

Research!America has been gauging public opinion on American's attitudes toward medical, health and scientific research since 1992. Results of our recent national poll show a high level of support for scientific research across all disciplines. Our nation's leadership in scientific research is important to Americans because they want better health and the United States to remain globally competitive.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Ninety-seven percent of Americans think it is important for the United States to be a global leader in scientific research, with 76% saying it is very important. A vast majority say that science is most important to our health (86%) and our competitiveness as a country (78%) [Figure 1]. Following close behind are our education system (70%), our standard of living (67%) and our economy (66%).

Sixty-nine percent of Americans think that scientific research is very important to the economy and 28% say it is somewhat important [Figure 2]. In terms of job creation and higher incomes, 58% think investing in scientific research is very important and 36% say it is somewhat important.

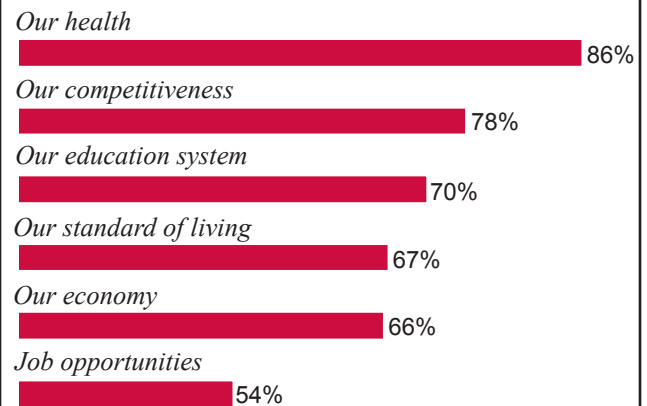
Americans expect our nation to retain its status as the major world power, with two-thirds (66%) saying they think the United States will be the greatest power of the 21st century. Twenty percent predict it will be China. Looking back, 51% of Americans say that the greatest scientific discoveries in the 20th century were in health and medicine, including vaccinations, antibiotics, genetics and stem cell research. Other areas of discovery mentioned include space exploration (11%), alternative energy (5%) and computers (4%).

BRIDGING THE SCIENCES

Health is a primary issue for many Americans. When asked to name a field of scientific study, medicine came to mind first for a quarter (25%) of Americans. The next most common response was biology (9%), followed by physics/nuclear physics (6%) and genetics/microbiology/molecular biology (6%).

Science Important to U.S. Health and Competitiveness

How important is the role science plays in ...? :
(% saying "very important")

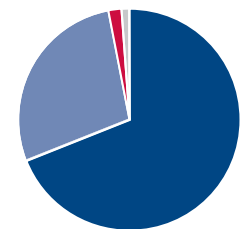


SOURCE: Bridging the Sciences Survey, 2006
Charlton Research Company for Research!America

Figure 1

Research Important to U.S. Economy

How important do you think scientific research is to the U.S. economy?

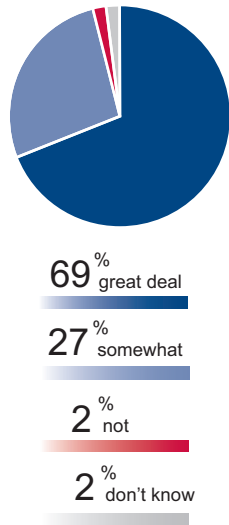


SOURCE: Bridging the Sciences Survey, 2006
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Figure 2

Work in Various Scientific Fields Impacts Discovery

How much do you think research in specific fields impacts scientific advances and discovery in other fields?



SOURCE: Bridging the Sciences Survey, 2006
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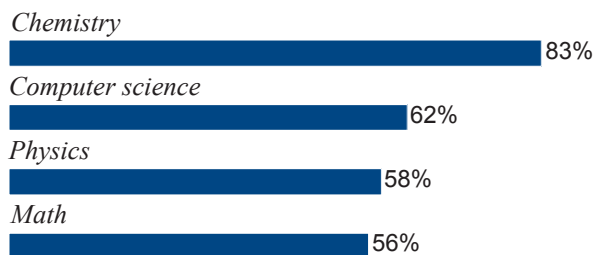
Figure 3

Forty-four percent of Americans say the most important scientific research today is taking place in health and medicine generally. An additional 22% specifically mentioned pharmaceutical research (10%), biology (5%), genetics (4%) and stem cell research (3%). Others named space exploration (5%), environmental research (4%) and technology (4%).

More than two-thirds (69%) of Americans are aware that research in specific fields impacts scientific advances and discovery in other fields a great deal and 27% say it does somewhat [Figure 3]. Far fewer, one-fourth (24%), think that scientists from different fields work together a great deal and 55% think they work together somewhat.

Medical Progress Affected by Many Fields of Science

Medical progress is influenced by research in various fields. To what degree do you think the following fields affect medical advances? (% saying "great deal")



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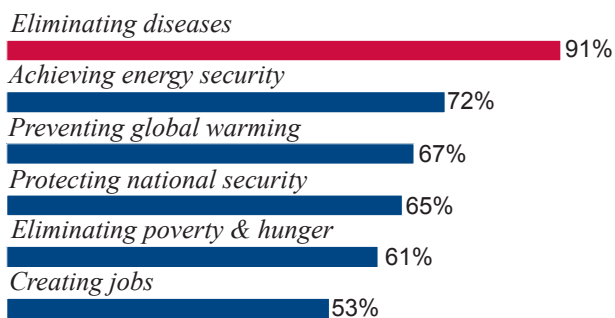
Figure 4

RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS AFFECT MEDICAL PROGRESS

For many Americans (83%), the effect of chemistry on medical progress is clear. Americans think computer science (62%), physics (58%) and math (56%) also have a great deal of influence [Figure 4]. The connections between medical advances and research in engineering (49%), energy (43%), space (40%), defense (40%) and geology (27%) are somewhat less apparent.

