

## Findings at a glance: Medical research scientists

Most Americans have positive overall views of medical research scientists, but their views are more mixed when it comes to trust in them to do a good job, show concern for the public's interest and provide fair and accurate information, according to a new [Pew Research Center report](#). There is widespread skepticism among the public when it comes to issues of scientific integrity.

### Overall views

68% of Americans have a positive view of medical research scientists.

### Trust and mistrust

About one-third or more U.S. adults say medical researchers do a good job conducting research (43%), care about the public's best interests (35%) and provide fair and accurate information (32%) all or most of the time.

But few Americans believe medical researchers are usually open about potential conflicts of interest with industry groups (15%) or take responsibility for mistakes (13%).

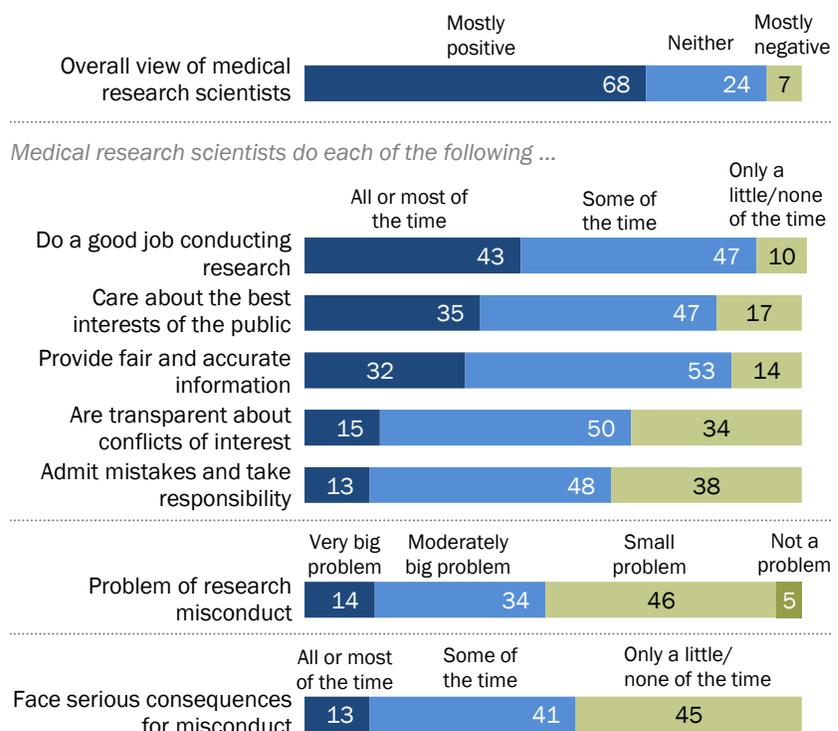
About half (48%) think research misconduct is at least a moderately big problem; only 13% believe medical researchers face serious consequences for misconduct all or most of the time.

### Other notable findings

- People who are more familiar with medical researchers and those with higher levels of factual science knowledge are more trusting of medical researchers. For example, those who report

### About four-in-ten Americans say medical researchers do a good job all or most of the time

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



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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knowing *a lot* about the work of medical researchers are more likely than those who know nothing to say medical scientists usually do a good job conducting research (61% vs. 24%).

- Adults ages 50 and older tend to have more positive and trusting views of medical researchers than do those 18 to 49. For instance, about two-thirds (65%) of adults 50 and older say that medical doctors care about the best interests of their patients all or most of the time, compared with about half (49%) of those under age 50.
- Black (59%) and Hispanic (60%) adults are more likely than whites (42%) to consider research misconduct among medical scientists to be at least a moderately big problem.
- Americans are [less likely to have trusting views](#) of medical researchers than of medical doctors. For example, 57% of Americans say doctors care about the best interests of their patients all or most of the time, compared with 35% for medical research scientists.

### 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=2,226) were asked about medical research scientists; 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 research scientists** conduct research to investigate human diseases and test methods to prevent and treat them.”