

Survey Research Report
Consumer Reports National Research Center



Medical Implant Poll
Source: 2012 Nationally-Representative Phone Survey



Introduction

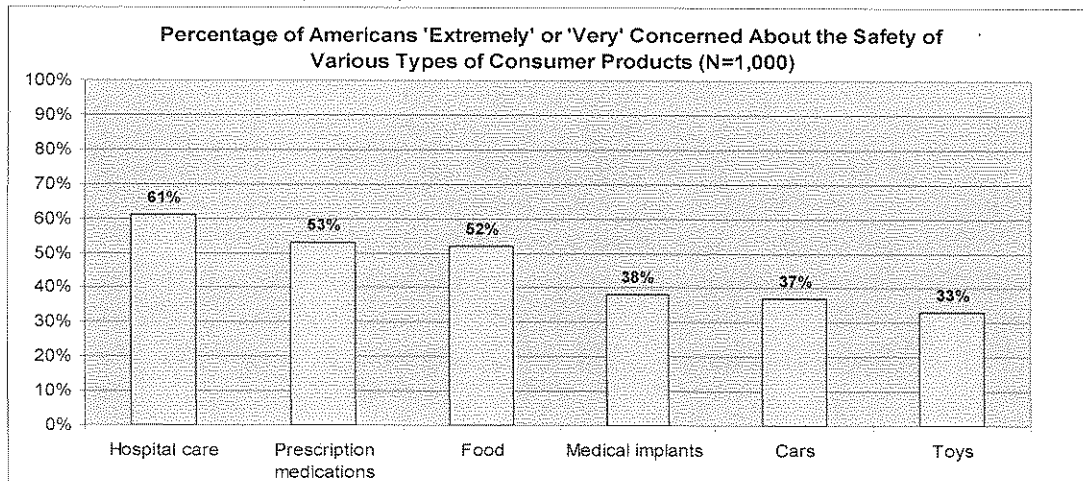
In February 2012, the Consumer Reports National Research Center conducted a nationally representative telephone survey about medical implants such as artificial joints and heart stents. The poll included 1,000 U.S. residents (18 and older) and was fielded by vendor *ORC International*. Respondents were asked their opinions about the safety, level of concern and consumer protections related to medical implants.

How many Americans are affected by medical implants?

Seventeen percent of Americans reported that they themselves have some type of medical implant. Over half of respondents had either an implant themselves or a close friend or family member with an implant. Three percent of Americans had a heart-related implant and 27% had a close friend or family member with a heart-related implant. Older respondents (55 and older) were more likely to have a medical implant or have a close friend or family member with one. This finding is expected as older respondents have had more time to experience and become familiar with any type of health problem, including medical implants (a cohort effect). While there weren't any consistent differences in opinion based on these types of personal experiences with implants, there were some major differences between younger and older respondents that are reported below.

