered UAS users at <https://uasdata.usc.edu/page/COVID-19+Corona+Virus>. The final data file, with the full sample, will be available at this site after the survey closes on March 31, 2020.

Survey Weights and Participation Rate

As 8,502 panel members were eligible to participate in this survey, the participation rate for this partial sample is 64%. We calculated weights in two stages: (1) base weights account for the probabilities of selection in our sampling procedures, and (2) post-stratification weights align survey distributions to CPS benchmarks. Weighting benchmarks were derived from the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement¹.

Panel Information

The UAS is an ongoing national research panel that started in 2014. We recruit panel members in waves from Marketing Systems Group frames of all household addresses in the United States. To ensure full coverage of the U.S. population, we provide internet-connected tablets to households that were not already online. Our panel includes U.S. residents who have cell phones, landlines, or no phone at all. Panel members are compensated for their participation.

¹ Due to the panel's sample design, unweighted subgroup sizes may not be representative of the weighted proportion in variable estimates. For more information view the demographic summary table below or visit <https://UASData.USC.edu> for information on sample design and weighting

About the Center for Economic and Social Research

The Center for Economic and Social Research (CESR), part of the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, conducts basic and applied research in economics, psychology, demography, education, and sociology. The center's name signifies the breadth of the research, which encompasses numerous disciplines, topics and methodologies. The Center's multi-disciplinary philosophy fosters a productive and innovative research environment focused on understanding and informing important societal issues.

Survey Team

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For questions about this survey, please contact uas-l@usc.edu

The USC Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research is a proud member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's [Transparency Initiative](#). The survey was funded by the USC Dornsife College of Arts, Letters and Sciences.

Top-line Report

Sample Characteristics

This note provides the sample characteristics, and brief summaries of the responses to the main questions asked in the survey. We list the major questions in the survey and show the responses in the form of graphs.

The table below summarizes select characteristics of the sample, with and without survey weights.

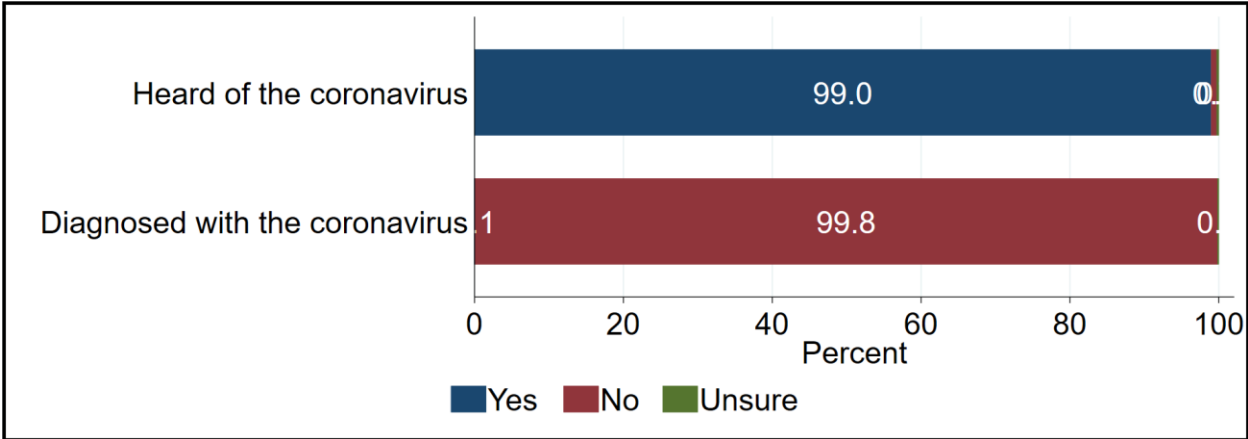
	Unweighted	Weighted
Male	42%	48%
Age (18-34)	20%	30%
Age (35-54)	36%	33%
Age (55-64)	21%	17%
Age (65+)	23%	21%
Low education (GED)	22%	25%
Medium education (Some College)	37%	42%
High education (College and above)	42%	33%
HH income (\$ 0-24,999)	19%	21%
HH income (\$ 25,000-49,999)	21%	22%
HH income (\$50,000-74,999)	19%	19%
HH income (\$75,000 and above)	40%	38%
Hispanic / Latino	14%	16%
White	83%	80%
Black	9%	14%

Awareness and Spread of the Coronavirus

U.S. Residents were very aware of the coronavirus. Almost all survey participants had heard of it, but almost none reported having been diagnosed.

cr001: Have you heard of the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

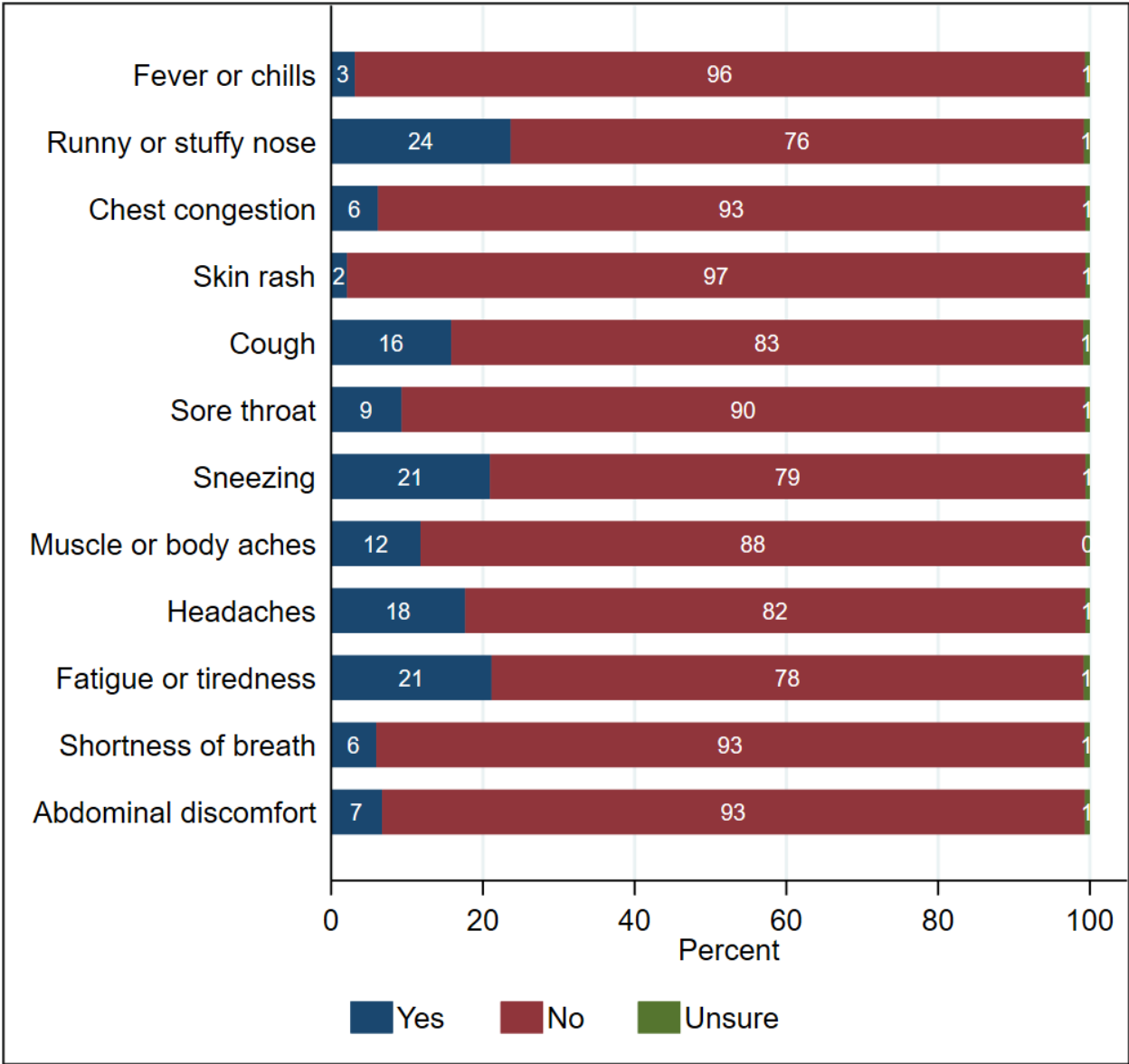
cr002: Has a doctor or another healthcare professional diagnosed you with the coronavirus (COVID-19)?



