

Findings at a glance: Medical doctors

Most Americans have positive overall views of medical doctors, and roughly half or more believe they can routinely count on medical doctors to do a good job, to show concern for patients' interests and to provide fair and accurate information. But about half of Americans see professional misconduct as at least a moderately big problem, and many are skeptical that doctors are usually transparent about conflicts of interest or take responsibility for mistakes, according to a new [Pew Research Center report](#).

Overall views

74% of Americans have a positive view of medical doctors.

Trust and mistrust

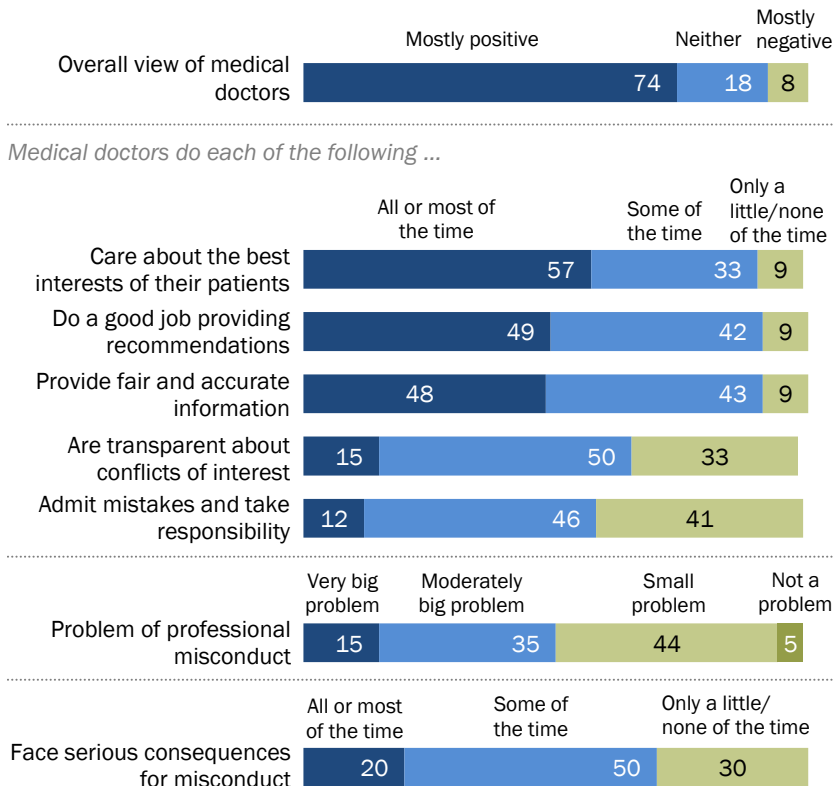
About half or more Americans say medical doctors usually care about their patients' best interests (57%), do a good job providing diagnoses and treatment recommendations (49%) or provide fair and accurate information when making recommendations (48%).

But there is more concern over issues of scientific integrity: 15% say doctors are transparent about potential conflicts of interest all or most of the time, and 12% say doctors usually admit and take responsibility for mistakes.

Half of Americans say professional misconduct among medical doctors is at least a moderately big problem. Just 20% say misconduct by doctors usually leads to serious consequences.

A majority of U.S. adults say medical doctors care about their patients' interests all or most of the time

% of U.S. adults who say the following about medical doctors



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. "Neither" means "neither positive nor negative."

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 7-21, 2019.

"Trust and Mistrust in Americans' Views of Scientific Experts"

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Other notable findings

- Adults ages 50 and older are more likely than those under age 50 to trust medical doctors. For instance, a majority of those 50 and older (56%) say doctors do a good job providing diagnoses and treatment recommendations all or most of the time, compared with 42% of those under 50. And older adults (65%) are more likely than younger adults (49%) to believe medical doctors care about their patients' best interests all or most of the time.
- Blacks (71%) and Hispanics (63%) are more likely than whites (43%) to see professional misconduct among medical doctors as at least a moderately big problem.
- [Medical doctors](#) are the most widely known of the six types of scientists on the Center's survey. A large majority of U.S. adults say they are familiar with the role of medical doctors because of news reports (69%) or a personal relationship (65%).
- People who are more familiar with medical doctors have more positive and trusting views of them. For example, among those who say they know a lot about the work of medical doctors, most (65%) say doctors care about the best interest of their patients all or most of the time, compared with 53% of those who know only a little about medical doctors.

About the survey

The nationally representative survey from Pew Research Center was conducted among U.S. adults ages 18 and older. About half of the survey respondents (N=2,238) were asked about medical doctors; these responses have a margin of sampling error of +/- 2.7 percentage points. Before answering questions about this group, respondents were given the following brief description: "**Medical doctors** provide patients with diagnoses of disease and/or treatment recommendations to promote, maintain or restore a patient's health."