



Press Release

IPSOS SOUTH AFRICA, JOHANNESBURG: 10 OCTOBER 2023

The global discourse on Mental Health

Stress is taking a toll on the workforce, with half of online South Africans confessing to having needed time off from work due to stress in the past year. This sentiment is echoed on a global scale, as nearly 4 in 10 people across 31 countries share a similar experience.

Drawing on three years of trended data, the Ipsos World Mental Health Day survey delves into the evolving perceptions of individuals regarding their mental health, the influential factors affecting their mental wellbeing, and situates these findings within the context of the wider healthcare landscape. Our Global Health Service Monitor underscores the prominence of mental health as the primary concern when querying individuals about the prevailing healthcare challenges in their respective nations.

Key findings:

- 77% of South Africans think their mental health is as important as their physical health.
- But just 32% say mental and physical health are treated equally by the healthcare system.
- South Africans are more likely to say they often think about their physical health (85%), compared to 75% who say they often think about their mental wellbeing.
- Seven in every ten (71%) South Africans say stress has impacted their life multiple times in the last year to the point that they could not cope with things and 50% say they have felt stressed to the point that they could not go to work for a period of time.

Global Perspectives on Mental and Physical Health Prioritisation

South Africa ranks among the leading nations with a relatively strong belief in the prioritisation of mental health (17%) over physical health (5%). However, the prevailing sentiment reveals a collective recognition of the equal importance of both mental and physical health, with 77% endorsing their parity.

Looking at the global findings, nearly four in every five (78%) people across 31 countries believe that their mental health is equally as important as their physical health. This sentiment is highest in Latin America (LATAM) with Argentina (88%), Colombia (87%) and Peru (also 87%) emerging as the top three countries where this belief is most prevalent. India witnessed a substantial shift in the perception of mental and physical health as being equally important from the previous year, experiencing a remarkable 17-percentage-point surge from 2022 (49%) to 2023 (66%).

In nations such as Turkey (22%), Brazil (19%), and Thailand (18%), mental health holds greater importance than physical health. When prioritising physical health as the paramount concern, Thailand (13%), India (11%), Switzerland, Great Britain, and Australia (10%) emerge as the frontrunners. (It is clear that views in Thailand are split between the two opinions.)



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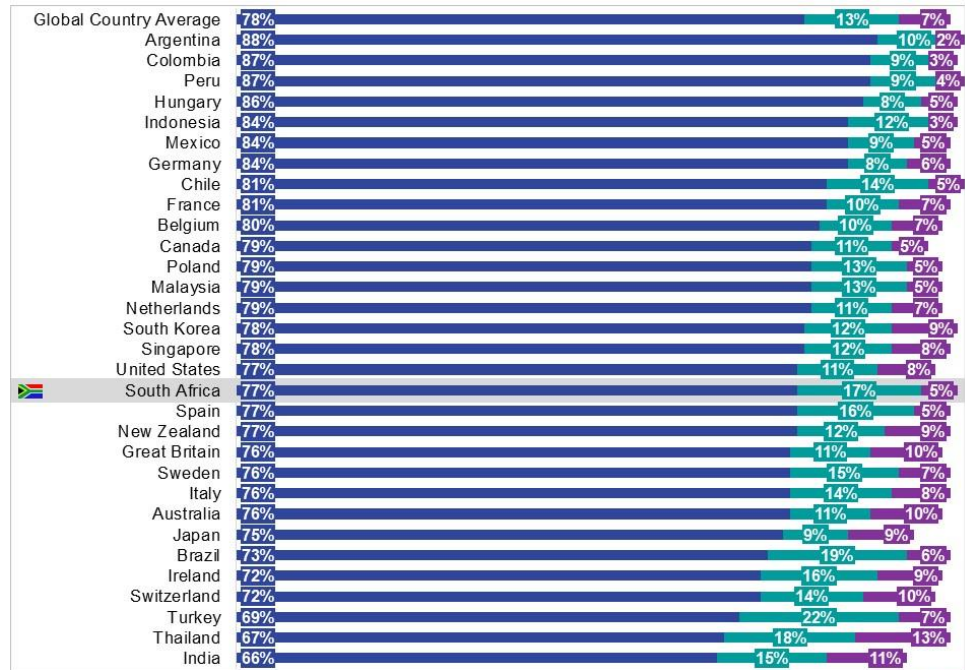
PERCEIVED HEALTH CHALLENGES IN THE COUNTRY



Thinking generally, which of the following, if any, do you see as the biggest health problems facing people in your country today?

