

National Physician Survey Topline
For the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation

Fielded March 9 to April 5, 2017

Margin of sampling error for total is ± 4.0 percent

Margin of sampling error for PCPs is ± 5.2 percent

Margin of sampling error for specialists is ± 6.3 percent

12-minute questionnaire of n = 601 physicians nationwide, including n = 360 PCPs; n = 241 specialists

Introduction

This survey is sponsored by the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation. The purpose is to hear physicians' views about aspects of the health care system. Your responses to these questions are completely confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Attitudes toward the Problem

1. Are you actively involved in the practice of medicine, including seeing patients?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Yes	100	100	100
No	-	-	-
DK/REF	-	-	-

2. Think about the average physician in the health care system today. How often do you think he or she prescribes a test or procedure that is not necessary? READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Everyday	28	27	29
Several times a week	26	30	24
About once a week	15	18	12
A couple of times a month	10	9	10
Less often than once a month	16	12	18
DK/REF	5	4	7

3. Do you think the frequency of unnecessary tests and procedures in the health care system is a...READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very serious problem	29	34	25
A somewhat serious problem	48	48	49
Not too serious problem	17	16	18
Not a problem at all	4	2	6
DK/REF	2	-	2

Responsibility, Barriers, and Solutions

4. Who do you think is in the best position to help address the problem of unnecessary tests and procedures? CODED OPEN END. IF DK/REF ASK: How about...RANDOMIZE RESPONSES | ALLOW ONE RESPONSE

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Physicians	63	60	65
Patients	5	5	4
Insurance companies	5	5	4
Medicare	1	1	1
The government	11	12	9
Trial lawyers	4	8	2
Hospitals	3	3	3
Pharmaceutical/ drug companies	-	-	-
Device manufacturers	-	-	-
Other	6	4	7
DK/REF	2	2	4

5. How much responsibility do you feel you have for making sure your patients avoid unnecessary tests and procedures? READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
A great deal of responsibility	66	66	66
Some responsibility	26	29	24
Not much responsibility	5	4	6
No responsibility	2	-	3
DK/REF	-	-	-

6. Let's say a patient came to you convinced he or she needed a specific test. You knew the test was unnecessary, but the patient was quite insistent. Would you: READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Order the test	4	3	4
Order the test, but give reasons why you advise against it	44	51	39
Refuse to order the test	45	40	48
DK/REF	7	5	9

Here are a few reasons physicians sometimes end up ordering an unnecessary test or procedure. In your own practice, is _____ a reason you sometimes end up ordering an unnecessary test or procedure? IF YES: Is this a major reason or minor reason? RANDOMIZE

7. Not having enough time with a patient for meaningful discussion

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	13	16	11
Minor reason	35	39	32
Not a reason	51	44	56
DK/REF	1	1	1

8. Concern about malpractice issues

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	53	57	50
Minor reason	33	32	34
No	13	10	15
DK/REF	1	1	1

9. Wanting to keep your patients happy

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	24	27	22
Minor reason	47	51	44
No	28	22	33
DK/REF	-	-	-

10. Patients insisting on getting the test or procedure

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	32	41	26
Minor reason	41	41	42
No	25	16	31
DK/REF	2	2	1

11. Having new technology in your practice

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	9	6	10
Minor reason	23	23	23
No	67	68	66
DK/REF	1	3	1

12. Feeling patients should be able to make the final decision

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	13	17	11
Minor reason	42	38	45
No	42	42	42
DK/REF	3	3	2

13. The fee-for-service system of payment

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	8	5	9
Minor reason	23	21	25
No	67	71	65
DK/REF	1	1	1

14. Wanting more information to reassure yourself

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	37	30	42
Minor reason	46	54	41
No	16	15	16
DK/REF	-	1	-

15. Just to be safe

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Major reason	29	33	26
Minor reason	47	49	46
No	21	17	24
DK/REF	3	1	3

Experience and Behavior

16. In your own practice, how often do patients ask for a test or procedure that you think is unnecessary? READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Everyday	13	13	13
Several times a week	26	31	23
About once a week	14	18	12
A couple of times a month	18	18	18
Less often than once a month	27	20	32
DK/REF	1	-	2

17. When patients ask for a test or procedure you feel is unnecessary, how often do you talk to them about why they should not have the test or procedure? READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Always or almost always	83	81	85
Often	9	14	7
About half the time	3	3	3
Not too often	1	1	1
Rarely or never	2	1	3
DK/REF	1	-	3

18. Over the last few years, has it gotten [ROTATE: easier or harder] to talk to patients about why they should avoid a test or procedure?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Easier	24	23	24
Harder	46	49	43
No difference	30	27	32
DK/REF	-	1	-

19. Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable talking to patients about why they should avoid an unnecessary test or procedure? Do you feel very or somewhat comfortable/uncomfortable?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very comfortable	74	64	81
Somewhat comfortable	20	28	15
Somewhat uncomfortable	4	7	3
Very uncomfortable	1	-	1
DK/REF	-	1	-

20. When you talk to patients about unnecessary tests or procedures, how often do they follow your advice and avoid the test or procedure? READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Always or almost always	36	24	44
Often	37	45	32
About half the time	17	22	14
Not too often	6	7	6
Rarely or never	1	1	1
DK/REF	3	1	4

Switching gears, I'd like your view on how effective some things would be at reducing the number of unnecessary tests and procedures in the health care system. How effective would _____ be in reducing unnecessary tests and procedures? RANDOMIZE

21. Having specific, evidence-based recommendations in a format designed for patients that physicians can use to discuss why some care may be unnecessary

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very effective	53	51	54
Somewhat effective	39	39	38
Not too effective	5	7	4
Not at all effective	3	2	3
DK/REF	1	1	1