Symptoms of Potential Ill Health

Few respondents reported experiencing any these symptoms in the past week. Roughly one in five reported having a runny or stuffy nose and/or sneezing, and roughly one in five reported feeling fatigue or tiredness. A low percentage of people reported having typical symptoms suggestive of the disease: 3% reported having fever or chills and 6% having shortness of breath.

cr002: Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 7 days?

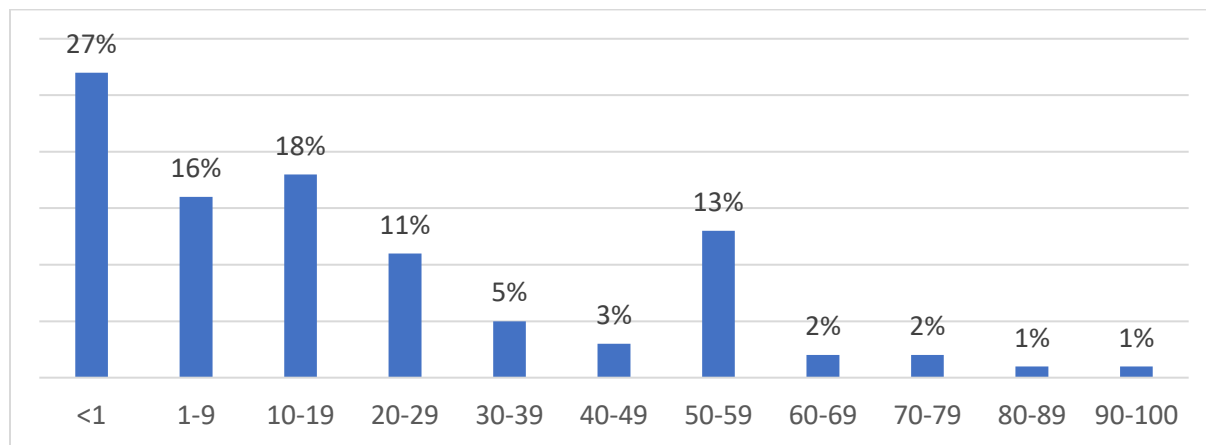


Chance of getting, or dying from, the coronavirus

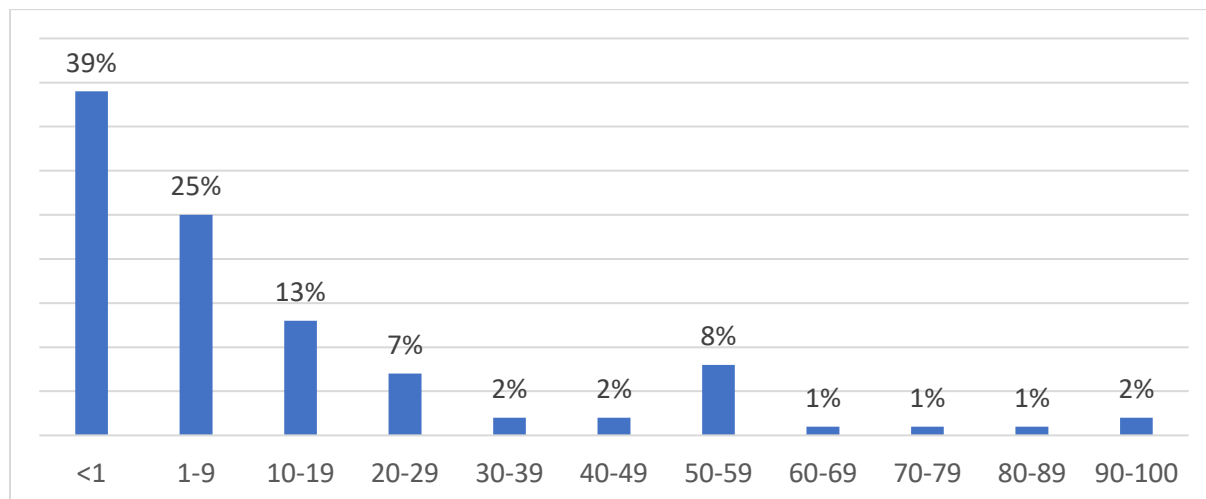
During the survey period (March 10-16) just over one out of four participants (27%) estimated their chance of being infected by the virus at or near zero. Mean percentage likelihood of getting the virus was 20.2 and median was 10.

Nearly four in 10 (39%) residents estimated that they had zero or near zero percent chance of dying from the virus if they do get it. Mean likelihood of dying from the virus was 14 and median was 4.

cr005: On a scale of 0 to 100 percent, what is the chance that you will get the coronavirus in the next three months?



