
Summary and Chartpack



Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS*

Part One – Global HIV/AIDS

June 2004

Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation. Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by Princeton Survey Research Associates between March 15 and May 11, 2004, among a nationally representative random sample of 2,902 respondents 18 years of age and older. The survey included an oversample of African American and Latino respondents (a total of 800 African American and 439 Latino respondents were interviewed). Results for all groups have been weighted to reflect the actual distribution in the nation.

The margin of sampling error for the survey is plus or minus 2 percentage points. For results based on subsets of respondents the margin of error is higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

In order to get trend data, three questions were added to an omnibus survey conducted between May 7 and May 12, 2004 among a nationally representative sample of 1,013 adults 18 years of age and older. Fieldwork was conducted by ICR/International Communications Research.

This is the first of three phases in which the full survey and in-depth analysis will be released. This release (Part One) focuses on findings related to Americans' views of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. Part Two will be released in June 2004, focusing on Americans' views and experiences with HIV testing. A more in-depth report on Americans' views and experiences with HIV (Part Three) will be released in August 2004, with a focus on differences between and among key subgroups of the population.

SURVEY FINDINGS

I. SETTING THE CONTEXT

The broad foreign policy context within which Americans view the global HIV epidemic hasn't changed much in the past few years. Most Americans think the U.S. currently spends too much on foreign aid in general, and a strong majority believes the U.S. should address problems at home first rather than spending more money on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic.

- In discussing Americans' views of the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, and what they think about the role of the U.S. in helping solve this global problem, it's important to set the context with their views on foreign aid in general. More than six in ten adults (62%) think the U.S. currently spends too much on foreign aid, while about one in five (18%) say it spends about the right amount, and one in ten (10%) say the U.S. spends too little on foreign aid (Chart 1). Responses to this question have been similar since 2000.
- When asked about the largest areas of spending by the federal government, half the public (49%) incorrectly identifies foreign aid as one of the two largest areas of federal spending (Chart 1).
- Half the public (53%) agrees with the statement that the U.S. is a global leader and has a responsibility to spend more money to fight HIV/AIDS in developing countries. However, when forced to choose, three in ten (30%) say they agree more strongly with this statement, while, perhaps not surprisingly, six in ten (62%) say they agree more with the statement that the U.S. should address problems at home first rather than spending more money to fight HIV/AIDS in developing countries (Chart 2).

II. VIEWS OF THE GLOBAL HIV EPIDEMIC

Overall, the public sees global HIV/AIDS as a serious problem, and they particularly recognize the impact of the epidemic in Africa. In fact, Americans seem to have a fairly accurate perception of the global epidemic. Half the public says that when it comes to the epidemic, the world today is losing ground, while four in ten say the world is making progress. Nearly four in ten know that less than ten percent of people worldwide who need treatment for HIV actually get it.

- Seven in ten (70%) say that the HIV/AIDS problem worldwide is best described as an epidemic, while about a quarter (26%) say it is a serious problem, but it's an exaggeration to call it an epidemic (Chart 3).
- When asked about the way the problem of HIV/AIDS affects the world today, half (49%) say the world is losing ground, while about four in ten (38%) say the world is making progress, and about one in ten (9%) say the problem is about the same as it has been (Chart 4).
- More than eight in ten (83%) correctly choose Africa as the part of the world that has been hardest hit with HIV/AIDS (Chart 5).
- Nearly four in ten (38%) know that less than ten percent of people worldwide who need medication for HIV actually get that medication. Three in ten (30%) say the share who actually get medication is between 10 and 25 percent, while a quarter (26%) say it is 25 percent or more (Chart 6).
- More than one-third (36%) of the public names HIV/AIDS as the most urgent health problem facing the world today, ranking second behind cancer (41%) (Chart 7).

III. EFFORTS AND SPENDING TO ADDRESS THE GLOBAL HIV EPIDEMIC

The public expects more action on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic from a variety of individuals and groups, and in general, people are somewhat supportive of the U.S. spending money to aid in the fight against global HIV/AIDS. There has been a substantial increase since 2002 in the share who believe that spending more money on HIV prevention in Africa will lead to meaningful progress.

- Most people say that a variety of groups are not doing enough when it comes to AIDS in developing countries, including the governments of the developing countries themselves (72%), pharmaceutical companies (60%), President Bush and his administration (59%), the United Nations (59%), the governments of other developed nations (57%), the U.S. government (55%), and the U.S. media (54%) (Chart 8).
- Despite expecting more action from a variety of people and organizations, most people say they have not personally donated money or time to an HIV/AIDS charity in the past year. About one in seven (14%) say they have personally donated money or volunteered time for an HIV/AIDS service organization or charity in the past year.
- When asked about a variety of things the U.S. helps fund with other countries around the world, more than half (56%) say the U.S. government currently does not spend enough on stopping the spread of HIV (compared with 27% who say it spends the right amount and 9% who say it spends too much). This is higher than the share saying the U.S. doesn't spend enough on world hunger (52%), treating and preventing tuberculosis and malaria (32%), peacekeeping (25%), and international economic development (18%) (Chart 9).
- Americans are more supportive of spending on foreign aid to fight HIV in developing countries than they are of spending on foreign aid in general (see Chart 1). When asked about foreign aid specifically to deal with the HIV/AIDS problem in developing countries, more than a third (36%) say the U.S. spends too little, another third (34%) say it spends the right amount, and 15% say it spends too much. In fact, the percent saying the U.S. spends too little on this effort is up from 25% in 2002.
- More than half the public (54%) says that spending more money on HIV prevention in developing countries will lead to meaningful progress in slowing the epidemic, while about four in ten (38%) say it won't make much difference (Chart 10).
- When it comes to Africa specifically, the share who believe that spending more money on prevention will lead to meaningful progress has increased since 2002. In 2002, four in ten adults (40%) said that spending more money on HIV prevention in Africa would lead to meaningful progress (compared with 47% who said it wouldn't make much difference). In 2004, more than half (55%) say that spending money on prevention in Africa will lead to progress, while one-third (33%) say it won't make much difference (Chart 11).
- Those who think spending more money on prevention in developing countries won't make much difference give a variety of reasons, including lifestyle/cultural factors (29%), the need to concentrate on problems at home first (14%), poor allocation of funds/corruption (13%), and the need to improve education/awareness efforts (13%) (Chart 12).

IV. IT'S THE MEDIA

The vast majority of the public reports getting their information about HIV/AIDS from the media, and many say they have seen a lot about the problem of AIDS in Africa in the last year. While more than half the public associates Nelson Mandela with the fight against global AIDS, fewer than half say the same thing about a variety of other leaders, including Bill Clinton, George Bush, and Kofi Annan.

- A large majority (71%) say that most of the information they get about HIV/AIDS comes from the media (Chart 13), and about half (51%) say they have seen a lot about the problem of AIDS in Africa in the last year. Fewer say they have seen a lot about the problem of AIDS in the U.S. (34%), Asia (11%), Latin America (7%), and Eastern Europe (5%) (Chart 14).
- More than half the public (55%) says they associate former South African president Nelson Mandela with the fight against global HIV/AIDS. More than four in ten say the same about Bill Clinton (46%), rock singer Bono (42%), and President George W. Bush (40%). Smaller shares say they associate U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan (29%) and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (11%) with the fight against global AIDS (Chart 15).

V. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS – VIEWS OF THE DOMESTIC EPIDEMIC

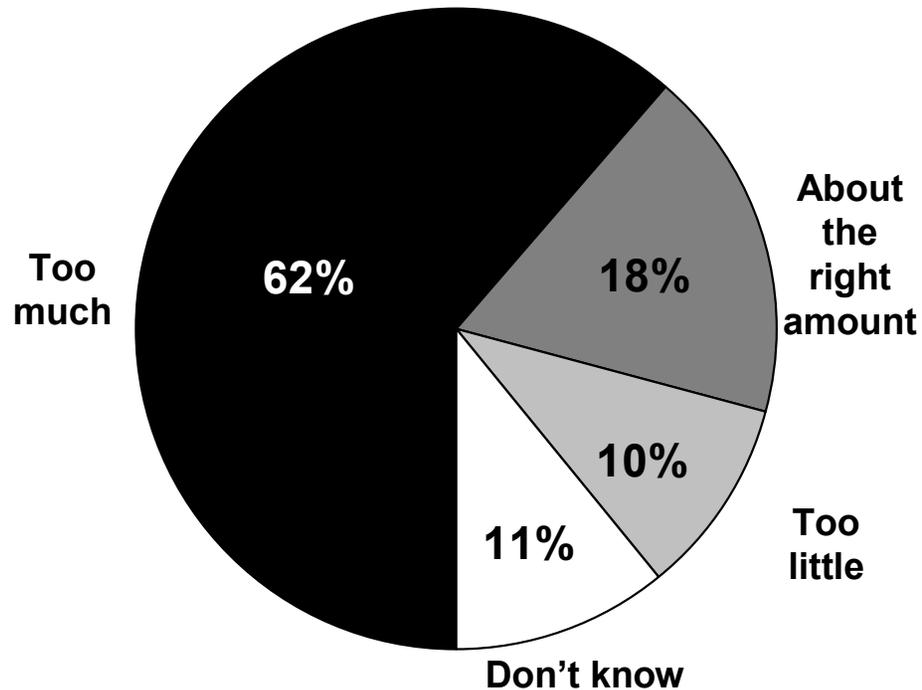
When it comes to the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic, the public is more likely to say they see progress in the U.S. than in developing countries, and they are somewhat more supportive of spending more money on domestic HIV/AIDS. Most people think there is at least some discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS in the United States, and more than twenty years into the epidemic, a variety of misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted continue to exist among significant minorities of the public.