22. Having more time with patients to discuss alternatives to a test or procedure

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very effective	50	53	48
Somewhat effective	37	35	38
Not too effective	10	9	10
Not at all effective	2	2	3
DK/REF	1	1	1

23. Changing the system of financial rewards some physicians receive for ordering tests and procedures

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very effective	31	27	33
Somewhat effective	38	36	39
Not too effective	13	18	10
Not at all effective	14	11	16
DK/REF	4	6	2

24. Malpractice reform

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very effective	65	60	68
Somewhat effective	25	29	23
Not too effective	5	6	4
Not at all effective	3	3	3
DK/REF	2	3	2

25. In the past 12 months, have you read or heard about evidence that addresses when to order and when not to order a test or procedure?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Yes	66	64	67
No	32	32	32
DK/REF	2	4	1

26. In the past 12 months, have you reduced the number of times you recommended a test or procedure because you learned it was unnecessary, or has this not happened?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Yes, have reduced	47	58	41
No, has not happened	49	38	56
DK/REF	4	4	4

27. Think about the next 12 months. Do you think you will be talking to patients more often, less often, or about the same amount about avoiding unnecessary tests and procedures?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
More often	21	28	16
Less often	3	2	3
About the same amount	75	67	80
I'm not sure	1	3	1
REF	-	-	1

28. Are you interested or uninterested in learning more about evidenced-based recommendations that address when certain tests and procedures may be unnecessary? Would you say you are very or somewhat interested/uninterested?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very interested	57	58	56
Somewhat interested	29	32	28
Somewhat uninterested	5	6	4
Very uninterested	8	3	11
DK/REF	1	1	2

29. How often do you talk with your patients about the costs of tests and procedures? READ

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Always or almost always	20	23	18
Often	21	27	16
About half the time	14	17	12
Not too often	24	23	25
Rarely or never	19	9	26
DK/REF	1	-	2

Exposure to Choosing Wisely

30. Have you heard of the *Choosing Wisely* campaign or not?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Yes, have heard	24	31	20
No, have not heard	73	65	78
I'm not sure	3	4	2
DK/REF	-	-	-

31. As you may know, the *Choosing Wisely* campaign is an initiative of the ABIM Foundation to help physicians and patients talk about unnecessary tests and procedures, and make smart and effective choices. The *Choosing Wisely* campaign has worked with medical specialty societies to create lists of evidence-based recommendations addressing when certain “routine” tests and procedures should be subject to further discussion. For example, the American Academy of Family Physicians recommended against prescribing antibiotics for acute mild-to-moderate sinusitis unless symptoms last for seven or more days. Is the *Choosing Wisely* campaign something you have seen or heard about?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Yes	40	46	36
No	55	46	61
I’m not sure	4	8	2
REF	-	-	-

32. Have you seen any of the *Choosing Wisely* materials about evidence-based recommendations, or have you not seen any of these materials?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Yes, have seen	23	30	18
No, have not seen	72	64	77
I’m not sure	5	6	4
REF	-	-	-

33. IF YES IN Q32: Have these materials been helpful or not helpful for you?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Helpful	85	93	77
Not helpful	14	6	23
DK/REF	-	1	-

34. IF YES IN Q32: Have these materials been helpful or not helpful for your patients?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Helpful	57	62	53
Not helpful	24	15	33
DK/REF	19	23	15

35. IF YES: Do you feel the *Choosing Wisely* campaign is valuable or not valuable in helping physicians talk to patients about unnecessary tests and procedures? IF VALUABLE: Would you say it is very or somewhat valuable? IF NOT VALUABLE: Would you say it is not too or not at all valuable?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Very valuable	49	56	43
Somewhat valuable	43	40	47
Not too valuable	6	2	10
Not at all valuable	1	2	-
DK/REF	-	-	-

Finally, some demographic questions just for statistical purposes.

36. How many years have you been practicing medicine?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Less than 10 years	13	13	13
10 to 20 years	29	36	24
20 to 30 years	30	28	31
More than 30 years	27	22	31
DK/REF	2	1	2

37. Which of the following best describes your medical practice?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Mostly office or clinic based	60	82	47
Mostly hospital based	21	10	27
Equally hospital and office/clinic based	15	7	19
Mostly long-term care facility based	1	-	2
Mostly hospice based	-	-	1
DK/REF	3	1	4

38. IF OFFICE OR CLINIC IN Q37: How would you describe your office or clinic?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Solo practice	24	25	24
Single-specialty partnership or group	46	44	47
Multi-specialist partnership	27	29	25
Not office-based	2	1	3
DK/REF	1	1	-

39. What is your primary medical specialty? CODED OPEN END

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Internal medicine	22	39	11
Family practice	15	38	-
Pediatric	11	20	5
OBGYN	5	-	9
General practice	2	1	3
Other	43	1	70
DK/REF	1	-	2

40. On average, how many patients do you see in a typical week? Your best estimate is fine.

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Less than 100	60	51	66
100 or more	37	47	30
DK/REF	3	3	4

41. Just to make sure we have a representative sample, what is your age?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Under 50	36	44	30
50 to 59	34	28	37
60+	29	26	31
DK/REF	1	2	1

42. Are you from a Hispanic, Latino or Spanish-speaking background?

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Yes	4	6	3
No	95	93	97
DK/REF	-	1	-

43. What do you consider your race? READ IF NECESSARY

	Total	PCP	Spec.
White	67	67	67
Black/African-American	5	4	5
Latino/Hispanic	3	3	3
Asian American	15	18	12
Arab American	4	3	4
Other	2	1	3
DK/REF	5	5	5

Gender

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Male	67	61	71
Female	33	39	29

Region

	Total	PCP	Spec.
Northeast	23	21	25
Midwest	20	25	17
South	35	35	35
West	22	20	24