

# Ebola Virus Disease Special Poll Report

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***The Ebola Virus Disease Poll  
Report***

**August 2014**

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

The first casualty of Ebola virus disease in Nigeria was recorded at First Consultants, Hospital in Obalende in Lagos State. The deceased was a Liberian-born American diplomat, Patrick Sawyer, who flew in from Lome, in transit to a conference in Calabar the Cross River state capital. Since his death and the subsequent death of a nurse that treated him in the hospital, great concern has been shown by Nigerians on a possible outbreak of the disease.

**NOIPolls Ltd** in partnership with **EpiAfric; an Abuja based public health consulting firm**, conducted a poll to seek the perceptions of Nigerians regarding the awareness of and the degree of anxiety around the disease and to ascertain awareness of possible preventive measures. Key findings which emerged from the poll include:

- **91%** of respondents surveyed acknowledged that they are aware of the recent outbreak of the viral disease.
- **80%** of Nigerians expressed worry over the spread of the disease in Nigeria and the North-East zone had for the highest proportion (**96%**) of respondents who are concerned about the spread of the virus in Nigeria.
- **83%** of the respondents believe the Ebola virus disease spreads “*by exchange of body fluids*”, 7% believe it spreads “*by air*”, while **4%** believe that it is spread via “*contact with infected bats (animal)*” and “*by mosquitoes*” respectively.
- In addition, slightly more than half (**51%**) of adult Nigerians affirmed they have enough information to protect themselves from the Ebola virus disease. The highest proportion of respondents who confirmed that they have enough information to protect themselves against the disease were aged between 30 – 45 years (**61%**). A majority of respondents aged between 18 – 21 years (**51%**) did not feel they had adequate information to protect themselves.
- Just over half (**57%**) of respondents are confident that the Federal Ministry of Health and its agencies can protect Nigerians from the impact of the virus in the case of possible spread. The South-East zone has the highest proportion (**65% i.e. 27% + 38%**) of respondents who are confident that the Ministry and its agencies can protect Nigerians from the virus.
- The vast majority (**72%**) of respondents are not confident that their local hospitals have the capability to offer needed care and handle instances of Ebola virus disease.
- The majority (**82%**) of adult Nigerians are currently more concerned about the Ebola virus disease than other diseases such as, HIV (**8%**) and hepatitis (**3%**).

## 2.0 Survey Background and Objectives

Ebola virus disease (EVD), previously known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a serious, often fatal illness in humans. Ebola was first recognized in 1976 in two concurrent outbreaks, in Nzara, Sudan, and in Yambuku, Democratic Republic of Congo, near the Ebola River, from which the disease gets its name. It has a fatality rate of up to 90%<sup>1</sup>. Current knowledge is that EVD outbreaks are started when the Ebola virus is introduced into human populations

<sup>1</sup> Ebola Virus Disease, available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/> [accessed August 15 2014]

through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals such as chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelope and porcupines found ill or dead or in the rain forest<sup>12</sup>. Ebola then spreads in the community through human-to-human transmission, with infection resulting from direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected people, and indirect contact with environments contaminated with such fluids<sup>3</sup>. Burial ceremonies in which mourners have direct contact with the body of the deceased person can also play a part in the transmission of Ebola<sup>4</sup>.

EVD is a severe acute viral illness often characterized by the sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding. Laboratory findings include low white blood cell and platelet counts and elevated liver enzymes. The incubation period, that is, the time interval from infection with the virus to the onset of symptoms, is 2 to 21 days<sup>1</sup>

The Ebola virus was first imported into Nigeria by the late Liberian-born American, Patrick Sawyer, who arrived in Lagos on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2014 and died five days later after being diagnosed with the Ebola virus at First Consultants Hospital in Obalende in Lagos State<sup>5</sup>.<sup>6</sup>By the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, 26 days after the emergence of Ebola in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria has confirmed 169 people under surveillance, 6 cases of undergoing treatment and 4 deaths<sup>7</sup>.

President Goodluck Jonathan had declared a national emergency on Ebola and approved 1.9 billion Naira intervention fund to combat the outbreak of the virus<sup>8</sup>. Likewise, the Anambra State Ministry of Health on 31<sup>st</sup> July announced that there are concerns in the State that the disease may have infiltrated the State through a corpse brought in from Liberia and deposited at Apex Mortuary in Nkwelle Ezunaka<sup>9</sup>. Though no one has tested positive for the virus yet, precautionary measures such as securing a site that will help the ministry to quarantine contacts until they are declared uninfected are being put in place

Major concerns about Ebola in Nigeria include widespread fear of the disease, limited availability of the right public health education, the on-going doctors' strike, non-adherence to standard infection control protocols in Nigerian hospitals, lack of personal protective equipment for health care workers and the general poor sanitation practices across the country.