- The public is more likely to say that the U.S. is making progress on HIV/AIDS than that the world is making progress (47% vs. 38%), and somewhat less likely to say the U.S. (vs. the world) is losing ground (36% vs. 49%).
- Half the public (52%) says the federal government spends too little money on HIV/AIDS, while 36% say it spends the right amount, and just 5% say it spends too much. When asked about federal government spending on HIV/AIDS compared with other health problems like heart disease and cancer, a somewhat smaller share say spending on AIDS is too low (42%), and a somewhat larger share say it's about right (40%).
- Nearly half the public (45%) thinks there is a lot of discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS in the U.S. today, and an additional four in ten (38%) say there is some discrimination. Just one in ten (11%) say there is only a little or no discrimination at all against people living with HIV.
- Virtually all Americans know that HIV can be transmitted by having unprotected intercourse (99%), sharing an IV needle (99%), and having unprotected oral sex (91%). However, significant minorities say that it is possible (or they don't know if it's possible) to transmit HIV through various forms of casual contact, including kissing (38%), sharing a drinking glass (25%), and touching a toilet seat (18%).
- Four in ten (39%) know that about half of all new HIV infections in the U.S. occur among African Americans, and a similar share (40%) know that half of all new infections in the U.S. occur among people under age 25.
- People are well-informed about certain aspects of the HIV epidemic – large shares know that there is no cure for AIDS (90%), that there are drugs that can lengthen the lives of those with HIV (88%), that as many as one in every three HIV-positive people in the U.S. don't know they are infected (84%), and that there is not currently an HIV vaccine available (79%). People are less well-informed about other aspects – fewer than half know that a pregnant woman with HIV can take drugs to reduce the risk of her baby being born infected (43%), and that having other sexually transmitted diseases increases a person's risk for HIV (41%).

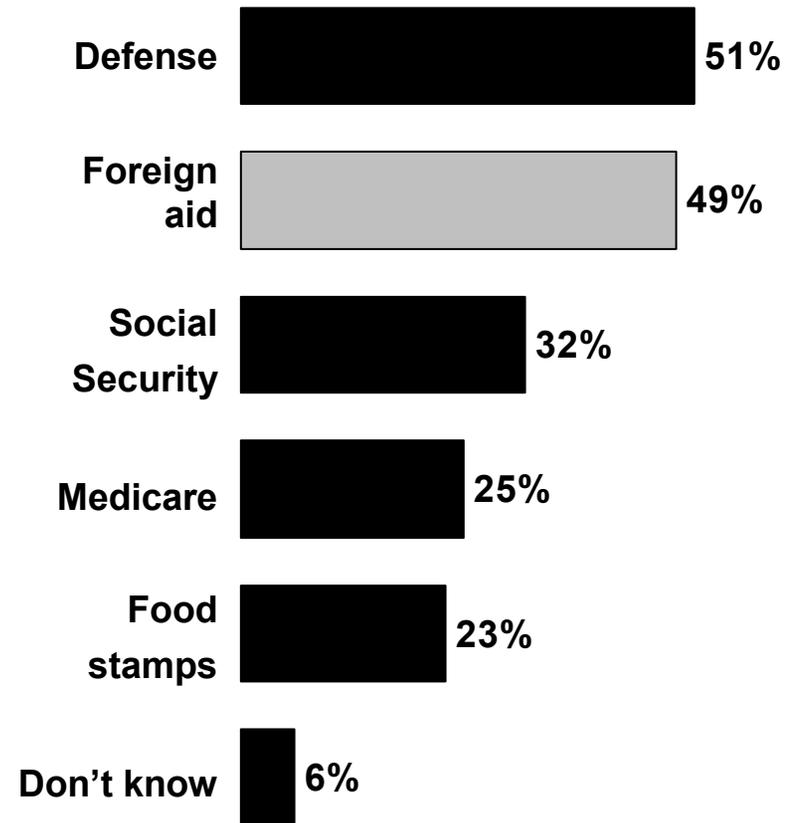
Chart 1

Setting the Context: Views on Foreign Aid

Turning to the issue of foreign aid, do you think the United States is now spending too much on foreign aid, too little on foreign aid, or about the right amount?



Which of the items on this list would you say are the TWO largest areas of spending by the federal government?*



* Note: Adds up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 15 – May 11, 2004)

Chart 2

U.S. Responsibility as a Global Leader vs. Addressing Problems at Home First

Which of these two statements do you agree with MORE STRONGLY?

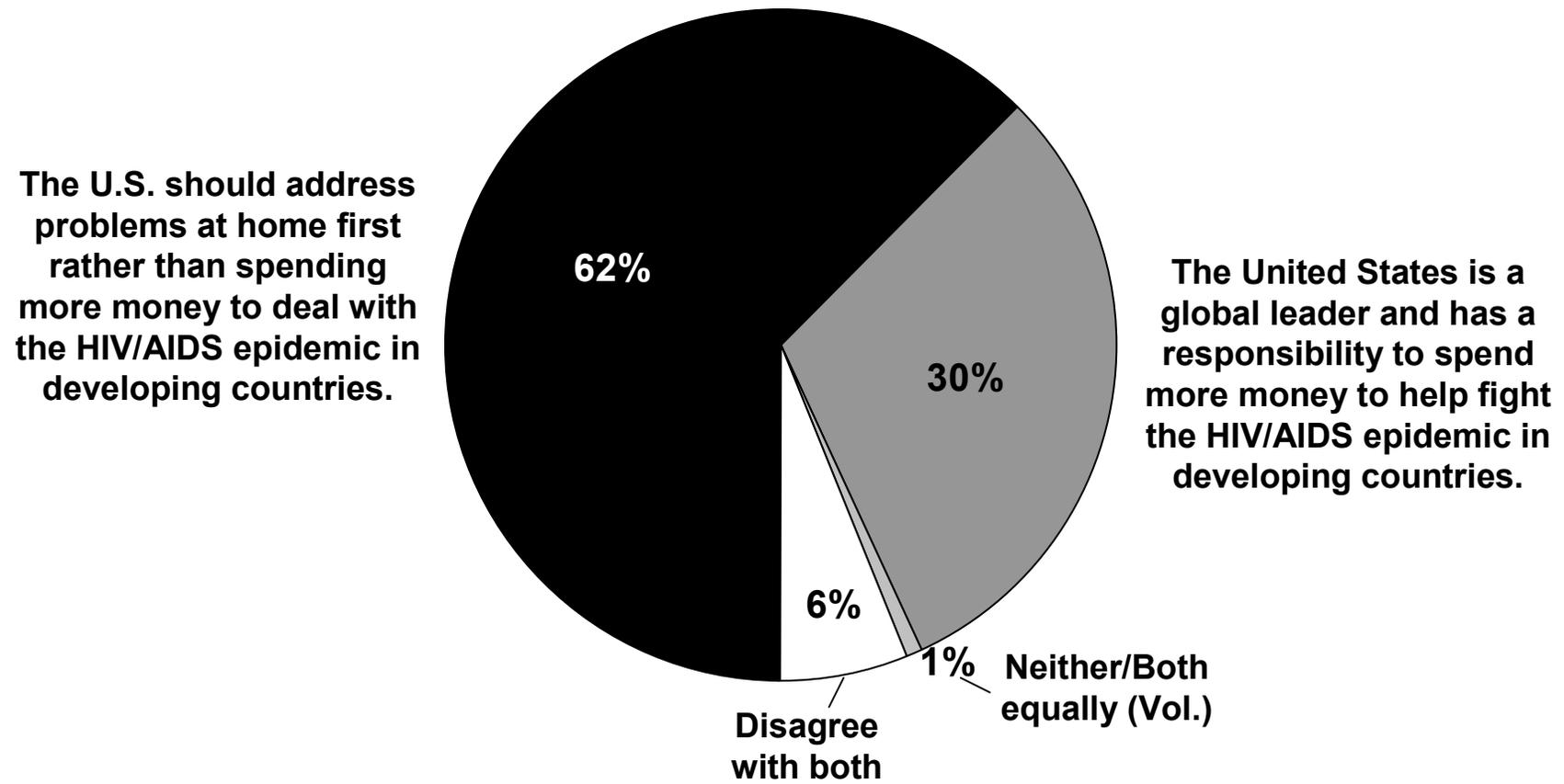


Chart 3

Is HIV/AIDS a Global Epidemic?