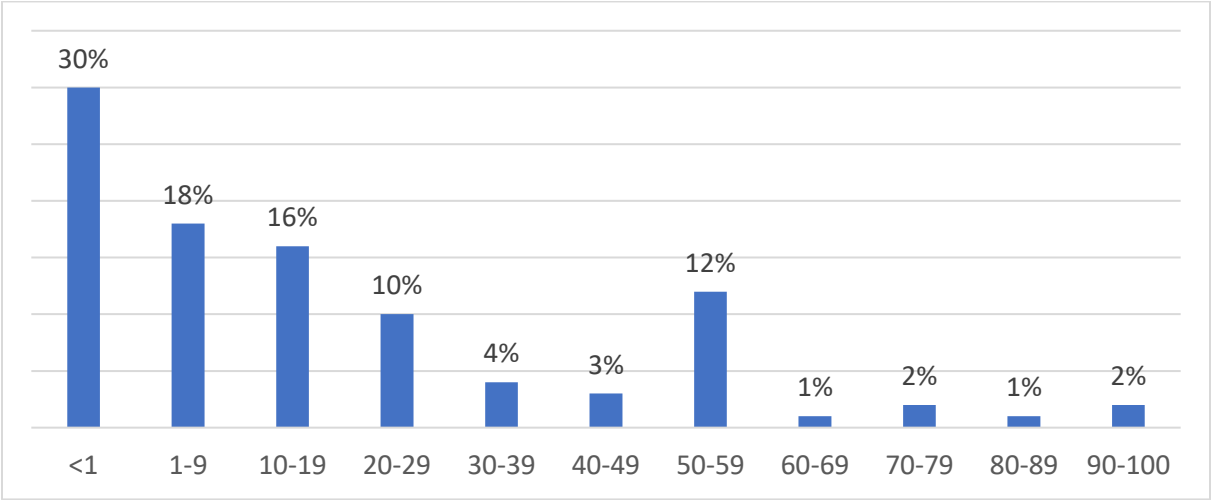
cr006: If you do get the coronavirus, what is the percent chance you will die from it?



Chance of Being Quarantined

Three out of ten put the chance of their being quarantined at or near zero. Nearly half said the chance was below 50%. Mean percentage likelihood of being quarantined was 19, and the median was 10.

cr007: What is the percent chance that you will be quarantined within the next three months?



Impact of the Coronavirus on Jobs and Income

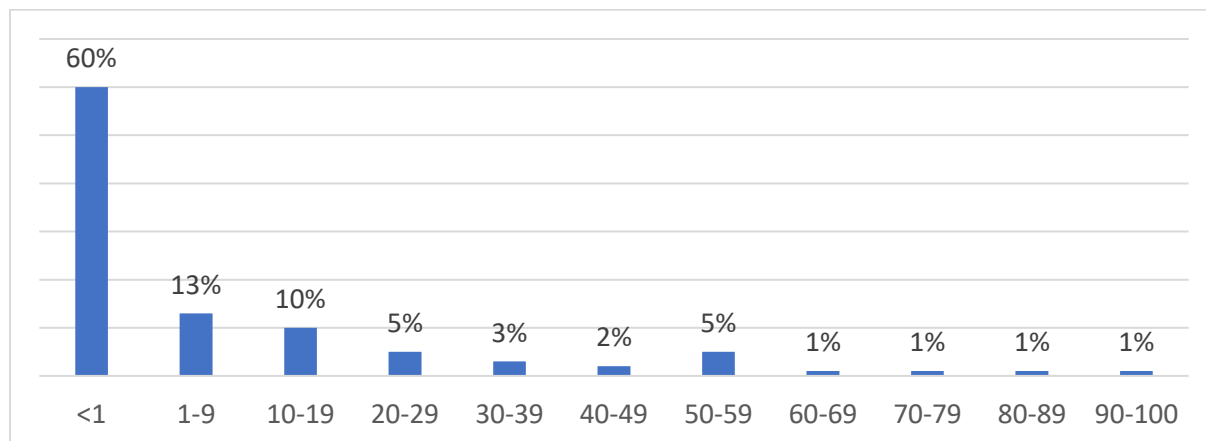
The survey asked participants if they have the kind of job that allows them to work from home and how likely they were to lose their job because of the coronavirus. Thirty-nine percent said they could work from home, 57% said they could not, and 4% weren't sure.

Overall, 60% rated the likelihood of losing their job in the next three months at zero, or near zero, and another 23% rated the likelihood between 1 and 20%.

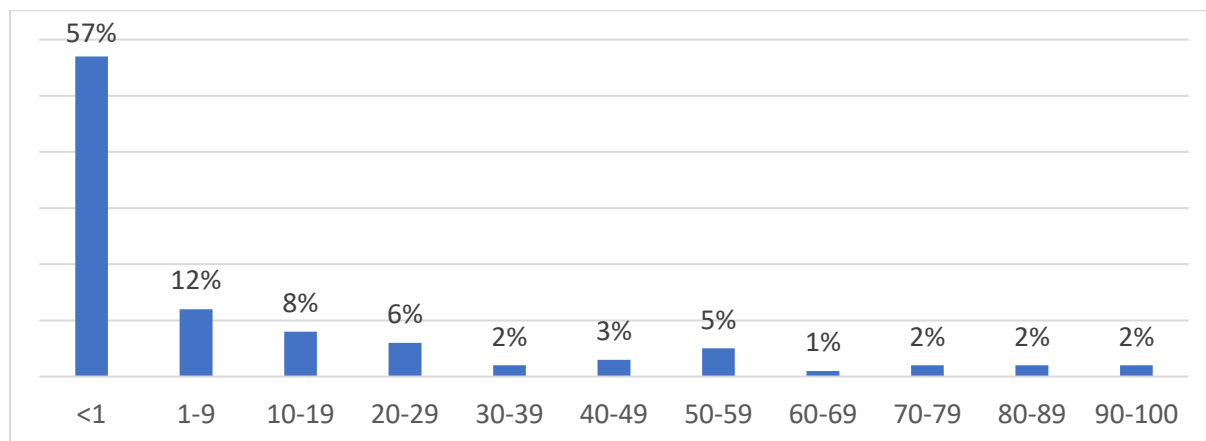
The distribution of reported chances of running out of money is similar to the distributed chances of losing one's job. Nearly the same proportion - 57% - said they had a zero or near zero chance of running out of money in the next three months as said they were at risk of losing their job.

Overall, the median for both questions was 0. The average estimate was 10 for job loss and 13 for running out of money. Those who do not have the ability to work from home rated their likelihood of losing their job in the next three months more highly, on average (12.3), than those who have that opportunity (average 6.5)

cr008a: What is the percent chance that you will lose your job because of the coronavirus within the next three months?



cr009: What is the percent chance you will run out of money because of the coronavirus in the next three months?

