

Americans Speak Out on Vaccines and Infectious Disease

A Public Opinion Survey Commissioned by Research!America and the American Society for Microbiology

May 2018

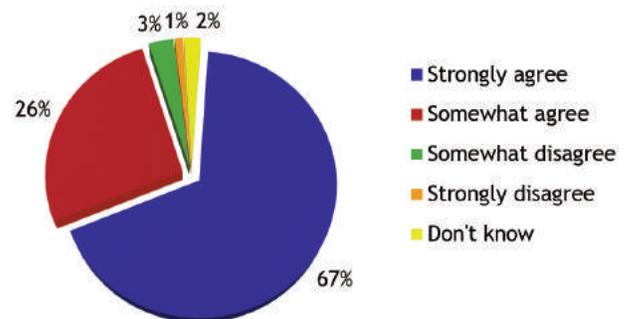
Research!America has been gauging public opinion on Americans' attitudes toward medical, health and scientific research since 1992. Results of a national survey show that a majority of Americans agree federal support to address infectious disease outbreaks is essential and vaccines are important to the health of society.

Infectious Diseases and Global Leadership

An overwhelming majority of Americans (93%) say it's important for the U.S. to be a global leader in research to improve health, according to a public opinion survey commissioned by Research!America and the American Society for Microbiology. [Figure 1] Nearly 80% currently agree the U.S. is a global leader, a nine-percent-point increase compared to a similar survey in 2008. And a large majority (89%) say it is important for the federal government to fund international programs on the surveillance and detection of infectious disease outbreaks. [Figure 2] An overwhelming majority (95%) think infectious and emerging diseases facing other countries will pose a major or minor threat to the U.S. in the next few years. [Figure 3]

Important for U.S. to Maintain Leadership in Research

How important do you think it is that the U.S. is a global leader in research to improve health?

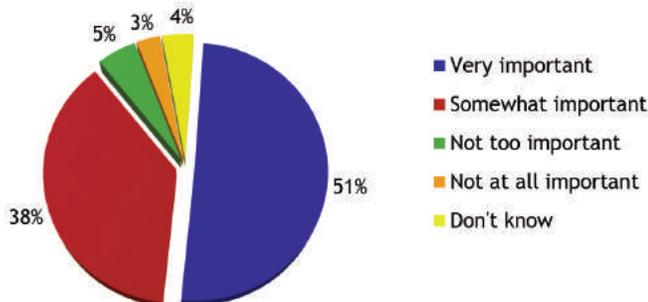


Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 1

Important for Government to Fund Surveillance of Disease Outbreaks

How important is it for the federal government to fund international programs on the surveillance and detection of infectious disease outbreaks?

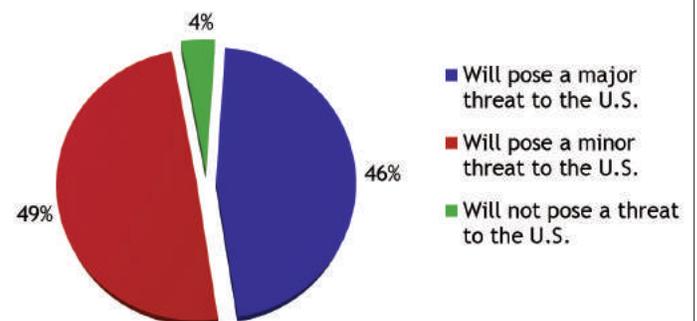


Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 2

Infectious Diseases Pose Threat to the U.S.

In general, to what extent do you think infectious and emerging diseases facing other countries will pose a threat to the U.S. in the next few years?



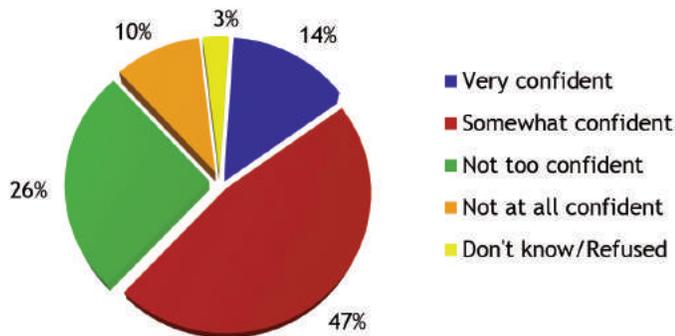
Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 3

Note: Due to rounding, the total may not add up to 100%.

