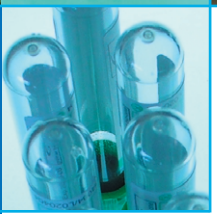
# Health & Medical Research Public Opinion Poll 2004









Research Australia

An alliance for discoveries in health





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## IMAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## TNS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Research Australia thanks TNS for conducting this public opinion poll and for supporting our activities.

TNS is a leading global provider of social and political polling. With a network spanning 70 countries, TNS use local expertise and knowledge combined with internationally consistent information to provide a range of market information services to a broad range of organisations.

Further information can be found on www.tns-global.com

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# Foreword

Understanding and reflecting the Australian community's views and opinions about health research is a core activity of Research Australia. This report presents the findings of the third annual Health and Medical Research Public Opinion Poll, conducted for Research Australia in August 2004 by TNS, a leading global provider of social and political polling.

Some questions have been repeated in each annual poll to assess trends in the public's views and perceptions of health and medical research. However this year some more probing enquiry was included in key areas such as people's attitudes to donating to health and medical research and their preparedness to participate in clinical trials. A new feature in this year's poll is the inclusion of some questions to provide an idea of the community's level of knowledge about Australia's health and medical research achievements and global position.

Highlights of this year's Poll included diverse insights into the importance of health and medical research in people's lives, the high priority that they place on government policy and investment and their own preparedness to donate. The community's knowledge of Australian health research discoveries and inventions was mixed. It is clear that many major achievements, which should be a source of great national pride are, in fact, not well known.

Research Australia is encouraged by the sustained interest of the Australian community in health and medical research and their understanding and appreciation of the difference that research is making in their lives. The public are clearly seeking growth and increased investment in health and medical research and many contribute themselves. Health and medical research investment is an important factor in Australian's views of government. Translation into improved products and services that will improve our nation's health and economic gains through new business in the emerging biotech sector is critical and many Australians indicated their support of tax policy that would encourage further industry investment.

The finding of this year's Poll should encourage the efforts of researchers, industry, the community and government to continue the growth of research endeavour in Australia. As we continue to build health and medical research as a higher national priority there is no doubt that the Australian people are strongly backing this vital work.

**Professor John Niland AC**
Chairman

**Dr Christine Bennett**
Chief Executive Officer

# Executive summary

Research Australia's third annual Health and Medical Research Public Opinion Poll (2004) again demonstrates strong community support for health and medical research. Australians have a high level of interest in health and medical research, the vast majority (72%) recognising that it has made a difference to their life.

The Poll also canvasses the public's involvement in giving to health and medical research. 61% of the community make donations to support health and medical research, primarily to disease specific charities. Importantly, the main reason people do not make donations to health research is that 74% think it is a government responsibility.

Public backing for government policy supporting health research is also strong. 49% of people said a commitment to increase health and medical research funding would influence their vote in an election positively while only 5% said their vote would be influenced negatively. When asked about preferences for distribution of surplus government funds, 47% would prefer increased funding for health and medical research, while 22% would prefer a tax cut. The public also believes the Federal Government should support health and medical research through higher tax incentives for companies investing in research and development.

Valuable insights into the community's attitudes toward participation in clinical trials have been gained from this year's Poll. 59% of people agreed they would be willing to be involved, 20% would not agree to participate and 21% were uncertain. For those uncertain or not willing to be involved, more information and explanation of treatment options are key reasons.

Some knowledge-based questions reveal that the Australian public could be better informed about Australian health and medical research. The majority of people (54%) did not recognise named Australian Nobel Prize winners. While 60% knew the bionic ear was developed in Australia and 55% knew that Australian research had led to knowledge that sleeping babies on their backs helps prevent SIDS, other significant Australian achievements were not well known.

