

People's Perspectives on the Healthcare System in Somaliland: Findings from the People's Voice Survey

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Introduction

Somaliland, a low-income country in the Horn of Africa, was declared independent in 1991 and has a population of 4.2 million according to DHS¹. King's Global Health Partnerships, based at King's College London, have been working to strengthen the health system in Somaliland in close partnership with the Ministry of Health and Development (MOHD). As part of a National Quality Improvement Program in Somaliland, the People's Voice Survey (PVS), was used to assess people's perspectives on the healthcare system to inform the National Quality Policy and Strategy (NQPS). PVS is a rapid, low-cost, telephone survey designed by QuEST Network to assess health system performance from a population perspective².

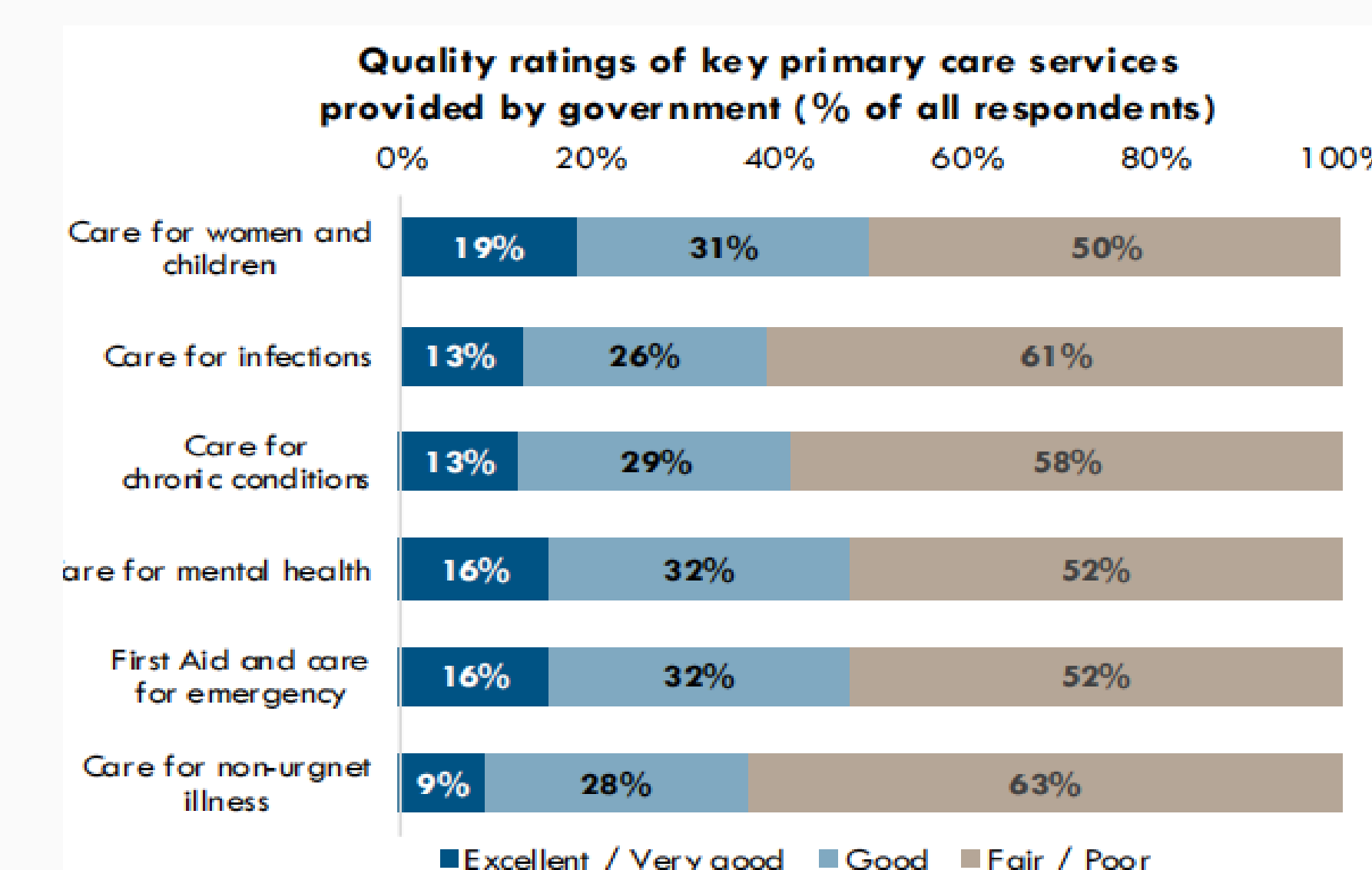
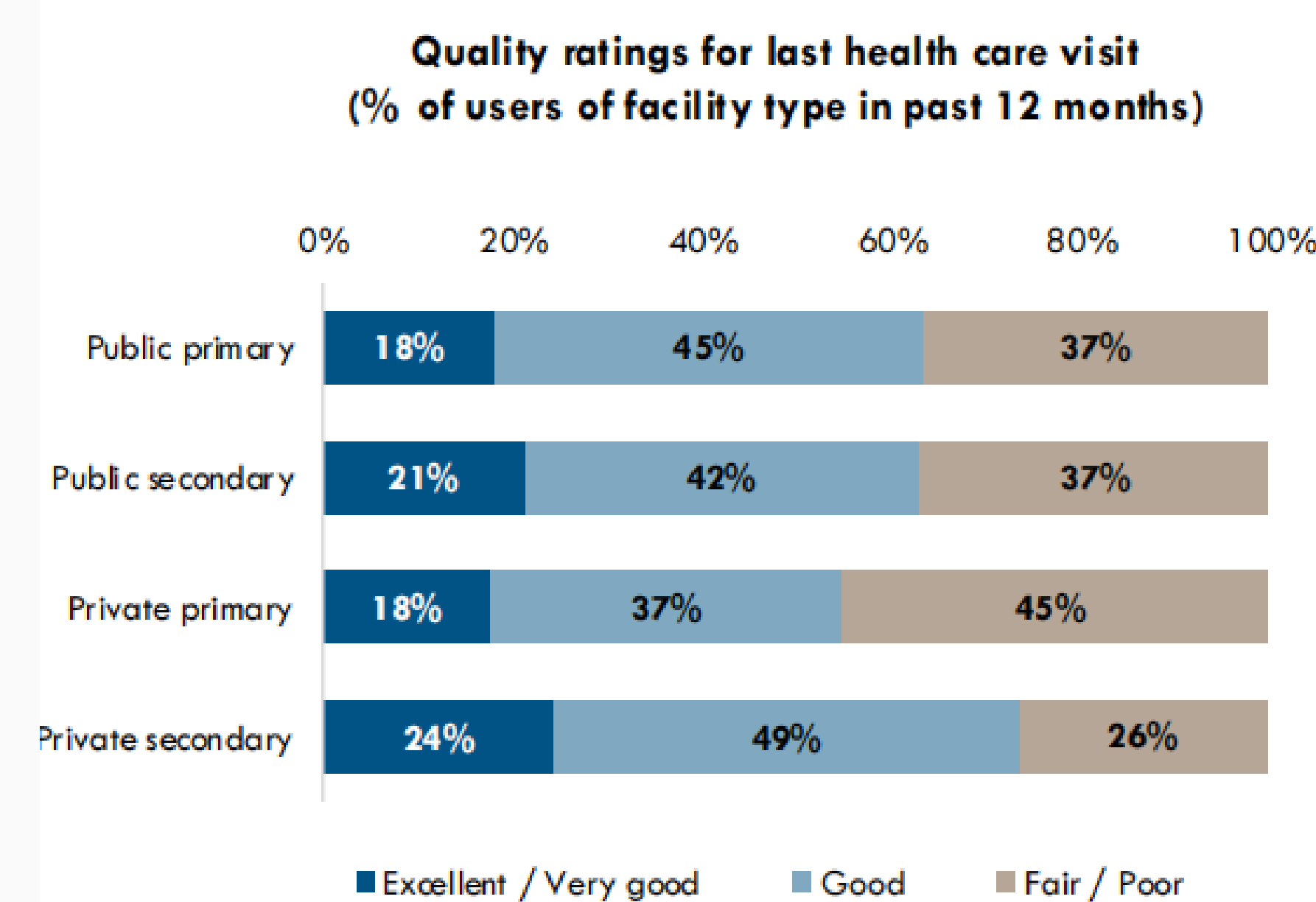
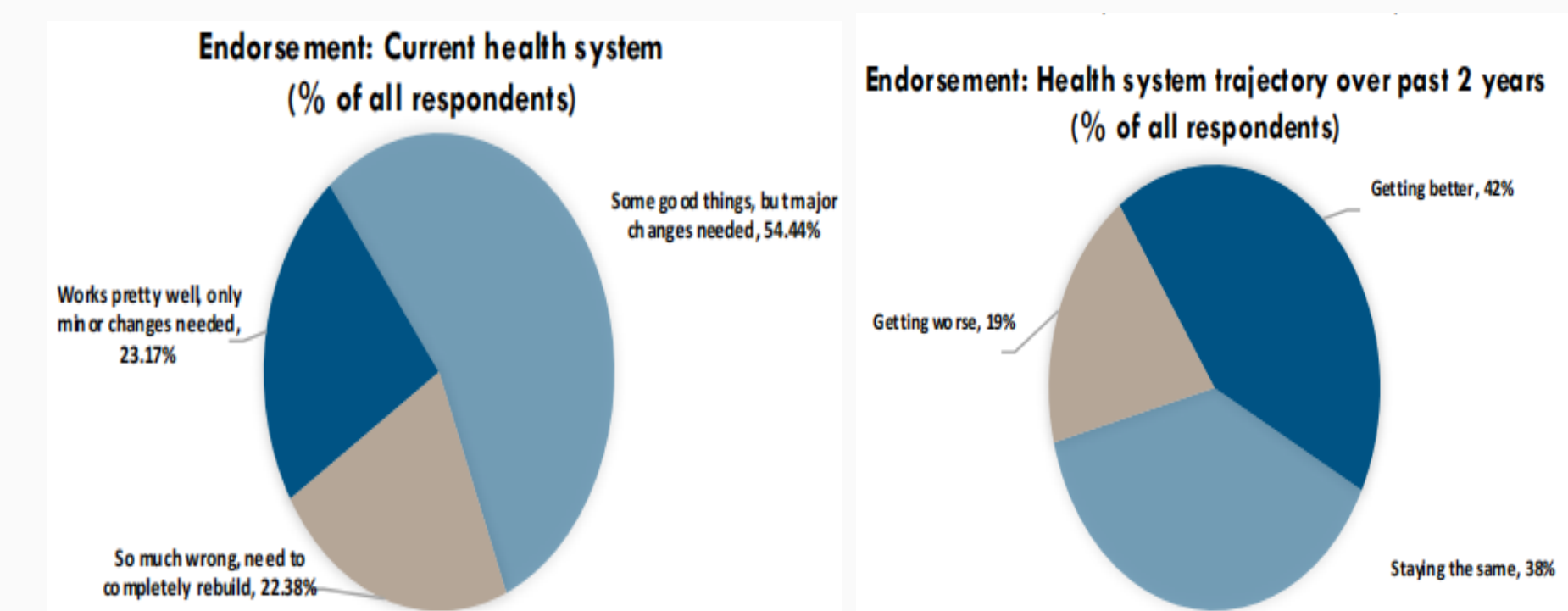
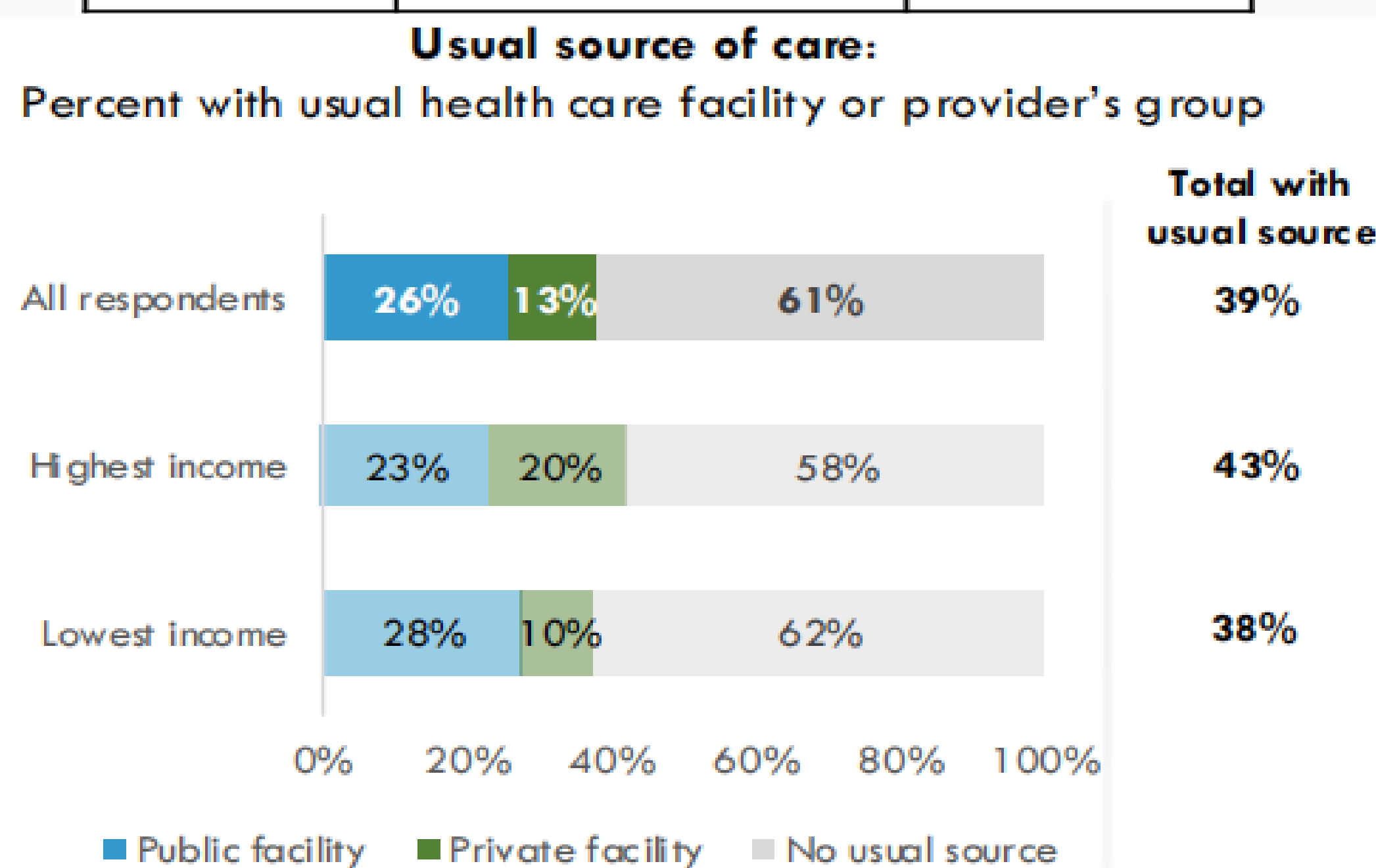
Methodology

