

Access, Experience and the Gap: Annual Report 2026

The first annual report of the Observatory examines, across ten Arab states and eleven domains of everyday life, what residents report being able to reach and how they evaluate what they reach, and interprets the divergence between the two for public administration and management.

Executive summary

- (i)** Reported access averages 57.1 across the ten states and reported experience 51.3. Access exceeds experience in 74 of the 110 state–domain observations, and 26 gaps reach 20 points or more, 20 in favour of access and 6 in favour of experience.
- (ii)** Access and experience are only weakly associated at the state level ($r = 0.45$), and the association rests on Tunisia, which records the highest values on both; among the other nine states the correlation is 0.00. Higher reported access does not, on this evidence, translate into higher reported experience.
- (iii)** The gap is largest in health and care (+24.2 on average, positive in nine states) and in family and social relationships (+19.4). Housing and safety and policing show access above experience in all ten states.
- (iv)** Digital access and use is the only domain in which experience exceeds access in every state (mean –10.6); leisure and community participation, service provision and assistance, and civic participation and voice divide the states most sharply.
- (v)** Six states show access running ahead of experience across most domains (Yemen, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Jordan); in Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon small net gaps conceal large gaps of opposite sign; Egypt shows no domain gap of 20 points or more.

- (vi) Five gap types, each associated with an administrative deficit, organise these configurations. The Access–Delivery Gap and the Organisational–Coordination Gap are the most frequent, each observed in five states.

1. Purpose and approach

The Observatory assesses public services from the standpoint of the residents who use them. It measures two dimensions in each of eleven domains: access, the extent to which services, resources and opportunities can be reached, and experience, the degree of satisfaction with what is reached. The difference between the two, the access–experience gap, is the analytical core of the report.

The gap carries diagnostic information that neither dimension conveys alone. Where access exceeds experience, provision reaches residents without meeting their needs, and the questions that follow concern the quality, reliability and responsiveness of delivery. Where experience exceeds access, residents value what they reach but report reaching little, and the questions concern availability, eligibility, procedures and information.

2. Data and measurement

The first wave (2026) covers 1,861 respondents in ten states: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen. Access is measured with 120 items and experience with 68 items across eleven domains, each rescaled from 0 to 100; the gap is access minus experience, in points.

Three features of the data condition interpretation. (i) The samples are non-probability samples, so scores describe respondents rather than national populations. (ii) Access is measured mainly with yes/no items and experience with rating scales, so part of any gap reflects instrument design; the sign of a gap, and comparisons of the same domain across states, are the most defensible readings. (iii) The data are cross-sectional and do not observe administrative processes directly: administrative mechanisms enter the analysis as interpretations of the gaps, not as measured quantities.

3. Regional findings

Across the ten states, reported access averages 57.1 and reported experience 51.3, a mean gap of 5.7 points in favour of access. Access exceeds experience in 74 of the 110 state–domain observations. Of the 26 gaps of 20 points or more, 20 favour access and 6 favour experience.

The two dimensions are only weakly associated. The correlation between mean access and mean experience across the ten states is 0.45, and it depends on Tunisia, which records the highest values on both measures (64.9 and 67.6); among the other nine states the correlation is 0.00. The implication is substantive: states that report greater reach do not, as a rule, report more satisfactory services, so the expansion of access cannot be assumed to improve experience.

● **FIGURE 1. ACCESS, EXPERIENCE AND THE GAP: REGIONAL OVERVIEW**

Across the ten states, reported access averages 57.1 and reported experience 51.3, a mean gap of +5.7 points. Access exceeds experience in 74 of the 110 state-domain observations; 26 gaps reach 20 points or more, 20 in favour of access and 6 in favour of experience.

ACCESS

57.1

Reported access

Mean of the ten states



EXPERIENCE

51.3

Reported experience

Mean of the ten states



GAP

+5.7

Access minus experience

Positive values: access exceeds experience



74

observations in which access exceeds
experience

of 110

26

large gaps (20 points or more)
in either direction

4. Findings by domain

Three groups of domains emerge. The first comprises domains in which access exceeds experience almost everywhere: housing and safety and policing (all ten states), and health and care, family and social relationships, and work, income and finance (nine states). Health and care records the largest mean gap (+24.2), reaching +46.1 in Yemen and more than +34 in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The pattern is consistent with health systems that residents can reach but do not experience as adequate,

which directs attention to the quality, affordability and responsiveness of care rather than to its availability alone.