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<sup>2</sup> Ebola Virus Infection, available at <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/ebola-fever-virus-infection> [accessed August 15 2014]

<sup>3</sup> Ebola Virus Diseases, available at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/> [accessed August 15 2014]

<sup>4</sup> Frequently asked questions on Ebola virus disease, available at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/faq-ebola/en/> [accessed August 15 2014]

<sup>5</sup> Ebola: Why Patrick Sawyer travelled to Nigeria – Wife, available at <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/166660-ebola-why-patrick-sawyer-travelled-to-nigeria-wife.html#sthash.0ORuHgT2.dpbs> [accessed August 15 2014]

<sup>6</sup> Ebola virus: Liberia apologises to Nigeria, available at <http://www.punchng.com/news/ebola-virus-liberia-apologises-to-nigeria/> [accessed August 15 2014]

<sup>7</sup> Ebola: Nigeria Confirmed Cases Still 10, With Four Deaths – Minister, available at <http://saharareporters.com/2014/08/14/ebola-nigeria-confirmed-cases-still-10-four-deaths-%E2%80%93-minister> [accessed August 15 2014]

<sup>8</sup> Nigeria's Jonathan declares state of emergency over Ebola, available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/08/us-health-ebola-nigeria-jonathan-idUSKBN0G81WB20140808> [accessed August 15 2014]

<sup>9</sup> Ebola scare: Governor Obiano bans corpses from outside Anambra, available at <http://dailypost.ng/2014/08/02/ebola-scare-governor-obiano-bans-corpses-outside-anambra/> [accessed August 15 2014]

Against this background, NOIPolls, in collaboration with EpiAfric conducted a poll to seek perceptions of Nigerians about Ebola.

Key objectives of the survey are as follows:

- To ascertain awareness of the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).
- To gauge the degree to anxiety of Nigerians should the disease starts to spread in Nigeria
- To measure the awareness of Nigerians on how the virus spreads
- To determine how informed Nigerians feel they are on how to protect themselves from the virus
- To measure the confidence of Nigerians on the ability of the Ministry of Health and its agencies to deal with an outbreak of Ebola virus disease
- To gauge public perception of the capabilities of local hospitals in managing cases of Ebola
- To identify how afraid of Ebola virus disease Nigerians are compared to some other diseases

### 3.0 Survey Methodology & Demographic Distribution

Results are based on telephone interviews of a proportionate random nationwide sample, and conducted in the week of **11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014**. 1,006 randomly selected phone-owning Nigerians adults aged 18 years and above, across the six geopolitical zones in the country, were interviewed and the Interviews were conducted in English, Pidgin, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages. With a sample of this size, we can say with 95% confidence that the results obtained are statistically precise - within a range of plus or minus 3% margin of error. The margin of error reflects influence of data weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties associated with conducting telephone surveys (particularly in Nigeria) can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

