

# How healthy is SA?

Health24 recently conducted a comprehensive online survey, sponsored by FedHealth, into the health of South Africans. The survey was completed by over 10,000 South Africans with a female response rate of 63% and 37% male.

Overall - South Africans believe they are in good health. They also believe that they have a definite understanding of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. The more detailed results, however, tend to paint another picture.

## Not as healthy as imagined

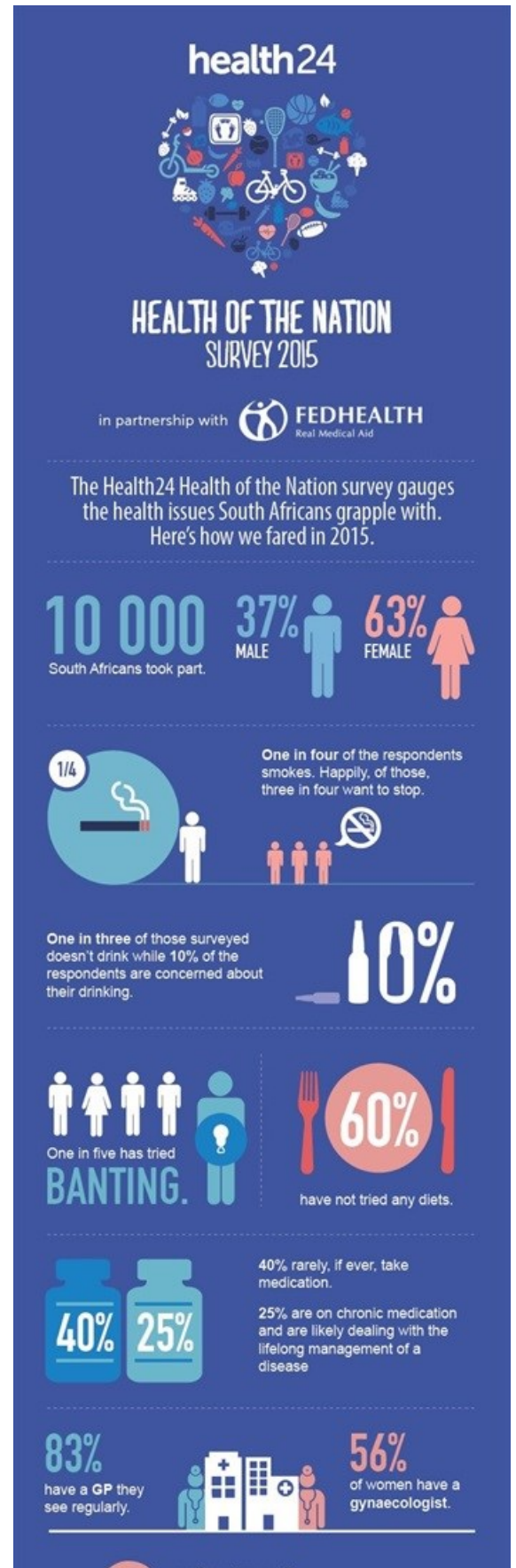
- One in four of the respondents smoke. Happily, of those, three in four want to stop. This is higher than the global average of 21% and in addition, 22% of the female entrants smoke, compared to the global average of just 7%.
- One in three does not drink while 10% of the respondents are concerned about their drinking.
- 91% want to get in better shape for summer and while overall they do not think they eat too much sugar, salt or fat, just over half think they eat too many carbs. One in five has tried Banting but 60% have not tried any diets.

While generally South Africans seem to feel they are healthy, there is very little to show for proactive health care. Only 19% of the women surveyed had recently had a mammogram. Overall, entrants were not up to date with the recommended screening tests, with the exception of blood glucose.

- 40% rarely, if ever, take medication, but one in four are on prescribed chronic medication, which equates to 25% of the respondents who are likely dealing with the lifelong management of a disease
- 83% have a GP they see regularly, but only 56% of women have a gynaecologist.
- Stress and well-being came up as factors affecting ordinary South Africans. Only 54% say they sleep well - 34% find themselves waking up during the night. The average stress level is 5.8 out of 10; the average mood is 6.7 out of 10.
- Men rate themselves as about 10% healthier, happier and less stressed than women.

Interestingly George is the happiest and least stressed place in South Africa and they consider themselves healthier than people in other cities. Kimberley residents have the most stress, lowest happiness and lowest health self-assessment.

The most common health problems listed were back pain (35%), eyesight issues (25%), depression (22%), digestive issues (16%) and skin problems (15%). Almost a quarter took sick leave in the 30 days before



they answered the survey.

**Other noteworthy results were:**

- 40% want to be organ donors, but are not
- 22% do not know what number to call in an emergency
- 44% do not know who Aaron Motsoaledi is
- Just over half believe vaccines should be compulsory



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