Now thinking about the issue of HIV/AIDS in countries outside the United States and the AIDS problem worldwide... Which ONE of the following two statements comes CLOSER to your views...

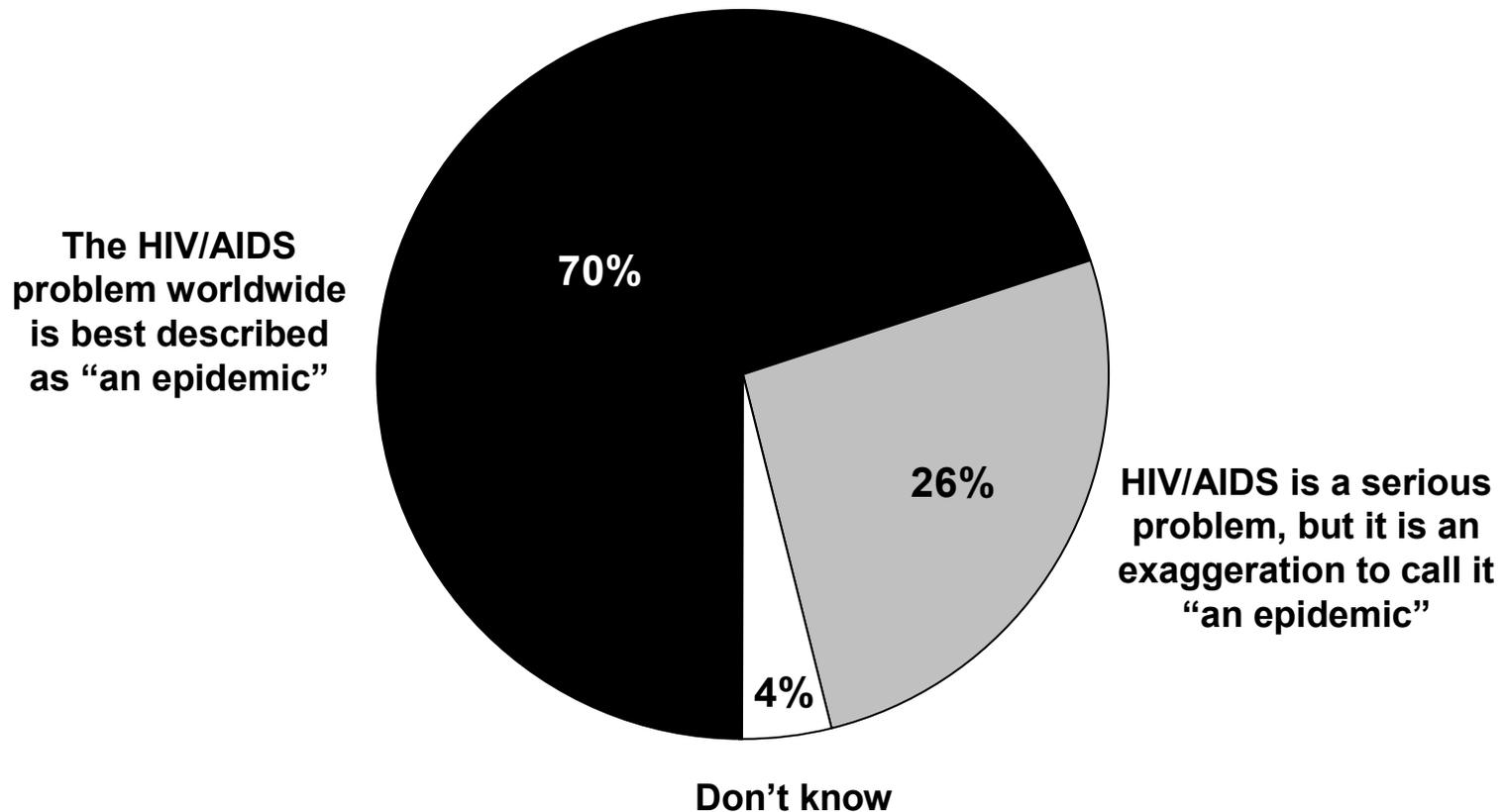


Chart 4

Perceptions of World's Progress on HIV/AIDS

Thinking about the way the problem of HIV/AIDS affects the world today, do you think the problem is **ABOUT THE SAME** as it has been, that the world today is **MAKING PROGRESS** in this area, or that the world today is **LOSING GROUND**?

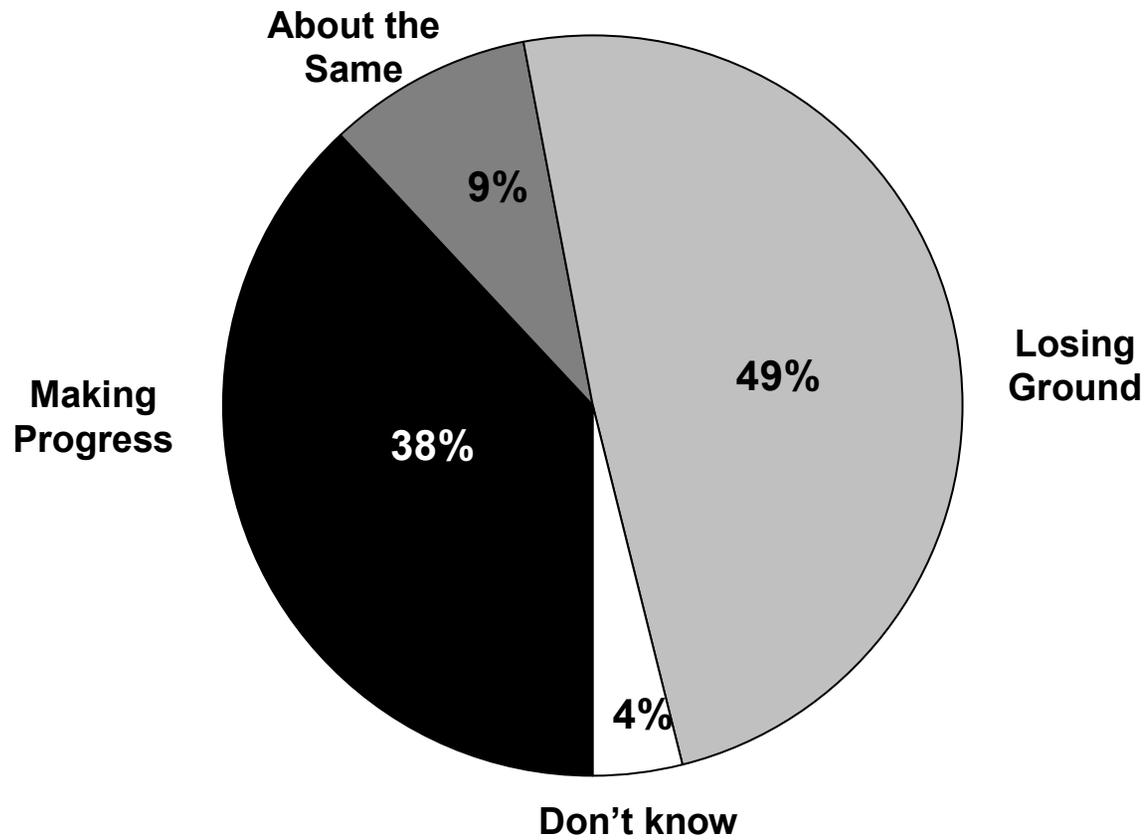


Chart 5

Geographic Areas Hardest Hit by HIV/AIDS

Which ONE of the following parts of the world today do you think has been hardest hit with HIV/AIDS?

