



Predictors of Support for Increased U.S. Spending on Global Health

JUNE 2009

One of the key questions explored in the Kaiser Family Foundation Survey of Americans on the U.S. Role in Global Health is the public's level of support for U.S. government spending to improve health for people in developing countries. The survey found that about two thirds of Americans say current levels of U.S. spending in this area are too low (26 percent) or about right (39 percent). In this Data Note, we take a deeper look at those who want to increase spending — the 26 percent who say the U.S. currently spends too little on global health efforts — and attempt to determine which factors are the strongest predictors of such support.

In our main report on the survey (available at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/posr05609pkg.cfm>), we noted that young people, African Americans, Latinos, and self-identified liberals and Democrats are more likely than their counterparts to support increased action from the U.S. on

global health issues. In order to dig beneath the surface and determine which factors are the strongest predictors of support for increased spending, we performed a multivariate logistic regression analysis, including various demographic factors along with experience traveling to a developing country, knowledge about foreign aid as a share of the federal budget, and level of attention paid to global health issues.

After controlling for all these factors, we found that increased attention to global health issues and more accurate knowledge about the size of foreign aid were both positively associated with support for increased U.S. spending on global health efforts. To illustrate the impact of these differences, Table 1 compares the predicted likelihood of support for increased spending on global health for those with accurate vs. inaccurate views of foreign aid spending, and for those who pay a lot vs. a little attention to global health issues, when all other factors are held constant. The "average" person with a more accurate view of the size of foreign aid spending is about twice as likely to support increased spending on global health compared to the average person with an inaccurate view of foreign aid (31 percent compared with 15 percent). Similarly, the average person who pays a lot of attention to global health issues is more than twice as likely as the average person who pays just a little attention to support spending increases (35 percent compared with 15 percent). This suggests that correcting misperceptions about foreign aid spending, as well as increasing the visibility of global health on the public's radar screen, could be potentially successful strategies to gain broader support for U.S. global health efforts.

We also found that various demographic factors were positively associated with support for increased spending on global health, including being male, being

Factors entered into the model:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Education
- Income
- Political party identification
- Political ideology
- Experience traveling to a developing country
- How much attention paid to global health issues
- Correct/incorrect answer to questions about size of foreign aid relative to the federal budget

younger, and identifying as a Democrat or independent. Table 2 shows the predicted likelihood of support for increased spending based on these demographics, when all other factors are held constant. Interestingly, experience traveling to a developing country and one's level of education were *not* significant factors.

TABLE 2.**Predicted likelihood of support for increased U.S. spending on global health by demographic characteristics, after controlling for other factors**

Characteristic	Predicted likelihood of support
Male	27%
Female	19%
Age 25	32%
Age 45	23%
Age 65	16%
Democrat	29%
Independent	25%
Republican	11%

TABLE 1.**Predicted likelihood of support for increased U.S. spending on global health by foreign aid knowledge and attention to global health issues, after controlling for other factors**

Characteristic	Predicted likelihood of support
Correct answer about foreign aid and federal budget	31%
Incorrect answer about foreign aid and federal budget	15%
Pay a lot of attention to global health issues	35%
Pay a little attention to global health issues	15%

This publication (#7921) is available on the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org.