

Philips research study reveals state of health and well-being of SA mothers and their children

Building on the success of the first African road show undertaken in 2010, Philips is once again journeying across Africa with the Cape Town to Cairo road show 2011. The main focus for this year is on Mother and Child Care and Women's healthcare, supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to improve healthcare in Africa.

- South African mothers* feel healthy: 86% rate their health and well-being as very good or good
- Children score even better: 93% of mothers consider their children to be healthy
- General satisfaction with hospital facilities during labour, but the majority of South African mothers are not confident about prenatal care and experience a lack of breastfeeding support: training initiatives in this area are welcome
- Two thirds of South African mothers experience some level of stress; reasons are often financially related.

In line with Philips' MDGs support, Philips launched a Mother and Childcare research which is part of a larger survey, the Philips Health and Well-being Index. It focuses on the state of health and wellbeing among mothers and young children in South Africa.



(image: Wikimedia Commons)

The research reveals that during the labour experience, the majority of those who have children felt uncertain about the prenatal care they received, and breastfeeding support available was not adequate. This is despite the fact that they feel better about their health and well-being in comparison to the general South African population. 86% of South African mothers rate their health and well-being as very good or good, compared to 80% of the general population. As much as 93% of those with children, consider the health and well-being of their children to be very good or good.

Majority of South African mothers uncertain about prenatal care during pregnancy

The study shows that the majority of mothers in South Africa are satisfied with their general practitioners and family planning services. General practitioners in particular are used for obtaining pregnancy and child healthcare advice. South African mothers also commonly turn to their own mothers and pharmacists as a source of advice for child health and pregnancy information. Mothers are less likely to use specialty doctors such as paediatricians and midwives/doulas for child health and pregnancy advice, for which the cost barrier may be a contributing factor. During pregnancy, South African mothers have access to state funded healthcare. However, specialists are only available at a cost, which may influence both the mothers' healthcare decisions and well-being.

During pregnancy most mothers in South Africa seek prenatal screenings such as regular sonograms and glucose tests (75% and 81% respectively). However, only 51% seek out birthing classes, childcare classes (49%) and only slightly over half (54%) take breastfeeding classes.



"Improving the quality of prenatal care in Africa requires clinical and technical training of care givers. During the Cape Town to Cairo road show, we are hosting a specially designed clinical training workshop, in which topics such as foetal heart rate interpretation and baby resuscitation, but also clinical fundamentals of obstetrics ultrasounds will be covered. Philips product specialists will provide an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with technical equipment, and give an overview of the different trimesters of pregnancy", says JJ van Dongen, senior director and general manager Philips Healthcare Africa & Country manager Philips South Africa. Philips Healthcare will organise these two-day training workshops in all key markets during the road show.

Most South African children visit the doctor for check-ups at least every half year

Most mothers (60%) visit the doctor at least annually for a general check-up (not related to pregnancy). For their children, the numbers are significantly higher; 81% of the South African children visit a doctor for a general check-up at least every six months. Mothers with children between 3 and 5 years old, take their children to the doctor less frequently than mothers with younger children. One-fifth of mothers say their child sees the doctor for a general check-up only once per year or even less. The barriers preventing mothers from going to a general check-up is a preference to go only when an illness manifests itself, but also the costs associated with visiting a doctor.

Financial-related worries are key stress factors



(Image: Robert Whitehead, via Wikimedia Commons)

More than half of South African mothers (66%) consider themselves to be stressed on some level. The most common reasons for stress are financial related; the economy being a key stressor for more mothers than any other (74%) and healthcare costs being another key stressor (68% of mothers). Other key stressors include having enough money to pay the bills, but also crime and worry about the health and well-being of a parent.

Furthermore, stress seems to be most intense among first time pregnant mothers, compared to mothers with at least one child. Thinking ahead to the future, mothers worry about influences of the outside world on their children's well-being. The increasing awareness of drug trafficking in South Africa leads to mothers fearing the impact of drugs on their children's lives (78%).

In addition, social media leads to worry for more mothers (63%) than concern over clean water, access to good education, depression or obesity. Not surprisingly, the study shows that one-third of mothers feel sleep deprived, with worry and stress being a key driver of lack of sleep.

About the Philips Mother and Child Care research

The research is a component of a larger, nationally representative, survey among adult South Africans aged 18-65+ years. The total sample for the Mother and Childcare findings comprised 250 women aged 18-40 years, who are pregnant or have at least one or more children aged zero to five years old (or both). Among this sample of women, a greater emphasis was placed on middle-higher income households than corresponds to the national profile of South Africa. The study will be replicated in six other countries globally. It is Philips' intention to continue this kind of trends research regarding the way people in different countries approach health and well-being, and to show similarities and differences across the globe.

For more information please follow the Cape Town to Cairo road show on: www.philips.com/africaroadshow.

[Download the full report.](#)

**Mothers refers to all the women that qualified for the M&CC survey, aged 18-40 years, and are either pregnant or have at least one child between the age of 0-5 years.*