

## National Physician Survey

### For the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation

N = 600 physicians nationwide (n = 360 PCPs; n = 240 specialists)

Margin of error: ± 4.0 percentage points

February 12 through March 21, 2014

*March 25, 2014*

### Introduction

This survey is sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation. The purpose is to hear physicians' views about aspects of the health care system. Your responses to these questions are completely confidential. Thank you for your participation.

### Attitudes toward the Problem

	Total (n=600)	PCP (n=360)	Specialist (n=240)
1. Are you actively involved in the practice of medicine, including seeing patients?			
Yes.....	100	100	100
No TERMINATE .....	-	-	-
DK/REF TERMINATE.....	-	-	-
2. Think about the average physician in the health care system today. How often do you think he or she prescribes a test or procedure that is not necessary?			
Everyday .....	33	33	32
Several times a week.....	24	29	21
About once a week .....	15	12	16
A couple of times a month.....	10	9	11
Less often than once a month.....	15	14	16
DK .....	3	3	3
REF .....	0	0	-

	Total	PCP	Specialist
3. Do you think the frequency of unnecessary tests and procedures in the health care system is a...			
Very serious problem .....	29	30	28
A somewhat serious problem.....	44	46	43
Not too serious problem.....	21	18	22
Not a problem at all .....	5	5	5
DK .....	1	1	2
REF .....	-	-	-

**Responsibility, Barriers, and Solutions**

4. Who do you think is in the best position to help address the problem of unnecessary tests and procedures? IF DK/REF ASK: How about...

Physicians .....	58	56	59
Patients.....	3	4	2
Insurance companies.....	3	4	2
Medicare .....	0	-	1
The government.....	15	13	16
Trial lawyers.....	7	8	6
Hospitals.....	1	1	1
Pharmaceutical/drug companies..	0	1	-
Device manufacturers.....	-	-	-
Other (_____).....	9	10	9
DK .....	3	2	3
REF .....	0	0	0

	Total	PCP	Specialist
5. How much responsibility do you feel you have for making sure your patients avoid unnecessary tests and procedures? READ			

A great deal of responsibility .....	66	69	64
Some responsibility .....	27	28	27
Not much responsibility .....	5	2	6
No responsibility .....	2	1	2
DK .....	1	0	1
REF .....	-	-	-

6. Let's say a patient came to you convinced he or she needed a specific test. You knew the test was unnecessary, but the patient was quite insistent. Would you:

Order the test.....	5	6	5
Order the test, but give reasons why you advise against it .....	48	48	48
Refuse to order the test .....	40	39	40
DK .....	6	6	6
REF .....	1	1	1

Here are a few reasons physicians sometimes end up ordering an unnecessary test or procedure. In your own practice, is \_\_\_\_\_ a reason you sometimes end up ordering an unnecessary test or procedure? IF YES: Is this a major reason or minor reason?

		<b>Major reason</b>	<b>Minor reason</b>	<b>Not a reason</b>
7. Not having enough time with a patient for meaningful discussion	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>62</b>
	PCP	19	26	55
	Specialist	9	22	67
8. Concern about malpractice issues	<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>
	PCP	53	28	19
	Specialist	51	25	23
9. Wanting to keep your patients happy	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>
	PCP	25	48	27
	Specialist	22	34	43
10. Patients insisting on getting the test or procedure	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>28</b>
	PCP	34	42	23
	Specialist	23	42	32
11. Having new technology in your practice	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>74</b>
	PCP	5	21	73
	Specialist	5	19	74
12. Feeling patients should be able to make the final decision	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>52</b>
	PCP	19	36	44
	Specialist	9	33	57
13. The fee-for-service system of payment	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>81</b>
	PCP	7	14	78
	Specialist	4	11	83
14. Wanting more information to reassure yourself	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>29</b>
	PCP	32	43	23
	Specialist	29	36	32
15. Just to be safe	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>24</b>
	PCP	35	47	18
	Specialist	38	31	29

## Experience and Behavior

Total                  PCP                  Specialist

16. In your own practice, how often do patients ask for a test or procedure that you think is unnecessary?

Everyday.....	10	12	10
Several times a week.....	20	28	14
About once a week .....	17	21	14
A couple of times a month.....	24	23	25
Less often than once a month.....	29	17	37
DK .....	0	-	1
REF .....	-	-	-

17. When patients ask for a test or procedure you feel is unnecessary, how often do you talk to them about why they should not have the test or procedure?