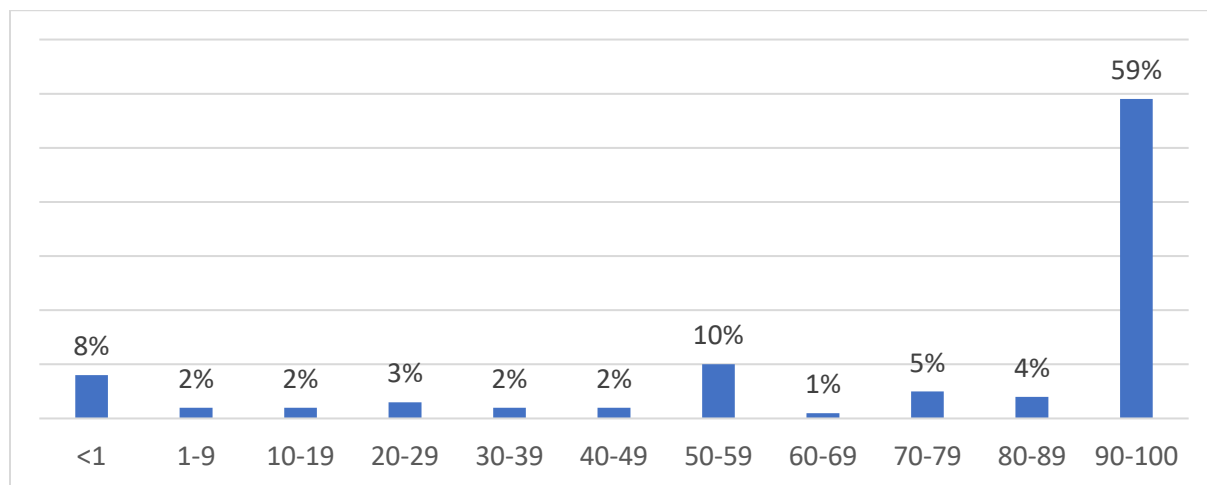


Attitude Toward Vaccination

The survey also asked participants about their willingness to get vaccinated and how much they might be willing to pay if it were available.

If a vaccine were available nearly six out of 10 (59%) said they would be 90-100% likely to use it.

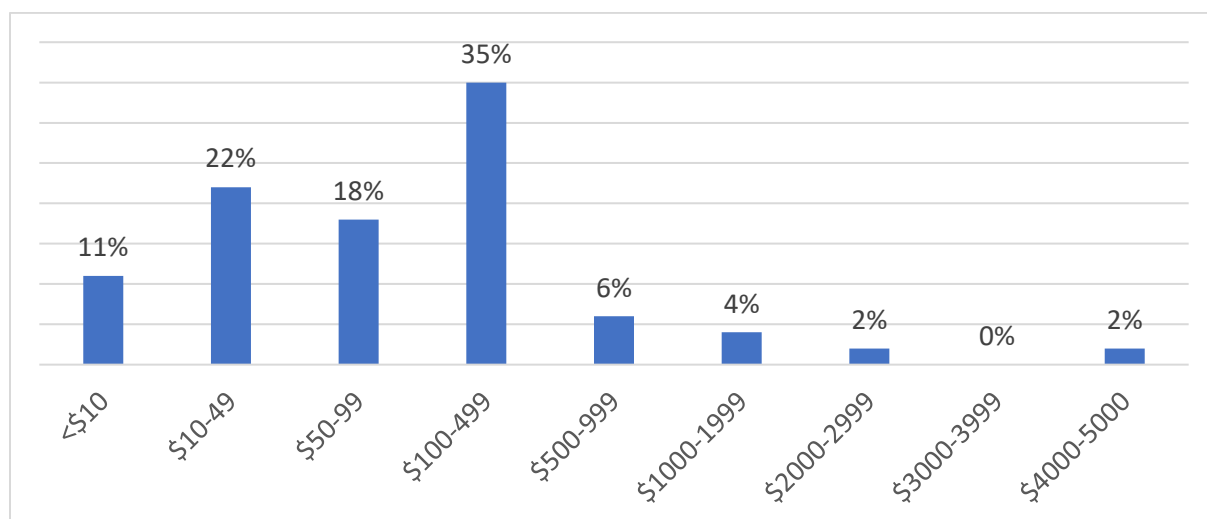
cr0024: Suppose that a 100% safe and effective coronavirus vaccine was available today. How likely are you to get yourself vaccinated?



The vast majority of respondents (86%) were unwilling, or unable, to pay more than \$500 for a new and effective vaccine. But a small minority (about 2%) would be willing to pay between \$4000- \$5000.

The median response was \$100 and the average reported amount was \$314

cr0023: Suppose that a 100% safe and effective coronavirus vaccine is developed today but insurance does not cover it. How much would you be willing to pay to get yourself vaccinated?

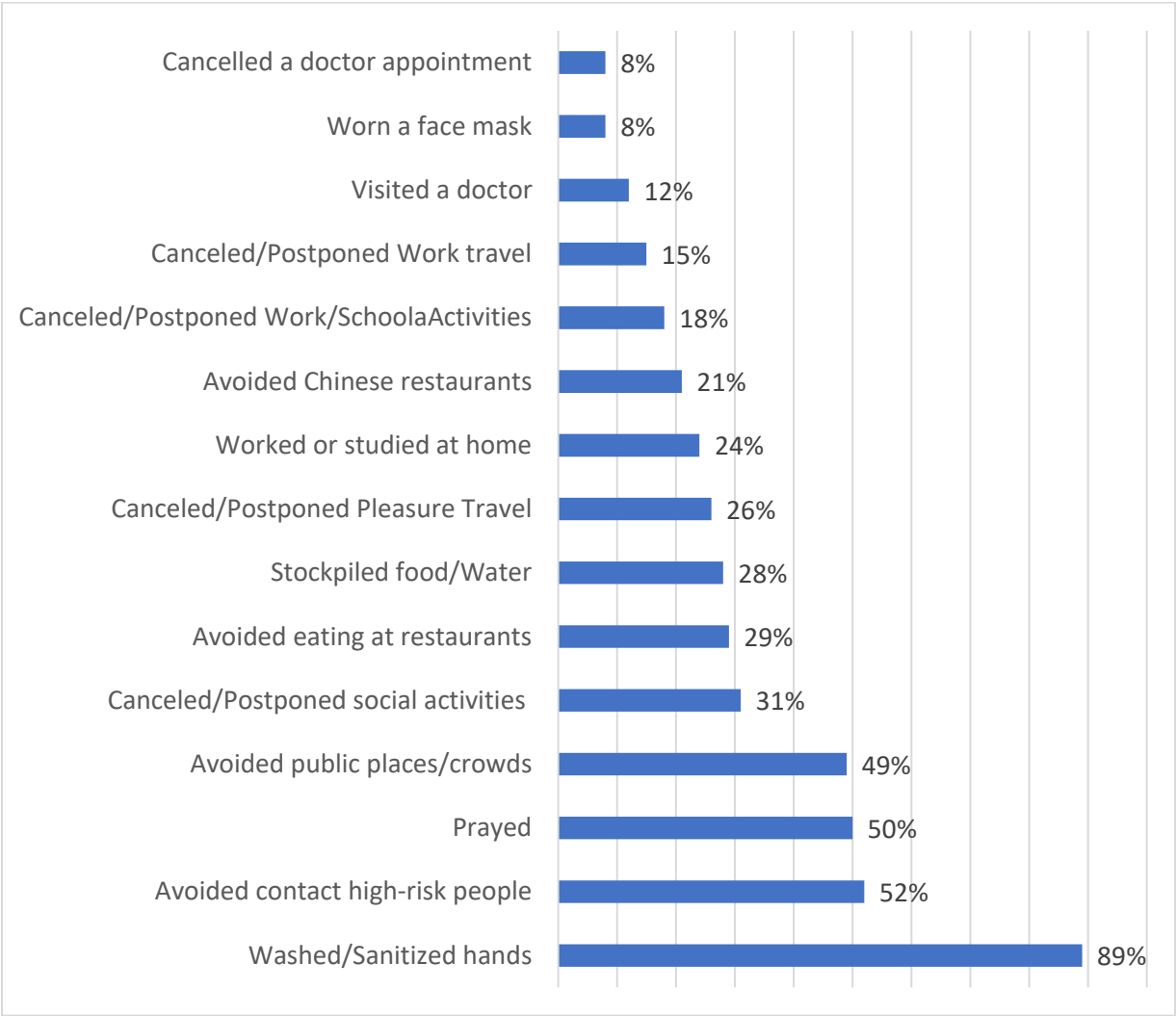


Coronavirus Prevention Behaviors

We asked survey participants what they have been doing to stay safe from coronavirus, in addition to what they normally do, and to rate the effectiveness of various behaviors, as shown in the chart below.