The second group consists of digital access and use, the only domain in which experience exceeds access in every state (mean -10.6; -35.5 in Tunisia). Residents who reach digital services evaluate them favourably, but report limited reach, which points to constraints of connectivity, skills, channels and design rather than of quality.

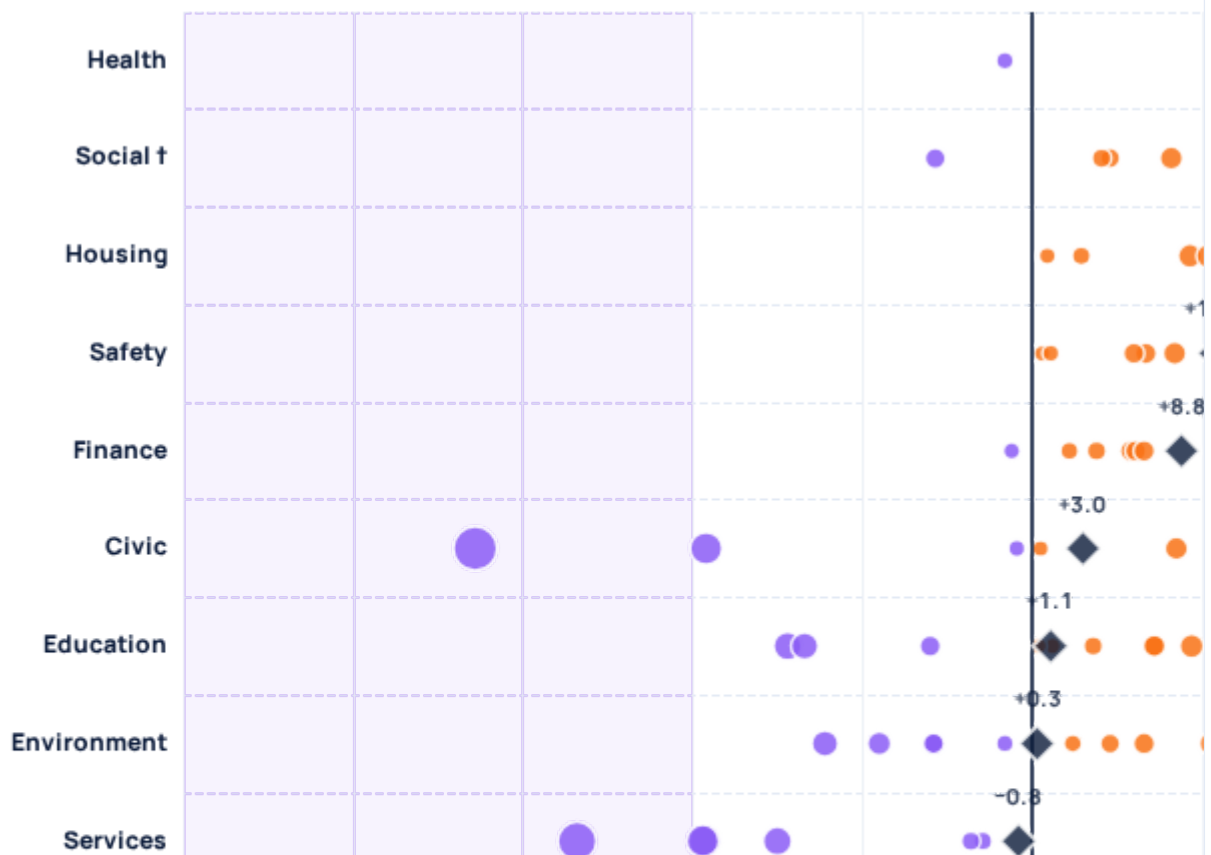
The third group comprises domains that divide the states. In leisure and community participation, access and experience are inversely related across states ($r = -0.82$), with gaps ranging from -46.8 in Tunisia to +20.4 in Iraq. Service provision and assistance separates four states in which access exceeds experience (Yemen +30.0, Qatar +19.8, Saudi Arabia +14.8, Iraq +14.0) from six in which experience exceeds access, most markedly Morocco (-26.8), Lebanon (-19.4) and Egypt (-19.3). Civic participation and voice ranges from -32.8 in Morocco to +20.9 in Kuwait. In these domains the gap reflects contrasting arrangements of provision rather than a common regional pattern.