Always or almost always.....	87	88	86
Often .....	8	7	8
About half the time .....	2	4	1
Not too often .....	1	0	1
Rarely or never .....	2	1	3
DK .....	0	-	0
REF .....	0	-	1

18. Over the last few years, has it gotten [ROTATE: easier or harder] to talk to patients about why they should avoid a test or procedure?

Easier.....	29	32	27
Harder .....	41	45	39
No difference (VOLUNTEERED)...	28	23	32
DK .....	1	-	2
REF .....	0	-	1

	Total	PCP	Specialist
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19. Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable talking to patients about why they should avoid an unnecessary test or procedure? Do you feel very or somewhat comfortable/uncomfortable?

Very comfortable.....	81	76	84
Somewhat comfortable .....	15	20	12
Somewhat uncomfortable .....	2	3	3
Very uncomfortable.....	1	1	2
DK .....	1	0	1
REF .....	0	0	1

20. When you talk to patients about unnecessary tests or procedures, how often do they follow your advice and avoid the test or procedure? READ

Always or almost always.....	37	34	39
Often .....	33	41	28
About half the time .....	21	17	24
Not too often .....	2	3	1
Rarely or never .....	4	4	3
DK .....	3	0	4
REF .....	0	-	1

Switching gears, I'd like your view on how effective some things would be at reducing the number of unnecessary tests and procedures in the health care system. How effective would \_\_\_\_\_ be in reducing unnecessary tests and procedures?

		<b>Very effective</b>	<b>Smwt effective</b>	<b>Not too effective</b>	<b>Not at all effective</b>
21. Having specific, evidence-based recommendations in a format designed for patients that physicians can use to discuss why some care may be unnecessary	<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
	PCP	47	41	7	5
	Specialist	44	39	12	4
22. Having more time with patients to discuss alternatives to a test or procedure	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>
	PCP	43	40	12	5
	Specialist	43	32	18	6
23. Changing the system of financial rewards some physicians receive for ordering tests and procedures	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>
	PCP	25	38	20	13
	Specialist	30	29	17	15
24. Malpractice reform	<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
	PCP	65	25	7	2
	Specialist	66	26	5	2

	Total	PCP	Specialist
25. In the past 12 months, have you read or heard about evidence that addresses when to order and when <u>not</u> to order a test or procedure?			
Yes.....	75	80	71
No .....	24	20	28
DK .....	0	0	0
REF .....	0	-	1
26. In the past 12 months, have you reduced the number of times you recommended a test or procedure because you learned it was unnecessary, or has this not happened?			
Yes, have reduced.....	48	55	44
No, has not happened .....	50	45	53
DK .....	1	1	2
REF .....	0	-	1
27. Think about the <u>next</u> 12 months. Do you think you will be talking to patients more often, less often, or about the same amount about avoiding unnecessary tests and procedures?			
More often .....	21	25	18
Less often .....	3	3	3
About the same amount .....	75	71	77
DK/ I'm not sure .....	1	1	1
REF .....	0	-	1
28. Are you interested or uninterested in learning more about evidenced-based recommendations that address when certain tests and procedures may be <u>unnecessary</u> ? Would you say you are very or somewhat interested/uninterested?			
Very interested .....	61	64	59
Somewhat interested .....	23	23	23
Somewhat uninterested .....	8	6	9
Very uninterested.....	8	5	9
DK .....	0	1	-
REF .....	0	-	1



	Total	PCP	Specialist
29. How often do you talk with your patients about the <u>costs</u> of tests and procedures?			
Always or almost always.....	20	22	19
Often .....	21	23	20
About half the time .....	13	13	13
Not too often .....	25	26	24
Rarely or never .....	19	15	22
DK .....	0	-	1
REF .....	0	-	1

### Exposure to Choosing Wisely

30. Have you heard of the *Choosing Wisely* campaign or not?

Yes, have heard.....	21	25	18
No, have not heard .....	78	73	80
I'm not sure .....	1	1	2

31. As you may know, the *Choosing Wisely* campaign is an initiative of the ABIM Foundation to help physicians and patients talk about unnecessary tests and procedures, and make smart and effective choices. The *Choosing Wisely* campaign has worked with medical specialty societies to create lists of evidence-based recommendations addressing when certain "routine" tests and procedures should be subject to further discussion. For example, the American Academy of Family Physicians recommended against prescribing antibiotics for acute mild-to-moderate sinusitis unless symptoms last for seven or more days. Is the *Choosing Wisely* campaign something you have seen or heard about?