Research Most Important in Eliminating Disease

How important do you think scientific research is in addressing each of the following areas? (% saying "very important")



SOURCE: Bridging the Sciences Survey, 2006
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Figure 5

Americans say that scientific research is most important to eliminating diseases such as cancer, with 91% saying it is very important [Figure 5]. Scientific research is also very important to achieving energy security (72%), preventing global warming (67%), protecting national security (65%) and eliminating poverty and hunger around the world (61%).

The top reason Americans think we are not making more progress in research to improve health is that research can take many years to produce results (82%). Other reasons include not motivating enough young people to pursue careers in science (77%), scientists from different fields are not encouraged to work together (59%) and not enough money is being invested in scientific research (58%).

ENCOURAGING YOUNG AMERICANS TO PURSUE A CAREER IN SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Americans respect scientists and think they are the best spokespersons for research. Sixty percent say that a scientist is an occupation of very great prestige, followed closely by physician (58%) and fireman (54%) [Figure 6]. A similar trend shows that Americans have the most confidence in the medical community (92%), the military (90%) and the scientific community (89%). When it comes to learning about scientific and technological developments, 51% say that scientists are the best qualified to explain the impacts on society.

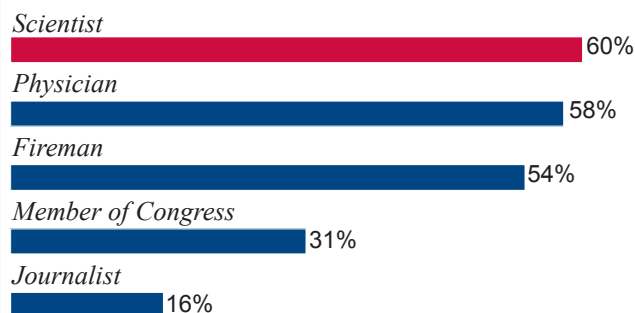
Eighty-five percent of Americans think scientific research is very important to today's society. The most common reasons for believing research is very important are medical and health-related (37%). Others include the sentiments that advancement is essential (16%) and scientific discoveries affect everything (11%). Knowledge (8%), quality of life (6%) and U.S. leadership (4%) are cited as other reasons.

Americans are concerned about the development of the next generation of scientists. A majority (52%) think that the U.S. is performing poorly compared to other nations in terms of math and science education [Figure 7]. Nearly nine in ten (89%) say it is very important for the U.S. to educate and train individuals qualified to conduct medical, health and scientific research. Ninety-seven percent say encouraging young people to pursue careers that require a solid education in science is important and 98% say that creating more career opportunities in science and research for them is also important [Figure 8].

A majority (81%) of Americans support their state governments providing financial incentives, such as tax exemptions, to attract research labs or companies to build new facilities in their state. Examples are the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, which Americans say are important to the economy (94%) and in providing jobs in the U.S. (89%).

Scientist Most Prestigious Career

Do you feel each of the following is an occupation of very great, considerable, some or hardly any prestige at all?
(% saying "very great")

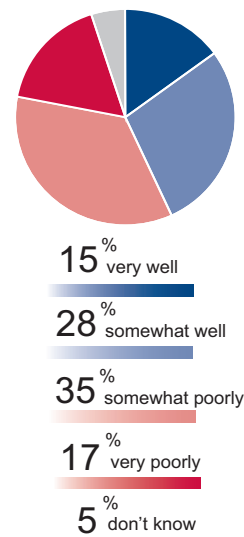


SOURCE: Bridging the Sciences Survey, 2006
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Figure 6

U.S. Performance in Science and Math Education Lacking

Do you think the U.S. is performing well or performing poorly compared to other nations in terms of science and math education?

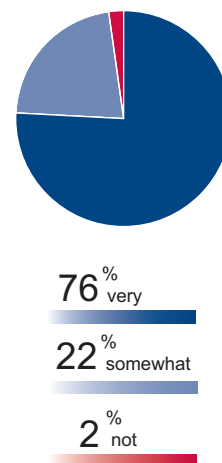


SOURCE: Bridging the Sciences Survey, 2006
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Figure 7

Expanding Research Career Opportunities Important for Young Americans

How important is it for the U.S. to create more opportunities for careers in science and research for its young people?



SOURCE: Bridging the Sciences Survey, 2006
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Figure 8

METHODOLOGY

Research!America has been gauging public opinion on attitudes toward health-related research since 1992. Research!America recently commissioned a poll on Americans' attitudes about medical, health and scientific research as part of the *Bridging the Sciences* initiative.

Charlton Research Company conducted a telephone survey using Random Digit Dial methodology among 800 adults nationwide. The sample was proportionate to the country's demographics, including geography, gender and ethnicity. The survey, fielded in December 2006, has a theoretical sampling error of $\pm 3.5\%$.

ABOUT RESEARCH!AMERICA

Research!America is the nation's largest not-for-profit public education and advocacy alliance working to make research to improve health a higher national priority. Founded in 1989, Research!America is supported by more than 500 member organizations that represent the voices of 125 million Americans. For more information, see www.researchamerica.org.

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