

COVID-19 VACCINE PERCEPTIONS OF CAMBODIAN AND MYANMAR MIGRANTS IN THAILAND

TRENDS IN 2022

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)



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Cover photo: Baan Laem market at the Baan Laem official crossing point between Thailand and Cambodia in Chanthaburi province. © IOM 2022/Sonia BLUE

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INTRODUCTION

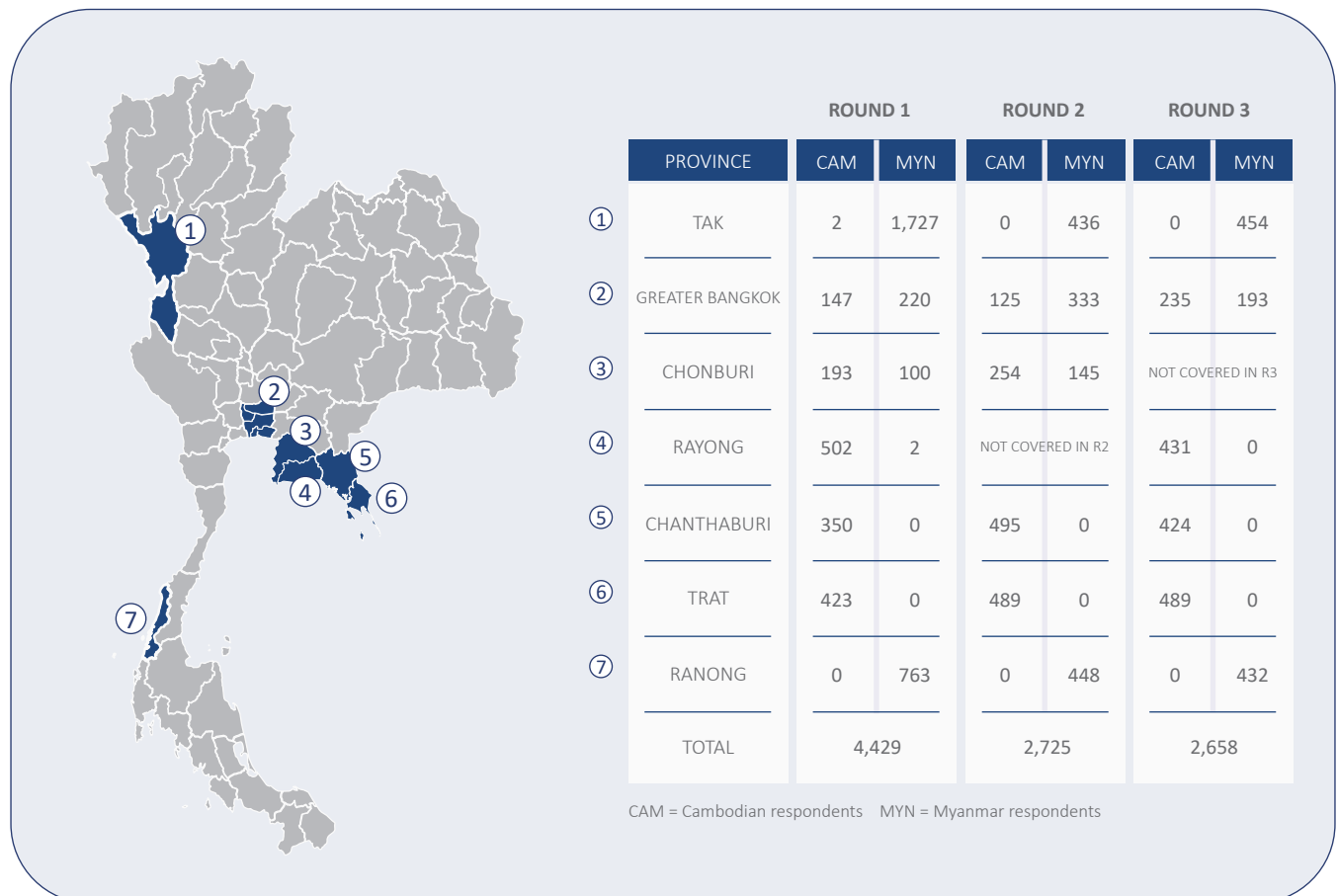
SCOPE

This report provides an overview of how the perceptions, needs and challenges related to COVID-19 have evolved among the migrant population in Thailand in 2022. Drawing on findings from three rounds of IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) COVID-19 Perception Surveys, it also traces how vaccine and booster uptake have increased throughout the year. [The first round](#) was conducted from late 2021 until early 2022, [the second round](#) in mid 2022, and the third round at the end of 2022. This report focuses mainly on the situation at the end of 2022 (Round 3), but also includes comparisons with Round 1 and Round 2. The Round 3 sample consists of 2,658 respondents, of whom 45 per cent identified as male, 55 per cent as female. Female respondents were more highly represented among Myanmar nationals (68%) compared to Cambodian nationals (46%).