KEY LEGEND

- THEY ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT
- MENTAL HEALTH IS MORE IMPORTANT
- PHYSICAL HEALTH IS MORE IMPORTANT



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Variations in Mental and Physical Health Treatment

Attitudes toward the treatment of mental and physical health vary significantly. In countries like Sweden (7%), Ireland (10%), the Netherlands and Poland (both 6%), people believe that mental health is treated with less importance than physical health, reflecting potential gaps in healthcare systems that may require addressing in future.

Countries in Asia are among the most likely to say that mental health is treated with equal attention by their healthcare system, probably reflecting a different cultural approach to health issues. In five Asian countries (Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, India, and Singapore) a majority believe mental wellbeing is treated with an equal level of priority as physical health.

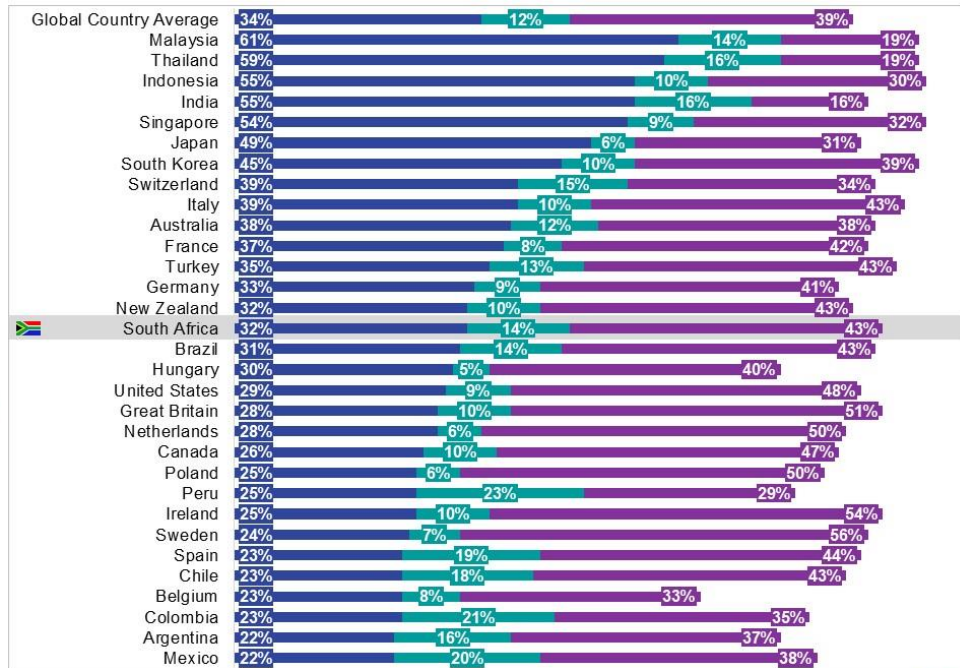
While still favouring physical health to a certain extent, Peru (23%), Colombia (21%), and Mexico (20%) emerge as leaders with people recognising a higher level of attention given to mental health within their healthcare systems.

PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTH TREATMENT IN HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Q Which of the following best describes how you think the importance of mental health and physical health are treated in ... current healthcare system?

KEY LEGEND

- THEY ARE TREATED AS EQUALLY IMPORTANT
- MENTAL HEALTH IS TREATED AS MORE IMPORTANT
- PHYSICAL HEALTH IS TREATED AS MORE IMPORTANT



