

National public poll: Experience with GPs

FOR: AMA National

Public Report

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Conducted by:



Essential Research
Suite 10, Level 8
377 Sussex Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Survey Methodology

The survey was developed by Essential Research and the AMA. The survey was conducted online and obtained 1510 respondents.

The fieldwork and data processing was conducted by Your Source. Your Source has an online consumer panel of over 100,000 Australians. To reach the sample of the survey, approximately 6000 – 7000 participants are invited to take part in the survey. This returns a sample of at least 1000. Participants are offered incentives in the form of 'zoinks', which are collected and transferred for gift certificates.

The survey was in the field from the 27th to the 31st of January 2010.

Open-ended comments were analyzed either manually or with Leximancer software. The complete list of open answers is provided separately to the AMA for further internal analysis.

Survey Reliability

Properly constructed sample surveys can provide results that are described as statistically reliable. The level of statistical reliability is dependent upon the sample size and (except where it is extremely small) the size of the population has no practical effect.

A survey that has 1000 respondents will provide results that are – at the 95% confidence level – subject to a sampling variation of between 2% and 3% at the total response level. Sub-samples, because of their smaller size, will exhibit larger sampling variances. The following table shows the sampling variances at the 95% confidence level for a range of sample sizes and response levels.

Sample Size	Variation where the answer is near the percentage of				
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
100	6%	8%	9%	9%	10%
200	4%	5%	6%	7%	7%
300	3%	5%	5%	6%	6%
400	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%
500	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
600	2%	3%	4%	4%	4%
700	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%
800	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
900	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
1000	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Overall the confidence level was set as 95%. In this report where variation in sub-samples is statistically significant a comment has been made.

For the purposes of simplicity we have rounded percentages to the nearest whole number. This may result in some percentage totals being 99% or 101%.

Summary of Results

Access to a general practitioner

Question: *Do you have a regular GP? That is a usual family doctor you see for your health needs?*

	TOTAL
Yes	88%
No	12%

Comments:

- People aged 55 years and over were more likely than those aged 18 -24 to have a regular GP (96% v 79%).
- Females were more likely than males to have a regular GP (91% v 85%).

Patients with no regular GP

Question: *If no, please state what best describes what you do when you or someone in your family are sick?*

	TOTAL
Attend a local clinic and see any available doctor	57%
Go wherever you can to get an appointment	24%
Go to the chemist	13%
Attend the local emergency department at hospital	6%

N=177

Frequency of visits to GP

Question: *How often would you say you visit a general practitioner?*

	TOTAL
Less than once a year	7%
About once a year	16%
2 or 3 times a year	40%
Every couple of months	29%
More often	9%

Comments:

- Frequency of visits to a GP increased with age - people aged 18 – 24 were more likely to visit a GP about once a year (30%), those aged 35 – 44 were more likely to see a GP 2 or 3 times per year (44%) and those aged 55 years and over were more likely to visit a GP every couple of months (39%).
- Males were more likely to visit a GP about once a year (19%), while females were more likely to visit a GP every couple of months (32%).

Experience when visiting a GP

Satisfaction with medical care received

Question: *When you visit a GP how satisfied are you with the medical care you receive?*

	TOTAL
Total satisfied	83%
Total dissatisfied	4%
Very satisfied	39%
Satisfied	44%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13%
Dissatisfied	3%
Very dissatisfied	1%

Comments:

- Satisfaction was higher amongst those that have a regular GP than those that do not have a regular GP (44% very satisfied v 5% very satisfied).

Last visit to a doctor

Question: *Thinking back on the last time you visited a doctor, what describes what happened in that visit? (Choose all that apply)*

	TOTAL
I went about one particular health issue	62%
I raised a range of different health issues	30%
I talked to the doctor about a matter relating to a family member	8%
I discussed general issues related to stress or depression	6%
Other	6%

Important factors when receiving medical care

Question: *Rate the importance of the following to you about your usual medical practice?*

	Total important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
Getting enough time with the doctor	96%	66%	30%	2%	1%
Being able to get an appointment at a time that suits me	95%	55%	40%	4%	1%
Having a long term relationship with one doctor so they can know my medical history	94%	65%	29%	4%	1%
Having two or three doctors I like and trust	76%	26%	50%	21%	3%
Having a nurse at the practice to support the doctors	71%	26%	45%	25%	4%
Just being able to turn up without an appointment	59%	16%	43%	36%	5%
Having a female doctor available	54%	26%	28%	40%	6%

Comments:

- Females were more likely to think having a female doctor is very important (40%) as were people aged 18 – 24 (34%) and 25 – 34 (34%). 39% of those on no income and 35% of those with dependent children rated having a female doctor as very important.

Training of general practitioners

Question: *How long do you think the training is to become a GP?*

	TOTAL
Under 5 years	6%
5-7 years	61%
8-10 years	27%
10+ years	6%

Comments:

- These results suggest that the public is generally unaware of the length and specialized nature of the training required to become a GP.

Government proposal of independent nurse practitioners

Public perception of independent nurse practitioners

Question: *Below is a list of statements regarding the introduction of independent nurse practitioners. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement:*

	Total agree	Total disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The best outcome for patients is having doctors and nurses work together	82%	2%	42%	40%	15%	2%	*
Nurses should be used more in doctor's practices, but with oversight by doctors	71%	6%	21%	50%	23%	5%	1%
The Government knows it is cheaper to train nurses and this is why they believe in nurse practitioners	59%	13%	19%	40%	29%	11%	2%
Nurses are fully trained professionals and should be allowed to practice without regard to doctors	20%	49%	4%	16%	31%	36%	13%

6.6 Primary health care policy models

Question: Policy makers are currently considering a series of models. Please read the below statements and indicate your level of agreement with each:

	Total agree	Total disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The General Practitioner remains as the primary point of care for all health issues	80%	4%	42%	38%	16%	3%	1%
The Government funds more nurses to work with GPs in general practices	72%	4%	25%	47%	24%	3%	1%
The Government changes the system to allow nurses to substitute for GPs	23%	46%	4%	19%	31%	29%	17%

Public attitudes towards general practitioners

Question: Please read the following list of statements and indicate your level of agreement:

	Total agree	Total disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is important that I have a usual family doctor who I know and trust.	86%	2%	50%	36%	12%	2%	*
GPs and family doctors are the fundamental pillar of good health in our society – other health professionals have important roles but cannot replace the GP	78%	5%	33%	45%	18%	4%	1%
I get good value from the time spent with my General Practitioner.	71%	8%	30%	41%	22%	6%	2%
The reason we don't have enough doctors is because of bad government policy - it's time the government invested in training more GPs	69%	8%	31%	38%	23%	7%	1%
As our population ages we need to accept that a personal GP or family doctor is a thing of the past – we just don't have enough of them.	35%	40%	8%	27%	24%	26%	14%