METHODOLOGY

The tool was developed with the collaboration of IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Migration Health Department (MHD), World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and World Vision Foundation. The survey is an individual-level survey with systematic randomized sampling. The population of interest included Cambodian and Myanmar migrants in Thailand. DTM aimed for a 50:50 balance between female and male respondents. Enumerators from DTM, Rajabhat University, and Sapiens collected valid data from a combined 9,812 respondents (4,429 in R1; 2,725 in R2; 2,658 in R3). Enumerators were instructed to visit communities where Myanmar or Cambodian migrants resided permanently or semi-permanently and interview one person per every three households. The information in this report represents only those Cambodian and Myanmar migrants who live in Chanthaburi, Chonburi, Ranong, Rayong, Tak, and Trat provinces as well as the Greater Bangkok area during the period of data collection. Also, results in this report reflect respondents’ self-reported vaccination statuses, but do not include information on which country they obtained their vaccines.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF COVID-19 PERCEPTION SURVEYS



DISCLAIMER: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

VACCINE PERCEPTIONS AND UPTAKE

Half (50%) of respondents in Round 3 reported that they or a family member had tested positive for COVID-19, almost three times the reported rate in Round 1 (18%). The rate of reported cases was nearly twice as high among Cambodian respondents (62%) compared to Myanmar respondents (33%).

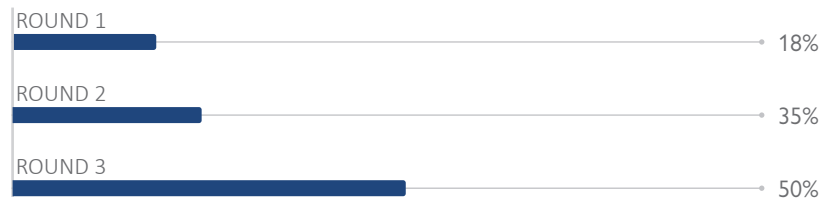
Concern about COVID-19 dropped from 70 per cent in Round 1 to 27 per cent in Round 3, reflecting changing perceptions of COVID-19 in different stages of the pandemic.

There was no significant variation regarding vaccination statuses between rounds 2 and 3. At 95 per cent fully vaccinated (2+ doses) in both rounds, vaccinations had increased considerably as of mid- and late 2022 compared to Round 1 (67%). Both rounds 2 and 3 saw only three per cent of respondents remain unvaccinated. Of those who remained unvaccinated in Round 3, 72 per cent were unwilling to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Among these, around half (48%) reported that the reason was that they had a chronic disease, a quarter (23%) reported that they were already healthy, and 20 per cent were worried about the vaccine’s interaction with other medications they were taking.*

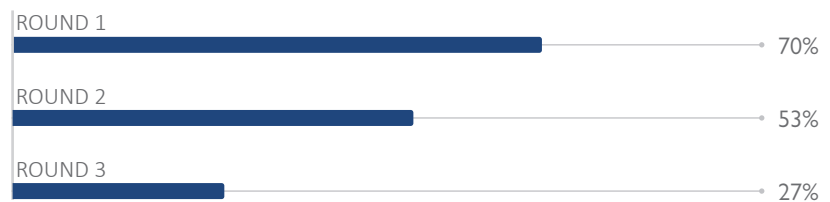
The unvaccinated rate was higher among Myanmar nationals (5%) than Cambodian nationals (2%). This continues a trend observed during the first and second round of data collection. The province with the highest proportion of unvaccinated respondents was Tak (9%), whereas all other surveyed provinces in Round 3 saw rates under five per cent.

There were no significant differences between men and women regarding vaccine uptake in Round 3. The fully vaccinated proportion of each was 97 per cent.

SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED THEMSELVES OR A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID-19



SHARE OF RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED FEELING MODERATELY OR VERY CONCERNED ABOUT COVID-19



VACCINATION RATES

	✘ UNVACCINATED	📄 1 DOSE	📄📄 + 2+ DOSES
TOTAL			
ROUND 1	15%	18%	67%
ROUND 2	3%	2%	95%
ROUND 3	3%	2%	95%
CAM NATIONALS			
ROUND 1	7%	17%	76%
ROUND 2	1%	2%	97%
ROUND 3	2%	1%	97%
MYN NATIONALS			
ROUND 1	20%	19%	61%
ROUND 2	5%	2%	93%
ROUND 3	5%	3%	92%

* Text and visualizations that are denoted with an asterisk signify percentages that have been drawn from multiple-answer questions, or questions for which respondents were allowed to provide more than one answer. As a result, percentages may not equal 100. The designations for asterisks applies to the entirety of this report.