A cross-sectional survey was done in 2023-24 in Somaliland using a contextualized Somali version of People's Voice Survey tool with a sample of 2200 telephone and 300 face-to-face interviews. The sample was representative of the population of Somaliland where a random sample of phone numbers was selected in areas with high telephone coverage, boosted with a randomly selected face-to-face sample from low telephone coverage areas. The selected respondents were 18 or above in age. Initial findings were compiled using descriptive analysis and regression analysis will be done at a later stage. The findings of this survey informed the NQPS Somaliland.

Results

- 47.08% of our respondents are from rural areas and 16.9% are from Nomadic settlements
- In Somaliland, 38% people have a usual source of care, most of which go to public health facilities.
- Around 41% of respondents did not seek care in last 12 months despite needing it, mostly due to high costs, distance and not perceiving condition serious enough.
- Out of people rating their mental health as poor or fair, only 3% people received mental health care in last 12 months.
- Use of preventative care services in Somaliland is low, where most services have been used by less than 50% eligible respondents, the lowest for cervical cancer screening (7%) and mammograms (8%).
- 16.39% respondents had an overnight hospital stay in last 12 months.
- Around 50% respondents have rated public health system in Somaliland as Excellent/Very good compared to 62% for private health sector.
- Quality ratings for most government primary care services are low with around 50% respondents rating most services as poor or fair.
- 53.22% respondents are confident they would be able to receive good quality care if needed and they would be able to afford it.
- 57.42% respondents believe government considers public opinions when making decisions about the healthcare system.
- 36.33% respondents have rated the government's management of COVID-19 as excellent/very good.
- These findings were included in the situation analysis for the NQPS and was included in the implementation plan as a regular means of collecting demand-side data on quality of healthcare in Somaliland.

Respondent demographics ¹		Overall (N = 2500)
Age (median) [Min, Max]		32 [18, 99]
Female		1300 (52%)
Urban residency		899 (35.98%)
Education (highest level)	Post-secondary	221 (8.98%)
	Secondary	205 (8.32%)
	Primary	385 (15.62%)
Household income (monthly)	Highest (≥ 250 USD)	436 (17.43%)
	Middle (100 to <250 USD)	814 (32.57%)
	Lowest (< 100 USD)	1141 (45.66%)
	Unknown	109 (4.35%)
Health insurance ²	No insurance	2477 (99.08%)
	Public insurance	0
	Private insurance	23 (0.92%)



Conclusion

In Somaliland, most people go to the public health sector for usual source of care and think highly of the public health system. However, there are still barriers to care-seeking such as high cost, distance and patient perception. Care-seeking for mental health and preventative care services is low in Somaliland. People have high confidence in their ability to receive and afford quality care in Somaliland if very sick. There are various good things in the health system of Somaliland but major changes are needed. PVS is a useful tool to include the people's perspectives and opinions in health policies and decisions.

References

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- Kruk, M.E., Kapoor, N.R., Lewis, T.P., Arsenault, C., Boutsikari, E.C., Breda, J., Carai, S., Croke, K., Dayalu, R., Fink, G. and Garcia, P.J., 2024. Population confidence in the health system in 15 countries: results from the first round of the People's Voice Survey. The Lancet Global Health, 12(1), pp.e100-e111.

Acknowledgments

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Further information

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