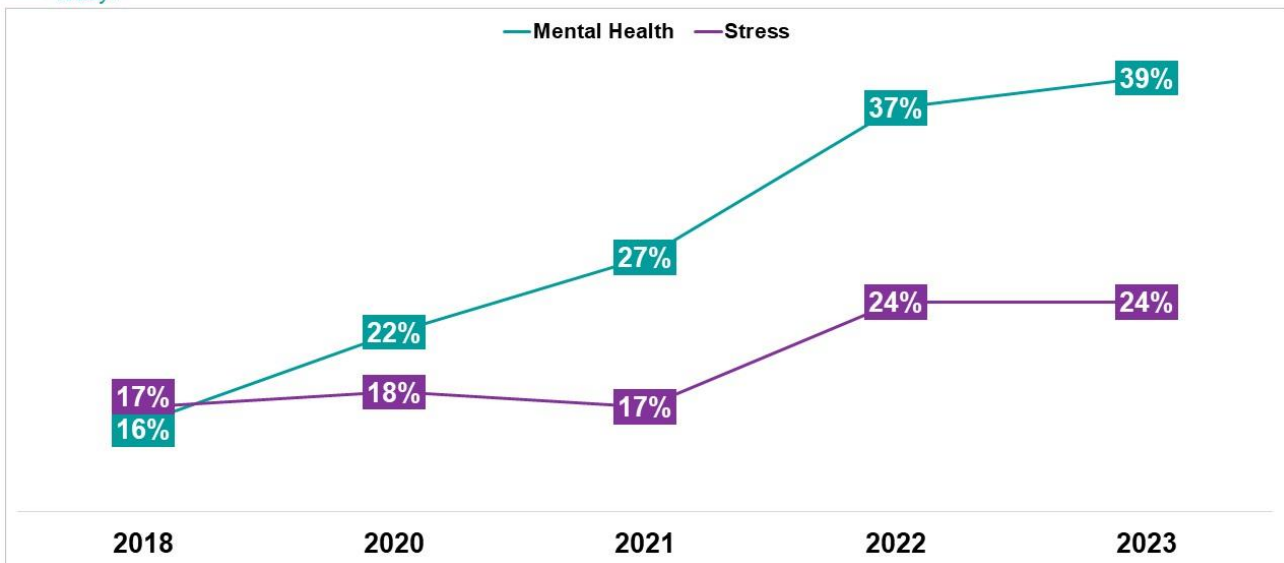
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When questioning online South Africans about the most pressing health challenges confronting the nation, an enduring and escalating concern revolves around mental health and stress, as indicated by a substantial 23-percentage-point increase from 2018 to 2023 for mental health as the biggest health concern. As South Africans recognise and advocate for equal attention being paid to mental and physical health, it illustrates the evolving landscape of healthcare priorities from the side of the population.

SOUTH AFRICANS' ESCALATING CONCERNS

Q Thinking generally, which of the following, if any, do you see as the biggest health problems facing people in your country today?



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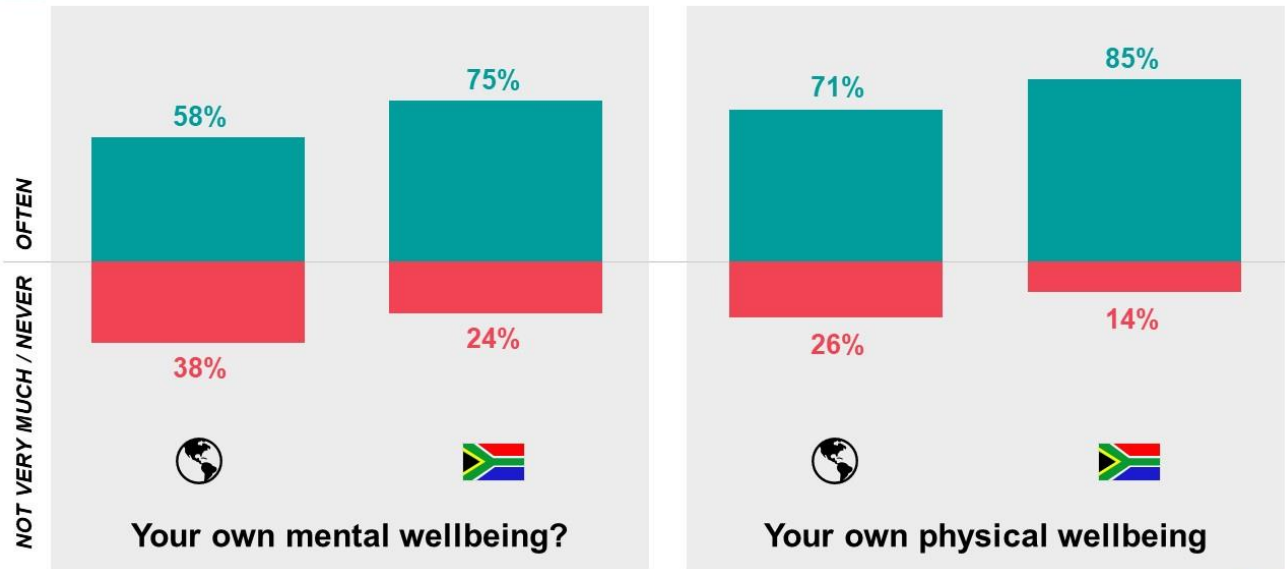
Awareness of Mental and Physical Well-being

Fifty-eight per cent globally say they think about their mental wellbeing often. South Africans and Brazilians (both 75%) are the most likely to express that this is the case. South Korea is the only country where the majority of people are more likely to say they don't think about their mental wellbeing much (61% saying they do so 'not very much/never').

South Africans' attention to physical health, with 85% stating that they frequently consider their physical well-being, harmonizes with their mentioned focus on mental health, thus underscoring a holistic view of overall well-being.