Level of concern about the safety of medical implants

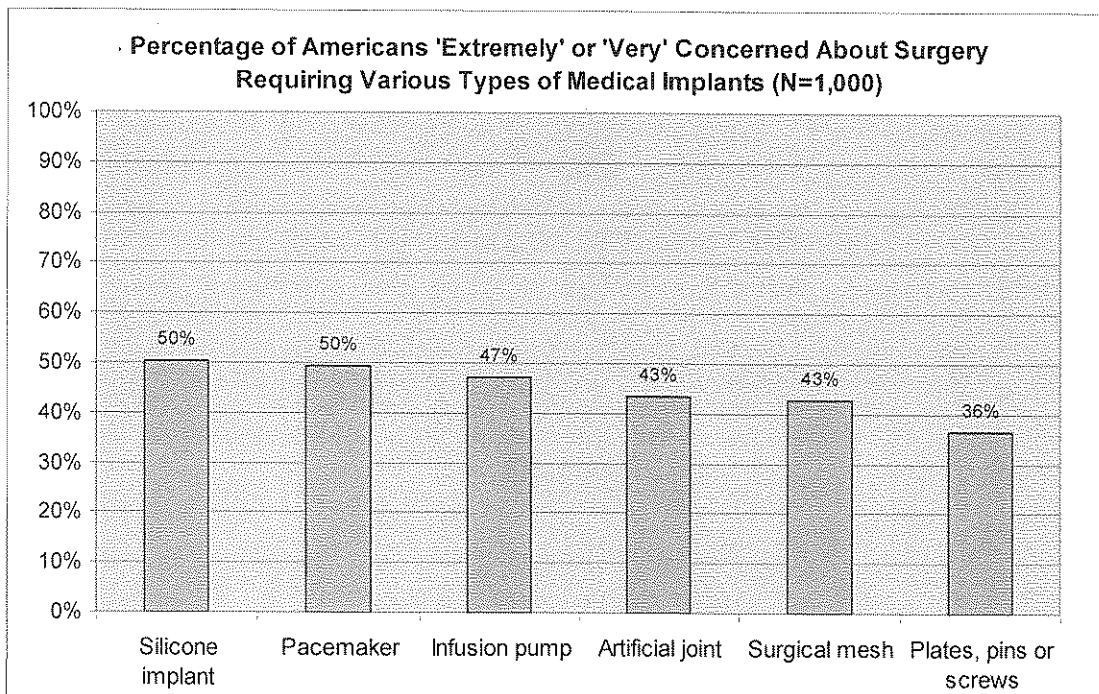
Respondents were asked how concerned (extremely, very, somewhat, not too, or not at all concerned) they were about the safety of various consumer products. Most of the nationally representative sample reported some level of concern about the safety of medical implants (38% 'extremely' or 'very' concerned), roughly on par with their safety concerns for other products such as toys and cars. However, Americans were not as concerned about the safety of medical implants as they were about other health treatments such as prescription medications and hospital care. Women were more likely than men to be 'highly' concerned about the safety of all products we asked about. Older respondents (55 and older) were more likely to be 'highly' concerned about the safety of medical implants and prescription medications.





Level of concern about specific types of medical implants

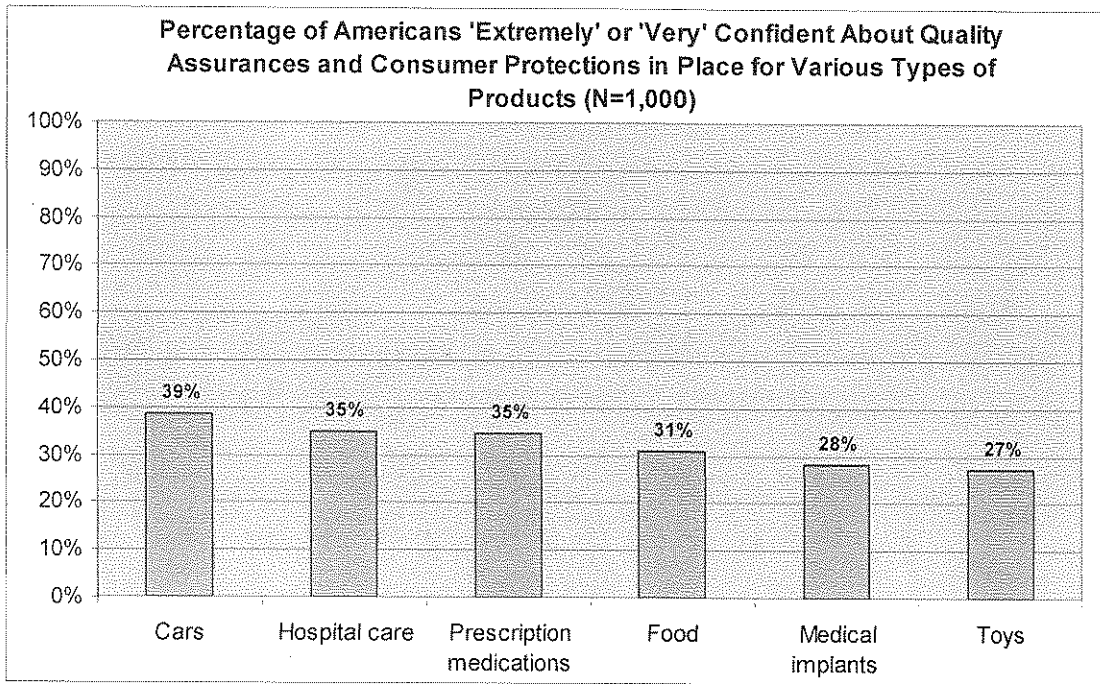
Respondents were asked how concerned (extremely, very, somewhat, not too, or not at all concerned) they would be if they or someone close to them had to have surgery utilizing various medical implants. Americans were least concerned with surgeries involving plates, pins or screws, and were more concerned with surgeries involving a silicone implant or pacemaker than those utilizing artificial joints, or surgical mesh. Women were more likely to be 'highly' concerned about all types of implants, with the exception of pacemakers for which there was no difference. Older respondents (55 and older) and those who either had an implant themselves or knew someone with an implant were less likely to be 'highly' concerned about surgery involving a pacemaker.