Respondents said they had stepped up hand washing. Roughly half said that they had been avoiding high-risk individuals, and/or avoiding public places. Half said they have been praying.

cr010: Which of the following have you done in the last seven days to keep yourself safe from coronavirus in addition to what you normally do?

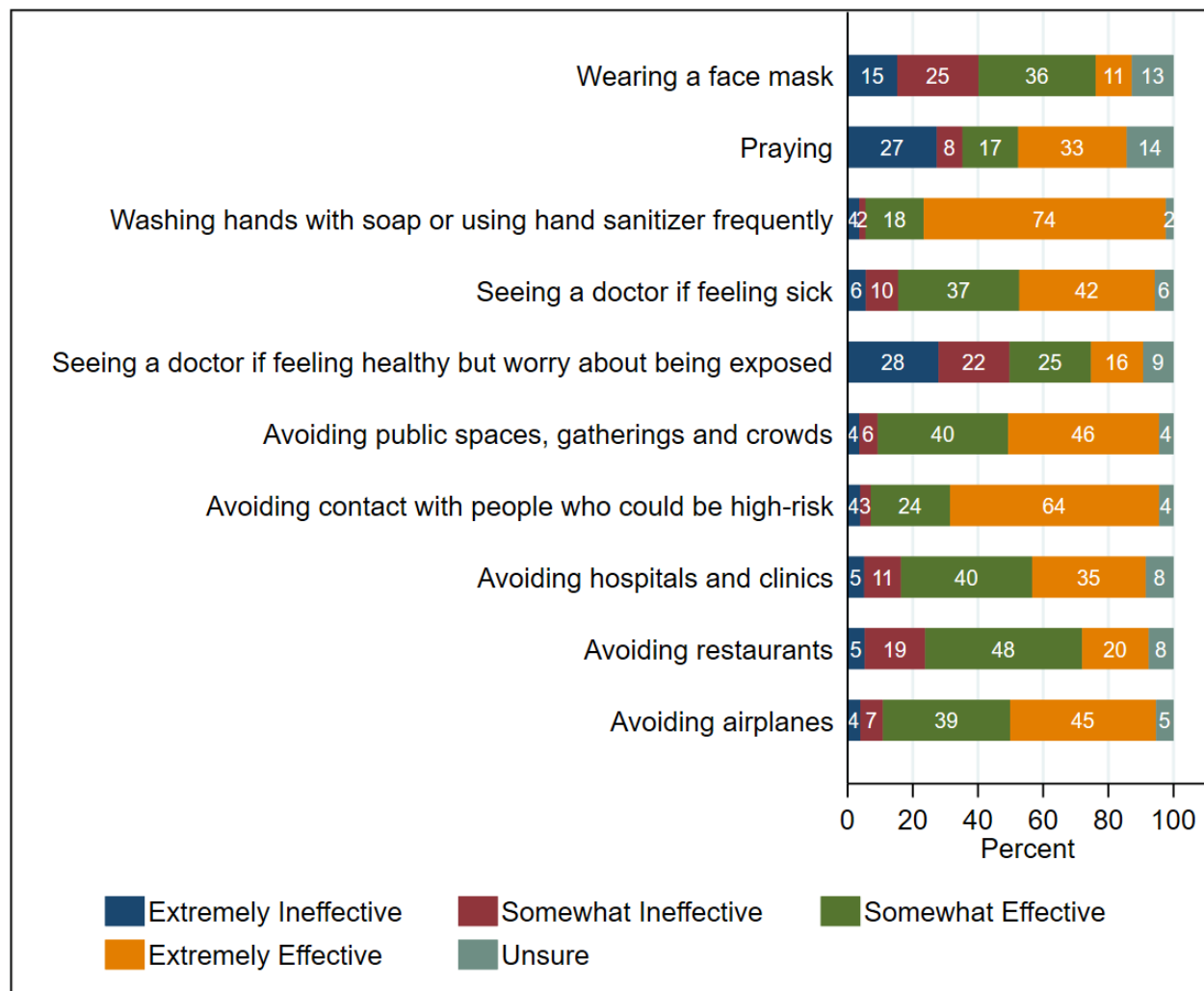


Hand washing or using hand sanitizer was rated by nearly three out of four (74%) as an extremely effective means of keeping safe from infection, and another 18% rated it as somewhat effective. Nearly two-thirds (64%) said that avoiding contact with high-risk people was extremely effective, along with 24% who said it was somewhat. Roughly 85% said that avoiding public places and crowds, and airplanes was extremely or somewhat effective.

Praying was considered to be effective by half of all participants, including 17% who said it is somewhat effective and 33% who rated it as extremely effective.

Wearing a face mask was rated as ineffective by 40%, and seeing a doctor while healthy was also rated as ineffective – by 50%.

cr011: How effective are the following actions for keeping you safe from coronavirus?