CONSIDERATION OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

Q How often, if at all, would you say you think about the following things:



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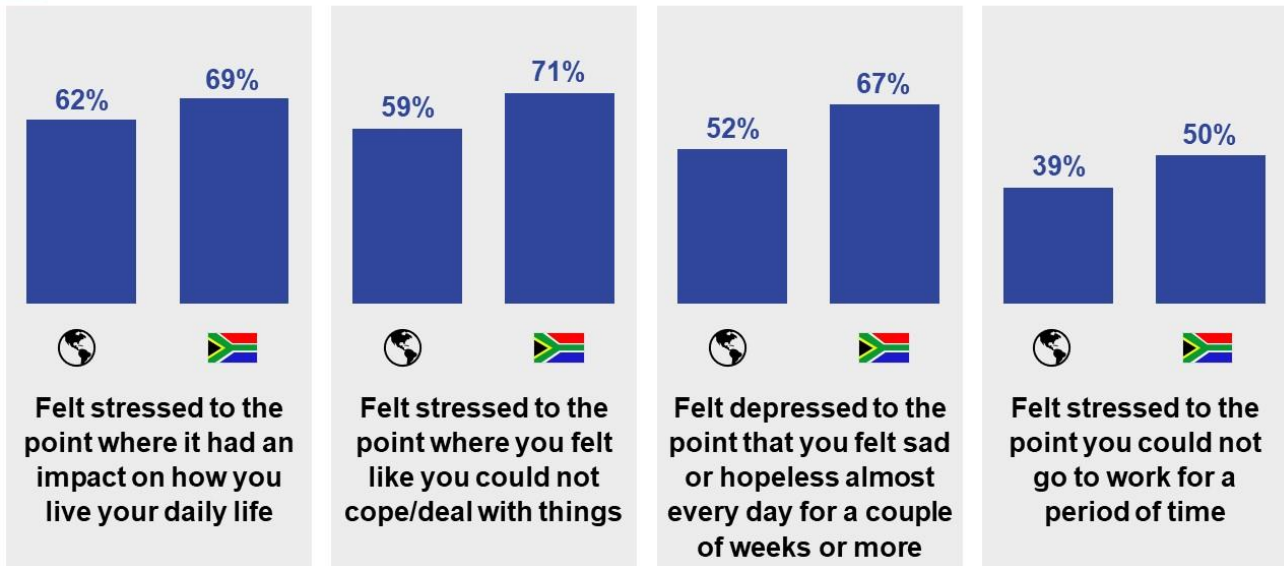
The Impact of Stress and Depression on Daily Life

Investigating the impact of stress and depression on daily life over the past year reveals that over three-fifths (62%) across 31 countries say that they have felt stressed to the point where it had an impact on how they lived their daily lives at least once in the past year.

Despite South Africans showcasing remarkable resilience amidst the ongoing challenges in this era of polycrisis, extreme stress continues to be a common experience. Notably, half of South Africans have reported stress levels so overwhelming that they were unable to attend work for a period (compared to a global country average of 39%). Furthermore, a staggering 71% of South Africans have encountered stress levels that made them feel incapable of coping with life's demands.

REFLECTIONS ON STRESS AND DEPRESSION

Q How often, if at all, would you say you think about the following things:



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As societies continue to grapple with the complexities of health and well-being, the perspective on health across countries showcases the diverse cultural factors that shape individual attitudes towards well-being, and how different regions are adapting to these challenges differently.

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About the study

- These are the results of a 31-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform and, in India, on its IndiaBus platform, between Friday, July 21 and Friday, August 4, 2023. For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of 23,274 adults aged 18 years and older in India, 18-74 in Canada, Republic of Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey, and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in all other countries.
- The sample consists of approximately 1,000 individuals each in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals each in Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and Turkey.
- The sample in India consists of approximately 2,200 individuals, of whom approximately 1,800 were interviewed face-to-face and 400 were interviewed online.
- Samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.S. can be considered representative of their general adult populations under the age of 75.
- Samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more “connected” segment of their population.
- India’s sample represents a large subset of its urban population — social economic classes A, B and C in metros and tier 1-3 town classes across all four zones.



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- *The data is weighted so that the composition of each country's sample best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.*
- *"The Global Country Average" reflects the average result for all the countries and markets in which the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result.*
- *When percentages do not sum up to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 percentage point more/less than the actual result, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of "don't know" or not stated responses.*
- *The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll where N=1,000 being accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of where N=500 being accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos' use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.*
- *The publication of these findings abides by local rules and regulations.*

About Ipsos

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- *Our tagline "Game Changers" sums up our ambition to help our 5,000 customers move confidently through a rapidly changing world.*
- *Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has been listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and Mid-60 indices and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).*
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