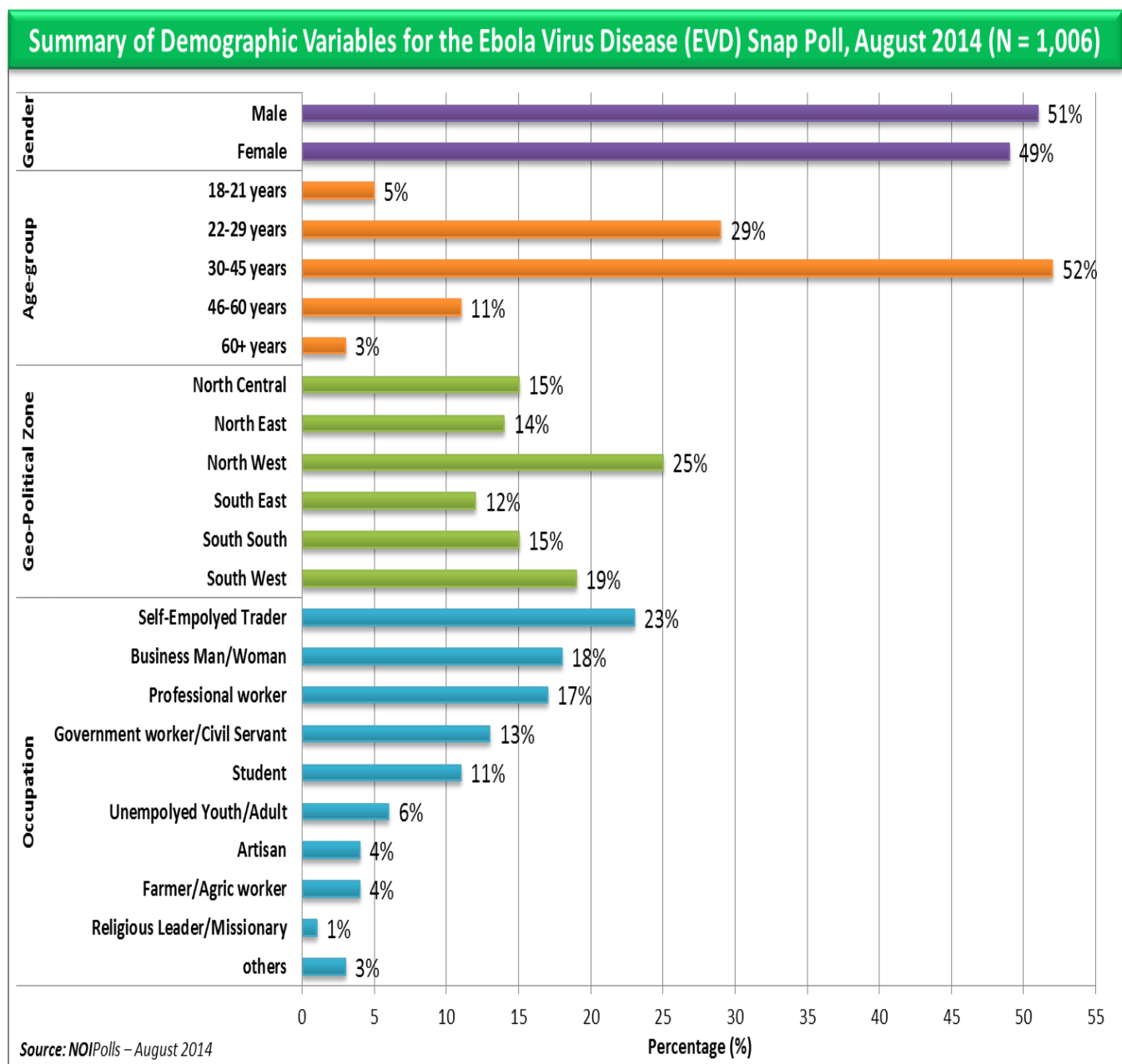
A total of 1006 respondents were interviewed in the survey. The demographic distribution of the respondents is divided into the following groups: Gender, age-group, geo-political zones and occupation as illustrated in figure 1 below:

**Gender:** The proportion of male and female respondents was almost equal with 51% and 49% respectively.

**Age-Group:** The age-group with the highest frequency in the survey was 30-45 (52%), followed by the 22-29 age-group with 29%. The lowest age-group represented was 60+ (3%).

**Geo-Political Zones:** All geo-political zones were represented in the survey, the highest represented zone being the North-West zone (25%) and the lowest being the South-East zone (12%).

**Occupation:** A slight majority of the respondents surveyed were self-employed traders (23%); followed by business men/women (18%) and professional workers (17%). The lowest represented occupation in the survey was Religious Leader/Missionary (1%).



**Figure 1: Demographic distribution**

## 4.0 Survey Results

Respondents to the poll were asked seven specific questions. This section of the report presents findings from each question.

### 4.1 Awareness On The Outbreak Of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)

To estimate the awareness of the Ebola virus disease, respondents were asked: **Are you aware of the current outbreak of Ebola virus disease in West Africa?** 91% of adult Nigerians surveyed acknowledged that they are aware of the outbreak of the virus in West Africa and this cuts across gender, geo-political zones and age groups.