Many Confident That U.S. Government Can Prevent Infectious Disease Outbreak

How confident are you that the federal government can prevent a major infectious disease outbreak in the U.S.?



Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 4

Vaccination for Childhood Diseases Most Concerning Global Health Problem

What is the global health problem that concerns you the most?

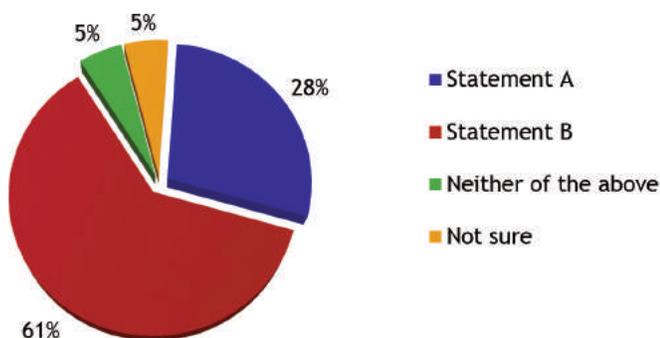


Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 5

Majority Agree Not Vaccinating Puts Children & Communities at Risk

Which statement is closest to your view? Statement A - Some people say parents should have the right to decide whether their children should get vaccinated or not. Statement B - Other people say that when parents decide not to vaccinate it puts their children and their communities at risk.



Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 6

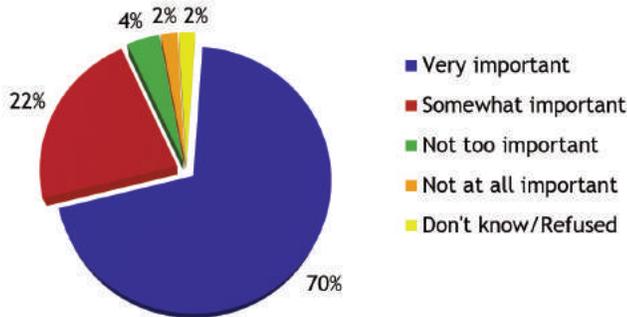
Only 31% agree that the global community is prepared to respond to another epidemic like Ebola, and fewer (25%) agree the U.S. is prepared to respond to such an epidemic. But 61% are confident that the federal government can prevent a major infectious disease outbreak in the U.S. [Figure 4] Seventy-percent say the federal government should do more to educate the public about global disease outbreaks and the risk to the U.S. A strong majority (81%) say Americans should be concerned about global health, and that the following should be responsible for funding global health research -- World Health Organization (73%), U.S. government (65%), businesses (52%), United Nations (50%), Foundations (45%), private citizens (36%) and state government (26%). When asked what is the global health problem that concerns them the most, nearly half of Americans (47%) said vaccination for childhood diseases like polio, along with HIV/AIDS. About two-thirds (64%) said hunger and nutritional health is the most concerning health problem while 39% said obesity, 38% family planning and reproductive health and 33% malaria. [Figure 5]

Public Perception of Vaccines

Nearly 90% of Americans say it is important for parents to have their children vaccinated and when parents decide not to vaccinate, 61% say it puts their children and their communities at risk, a 10-percentage point increase from 2008. Twenty-eight percent agree parents should have the right to decide whether their children should get vaccinated or not. [Figure 6] Forty-six percent say they got the flu vaccine during the last flu season but 53% did not. Among the reasons -- 48% say they do not trust the flu vaccine, 40% do not feel they need it to prevent the flu, 26% say the vaccine is not effective and therefore not worth getting, 11% say they did not have enough time, 8% say their doctor did not recommend it and 7% say it is not covered by their insurance. But a strong majority (85%) favor increased federal spending on research to improve and find new vaccines.

Vaccines are Important to Health of Society

Thinking about the common vaccines available today such as polio, tetanus, measles, and flu, how important do you believe vaccines are to the health of our society today?



