

Press Release



**South African
Institute of
Race Relations**

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

For immediate release

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South African health worse than BRIC countries despite more money

South Africa's proportional health expenditure is the highest in comparison to the BRIC group of countries, but our health outcomes are generally worse, says the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Spending is at 9% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), followed by Brazil's 8% and Russia's 5%. China and India both spend the lowest proportions at 4%.

These figures appear in the latest *South Africa Survey*, published by the Institute in Johannesburg this week.

With 49 million people, South Africa has the highest incidence of tuberculosis (TB) at 960 per 100 000 people. China's population of 1.32 billion has an incidence of 97 while Brazil's 192 million people have the lowest incidence at 46. Russia's 142 million people have an incidence of 107 and India, with 1.14 billion people, is at 168.

About 62% of children are immunised against measles in South Africa yet in Brazil and Russia, 99% of children are immunised. China and India have 94% and 70% of children immunised respectively.

Life expectancy at birth is 51 in South Africa and in China, 73. Brazil, Russia, and India have life expectancies at birth of 72, 68, and 64 respectively.

About 83% of women in China survive to age 65 yet only 41% in South Africa reach that age. Less than 50% of males in Russia and South Africa survive to age 65, these two countries having proportions of 46% and 31% respectively.

South Africa's infant and under-five mortality rates are lower only than those of India. The latter has an under-five mortality rate of 69 per 1 000 while South Africa's rate is 67.

The infant mortality rate for India stands at 52 per 1 000 live births while that of South Africa is 48. Russia has the lowest infant and under-five mortality rates at 12 and 13 respectively.

Ideally, a substantial health budget should translate to a higher life expectancy and a higher proportion of individuals surviving to age 65. Infant and under-five mortality rates would also be reasonably expected to be much lower.

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According to Thuthukani Ndebele, a researcher at the Institute, the relatively high health expenditure in South Africa does not result in good outcomes for national health. In fact, the country's health indicators are often worse than those of countries which spend a smaller slice of GDP.

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