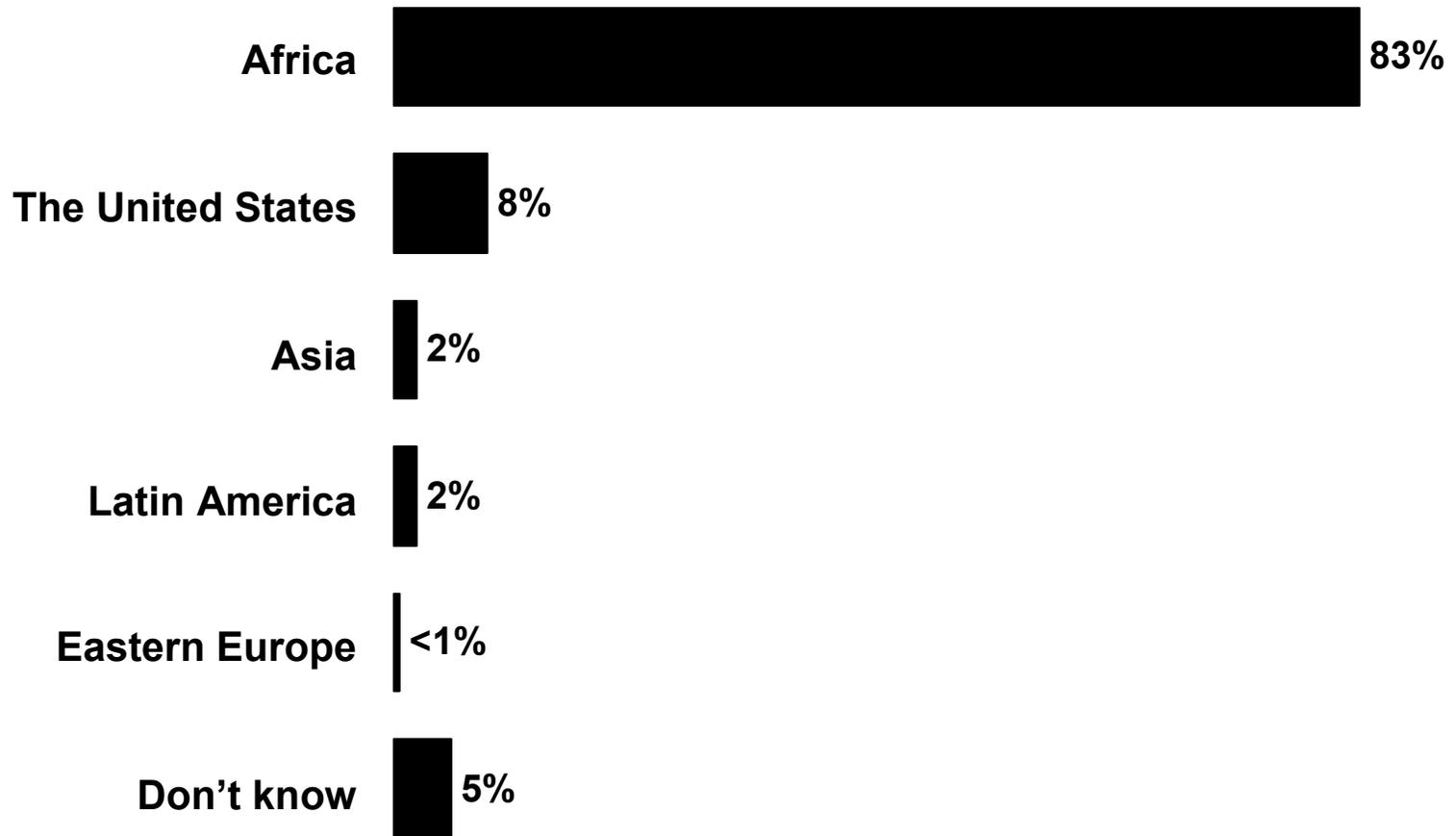


Chart 6

Perception of Worldwide Need for HIV Medication

Now thinking about people with HIV in ALL parts of the world... What percentage of people **WORLDWIDE** who need medication for HIV actually get that medication?

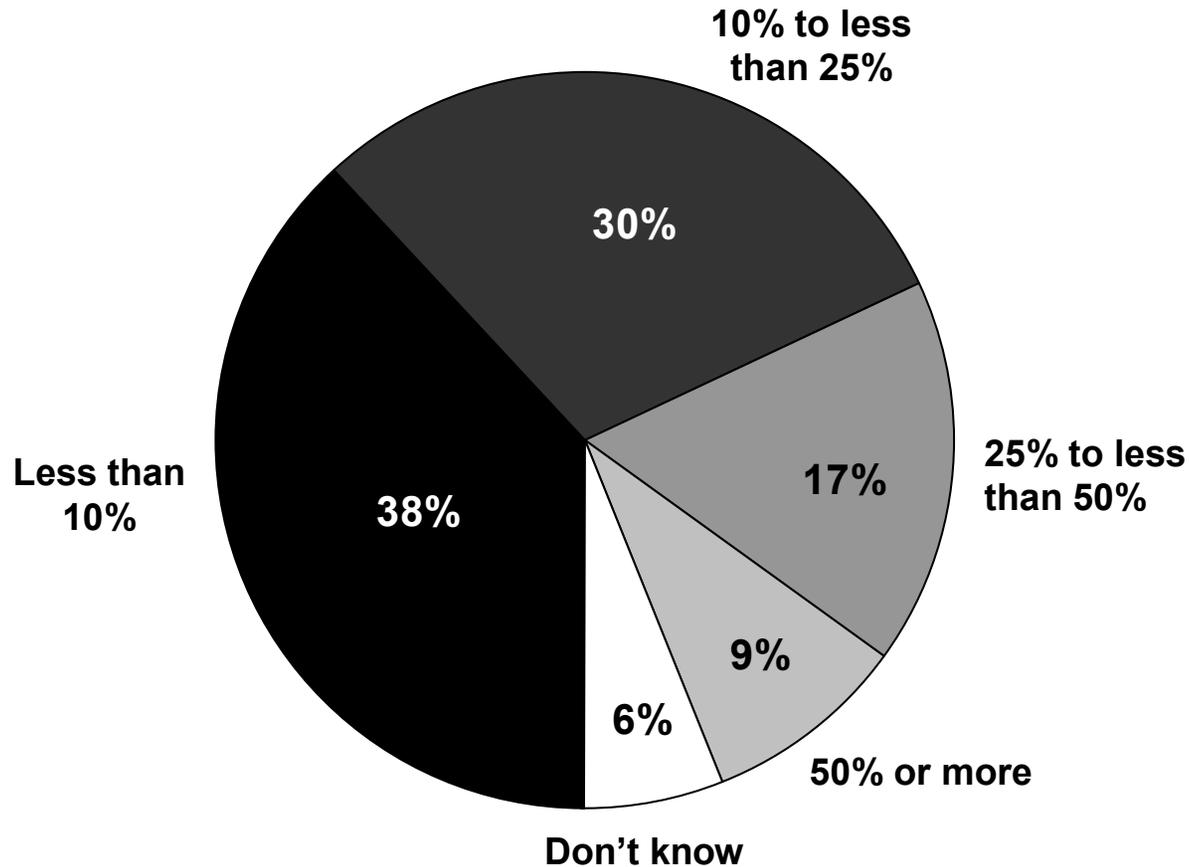
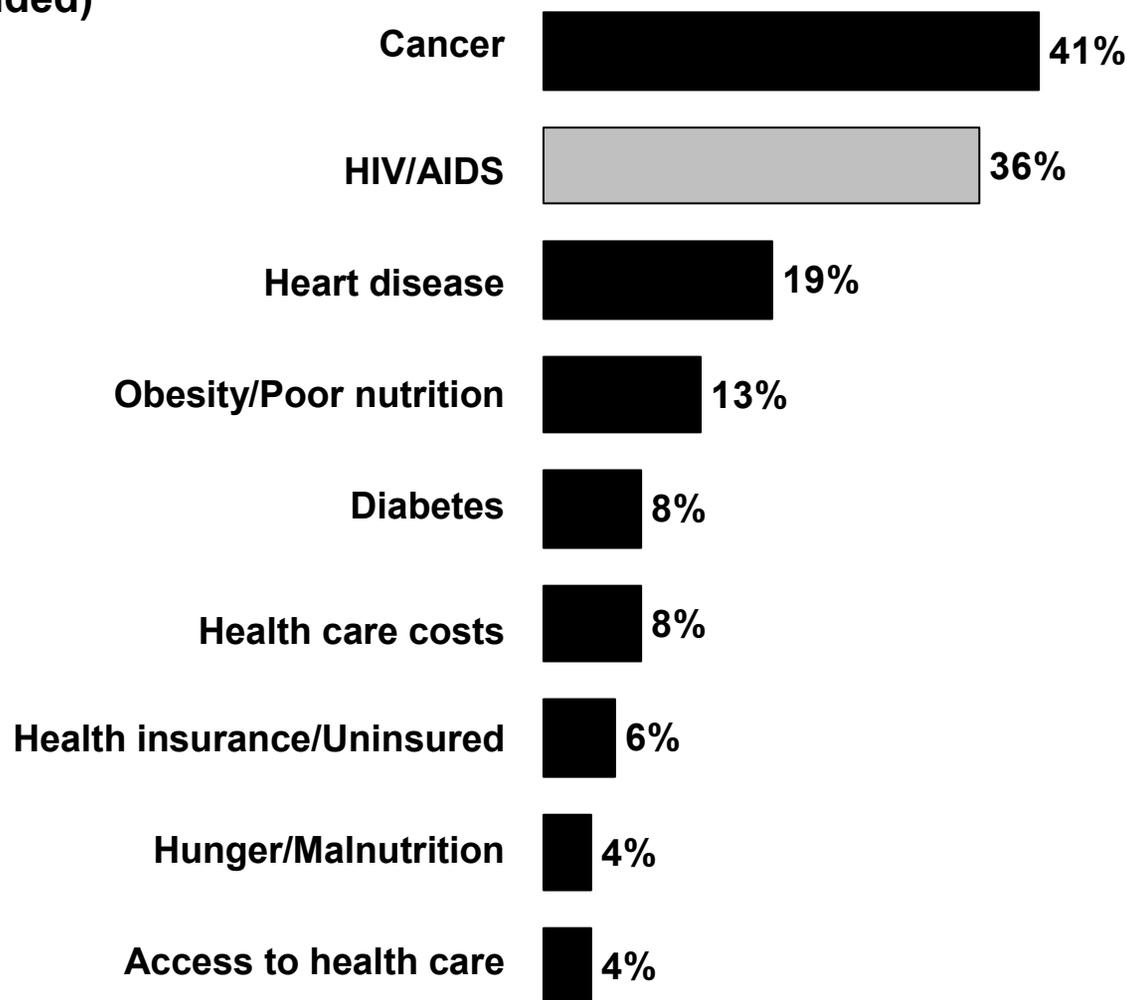