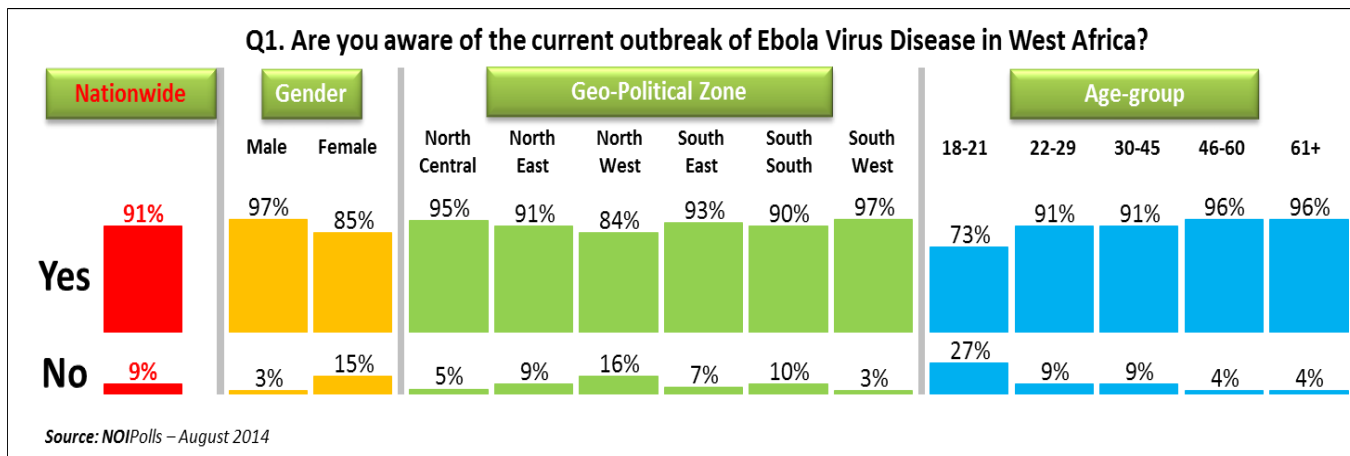


Figure 2: The level of awareness on the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease

**4.2 Degree Of Anxiety Of Nigerians On Possible Spread Of Disease**

Furthermore, in order to ascertain how worried Nigerians are about the Ebola virus disease, respondents were asked: **How worried are you about the current outbreak of Ebola virus disease and possible spread in Nigeria?** The responses show that **80% (61%+19%)** of adult Nigerians expressed worry over the spread of the disease in Nigeria. On the contrary, a total of **20% (14%+6%)** of the respondents surveyed claimed that they are not concerned about a possible spread of the Ebola virus disease in the country.

Analysis across geo-political zones indicates that the North-East zone has the highest proportion (**96%**) of respondents concerned about the spread of the virus in Nigeria. This is closely followed by the North-West zone and the North-Central zone with **87%** and **77%** respectively.

On the other hand, the South-East and the South-South zones have the relatively largest number of respondents who are not concerned about the spread of the virus in Nigeria, although 72% in these zones were concerned. In addition, respondents aged **60** years and above have the highest ratio (**85%**) of respondents who are anxious about the spread of the disease (they however represent just 3% of respondents) while the age-group between **18 – 21** years has the largest proportion (**45%**) of respondents who are not worried about the possible spread of the disease

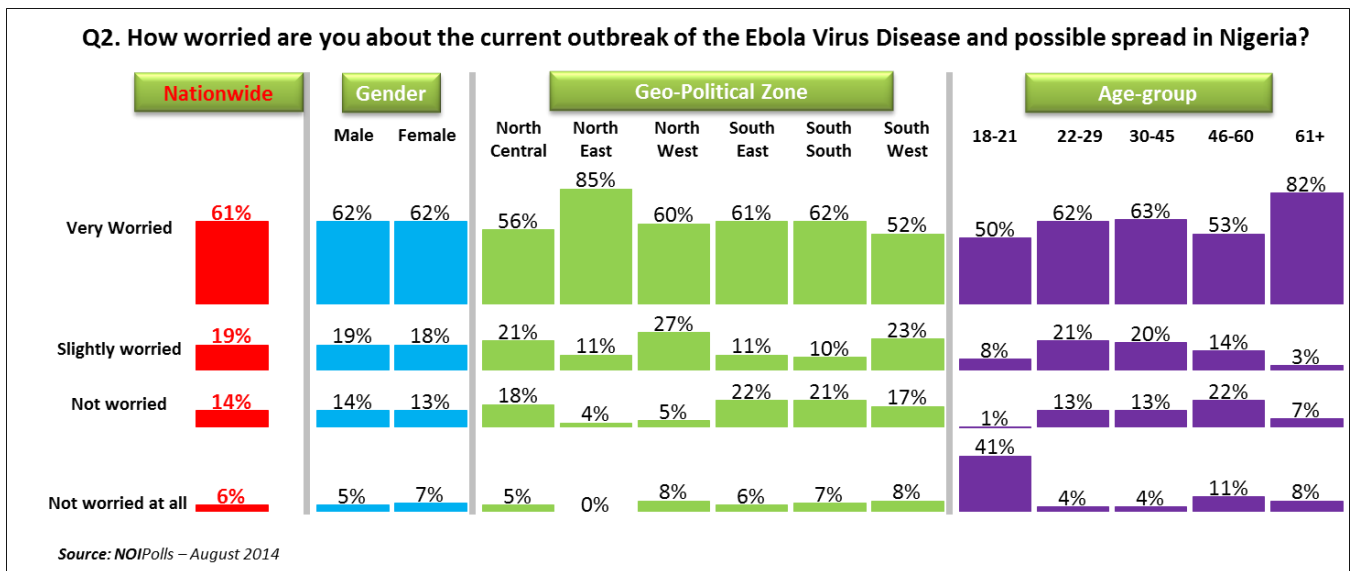


Figure 3: The degree of anxiety about the Ebola Virus

**4.3 Awareness Of Nigerians On How The Ebola Virus Disease Spreads**

To ascertain the knowledge of the spread of the virus, respondents were asked: **As far as you know, how do you think the Ebola virus disease spreads?** The findings revealed that 83% of the respondents affirmed that it spreads “by exchange of body fluids”, whereas 7% believe it spreads “by air” while 4% each stated that it is spreads via “contact with infected bats (animal)” and “by mosquitoes”.

