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# Public Health a Major Priority in African Nations

*Improving Hospitals, Dealing with  
HIV/AIDS are Top Issues*

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## About the Report

This report examines public opinion in Africa on health priorities. It is based on 5,043 face-to-face interviews with adults 18 and older, between March 6, 2013 and April 12, 2013 in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. For more details, see survey methods and topline results.

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# Public Health a Major Priority in African Nations

## *Improving Hospitals, Dealing with HIV/AIDS are Top Issues*

Concerns about public health are widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, and there is considerable support in the region for making public health challenges a top national priority. In particular, people want their governments to improve the quality of hospitals and other health care facilities and deal with the problem of HIV/AIDS.

A Pew Research Center survey, conducted March 6, 2013 to April 12, 2013 in six African nations, also finds broad support for government efforts to address access to drinking water, access to prenatal care, hunger, infectious diseases, and child immunization.

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### Public Health Priorities

*% should be one of the most important priorities for the government*

	<b>Build and improve hospitals</b>	<b>Prevent and treat HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>Access to drinking water</b>	<b>Access to prenatal care</b>	<b>Fight hunger</b>	<b>Prevent and treat infectious diseases</b>	<b>Increase child immunization</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Ghana	85	81	88	81	81	79	72
Senegal	84	79	80	84	86	80	74
Uganda	78	77	72	73	65	70	66
Kenya	74	63	72	67	70	62	58
S. Africa	66	75	67	64	67	63	63
Nigeria	64	59	62	64	64	60	56
<b>MEDIAN</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>65</b>

Source: Spring 2013 Global Attitudes survey. Q161a-g.

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A median of 76% across six countries surveyed say building and improving hospitals and other health care facilities should be one of the most important priorities for their national government. The percentage of the public who holds this view ranges from 85% in Ghana to 64% in Nigeria.

Similarly, a median of 76% believe preventing and treating HIV/AIDS should be one of government's most important priorities, ranging from 81% in Ghana to 59% in Nigeria.

A median of at least 65% also say the other issues included on the poll — ranging from access to drinking water to increased child immunization — should be among the most important priorities. In fact, majorities hold this view about all seven issues in all six nations.

Overall, there has been little change in public health priorities in Uganda or Kenya since these questions were last asked in 2007, although in the latter nation the percentage of people saying HIV/AIDS should be one of the most important priorities for government has declined from 80% to 63%. Meanwhile, Ghanaians today are more likely to say that six of the seven tested health issues should be a central concern for government. For instance, 85% of Ghanaians say this about building and improving hospitals, compared with 62% in 2007.<sup>1</sup>

In a follow up question, respondents were asked which of these challenges they believe should be the *most important* public health priority for their government. On this question, responses are somewhat diffuse within each nation, and differ by country.

However, hospital and health care facility improvement is at or near the top of the list in several nations, including Uganda where roughly one-in-three (34%) consider this the number one public health concern.

Many also say HIV/AIDS should be the top priority for government, especially in South Africa and Uganda, which have the highest HIV prevalence rates among the six countries surveyed.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, fighting hunger and malnutrition is the highest priority in Senegal, and is tied for the top spot in Kenya.

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### Top Public Health Concerns by Country

% saying \_\_\_ should be the top public health priority

<b>Ghana</b>	%	<b>Senegal</b>	%
Hospital improvement	20	Hunger/malnutrition	30
Quality drinking water	19	Hospital improvement	14
Infectious diseases	13	HIV/AIDS	14
<b>Kenya</b>	%	<b>Nigeria</b>	%
Hospital improvement	21	HIV/AIDS	15
Hunger/malnutrition	21	Hunger/malnutrition	13
HIV/AIDS	15	Infectious diseases	10
<b>Uganda</b>	%	<b>S. Africa</b>	%
Hospital improvement	34	HIV/AIDS	35
HIV/AIDS	23	Hunger/malnutrition	13
Quality drinking water	7	Hospital improvement	7
Prenatal care	7	Quality drinking water	7

Note: Top three choices shown. "All equally important (VOL)" response not shown.