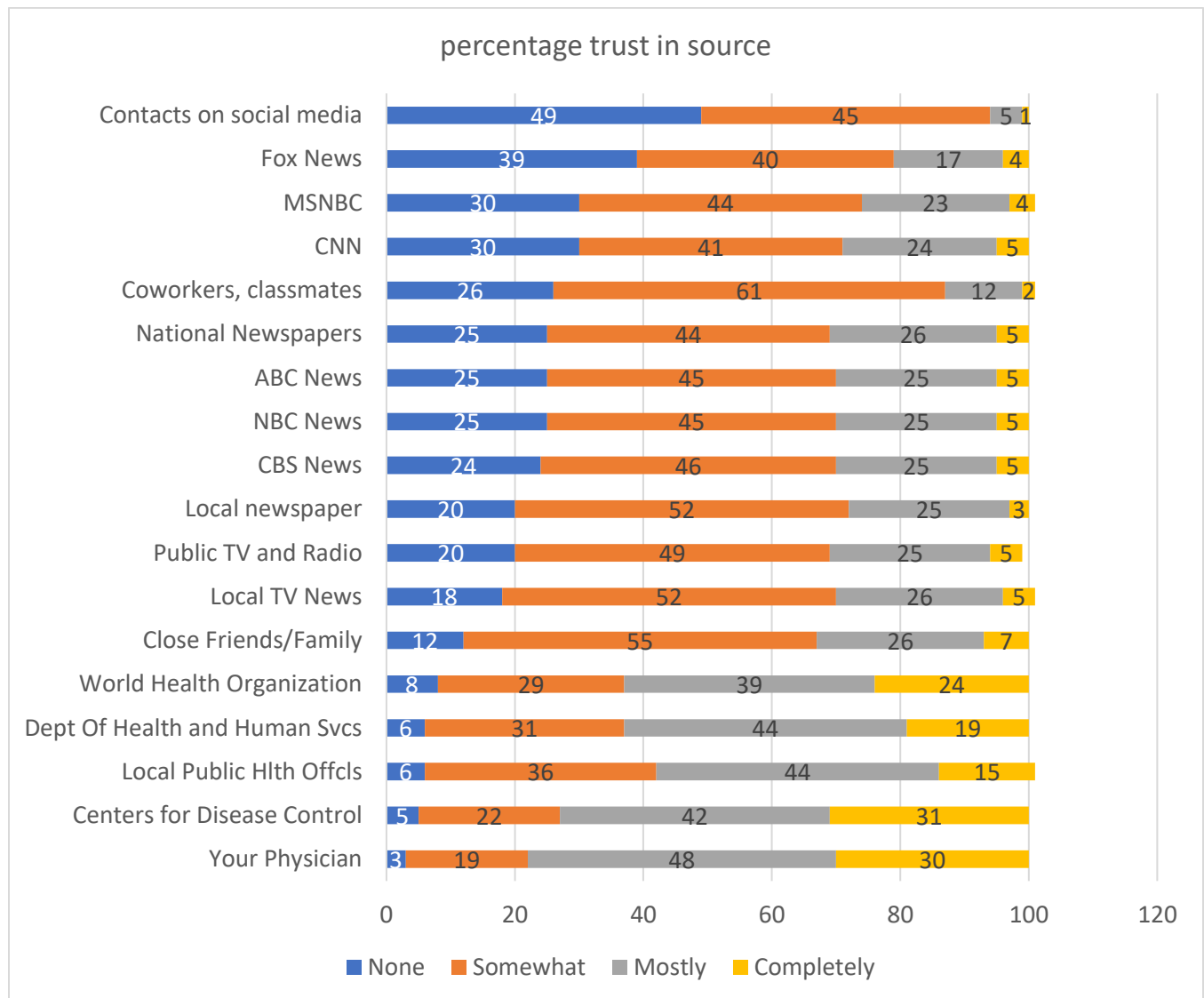


Sources of Information

The survey asked which sources of information participants used to get information about coronavirus and sources of information that they trust.

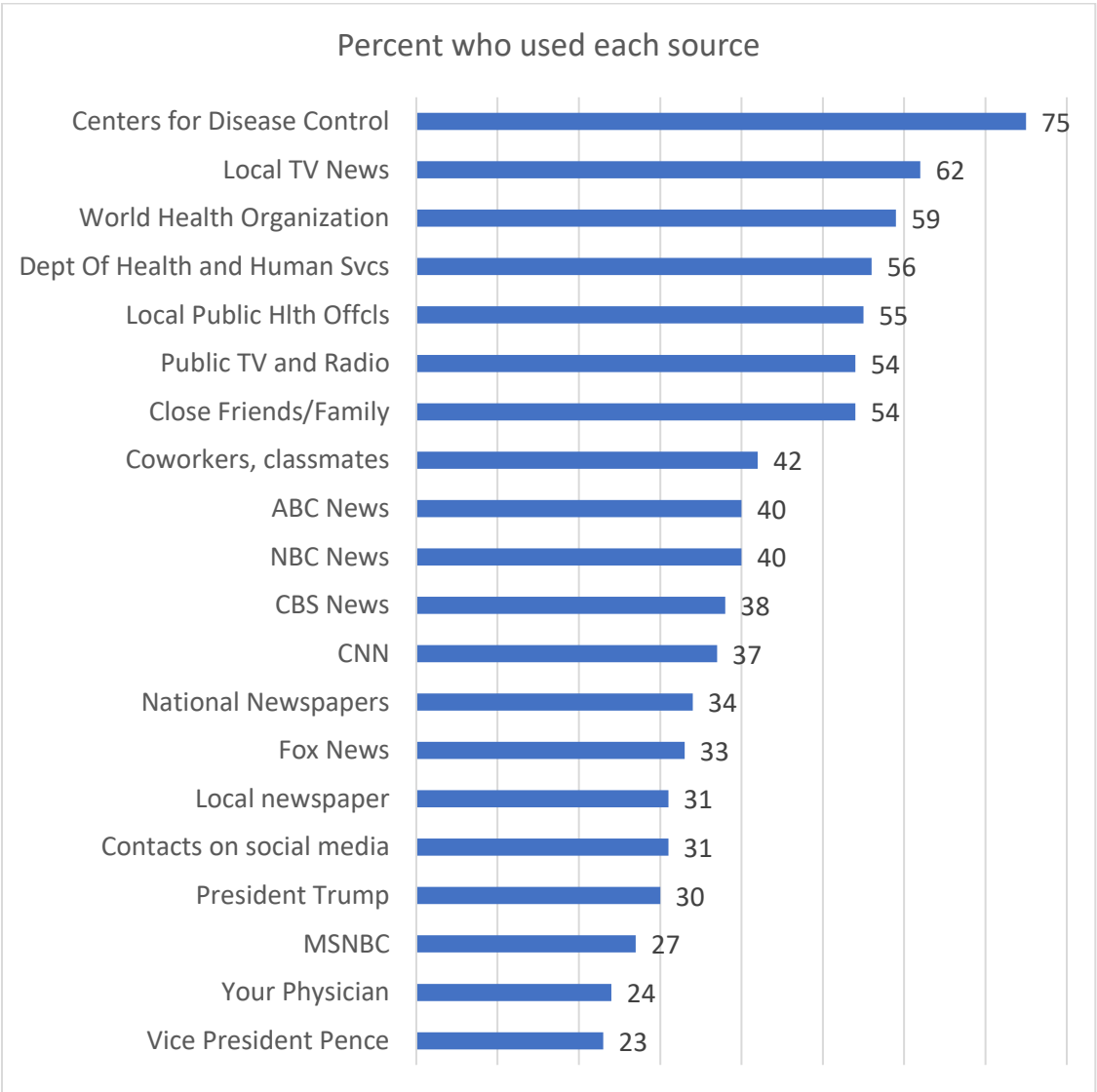
CDCs and physicians were rated as completely trustworthy just under a third, the World Health Organization by 25% and the HHS and local health officials by 18% and 15% respectively. Least trusted were social media contacts at 49% no trust, Fox News (39%), and MSNBC and CNN at 30%.

cr012: How much do you trust the following sources of information about the coronavirus (COVID-19)?