Geo-political zone evaluation reveals that the South-West zone has the highest proportion (94%) of respondents who indicated it spreads by exchange of body fluids. The age-group between 18 – 21 years accounted for the largest fraction of respondents who claim that the virus spreads by air and by mosquitoes with 25% and 44% respectively.

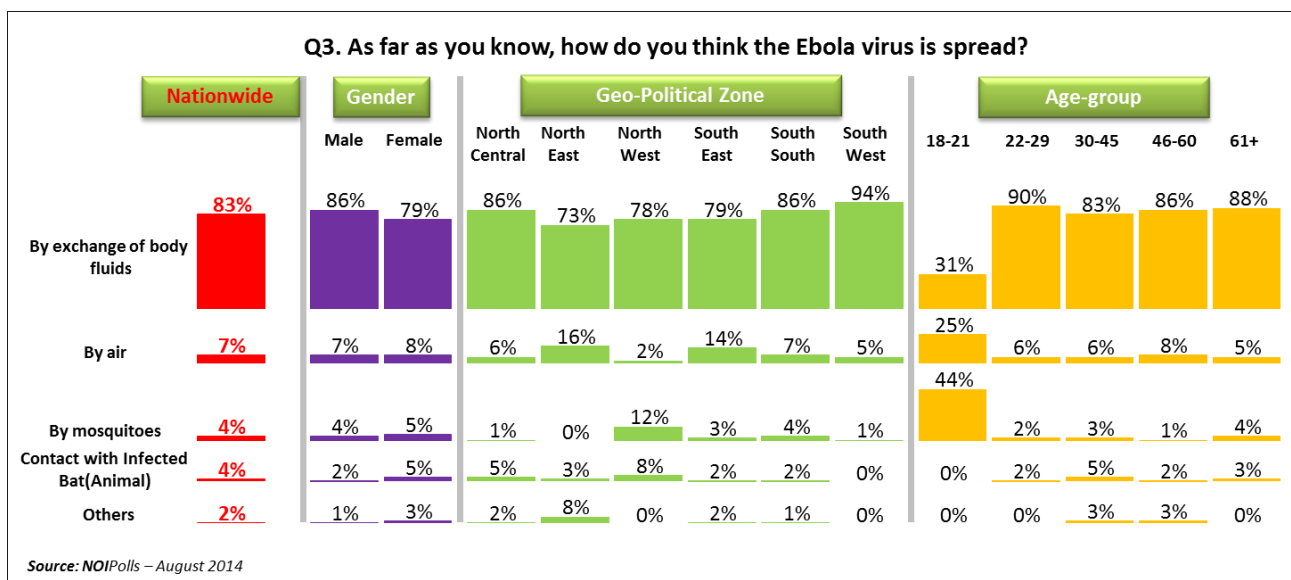


Figure 4: The perception on how the virus spreads

**4.4 The Level Of Information Nigerians Have To Protect Themselves**

Subsequently, respondents were asked: **Do you think that you have the information you need to protect yourself against the virus in the event that Ebola starts spreading in Nigeria?** In answer to this question, slightly more than half (51%) of adult Nigerians affirmed that they have enough information to protect themselves from the Ebola virus disease. Inversely, 35% of the respondents surveyed did not feel they had sufficient information to protect themselves against the virus should it start spreading, while 14% admitted that they are not certain if they have adequate information to protect themselves from the virus.

From the geo-political zone perspective, the North-Central zone has the highest proportions of respondents (65%) who confirmed they have ample information to protect themselves should the virus start to spread. The North-East zone (59%) accounted for the largest ratio of respondents who do not have enough information, while the South-East zone (24%) has the highest percentage of respondents who are not sure if they have adequate information to protect themselves against the Ebola virus. Analysis based on age-group revealed that the highest proportion of respondents who confirmed they have enough information to protect themselves against the disease were aged between 30 – 45 years (61%). More respondents aged between 18 – 21 years (51%) felt that they do not have adequate information to protect themselves, while more respondents aged 60 years (29%) and above are not sure if they have sufficient information to protect themselves against the Ebola virus disease.