Source: Spring 2013 Global Attitudes survey. Q162.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the 2007 findings, see [A Global Look At Public Perceptions of Health Problems, Priorities, and Donors: The Kaiser/Pew Global Health Survey](#). The 2007 survey was conducted in partnership with the Kaiser Family Foundation. Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa were also surveyed in 2007, but those trends are not shown because the 2007 samples in those countries were less representative than the 2013 samples, which are nationally representative.

<sup>2</sup> 2012 estimates: 17.9% HIV prevalence rate in South Africa and 7.2% in Uganda. Data from AIDSinfo.org <http://www.unaids.org/en/dataanalysis/datatools/aidsinfo/>.

## Survey Methods

Results for the surveys are based face-to-face interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see below.

The descriptions below show the margin of sampling error based on all interviews conducted in that country. For results based on the full sample in a given country, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus the margin of error. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Country: **Ghana**  
 Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by region and settlement size  
 Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus  
 Languages: Akan (Twi), English, Dagbani, Ewe  
 Fieldwork dates: March 20 – April 3, 2013  
 Sample size: 799  
 Margin of Error:  $\pm 4.7$  percentage points  
 Representative: Adult population

Country: **Kenya**  
 Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by province and settlement size  
 Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus  
 Languages: Kiswahili, English  
 Fieldwork dates: March 13 – March 30, 2013  
 Sample size: 798  
 Margin of Error:  $\pm 4.3$  percentage points  
 Representative: Adult population

Country: **Nigeria**  
 Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by region and urbanity  
 Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus  
 Languages: English, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo  
 Fieldwork dates: March 6 – April 4, 2013  
 Sample size: 1,031  
 Margin of Error:  $\pm 4.0$  percentage points  
 Representative: Adult population (excluding Borno, Yobe and some areas in Taraba, or about 5% of the population)

Country: **Senegal**  
 Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by region and urbanity  
 Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus  
 Languages: Wolof, French  
 Fieldwork dates: March 6 – March 30, 2013  
 Sample size: 800  
 Margin of Error:  $\pm 4.1$  percentage points  
 Representative: Adult population

Country: **South Africa**  
 Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by metropolitan area, province and urbanity  
 Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus  
 Languages: English, Zulu, Xhosa, South Sotho, Afrikaans  
 Fieldwork dates: March 18 – April 12, 2013  
 Sample size: 815  
 Margin of Error:  $\pm 4.1$  percentage points  
 Representative: Adult population

Country: **Uganda**  
 Sample design: Multi-stage cluster sample stratified by region and urbanity  
 Mode: Face-to-face adults 18 plus  
 Languages: Luganda, English, Runyankole/Rukiga, Luo, Runyoro/Rutoro, Ateso, Lugbara  
 Fieldwork dates: March 15 – March 29, 2013  
 Sample size: 800  
 Margin of Error:  $\pm 4.3$  percentage points  
 Representative: Adult population

## Topline Results

**Pew Research Center**  
**Spring 2013 survey**  
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### Methodological notes:

- Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see Survey Methods section.
- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline “total” columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.
- For some countries, trends for certain years are omitted due to differences in sample design or population coverage. Omitted trends often reflect less representative samples than more recent surveys in the same countries. Trends that are omitted include:
  - Senegal prior to 2013
  - Nigeria prior to 2010
  - South Africa in 2007
- Not all questions included in the Spring 2013 survey are presented in this topline. Omitted questions have either been previously released or will be released in future reports.

