

Access to Personal Protective Equipment in Ghana



"Health workers should not have to sacrifice their own health to care for other people's health. We are very willing to work if all the protective gear and hand hygiene items are provided."

Globally, healthcare facilities are running through personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves, and gowns at rapid rates due to treating COVID-19 patients while simultaneously trying to protect healthcare workers from the disease. Our consortium¹ conducted a survey of healthcare workers in Ghana from April 20-24, 2020 to gather data on the availability of PPE to healthcare workers.

Results

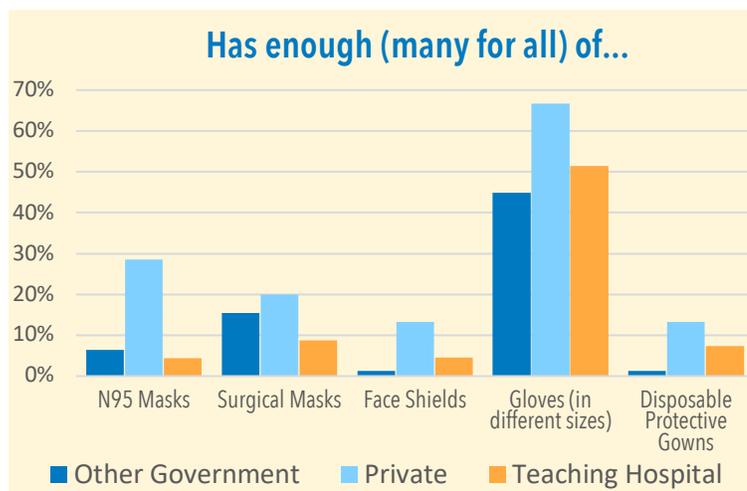
All PPE is in short supply. 50% of respondents reported having a sufficient supply of gloves, but very few reported having sufficient surgical masks (13%), N95 masks (8%), protective gowns (5%), or face shields (4%).

Private hospitals have better access to PPE than other kinds of facilities, though PPE is still in short supply. Meanwhile, the large teaching hospitals—where most COVID-19 patients are routed—have the worst access to N95 and surgical masks.

Lack of PPE was consistent across regions. Though Greater Accra and Ashanti reported better access to gloves than other regions (57% in Greater Accra and 58% in Ashanti reported having enough gloves, compared to an average in all other regions of 21%), gloves were not universally available in any region.

In response to an open-ended question for additional comments, healthcare workers expressed their concern over the quantity of the PPE available, access to PPE for nurses and other hospital staff, and the need for more PPE, beyond doctors.

"I think stakeholders should be extra vigilant how they are handling the frontline issue because it will be very chaotic for the nation if other health professionals pretend they are working but in reality will not be working."



¹ To help us make better decisions on the COVID-19 crisis, IDS International created a consortia of data and tech companies to measure the effectiveness of physical distancing and disinfectant behaviors like hand-washing and masks. Consortium partner Clear Outcomes led the data collection in partnership with the Ghana Medical Association. A total of 162 healthcare workers responded to the survey, including doctors, nurses, midwives, laboratory technicians, administrators, and others. Representatives of Ghana's main teaching hospitals and other private and government hospitals throughout the country participated in the survey, though the sampling and results should not be taken as statistically representative. For more information contact data@clearoutcomes.net.