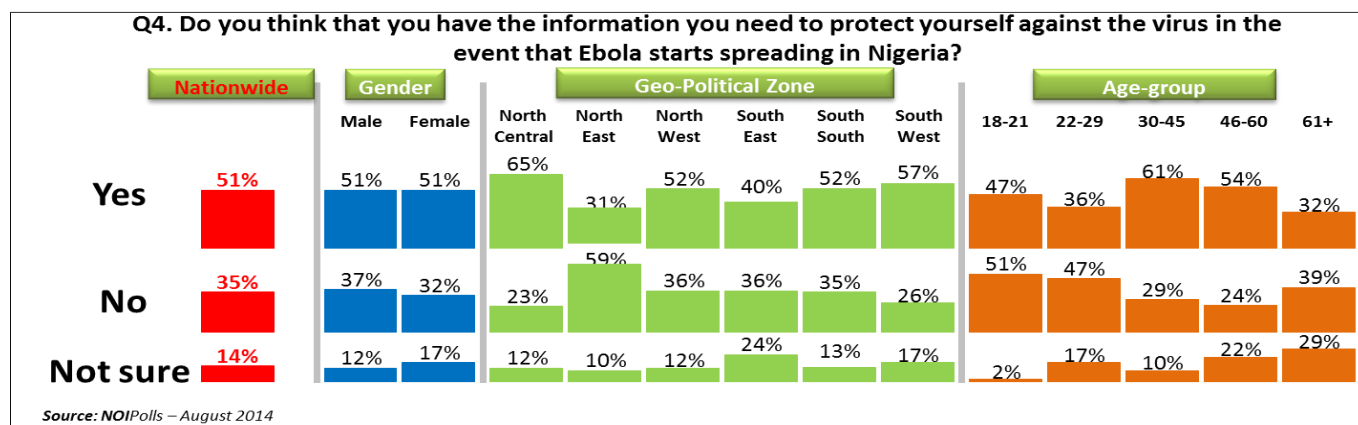


Figure 5: The level of information Nigerians have about the virus

**4.5 Reliability Of Nigerians On Its Ministry Of Health And Its Agencies**

Respondents were also asked: **How confident are you in the ability of the Ministry of Health and its agencies to protect Nigerians from the impact of the Ebola virus, should it spread in Nigeria?** The outcome revealed that the majority (57%: 17%+40%) of respondents are confident that the Ministry of Health and its agencies can protect Nigerians from the impact of the virus. 43% (34%+9%) of Nigerians disclosed that they are not sure that the Ministry of Health and its agencies can protect Nigerians from the impact of the Ebola virus should it start spreading.

The South-East zone has the highest proportion (65%: 27%+38%) of respondents who confirmed that the Ministry and its agencies can protect Nigerians from the virus, while the North-West zone accounted for the largest proportion (53%: 46%+7%) of respondents who are not convinced that the Ministry of Health and its agencies can protect the citizens. Also, most respondents aged between 46 – 60 years (68%: 31%+37%) are confident, while

more respondents aged between 18 – 21 years (**56%: 55%+1%**) are not confident that the Ministry of Health and its agencies to protect Nigerians from the impact of the Ebola virus disease.

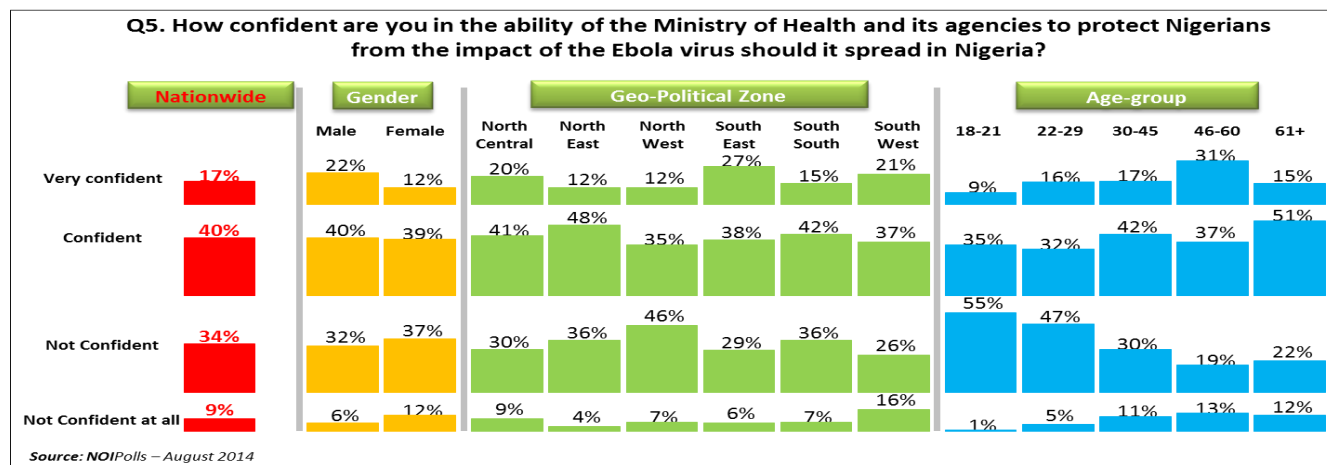


Figure 6: The level of confidence of Nigerians on the ability of the Ministry of Health and its agencies