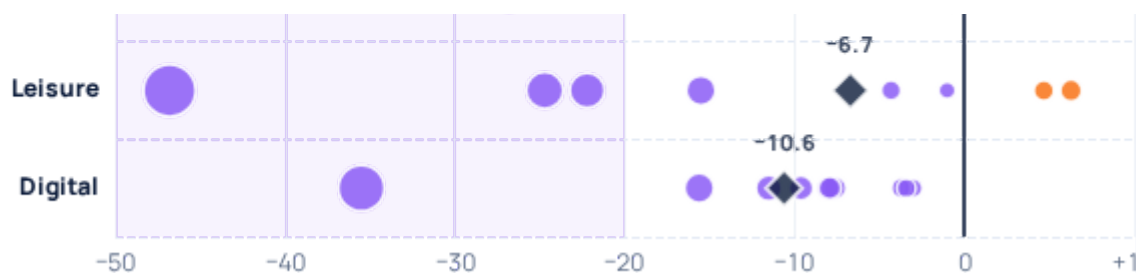
Figure 2. The access–experience gap by domain

Each track shows the gap in one domain for the ten states, from experience exceeding access (left) to access exceeding experience (right). Marker size is proportional to the size of the gap; the diamond marks the regional mean and shaded zones mark gaps of 20 points or more. Hovering over a state traces its position across all eleven domains.

Access exceeds experience in housing; and safety and policing in all ten states, and in health and care; family and social relationships; and work, income and finance in nine. Experience exceeds access in digital access and use in every state. The widest dispersion across states occurs in leisure and community participation (from -46.8 to $+20.4$); service provision and assistance (from -26.8 to $+30.0$); and family and social relationships (from -5.7 to $+48.4$).

● Access ● Experience — Gap · access exceeds experience
— Gap · experience exceeds access





Source: A-SCOPE MENA, Arab Access and Experience Dataset 2026 · non-probability samples; scores describe respondents. · Reading the data

[Data \(table and CSV\)](#)

5. Findings by state

Three configurations can be distinguished. (i) In Yemen (+16.8), Iraq (+12.5), Saudi Arabia (+10.5), Qatar (+10.1), Kuwait (+8.3) and Jordan (+6.6), access runs ahead of experience across most domains. Yemen combines the largest net gap with the widest divergence across domains (mean absolute gap 19.2), while Jordan records the smallest divergence in the region (9.4).

(ii) In Tunisia (-2.7), Morocco (-4.8) and Lebanon (+3.0), small net gaps conceal large gaps of opposite sign. Tunisia combines the highest levels of access and experience with the second-widest divergence (19.0): access exceeds experience by more than 23 points in housing, work, income and finance, and safety and policing, while experience exceeds access by 46.8 points in leisure and 35.5 points in digital access. For these states an aggregate indicator would be misleading; the analysis must proceed domain by domain.

(iii) Egypt (-2.9) shows no domain gap of 20 points or more; its negative gaps in services (-19.3) and civic participation (-19.2) indicate where reach, rather than quality, constrains residents.

Figure 3. Gap skylines by state

Each profile represents one state. In the fingerprint, petals extending outward from the reference ring mark domains in which access exceeds experience, and petals extending inward mark the reverse; the dashed rings mark gaps of 20 points and the centre gives the overall gap. The skyline presents the same values as towers above and reflections below a horizon.

Fingerprint

Skyline

Access exceeds experience in most domains in 8 of the ten states; the exceptions are Tunisia and Egypt. Large gaps in both directions occur in Tunisia, Lebanon and Morocco, where a small net gap conceals substantial divergence across domains.