The country seems to be relying most heavily on the Centers for Disease Control as a source of information about the coronavirus, followed by local TV news. Roughly 2 in 5 relied on network news stations, along with coworkers, classmates, network news, and CNN. About a third used National newspapers, or Fox news.

cr013: Which of the following information sources have you used to learn about the coronavirus in the past 7 days?

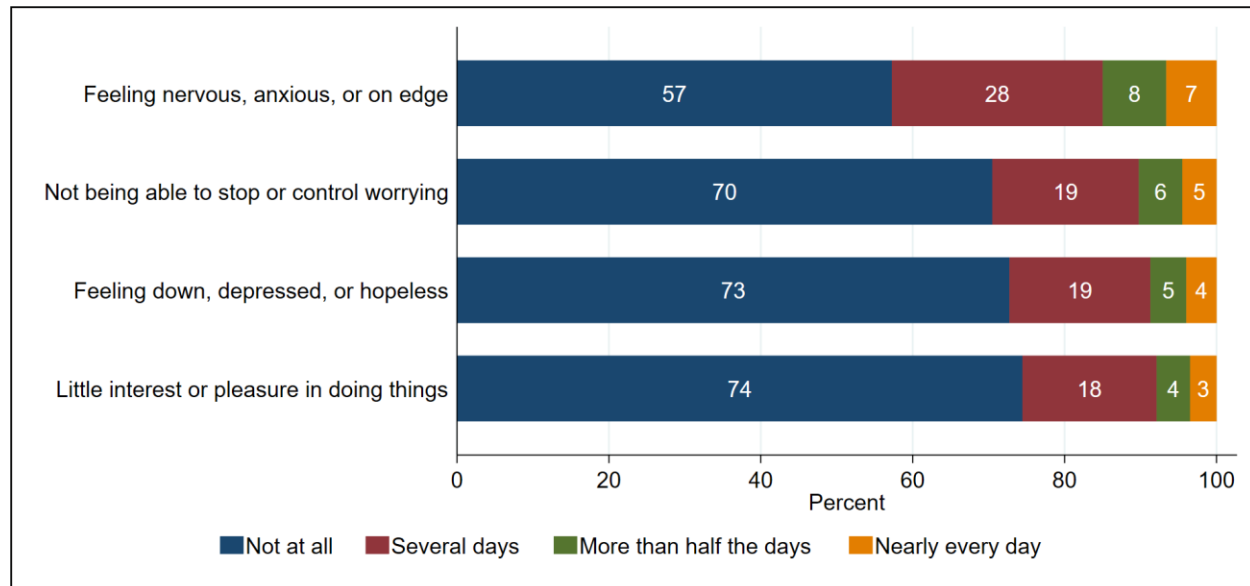


Mental Health and Behavior

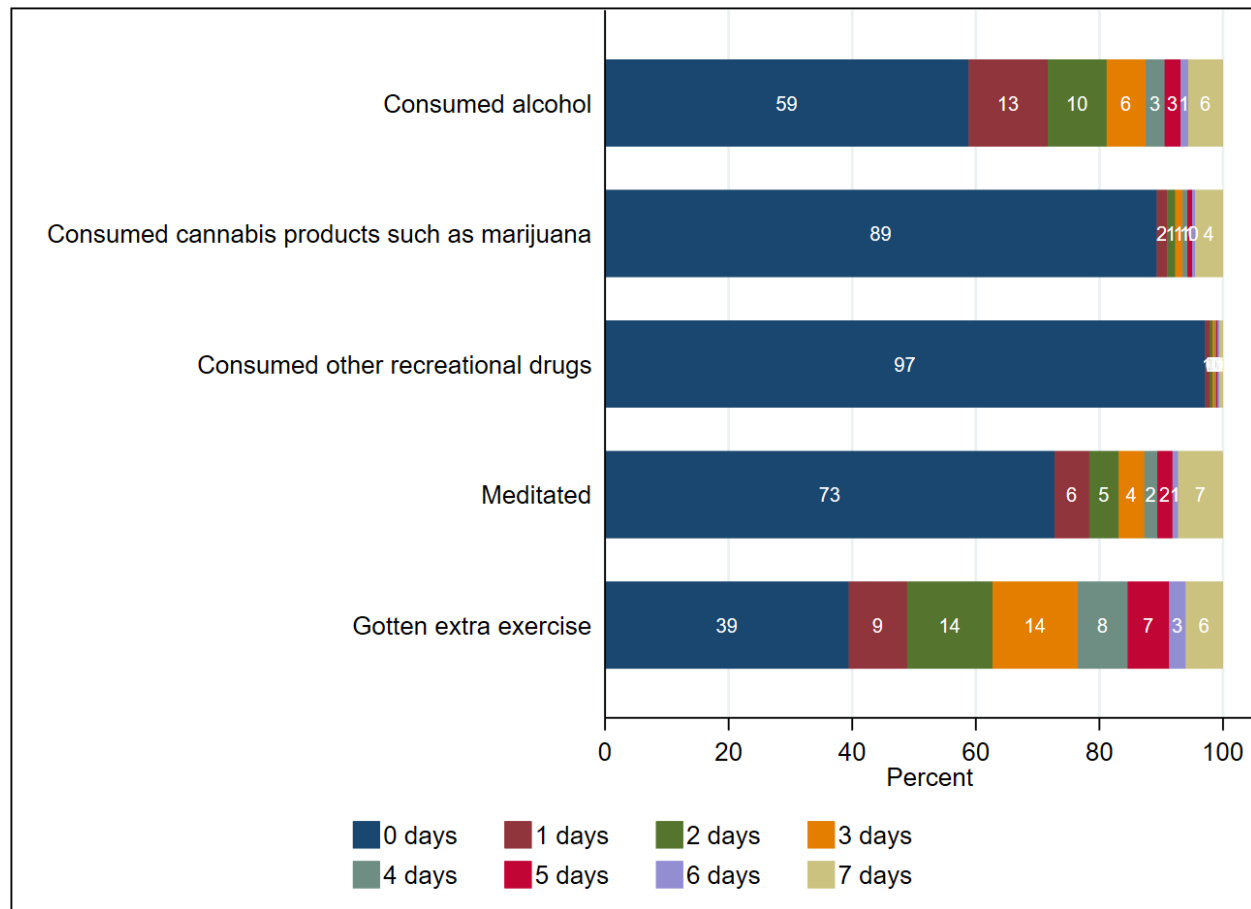
The survey included a mental health battery, and questions about behavior, to allow us to follow how these may change over time. At this point, a majority of respondents reported no, or few, days on which they were anxious, worrying, depressed, or had little interest in doing things.

Similarly, a majority of participants reported not to have consumed alcohol or drugs over the past seven days.

cr014: Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?