Confidence in consumer protections

Respondents were asked how (extremely, very, somewhat, not too, or not at all confident) confident they were in consumer protections and quality assurances in place to prevent serious safety problems with various products. Americans were more likely to be 'highly' ('very' or 'extremely') confident about the consumer protections in place to help assure the quality of cars, hospital care, and prescription medications than those in place for medical implants. Levels of confidence did not differ by gender or age.





Proposed consumer protections

Respondents were asked if they agreed that specific measures should be taken to provide consumer protection with regard to medical implants. Overall, Americans overwhelmingly (90% or more) agreed that consumer protections should include a national system for tracking medical implants so patients can be notified about safety problems or recalls (95%), require medical device makers to do long-term monitoring of implants if there are safety concerns or problems (94%), require patients to receive in writing the specifications of medical implants used during their operation (93%), and require each implant to be safety tested before being sold even when similar implants are currently in use (91%). Opinions were mixed about whether specific types of medical implants should be immediately recalled as soon as one report of a breakage or failure is received, women were more likely than men to support immediate recalls (66% vs. 53%). More than 70% of respondents believed they should NOT allow a new medical implant to be sold based on its similarity to an existing implant, even when that implant has a safety problem or has been recalled.

Percentage of Americans agreeing or disagreeing that the specific consumer protections should exist (N=1,000)		
Proposed Consumer Protections	Yes	No/Unsure
Include a national system for tracking medical implants so patients can be notified about safety problems or recalls	95	5
Require medical device makers to do long-term monitoring of implants if there are safety concerns or problems	94	6
Require patients to receive in writing the specifications of medical implants used during their operation	93	7
Require each implant to be safety tested before being sold even when similar implants are currently in use	91	9
Immediately recall all implants of a specific type as soon as one report of breakage or failure is received	59	41
Allow a new medical implant to be sold based on its similarity to an existing implant even when that existing implant has a safety problem or has been recalled	27	73



Opinions about preventing safety problems with medical implants

Respondents were asked if consumer protections should limit safety testing in order to prevent delays and encourage innovation or if it is more important to prevent safety problems. Overall, respondents supported preventing safety problems (82%) over preventing delays (15%), and 3% were undecided. Men were more likely than women to support preventing delays (19% vs. 11%), while women were more likely to support preventing safety problems (87% vs. 76%). Older respondents (55 and older) were more likely than younger respondents (below 55) to support preventing delays (19% vs. 12%), while younger respondents were more likely to support preventing safety problems (84% vs. 77%).

Conflicts of interest and safety decisions

Respondents were asked how concerned they would be about the safety decisions or recommendations made by expert committees that included doctors who had CURRENT financial relationships with medical device makers. Overall, 92% expressed some level of concern ('somewhat', 'very' or 'extremely' concerned), and 66% were 'highly' concerned ('very' or 'extremely' concerned). Older respondents were more likely to be 'highly' concerned about financial conflicts of interest than younger respondents (73% vs. 62%). These rates of concern are high relative to other concerns asked about, however, they are not unexpected. A 2010 Consumer Reports survey on doctors' conflicts of interest found Americans were concerned that doctors' recommendations might be influenced by payments received for promoting specific drugs to other doctors. (<http://propublica.s3.amazonaws.com/assets/docs/ConsumerReportsDoctorSurveyOct2010.pdf>)

Methodology

This phone survey was fielded by ORC International from February 9, 2012 to February 12, 2012.

The most advanced probability sampling techniques are employed in the selection of households for telephone interviewing. ORC utilizes an unrestricted random sampling procedure that controls the amount of serial bias found in systematic sampling to generate its random-digit-dial sample. The sample is fully replicated and stratified by region. Only one interview is conducted per household. Analyses were conducted with the sample weighted to reflect national demographics. A total of 1,000 surveys were completed by adult homeowners aged 18 or older.