Chart 7

Most Urgent Health Problem Facing the World

What do you think is the MOST urgent health problem facing the world TODAY? (Open-ended)*



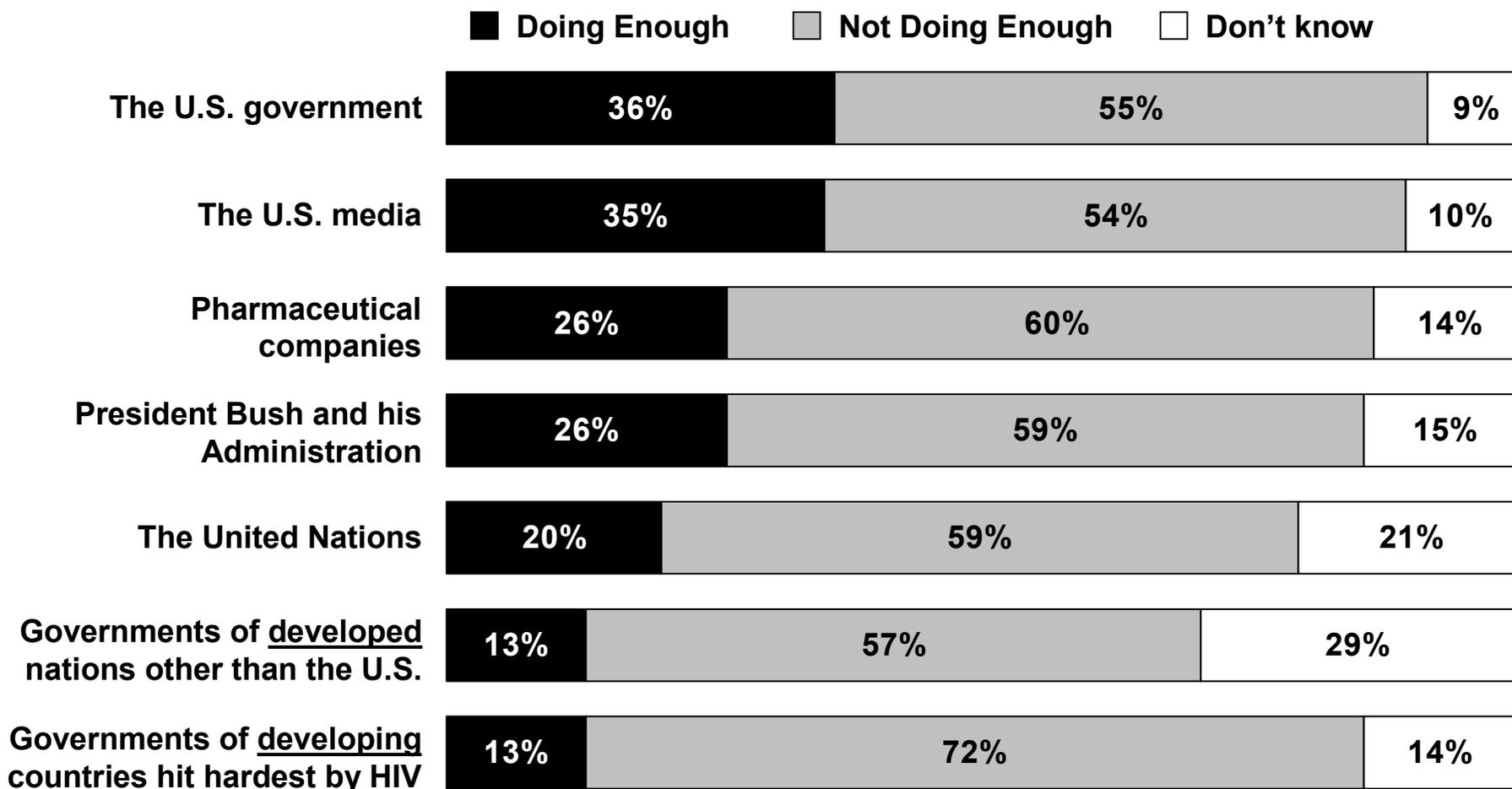
* Note: Adds up to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 15 – May 11, 2004)

Chart 8

Who is Doing Enough?

When it comes to the problem of AIDS in developing countries, would you say the following are doing ENOUGH to help solve the problem of AIDS in developing countries, or are they NOT DOING ENOUGH?