Yes.....	38	45	33
No .....	60	53	65
DK/I'm not sure .....	2	2	2
REF .....	0	-	1

	Total	PCP	Specialist
32. Have you seen any of the <i>Choosing Wisely</i> materials about evidence-based recommendations, or have you not seen any of these materials?			

Yes, have seen.....	23	27	20
No, have not seen.....	74	69	78
I'm not sure.....	3	5	1
REF.....	0	-	1

33. IF YES IN Q32: Have these materials been helpful or not helpful for you?  
*Base n= 135, PCP n=86, Specialist n=49*

Helpful.....	80	84	76
Not helpful.....	19	14	24
DK.....	1	1	-
REF.....	-	-	-

34. IF YES IN Q32: Have these materials been helpful or not helpful for your patients? *Base n= 135, PCP n=86, Specialist n=49*

Helpful.....	47	61	35
Not helpful.....	33	25	40
DK.....	19	15	23
REF.....	1	-	1

35. IF YES IN Q32: Do you feel the *Choosing Wisely* campaign is valuable or not valuable in helping physicians talk to patients about unnecessary tests and procedures? IF VALUABLE: Would you say it is very or somewhat valuable? IF NOT VALUABLE: Would you say it is not too or not at all valuable? *Base n= 135, PCP n=86, Specialist n=49*

Very valuable.....	45	51	40
Somewhat valuable.....	45	40	49
Not too valuable.....	5	3	7
Not at all valuable.....	4	3	4
DK.....	1	3	-
REF.....	-	-	-

Finally, some demographic questions just for statistical purposes.

	Total	PCP	Specialist
36. How many years have you been practicing medicine? OPEN END RESPONSE			
Less than 10 years .....	5	5	5
10-20 years.....	22	27	18
20-30 years.....	33	31	35
More than 30 years .....	40	36	42
DK/REF.....	0	1	-

37. Which of the following best describes your medical practice?

Mostly office or clinic based.....	58	77	46
Mostly hospital based .....	21	10	28
Equally hospital and office/clinic based .....	19	12	24
Mostly long-term care facility based .....	1	0	2
Mostly hospice based .....	0	-	0
DK/REF .....	0	0	0

38. IF MOSTLY OFFICE/CLINIC IN Q37: How would you describe your office or clinic? *Base n= 396, PCP n=278, Specialist n=118*

Solo practice .....	34	29	40
Single-specialty partnership or group.....	37	36	38
Multi-specialty partnership.....	27	33	21
Not office-based .....	1	1	1
DK/REF.....	0	1	-

	Total	PCP	Specialist
39. What is your primary medical specialty?			
Internal medicine.....	19	40	4
Family practice .....	17	40	2
Pediatrics.....	8	20	1
OBGYN .....	7	-	12
General practice.....	1	-	1
Other (SPECIFY) .....	48	-	80
DK/REF.....	0	-	0

40. On average, how many patients do you see in a typical week? Your best estimate is fine. OPEN END RESPONSE

Less than 100 .....	65	63	67
100 or more.....	33	34	32
DK .....	1	1	0
REF .....	1	1	1

41. Just to make sure we have a representative sample, what is your age?

Under 49 .....	24	29	21
50 to 59 .....	40	37	42
60+ .....	34	32	36
DK/REF.....	1	2	1

42. Are you from a Hispanic, Latino or Spanish-speaking background?

Yes.....	4	6	3
No .....	95	93	97
DK/REF.....	1	1	0

	Total	PCP	Specialist
43. What do you consider your race?			
White .....	76	72	79
Black/African-American .....	7	4	9
Latino/Hispanic .....	3	4	2
Asian American .....	9	13	5
Arab American .....	1	1	1
Other (SPECIFY) .....	3	3	3
DK/REF .....	2	4	1
Gender			
Male .....	67	61	71
Female.....	33	39	29
Region			
Northeast .....	22	23	22
Midwest.....	21	21	21
South .....	35	35	35
West .....	22	22	22