- Outward or above: access exceeds experience
- Inward or below: experience exceeds access
- Reference ring or horizon: no gap



 Egypt

Access 51.8 Experience 54.7 Gap -2.9

Access-Experience Alignment



 Iraq

Access 52.9 Experience 40.4 Gap +12.5

Access-Delivery Gap

Access-Experience Alignment





 **Jordan**

Access 57.7 Experience 51.1 Gap +6.6

Access-Experience Alignment



 **Kuwait**

Access 60.7 Experience 52.4 Gap +8.3

Access-Delivery Gap

Access-Experience Alignment



 **Lebanon**

Access 59.2 Experience 56.2 Gap +3.0

Access-Delivery Gap

Administrative-Interface Gap

Organisational-Coordination Gap



 **Morocco**

Access 52.0 Experience 56.8 Gap -4.8

Access-Reach Gap

Administrative-Interface Gap

Organisational-Coordination Gap



 **Qatar**

Access 58.4 Experience 48.3 Gap +10.1

Organisational-Coordination Gap



 **Saudi Arabia**

Access 54.2 Experience 43.7 Gap +10.5

No gap type at these thresholds



 **Tunisia**

Access 64.9 Experience 67.6 Gap -2.7

Access-Delivery Gap

Access-Reach Gap

Organisational-Coordination Gap



 **Yemen**

Access 59.0 Experience 42.2 Gap +16.8

Access-Delivery Gap

Administrative-Interface Gap

Organisational-Coordination Gap

Source: A-SCOPE MENA, Arab Access and Experience Dataset 2026 · non-probability samples; scores describe respondents. · Reading the data

[Data \(table and CSV\)](#)

6. The gap typology and administrative deficits

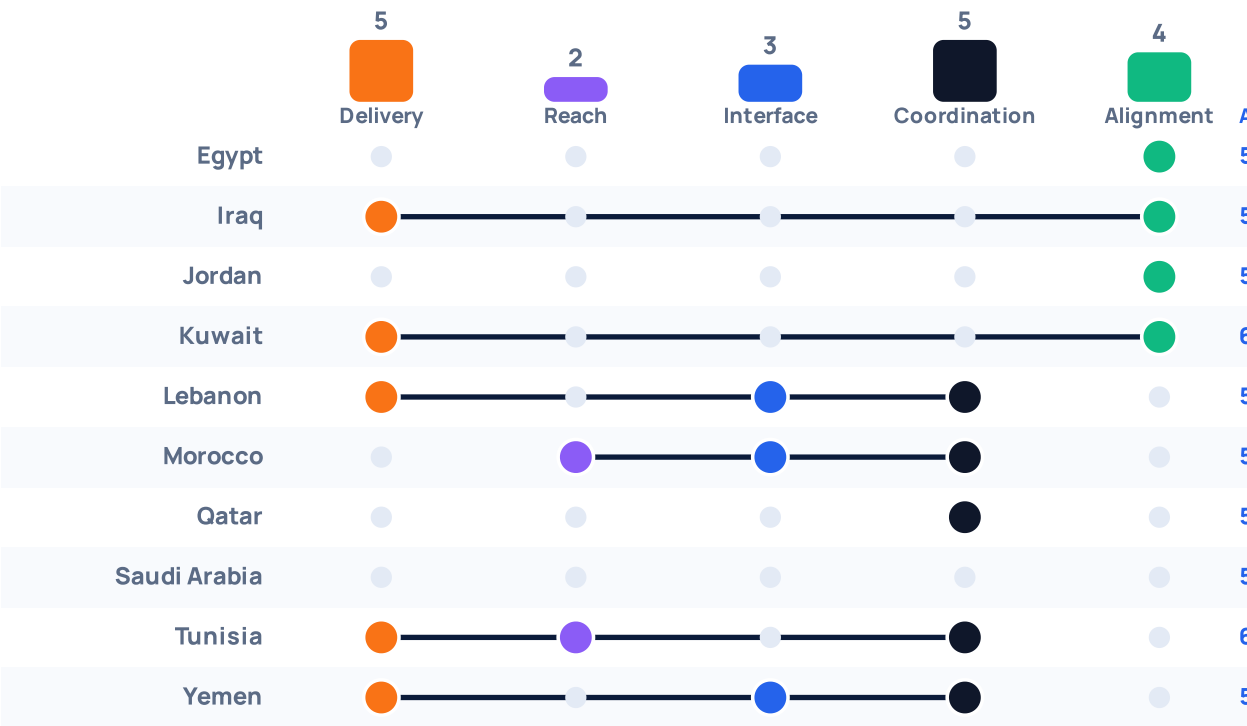
Five gap types, each defined by an explicit rule on the gaps in the ten public-service domains, organise these configurations and link each to an administrative deficit. At the selected thresholds, the Access-Delivery Gap (implementation and service-delivery deficit) and the Organisational-Coordination Gap (administrative capacity and coordination deficit) are the most frequent, each observed in five states. The Administrative-Interface Gap is observed in Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen; the Access-Reach Gap (service-design and access deficit) in Morocco and Tunisia; and Access-Experience Alignment in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia shows no gap type.