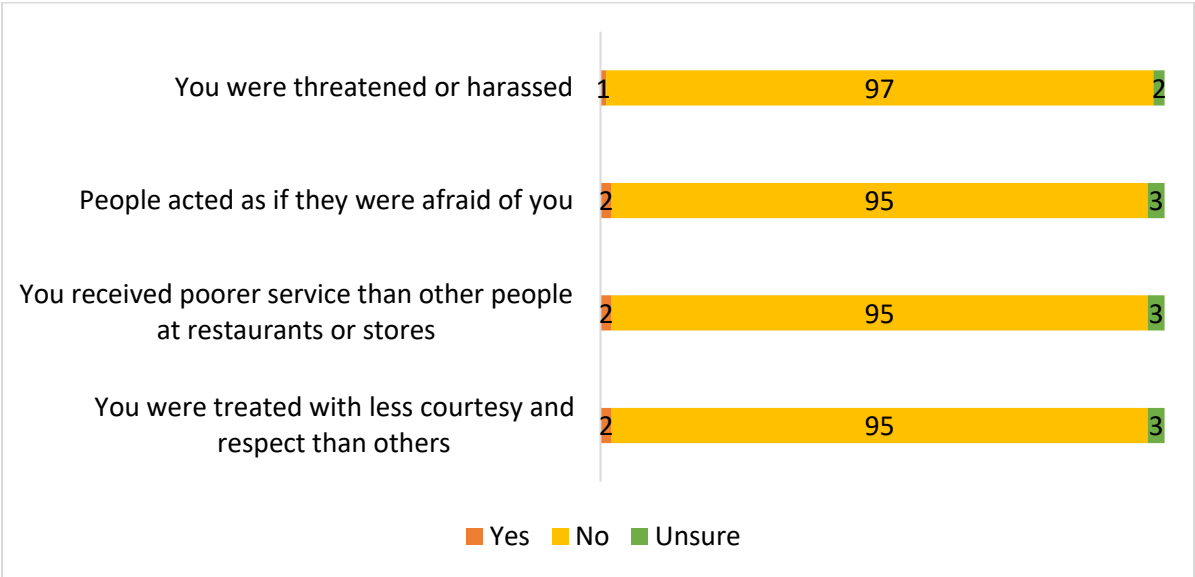
cr015: Out of the past 7 days, what is your best estimate of the number of days that you did each of the following activities?



Perceived Discrimination

The number of people overall who have experienced unpleasant encounters is limited at this point.

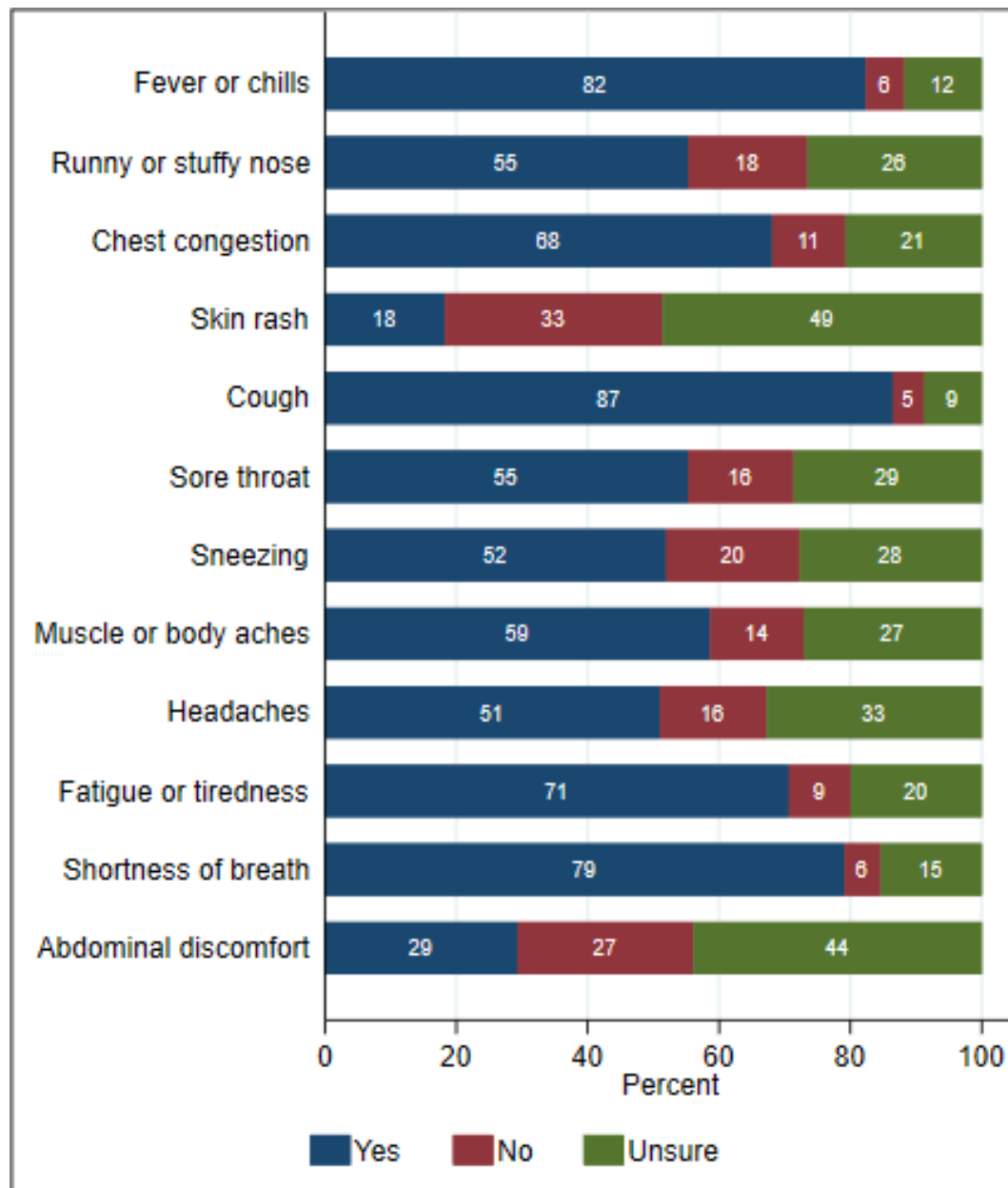
cr016: Have any of the following things happened to you due to people thinking you might have the coronavirus?



Knowledge of Symptoms of Coronavirus

It appears that most respondents have a good understanding of the symptoms mostly associated with the coronavirus. Fever/chills, cough, and shortness of breath are mostly known by respondents, followed by fatigue or tiredness and chest congestion.

cr018: Which of the following are the main symptoms people infected with the coronavirus (COVID-19) experience?



Quarantine and Self-evaluation on Possible Infection

During the survey period (March 10-16) very few people believed they had been infected. A small number have been told by doctors or other authorities to avoid other people. About one in five have taken steps to self-quarantine or stay away from other people to avoid infecting them.

cr019: Do you think you've been infected with the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

cr020: Do other people think you might have been infected with the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

cr021: Have doctors or other authorities ordered you to stay away from other people to avoid infecting them?

cr022: Have you taken steps to stay away from other people to avoid infecting them?