The margin of error is +/- 3.0 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

Medical Devices 2012: Survey tabulations

b1
I am going to read you a number of items that may be relevant to consumers. In general, how concerned are you with the safety of each of the following? (Items Randomized)

	Cars	Toys	Prescription medications	Food	Hospital care	Medical implants such as artificial joints and heart stents
1	Extremely concerned	14	20	20	25	14
2	Very concerned	24	33	32	37	24
3	Somewhat concerned	30	27	29	24	30
4	Not too concerned	19	17	11	8	18
5	Not at all concerned	14	7	8	6	13
99	Don't Know/Unsure	0	0	0	0	2
	Base: All	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

b2a
When it comes to preventing serious safety problems with each of the following, how confident are you that current quality assurances and consumer protections keep consumers safer? (Items Randomized)

	Cars	Toys	Prescription medications	Food	Hospital care	Medical implants such as artificial joints and heart stents
1	Extremely confident	9	7	9	8	7
2	Very confident	30	21	26	26	22
3	Somewhat confident	48	52	44	48	49
4	Not too confident	9	11	14	12	12
5	Not at all confident	3	8	7	5	8
99	Don't Know/Unsure	1	2	1	0	3
	Base: All	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

b3a
Considering the overall safety of medical implants today --- how often problems occur and how serious any resulting problems might be --- how concerned would you be if a doctor indicated your surgery or the surgery of a family member would require each of the following?

	Surgical mesh	Infusion pump	Plates, pins or screws	Silicone implant	Artificial joint	Pacemaker
1	Extremely concerned	18	19	14	17	21
2	Very concerned	24	28	23	26	29
3	Somewhat concerned	33	28	30	30	26
4	Not too concerned	14	15	19	15	14
5	Not at all concerned	9	8	14	11	10
99	Don't Know/Unsure	1	1	1	0	0
	Base: All	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

b4

Some people say that EFFECTIVE consumer protections for medical implants should limit safety testing in order to prevent delays and encourage innovation; others say it is more important to prevent safety problems. Which comes closer to your point of view? (List Not Read)		%
1	Limit safety testing	15
2	Prevent safety problems	82
99	Don't Know/Unsure	4
Base: All		1000

b5

I will read out a set of statements which you may or may not think are needed to protect consumers. Would you say in order to be EFFECTIVE, consumer protections for medical implants should do each of the following?		Include a national tracking system for implants so patients can be notified about safety problems or recalls	Require medical device makers to do long-term monitoring of implants if there are safety concerns or problems	Require patients to receive in writing the specifications of medical implants used during their operation	Require each implant to be safety tested before being sold even when similar implants are currently in use	Immediately recall all implants of a specific type as soon as one report of breakage or failure is received	Allow a new medical implant to be sold based on its similarity to an existing implant even when that existing implant has a safety problem or has been recalled
1	Yes, they definitely should	%	%	%	%	%	%
2	Yes, they probably should	72	72	72	68	36	17
3	No, they probably should not	23	22	21	23	23	10
4	No, they definitely should not	2	3	4	6	28	24
99	Don't Know/Unsure	2	3	3	2	11	47
Base: All		1	1	0	1	1	1
		1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

b6

In general, how concerned would you be about the safety decisions or recommendations made by expert committees that included doctors who had CURRENT financial relationships with medical device makers? Would you say ...		%
1	Extremely concerned	36
2	Very concerned	30
3	Somewhat concerned	26
4	Not too concerned	6
5	Or, not at all concerned	2
99	Don't Know/Unsure	0
Base: All		1000

b7		Would you say that, in general, your physical health is . . .	%
1	Excellent	16	
2	Very good	38	
3	Good	26	
4	Fair	14	
5	Or, poor	6	
99	Don't know/Unsure	0	
	Base: All	1000	

b8		Do you or does a family member or close personal friend have a medical implant? Would you say . . .	%
1	Yes, you do	17	
2	Yes, a family member or close personal friend does	47	
3	Or, no one does	45	
99	Don't know	1	
	Base: All	1000	

b9a		Do you have a stent, valve, pacemaker or some other implant related to the heart?	%
1	Yes	19	
2	No	81	
	Base: Have an implant	171	
	% Yes of total	3	
	Base:	1000	

b9b

	Does a family member or close personal friend have a stent, valve, pacemaker or some other implant related to the heart?	%
1	Yes	57
2	No	41
99	Don't know	2
	Base: Family/friend has implant	471

	% Yes of total	27
Base		1000

sex	Sex	%
1	Male	49
2	Female	51
	Base: All	1000

Age	Age	%
	18 to 29	19
	30 to 44	27
	45 to 54	20
	55 to 64	17
	65+	18
	Base: All	984