The classification is tested against alternative thresholds. Seven of the nineteen current assignments hold under at least 90 per cent of the threshold specifications examined; the most threshold-dependent are the Access-Delivery Gap assignments of Kuwait (42 per cent) and Lebanon (48 per cent), which should be read with corresponding caution.

Figure 4. Gap-type membership

Filled markers indicate the gap types identified for each state at the selected thresholds; connecting lines indicate combinations of types. Bars report the number of states in each type.

At the selected thresholds, the most frequent gap types are Access–Delivery Gap and Organisational–Coordination Gap (5 states each); the least frequent is Access–Reach Gap (2). Saudi Arabia shows no gap type. The largest number of types, 3, is found in Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.



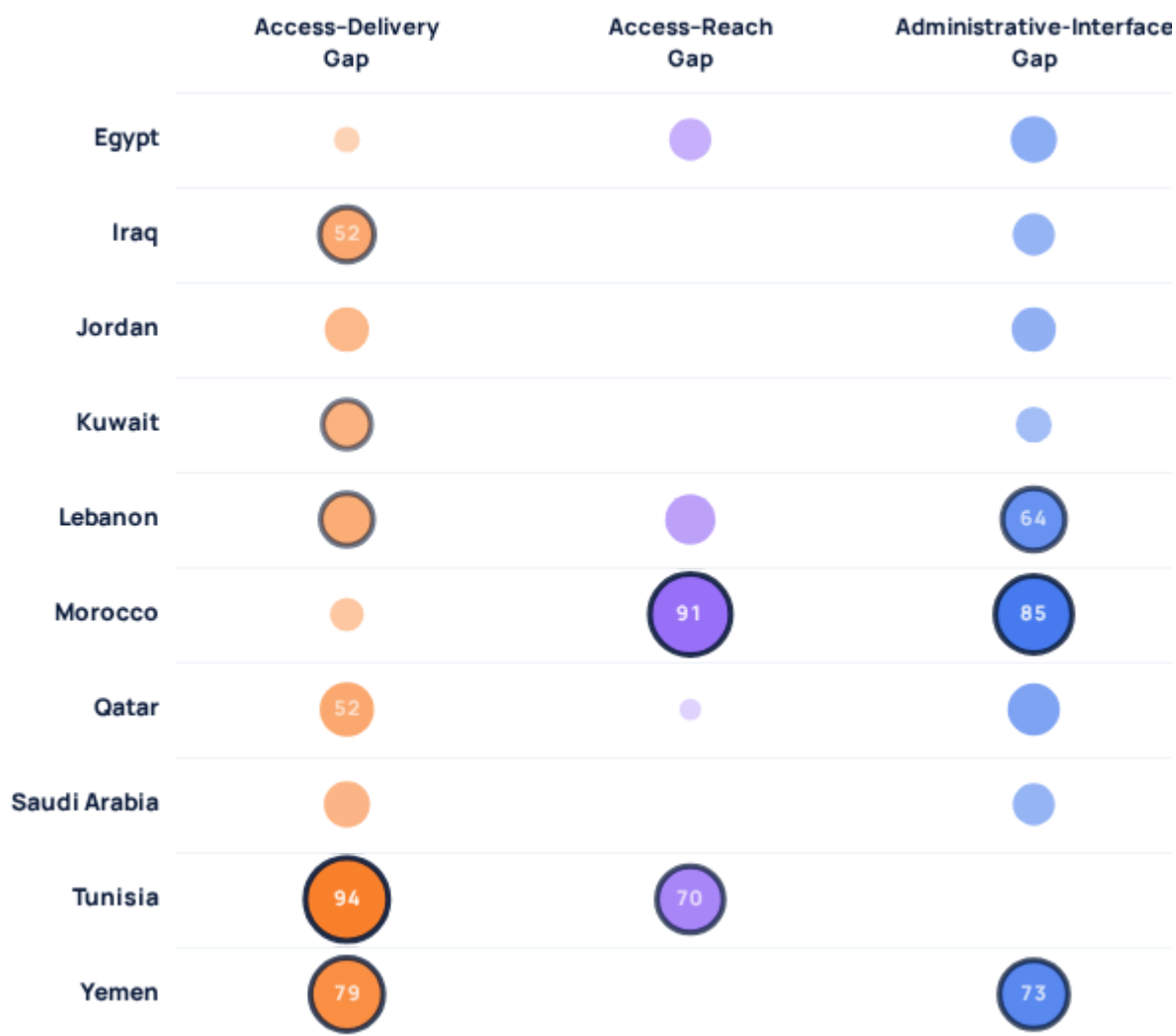
Source: A-SCOPE MENA, Arab Access and Experience Dataset 2026 · non-probability samples; scores describe respondents. · Reading the data