Source: A Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 7

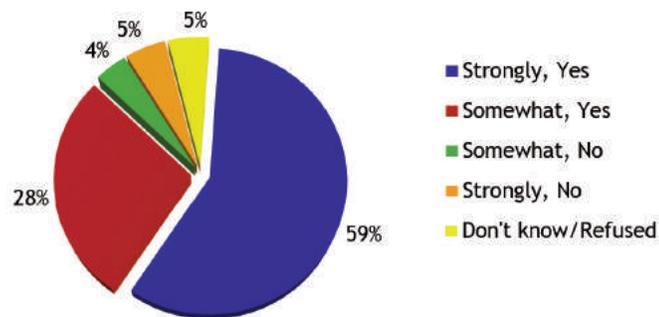
Public attitudes regarding the benefits of vaccines have shifted over the last decade. In thinking about the common vaccines available today such as polio, tetanus, measles and flu, 70% of Americans say vaccines are very important to the health of our society, a 10-percentage point decrease compared to 2008. [Figure 7]

Fifty-nine percent of Americans strongly believe that they have benefited from the development of vaccines over the last 50 years, a 16-percentage point decrease from 2008. [Figure 8] And confidence in the current system in the U.S. for evaluating the safety of vaccines and recommendations for when they should be given, declined to 77% from 85% in 2008. [Figure 9] Roughly two-thirds of Americans (67%) are confident that the current system ensures an adequate supply of necessary vaccines to prevent shortages, down 11-percentage points from 2008.

Only 21% have heard of a universal flu vaccine [Figure 10] and nearly half (45%) agree that the public does not get enough information from their doctors about vaccinations. When asked how did they hear about vaccines, more than half said the media (54%), online/internet (45%), doctor/healthcare provider (41%), advertisements (38%), social media (36%), friends/family (29%), government (10%) and a patient organization (6%).

Many Have Personally Benefited From Vaccines

Do you believe that you have personally benefited from the development of vaccines over the last 50 years?

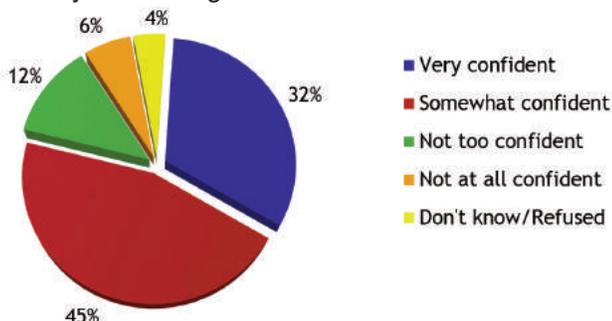


Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 8

Majority Confident in U.S. Vaccine Evaluation and Recommendations

How confident are you in our current system in the U.S. for evaluating the safety of vaccines and recommendations for when they should be given?

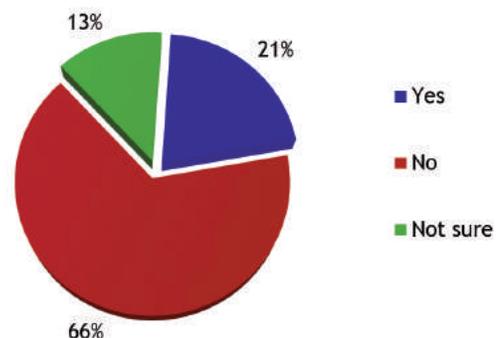


Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 9

Majority Have Not Heard of Universal Flu Vaccine

Do you recall hearing anything recently about a new type of vaccine called a universal flu vaccine?



Source: Research!America survey conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in May 2018.

Figure 10

Methodology

May 2018 Survey

This nationwide online survey was conducted by Zogby Analytics on behalf of Research!America among 1,004 adults in the U.S. This survey has a theoretical sampling error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

November 2008 Survey

This nationwide telephone survey was conducted by Charlton Research Company among 800 adults nationwide. The survey has a theoretical sampling error of +/-3.5%. This poll was commissioned by Research!America and Wyeth.

The full surveys are available online: www.researchamerica.org/publicopinionsurveys.

About Research!America

Research!America is the nation's largest nonprofit public education and advocacy alliance working to make research to improve health a higher national priority. Founded in 1989, Research!America is supported by member organizations representing 125 million Americans. Visit www.researchamerica.org.



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About ASM

The American Society for Microbiology is the largest single life science society, composed of more than 30,000 scientists and health professionals. ASM's mission is to promote and advance the microbial sciences. ASM advances the microbial sciences through conferences, publications, certifications and educational opportunities. It enhances laboratory capacity around the globe through training and resources. It provides a network for scientists in academia, industry and clinical settings. Additionally, ASM promotes a deeper understanding of the microbial sciences to diverse audiences.



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