		Q161a I'm going to read you a list of things that the government might do to improve public health and health care in our country. How much of a priority should it be for the state/government: a. Preventing and treating HIV/AIDS					
		One of the most important priorities	A very important priority	A lower priority	Not a priority at all	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	81	16	2	0	2	100
	Spring, 2007	79	19	2	0	0	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	63	33	4	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	80	18	3	0	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	59	35	4	1	0	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	79	18	2	1	1	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	75	21	2	2	0	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	77	21	1	1	0	100
	Spring, 2007	85	14	1	0	0	100

		Q161b I'm going to read you things that the government might do to improve public health/health care in our country. How much of a priority should it be for the government: b. Preventing and treating other infectious diseases like tuberculosis and malaria					
		One of the most important priorities	A very important priority	A lower priority	Not a priority at all	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	79	20	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	61	37	2	0	0	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	62	34	4	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	67	30	3	0	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	60	38	1	0	0	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	80	18	1	1	0	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	63	33	4	1	0	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	70	29	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	71	26	2	0	0	100

		Q161c I'm going to read you things that the government might do to improve public health/health care in our country. How much of a priority should it be for the government: c. Making sure everyone has access to good quality drinking water					
		One of the most important priorities	A very important priority	A lower priority	Not a priority at all	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	88	11	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	65	29	5	1	0	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	72	24	4	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	65	31	3	0	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	62	36	1	0	1	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	80	19	1	0	0	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	67	29	3	0	0	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	72	27	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	69	26	4	0	0	100

		Q161d I'm going to read you things that the government might do to improve public health/health care in our country. How much of a priority should it be for the government: d. Fighting hunger and malnutrition					
		One of the most important priorities	A very important priority	A lower priority	Not a priority at all	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	81	17	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	62	28	7	3	1	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	70	26	3	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	69	27	4	0	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	64	32	3	0	1	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	86	13	0	0	1	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	67	27	5	1	0	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	65	33	2	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	72	21	6	1	0	100

		Q161e I'm going to read you things that the government might do to improve public health/health care in our country. How much of a priority should it be for the government: e. Building and improving hospitals and other health care facilities					
		One of the most important priorities	A very important priority	A lower priority	Not a priority at all	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	85	15	0	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	62	32	5	1	0	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	74	24	2	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	66	31	3	0	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	64	33	2	1	1	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	84	16	1	0	0	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	66	28	5	1	0	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	78	21	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	77	20	3	0	0	100

		Q161f I'm going to read you things that the government might do to improve public health/health care in our country. How much of a priority should it be for the government: f. Increasing the number of children who get immunized					
		One of the most important priorities	A very important priority	A lower priority	Not a priority at all	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	72	24	3	0	1	100
	Spring, 2007	53	37	8	2	0	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	58	35	5	1	1	100
	Spring, 2007	62	33	5	0	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	56	38	4	1	1	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	74	23	1	1	0	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	63	30	5	2	1	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	66	33	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	69	25	5	1	0	100

		Q161g I'm going to read you things that government might do to improve public health/health care in our country. How much of a priority should it be for the government: g. Making sure women have access to good prenatal health care when they are pregnant					
		One of the most important priorities	A very important priority	A lower priority	Not a priority at all	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	81	16	2	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	62	32	5	1	0	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	67	28	4	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	65	32	2	0	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	64	34	2	0	0	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	84	15	0	0	1	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	64	29	5	1	0	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	73	26	1	0	0	100
	Spring, 2007	73	23	3	1	0	100

		Q162 Which of these do you think should be the most important priority for the (state or government)?									
		Preventing and treating HIV/AIDS	Preventing and treating other infectious diseases like Tuberculosis and Malaria	Making sure everyone has access to good quality drinking water	Fighting hunger and malnutrition	Building and improving hospitals and other health care facilities	Increasing the number of children who get immunized	Making sure women have access to good prenatal health care when they are pregnant	All equally important (Volunteered)	DK/Refused	Total
Ghana	Spring, 2013	12	13	19	10	20	1	8	18	0	100
Kenya	Spring, 2013	15	6	11	21	21	3	3	19	0	100
Nigeria	Spring, 2013	15	10	7	13	6	0	4	44	0	100
Senegal	Spring, 2013	14	6	4	30	14	1	9	22	0	100
South Africa	Spring, 2013	35	4	7	13	7	1	2	32	0	100
Uganda	Spring, 2013	23	3	7	6	34	2	7	19	0	100