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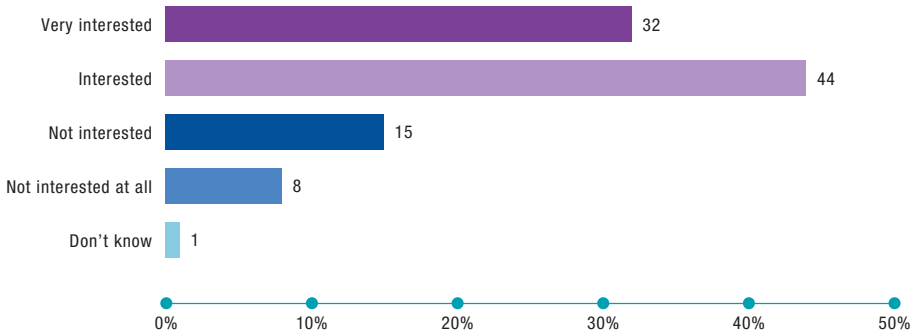


# Australian community support

## INTEREST IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

**Question: How interested are you in health and medical research?**

- The majority of people (76%) are interested in health and medical research and one third are very interested.



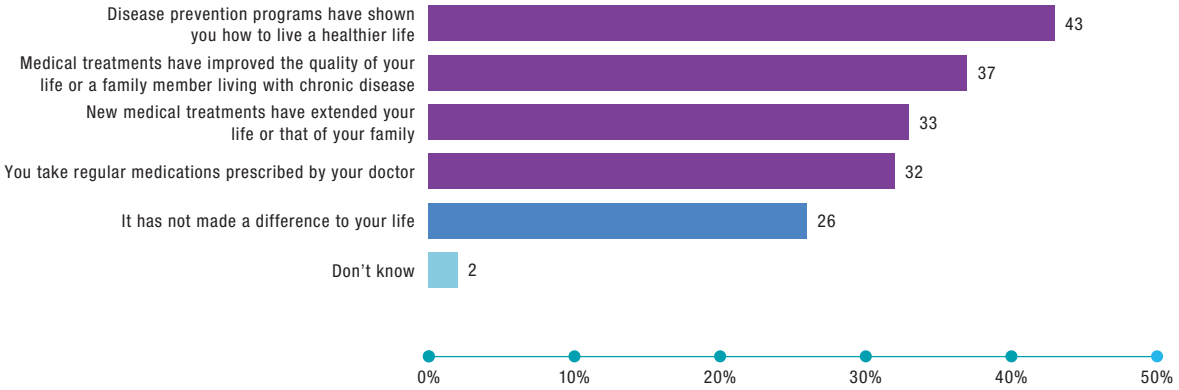

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# Australian community support

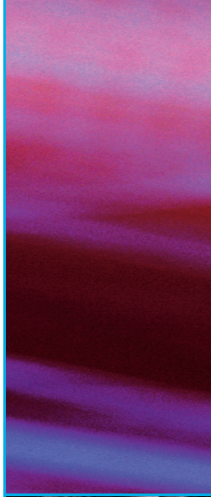
## HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**Question: How has health and medical research made a difference to your life? (can choose more than one)**

- 72% of people believe that health and medical research has made a difference to their life.
- Disease prevention programs showing how to live a healthier life was the leading response (43%).
- 37% of people said that medical treatments have improved the quality of their life or that of a family member living with a chronic disease.
- One third of respondents believe that new medical treatments have extended their life or that of their family.
- Similarly, approximately one third said they benefited from health and medical research because they take regular medications prescribed by their doctor.




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# Australian community support

## PRIORITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL GIVING

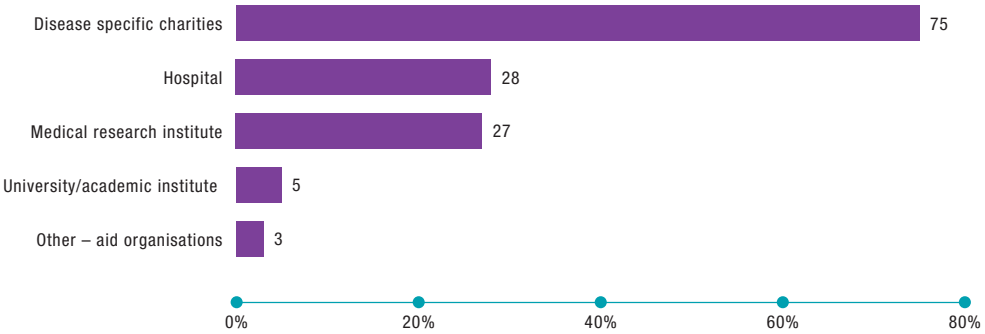
**Question: Do you make any donations to support health and medical research?**

- 61% of people said they make donations to support health and medical research.