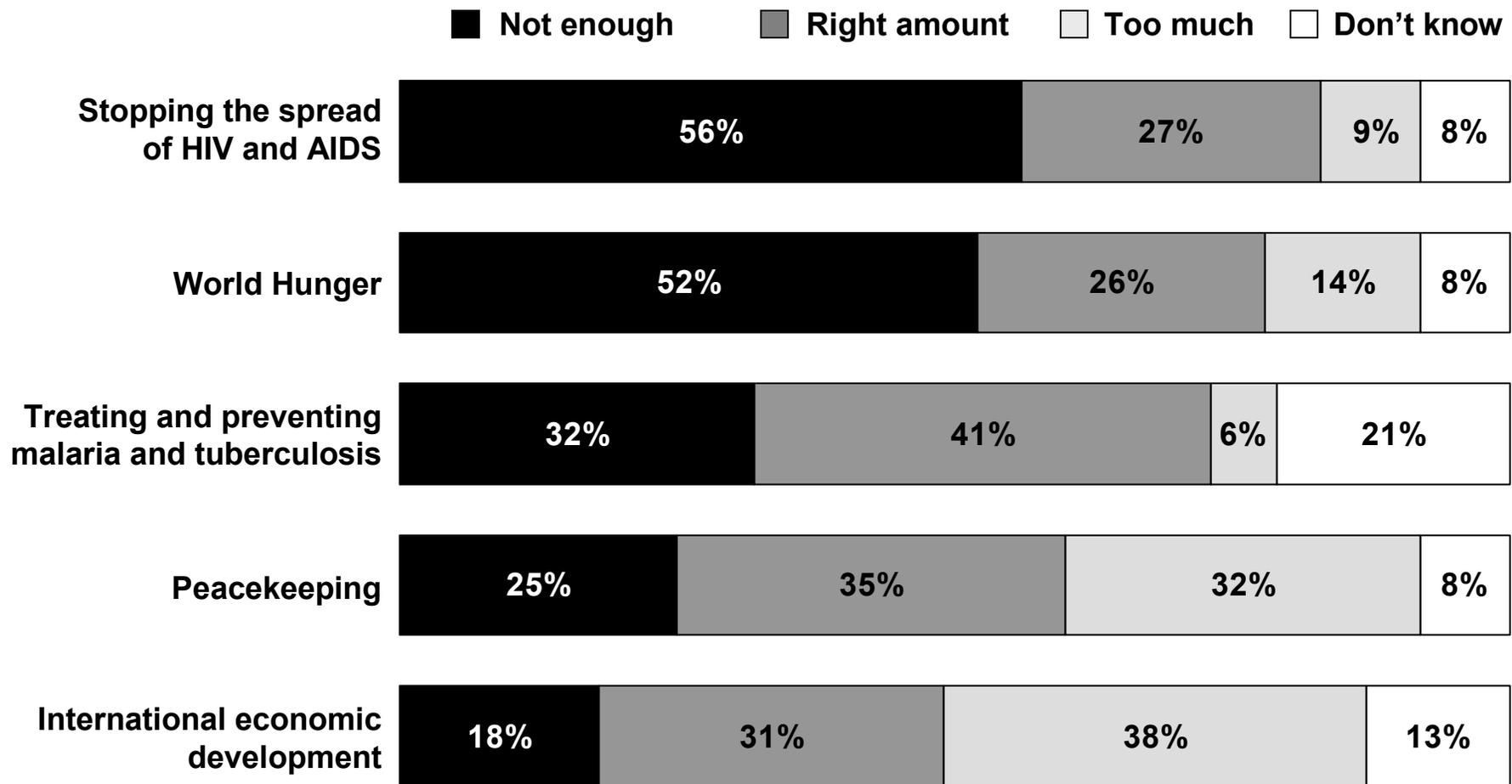


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 15 – May 11, 2004)

Chart 9

Views of U.S. Spending on International Efforts

Do you think the U.S. government currently spends too much, not enough, or about the right amount on the following...



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 15 – May 11, 2004)

Chart 10

Will Spending on HIV/AIDS Prevention in Developing Countries Lead to Progress?

In general, do you think that spending more money on HIV/AIDS prevention in **DEVELOPING COUNTRIES** will lead to meaningful progress in slowing the epidemic, or that spending more money won't make much difference?

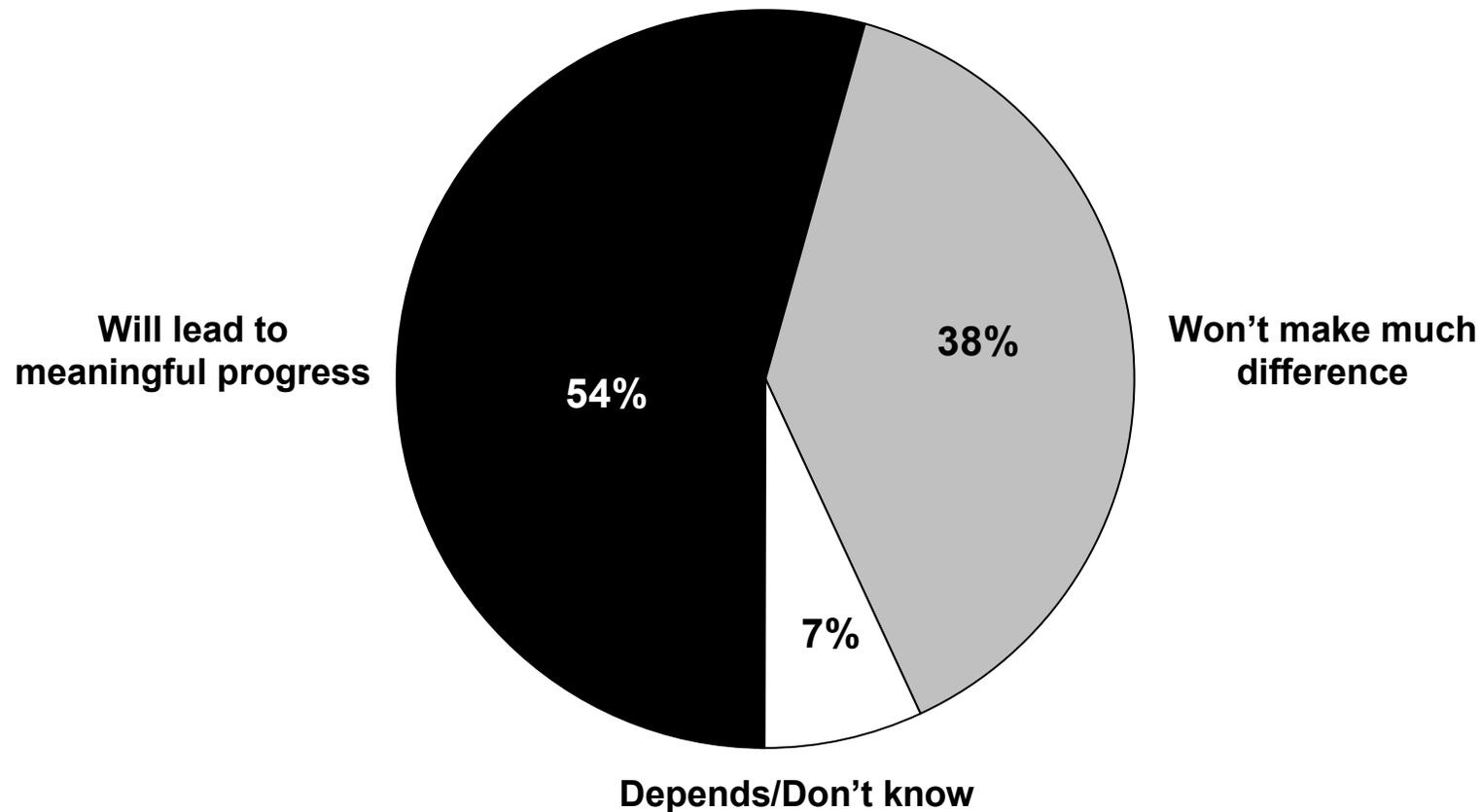
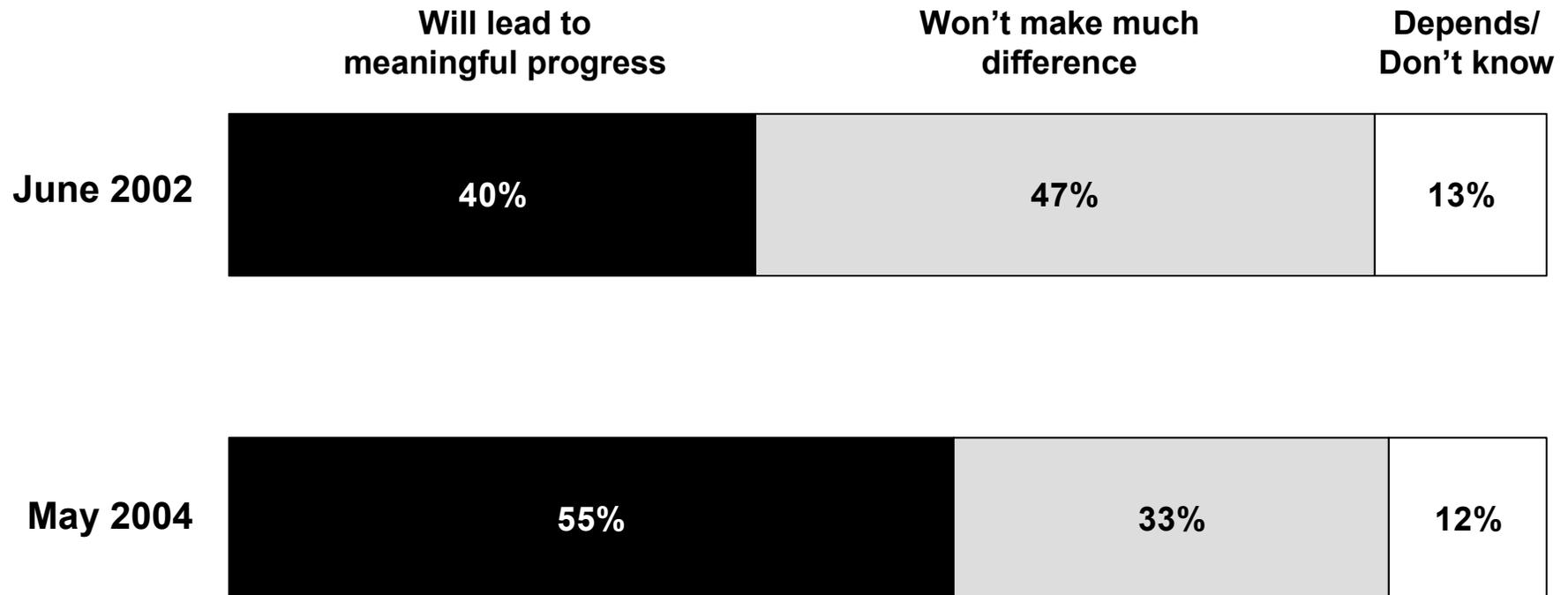


Chart 11

Trend: Will Spending on HIV/AIDS Prevention in Africa Lead to Progress?

