

Methodology Statement: Discussion Board

The Pew Charitable Trusts funded NORC and Sunseed Research LLC to conduct an online discussion board study of the general public's opinion about in vitro testing and regulatory oversight of said testing. Study participants were recruited from NORC's nationally representative, general population probability sample of over 40,000 households, the AmeriSpeak Panel.^{1,2} The first stage of recruiting included fielding a consent survey to 465 AmeriSpeak panelists. This survey gained consent from the participants to be contacted for the study and collected demographic data and contact information from the 365 panelists who agreed to participate. Of the 365 consented panelists, 105 were from New Jersey (NJ), 100 were from Washington state (WA), and 160 were from other states (general population). NJ and WA were of particular interest to the funders because of engagement with public officials in those states. From these 365 panelists, a nonprobability sample of 20 respondents from NJ or WA and 20 respondents from all other states (general population) were selected for the study by prioritizing and balancing participants on demographics such as race, age, and gender. These 40 respondents were sent links to the online itracksBoard platform and invited to log in for four sessions across two days, Sept. 14 and 15, 2021. NJ and WA residents participated in one discussion board, while general population residents participated in a separate discussion board with the same questions/prompts. Questions for each session were posted at midnight and noon, and participants could answer the questions at their convenience. The online discussion board was left open for an additional day, Sept. 16, to allow for any late responses. In total, 19 participants completed the general population study, and 18 participants (11 NJ, seven WA) completed the NJ/WA study. Participants received \$125 for participation in the study.

During the online discussion boards, participants were asked about a variety of topics, including healthy behaviors, confidence in and risks associated with in vitro testing, federal regulation and oversight of in vitro testing, and proposed legislation regarding in vitro testing. Question types included both multiple choice and open-ended. As participants may not have been familiar with all of the topics, researchers were sure to define and explain key terms and concepts within the discussion board questions. Researchers observed the online discussion boards in real time and probed for more information if an answer was vague. Next, researchers analyzed transcripts of the discussion boards to identify themes and pull specific quotes demonstrating those themes. No formal coding scheme was used, and themes were conceptualized based on the answers of the participants. Where there were "countable" responses (e.g., questions related to whether a specific activity is healthy or not), counts were included and woven into the themes identified.

¹ NORC at the University of Chicago, "Technical Overview of the AmeriSpeak® Panel: NORC'S Probability-Based Household Panel" (2021), <https://amerispeak.norc.org/content/dam/amerispeak/research/pdf/AmeriSpeak%20Technical%20Overview%202019%2002%2018.pdf>.

² Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, AmeriSpeak® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the US household population. Randomly selected US households are sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame. These sampled households are then contacted by US mail, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. While most AmeriSpeak households participate in surveys by web, non-internet households can participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by telephone. Households without conventional internet access but having web access via smartphones are allowed to participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by web. AmeriSpeak panelists participate in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, academic researchers, and media and commercial organizations. For more information, email AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org or visit AmeriSpeak.norc.org.

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