BOOSTER UPTAKE

Information on boosters was only collected during rounds 2 and 3. Overall, uptake of booster doses increased since Round 2 from 46 per cent to 59 per cent. Cambodian nationals were more likely to have boosters (63%) compared to Myanmar nationals (53%), a trend that is consistent with the findings from Round 2. Like for the general vaccine, booster uptake was lowest in Tak.

Information on the booster was most frequently sourced through word of mouth (90%), followed by government sources (32%), and the internet (23%). Thai government sources and the internet were more prominent in Tak and the Greater Bangkok area compared to other surveyed provinces.

Among respondents who cited receiving information from word of mouth sources, 68 per cent indicated their information came from their employer, 57 per cent from friends or family in Thailand, and 20 per cent from a community leader. Information from community leaders, community volunteers, and friends and family in Thailand was much more common in Tak, while other provinces, especially Rayong, Chanthaburi, and Trat, as well as the Greater Bangkok area, relied more heavily on employers. Boosters were received most often in public health hospitals (46%), followed by mobile health units (26%) and health centres (23%). Boosters were also administered in shopping malls.

Almost all respondents found the process of receiving the booster not difficult (99%). A third of those without a booster are still willing to get one. The top reasons for being unwilling to get one include believing the booster is unnecessary, not feeling worried about COVID-19, and having side effects from the first doses of the vaccine.

SHARE OF VACCINATED RESPONDENTS WITH BOOSTER

	TOTAL	CAM NATIONALS	MYN NATIONALS
ROUND 2	46%	55%	36%
ROUND 3	59%	63%	53%

TOP 3 INFORMATION SOURCES FOR BOOSTER*

1	Word of mouth	90%
2	Thai government	32%
3	Internet	23%

TOP 3 WORD OF MOUTH SOURCES FOR BOOSTER*

Note: Only those who answered "word of mouth" to the question on booster information sources were able to answer this question

1	Employer	68%
2	Friends or family in Thailand	57%
3	Community leader	20%

TOP 3 LOCATIONS RESPONDENTS RECEIVED BOOSTER

1	Public health hospital	46%
2	Mobile health unit	26%
3	Health center	23%

33% of those without a booster were still willing to get one. Willingness was highest in the Greater Bangkok area (47%) and the lowest in Tak (17%).

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

Between late 2021 and the end of 2022, DTM conducted three rounds of COVID-19 perception surveys among Cambodian and Myanmar migrants in Thailand. As the resulting findings illustrate, vaccine uptake has increased substantially, whilst concern about COVID-19 has dropped. Among those who remain unvaccinated, about a quarter (28%) indicated being willing to receive the vaccine. A large proportion of those who remained unwilling cited concerns related to chronic diseases or the vaccine's interaction with other medications, while others considered the vaccine unnecessary. Tak remains the province with the highest rate of unvaccinated migrants among the assessed provinces. Booster uptake was found to be more advanced among Cambodian nationals compared to Myanmar nationals in the assessed areas. Of those who had not yet received a booster, a third indicated being willing to get one.



PHOTO: Migrant household in Samut Prakan, within the Greater Bangkok area. © IOM 2022/Sonia BLUE

SUPPLEMENTARY LINKS

The COVID-19 Perception Reports Round 1 and Round 2 can be accessed at:

[COVID-19 Vaccine Perceptions of Cambodian and Myanmar Migrants in Thailand: Round 1](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine Perceptions of Cambodian and Myanmar Migrants in Thailand: Round 2](#)

Factsheets from Round 2, with more detailed information on respondents' profiles, migratory journey and socio-economic situation can be accessed at:

1. [Factsheet on overall survey population](#)
2. [Factsheet on respondents in Chanthaburi province](#)
3. [Factsheet on respondents in Chonburi province](#)
4. [Factsheet on respondents in the Greater Bangkok Area](#)
5. [Factsheet on respondents in Ranong province](#)
6. [Factsheet on respondents in Tak province](#)
7. [Factsheet on respondents in Trat province](#)
8. [Factsheet on Cambodian national respondents](#)
9. [Factsheet on Myanmar national respondents](#)