In general, do you think that spending more money on HIV/AIDS prevention in AFRICA will lead to meaningful progress, or that spending more money won't make much difference?



Sources: Update to Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted May 7-12, 2004); *Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University National Survey on the Public's Attitudes towards HIV/AIDS in the US and the World* (conducted June 13-23, 2002).

Chart 12

Reported Reasons Why Spending More Money Won't Make a Difference

What is the main reason you think spending more money on HIV/AIDS prevention in developing countries won't make much difference? (*Open-ended – among 33% who think spending more on prevention won't make much difference*)

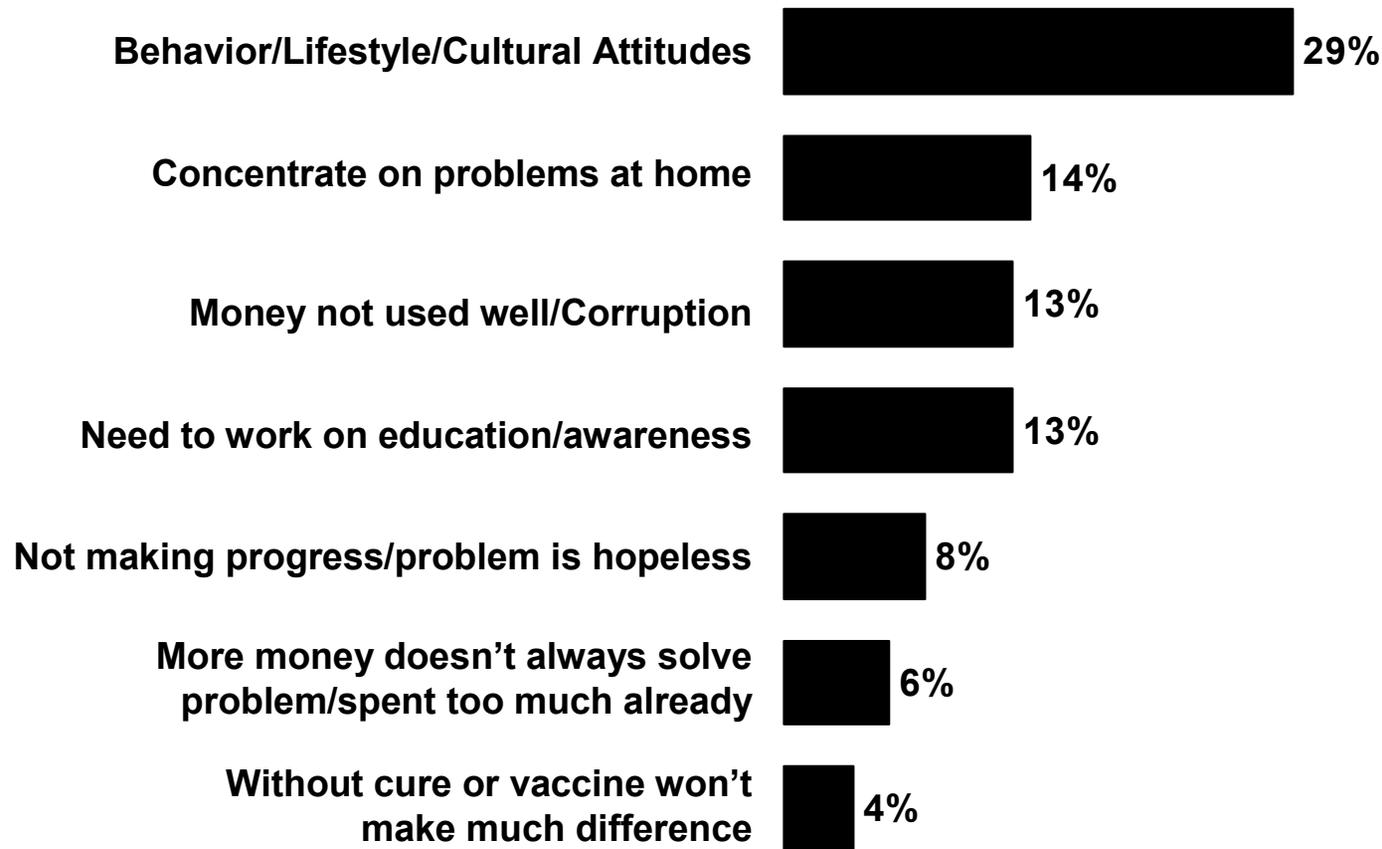
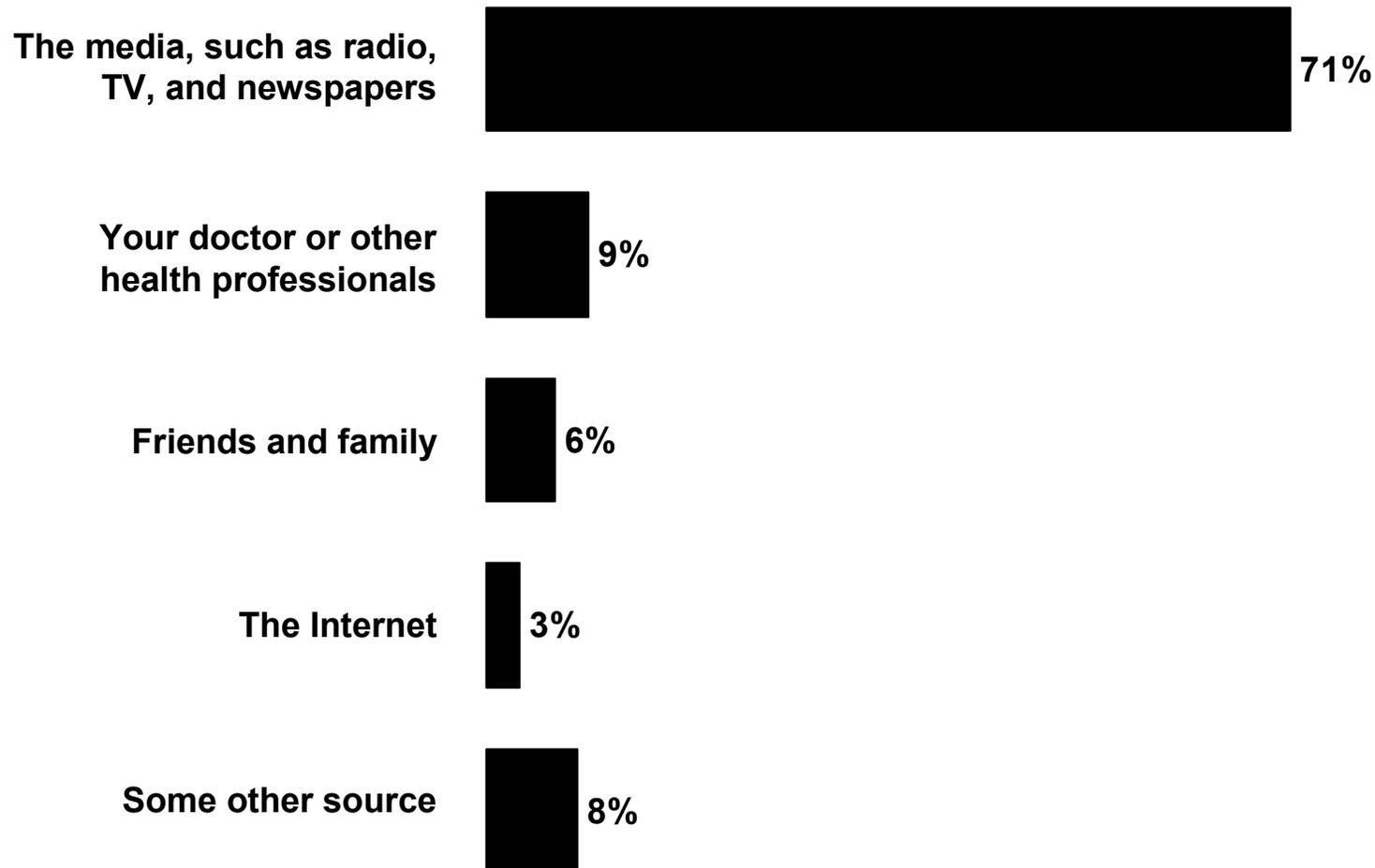


Chart 13

Sources of Information

Thinking about everything you know about HIV/AIDS, does this information mainly come from things you've seen and heard from...