#### 4.6 Perceptions On The Capabilities Of Local Hospitals In Managing Cases Of Ebola

Also, respondents were asked: **How confident are you that your local hospital has the capacity to provide the needed care and manage cases of Ebola virus?** Responses shows that the vast majority (**72%: 47%+25%**) of adult Nigerians are not confident that local hospitals have the capacity to provide care and manage cases of Ebola virus, whereas, **28% (4%+24%)** stated that they are confident that the local hospitals can care and manage cases of Ebola disease.

Findings from the geo-political zone view shows that the North-West has the highest (**42%: 52%+26%**) proportion of respondents who indicated that they are not confident, while the North-Central zone accounted for the highest proportion of respondents who expressed their confidence in the local hospitals in managing the Ebola virus with **39% (9%+30%)**.

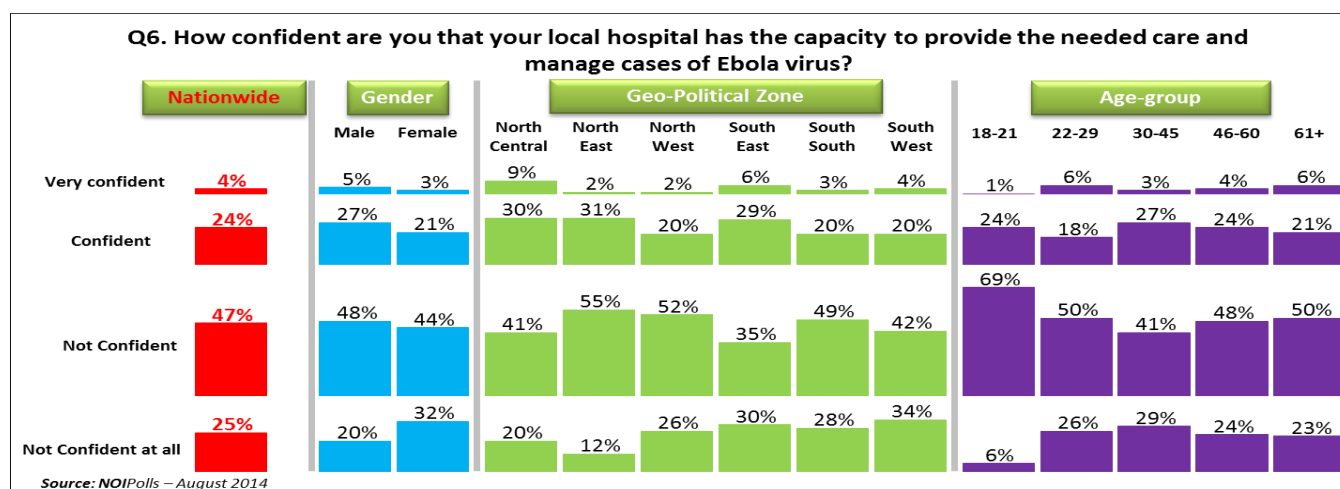
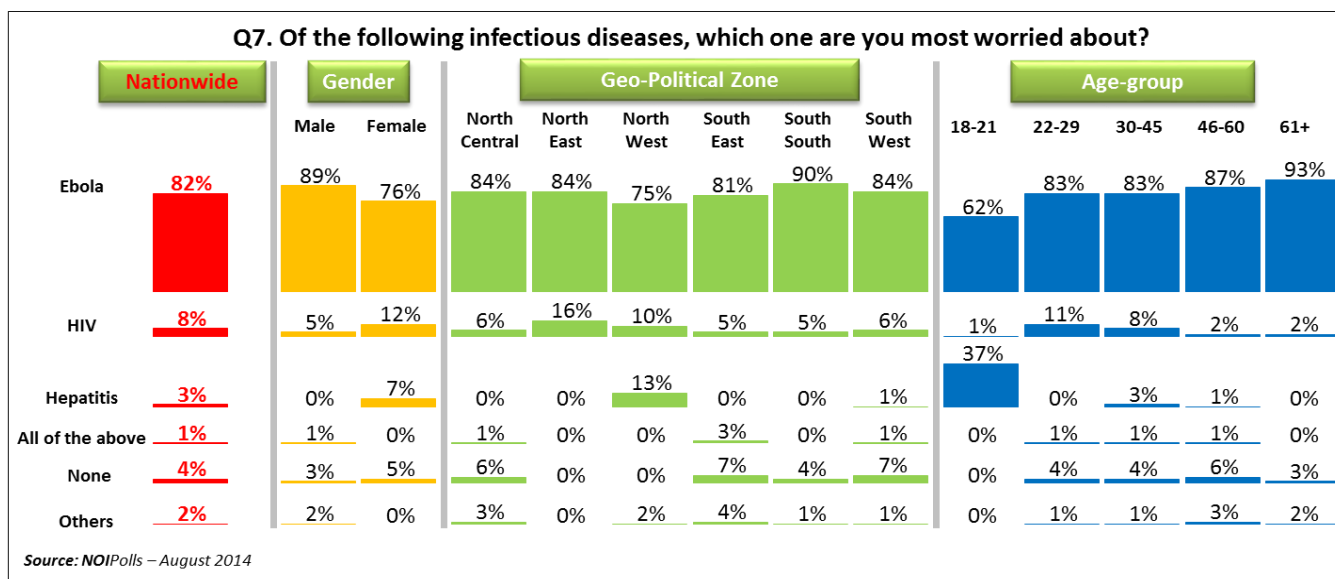


