

# Needs Assessment

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Knowledge for Health

## K4Health Needs Assessment

([www.k4health.org/needs-assessments](http://www.k4health.org/needs-assessments)) activities focus on family planning, reproductive health, and other health information needs, providing global insight and direction for related programs.

Assessments provide a means to address the unique needs of various countries, existing gaps in health information, as well as preferred formats and delivery mechanisms that will enhance work performance, save costs, and ultimately improve the quality of health care services and health outcomes.

There are three components of the initial needs assessment including an environment scan, a global online survey, and a multi-country qualitative study conducted in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.



## Needs Assessment Activities Provide Answers

Results of the needs assessment activities provide answers to such questions as:

- What are the health information needs of key audiences?
- What infrastructure exists to support information and communication technologies (ICTs)?
- What are the most promising technologies and tools?
- What health information networks exist and can they extend reach and use of health information?
- Who are the key health information stakeholders?
- What are the challenges to accessing and using up-to-date health information?

[www.k4health.org/needs-assessments](http://www.k4health.org/needs-assessments)



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## Completed Needs Assessment Activities

The three components of the initial needs assessment include:

### Environment Scan

To answer key research questions, information was collected from publications, internet searches, pertinent listservs, and telephone interviews. Results suggest that while emerging technologies are opening doors, traditional tactics still have far greater reach and sustainability in many settings. The scan also found that information for health workers must be tailored to the local setting and to the information needs of a specific cadre of health workers; otherwise, it is useless.

### Global Online Health Information Needs Assessment

The Global Online Survey was conducted in March-April 2009 and drew responses from 808 health professionals working in more than 110 countries. According to respondents, the leading barriers to accessing and using health information are: too much information to sort through, too little time, limited access to computers and the Internet, slow and unreliable Internet connections, cost, and lack of access to journals.

### Country-Level Qualitative Studies

The country-level qualitative needs assessment activities took place in five countries where participatory network mapping, informant interviews, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews were used as methodologies to conduct the needs assessment. They were designed to reach down to the district and community levels to determine the level of access to information, barriers to access, and methods to overcome challenges to meet information needs at the district and community levels.

Want to learn more?

Visit [www.k4health.org/needs-assessments](http://www.k4health.org/needs-assessments) to view our completed environment scan, our online health information needs assessment conducted in Southern Africa, and our qualitative needs assessment in Malawi.

## Ongoing Needs Assessment Activities

K4Health has a number of other qualitative needs assessment activities in development throughout the world, including India, Peru, and Senegal.

Our staff and partners will gauge demand throughout the lifespan of the project to ensure that audience needs are continuously being heard and met. Policy makers, program managers, and health care providers can use these results to inform global, regional, and country-specific health information programs.

## Contact

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions regarding K4Health's Needs Assessment, contact the team at [needsassessment@k4health.org](mailto:needsassessment@k4health.org).



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Knowledge for Health, implemented by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs in partnership with FHI and Management Sciences for Health.