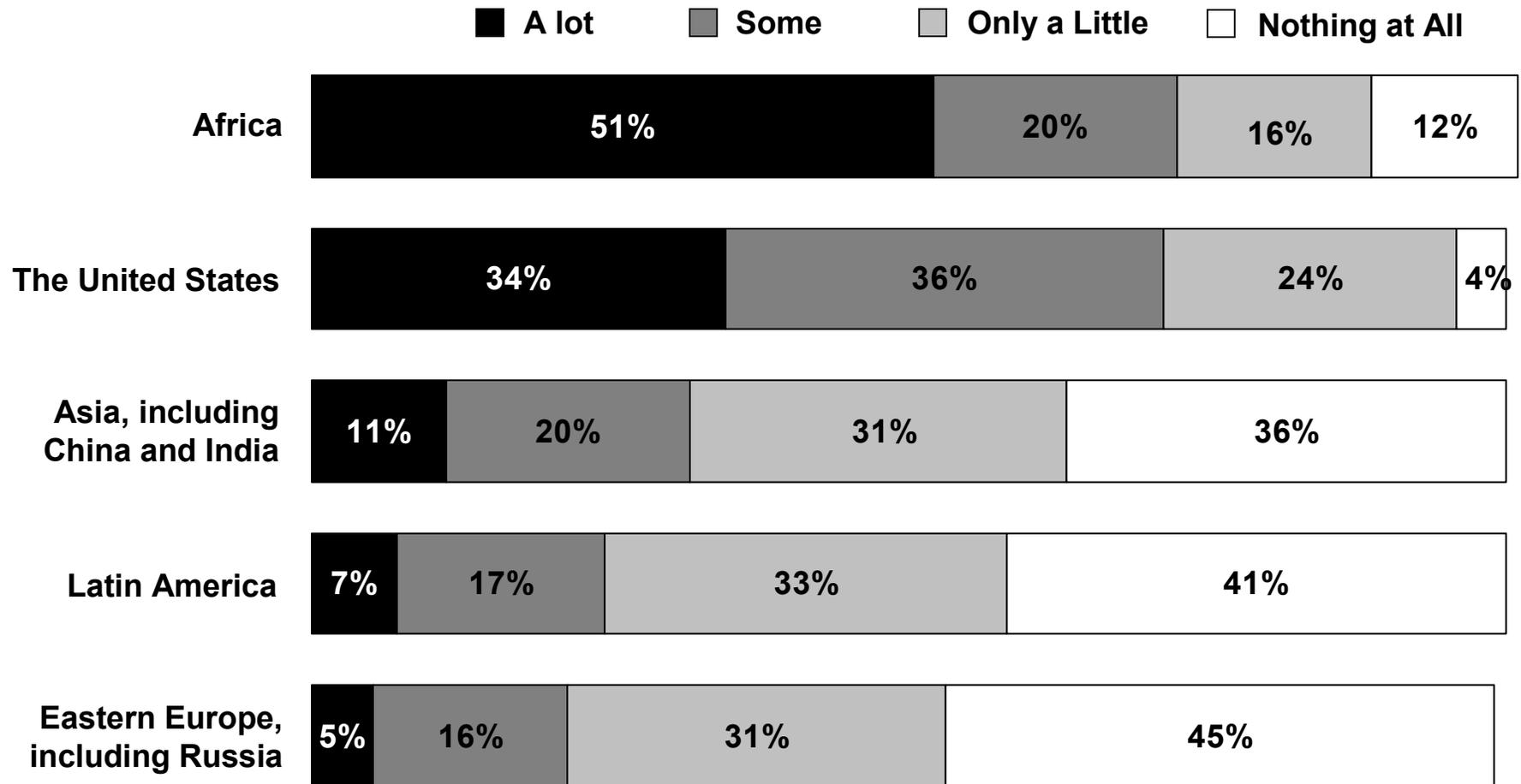


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 15 – May 11, 2004)

Chart 14

How Much the Public Has Seen About the Problem...

During the last year, how much, if anything, have you personally seen, heard, or read about the problem of AIDS in...

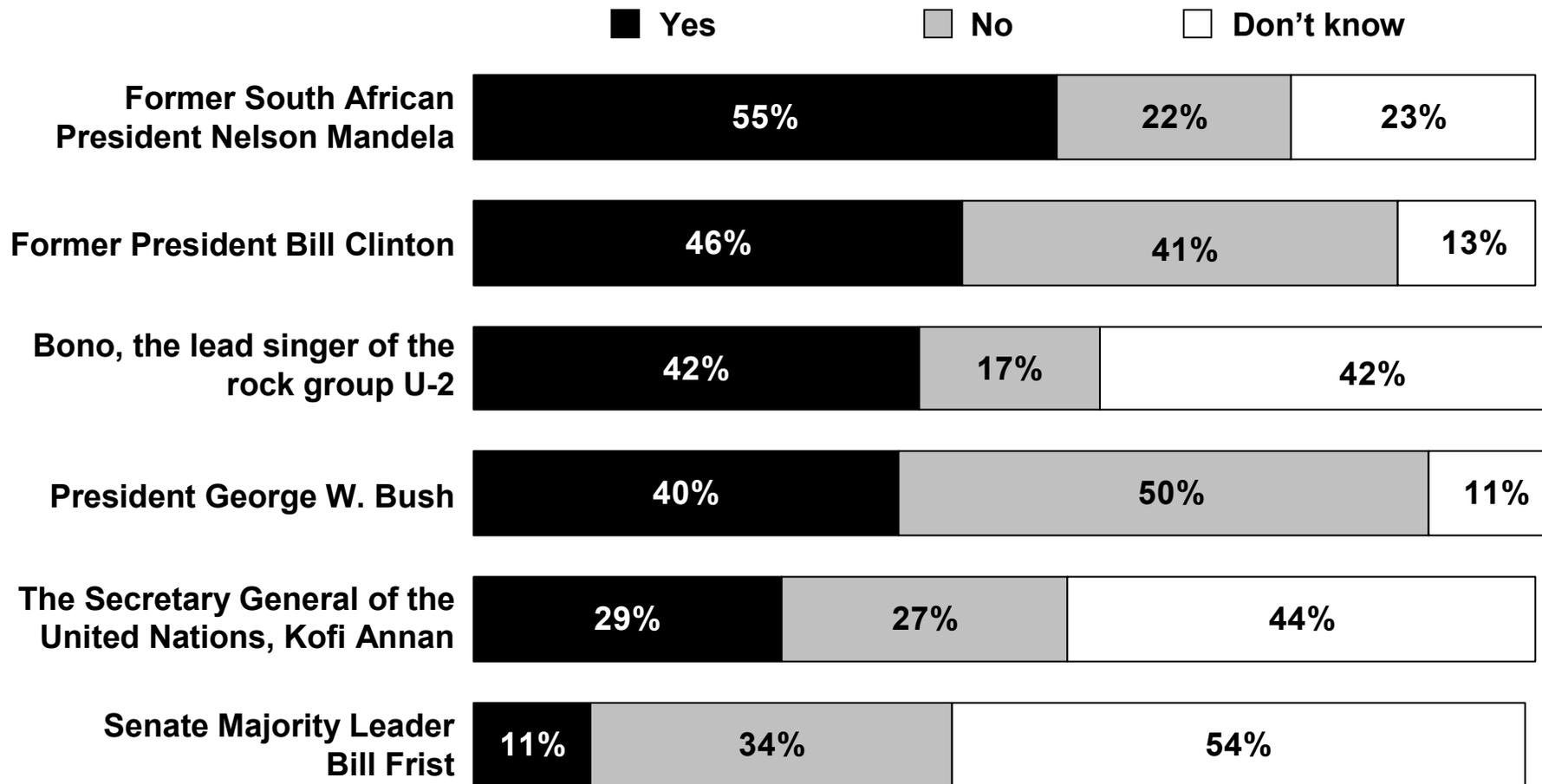


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation *Survey of Americans on HIV/AIDS* (conducted March 15 – May 11, 2004). Note: Don't know not shown.

Chart 15

Public's Views of Leaders on Global AIDS

I'm going to read you a list of people, and I'd like you to tell me for each one whether you associate this person with the fight against global AIDS.





The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Phone: (650) 854-9400 Fax: (650) 854-4800

Washington Office:
1330 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 347-5270 Fax: (202) 347-5274

www.kff.org

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