Figure 7: The capability of local hospitals to manage Ebola disease

#### 4.7 Infectious Diseases Nigerians Are Most Worried About

Finally, respondents were asked: **Of the following infectious diseases, which one are you most worried about?** The result revealed that majority (**82%**) of Nigerians surveyed reported that they are currently most concerned about the Ebola virus disease than any other disease. This cuts across geo-political zones, gender and age-group. Notwithstanding, 8% of the respondents indicated HIV, 3% mentioned hepatitis while 2% stated other diseases. Also, 4% specified none of the diseases, whereas 1% mentioned all the diseases.



**Figure 8: The infectious disease Nigerians are mostly worried about**

## 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the poll results revealed that the majority (**82%**) of adult Nigerians are currently most concerned about the Ebola virus disease amongst other infectious diseases; even as **91%** of respondents surveyed acknowledged that they are aware of the outbreak of the virus. Furthermore, responses show that **80%** of Nigerians express worry over the spread of the disease in Nigeria. When asked how the disease spreads, **83%** of the respondents affirmed that it spreads “*by exchange of body fluids*”, whereas 7% believes it spreads “*by air*” amongst others. In addition, slightly more than half (**51%**) of adult Nigerians affirmed they have enough information to protect themselves from the Ebola virus disease. More findings indicate that the majority (**57%**) of respondents’ are confident that the Ministry of Health and its agencies can protect Nigerians from the impact of the virus. However, the vast majority (**72%**) of respondents are not confident that their local hospitals have the capacity to provide needed care and manage cases of Ebola virus. These findings are important in determining preventive measures as the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in West Africa has recently been declared as an international emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as supporting the Nigerian Ministry of Health to plan its response.

# *Appendix*

## Questionnaire

Good Day Ma/Sir, my name is..... I work with NOIPolls, an opinion polling organization based in Abuja. (We retrieved your number from a pool of randomly generated numbers). We are currently conducting a survey to find out the perception of Nigerians regarding the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). Your participation in this poll is completely voluntary. However your opinion is vital to this survey. Is this a good time to talk?

**Note to interviewer: Do not read out “Don’t know” and “Refused” options.**

1. Are you aware of the current outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa?
  1. Yes **(Continue to Q2)**
  2. No **(Skip to demography)**
  
2. How worried are you about the current outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease and possible spread in Nigeria?
  1. Very Worried
  2. Slightly worried
  3. Not worried
  4. Not worried at all
  
3. As far as you know, how do you think the Ebola virus is spread?
  1. By mosquitoes
  2. By air
  3. By exchange of body fluids
  4. Others (please specify).....
  
4. Do you think that you have the information you need to protect yourself against the virus in the event that Ebola starts spreading in Nigeria?
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Not sure
  
5. How confident are you in the ability of the Ministry of Health and its agencies to protect Nigerians from the impact of the Ebola virus should it spread in Nigeria?
  1. Very confident
  2. Confident
  3. Not Confident
  4. Not confident at all
  
6. How confident are you that your local hospital has the capacity to provide the needed care and manage cases of Ebola virus?
  1. Very confident
  2. Confident
  3. Not confident
  4. Not confident at all
  
7. Of the following infectious diseases, which one are you most worried about **(Single response only)**?
  - a. HIV
  - b. TB
  - c. Ebola
  - d. Hepatitis
  - e. Cholera