[Data \(table and CSV\)](#)

Figure 5. Stability of classification

Bubble size is proportional to the share of threshold combinations under which each state is assigned to each gap type (large gap of 15 to 25 points in one to three domains; alignment below 3 to 7 points in two to four domains). An outline marks assignment at the selected thresholds.

7 of the 19 current assignments hold under at least 90 per cent of threshold specifications. The most threshold-dependent current assignments are Kuwait (Access–Delivery Gap, 42 per cent); and Lebanon (Access–Delivery Gap, 48 per cent).



Source: A-SCOPE MENA, Arab Access and Experience Dataset 2026 · non-probability samples; scores describe respondents. · Reading the data

[Data \(table and CSV\)](#)

7. Interpretation

The findings support three interpretive propositions. First, the principal problem revealed by the survey is not the absence of provision but its conversion into services that residents value: in most states and most domains, residents report reaching more than they evaluate favourably. Second, the problem differs by domain: in health and care it concerns the quality of what is reached, whereas in digital services it concerns reach itself. Third, national averages conceal the most consequential variation, which lies across domains within the same state.

These propositions are consistent with an administrative reading of the gap, in which implementation, frontline delivery, procedures and coordination determine how far formal provision becomes effective and valued. The survey does not observe these processes directly, and the propositions are therefore offered as interpretations to be examined with administrative and qualitative evidence.

8. Implications for public administration and management

- (i) Delivery quality where access runs ahead. In health and care, housing, safety and policing, and work, income and finance, performance management should extend beyond coverage to the quality and responsiveness of delivery: waiting times, the reliability of services, the conduct of frontline staff and the handling of user problems.
- (ii) Reach where experience runs ahead. In digital access and use, and in services, leisure and civic participation in the states where experience exceeds access, reform should concentrate on service design, eligibility and targeting, outreach and information, and the administrative burden that conditions entry.
- (iii) The administrative interface. Where large gaps concentrate in domains of direct contact with public institutions, as in Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen, procedures,

communication with users, the consistency of frontline discretion and complaint and redress mechanisms warrant review.

- (iv)** Coordination and capacity. Where divergence is wide across many domains, as in Tunisia, Yemen, Morocco, Lebanon and Qatar, uneven implementation across sectors points to the need for coordination between agencies and for stronger organisational capacity.
- (v)** Domain-specific rather than aggregate targets. Because aggregates conceal offsetting gaps, performance frameworks should set and monitor targets domain by domain, for access and experience jointly.
- (vi)** Citizen assessment as a management instrument. The routine measurement of access and experience in the same domains, ideally with probability samples and repeated waves, would allow governments to monitor the gap over time and to assess the effect of reforms on it.

9. Limitations and next steps

The results describe respondents in non-probability samples and should not be read as national estimates. Differences of a few points between states carry little weight, and part of every gap reflects the different formats of access and experience items. Subsequent waves should use probability sampling, extend the number of states, align the formats of access and experience items where possible, and link the survey to administrative data on provision, so that the mechanisms inferred in this report can be examined directly.