## YES... organisations people donate to for health and medical research

**Question: Of the following types of organisations, which do you donate to for research? (can choose more than one)**

- Of the 61% who make donations to support health and medical research, the most common recipient is disease specific charities (75%).



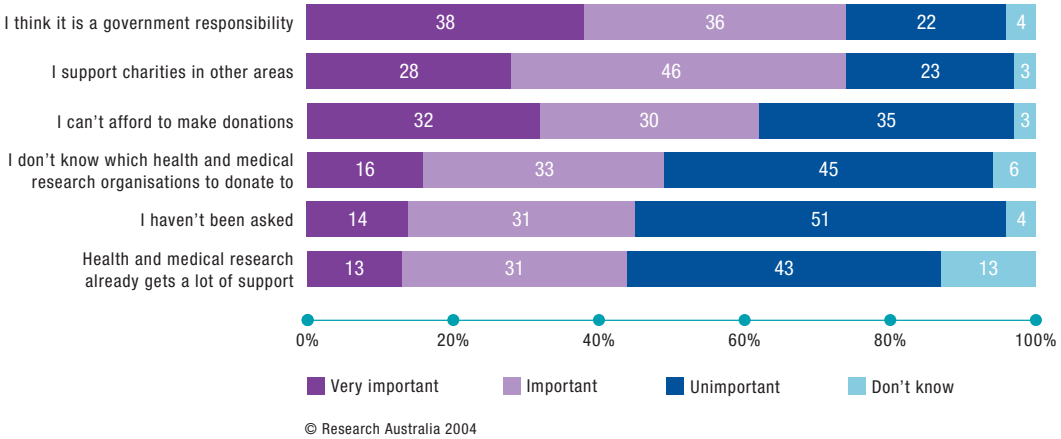

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# Australian community support

## NO... reasons why people have not donated to health and medical research

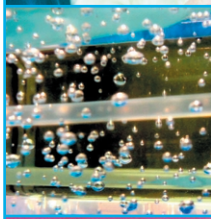
**Question: How important are each of the following reasons why you may not have donated to health and medical research?**

- Of the 39% who do not donate to health and medical research, the most common reasons not to donate were that they think it is a government responsibility or support charities in other areas. 74% of people identified each of these reasons.




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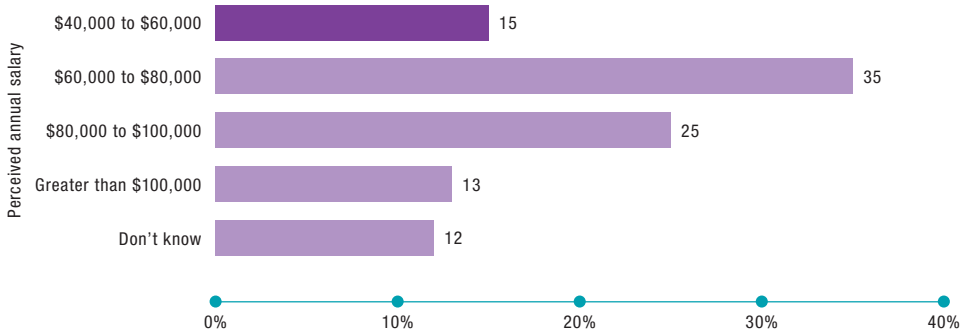


# Australian community support

## REMUNERATION TO HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCHERS

**Question: An average health and medical research scientist aged 28 to 30 years will have had 8 years of university training including a PhD. What do you think their annual salary range should be?**

- The majority of people (73%) thought the salary of the average health and medical researcher aged 28-30 after completion of their PhD would be over $60,000.
- 15% of people thought the salary would be less than $60,000.
- The actual salary is $50,000 to $55,000.



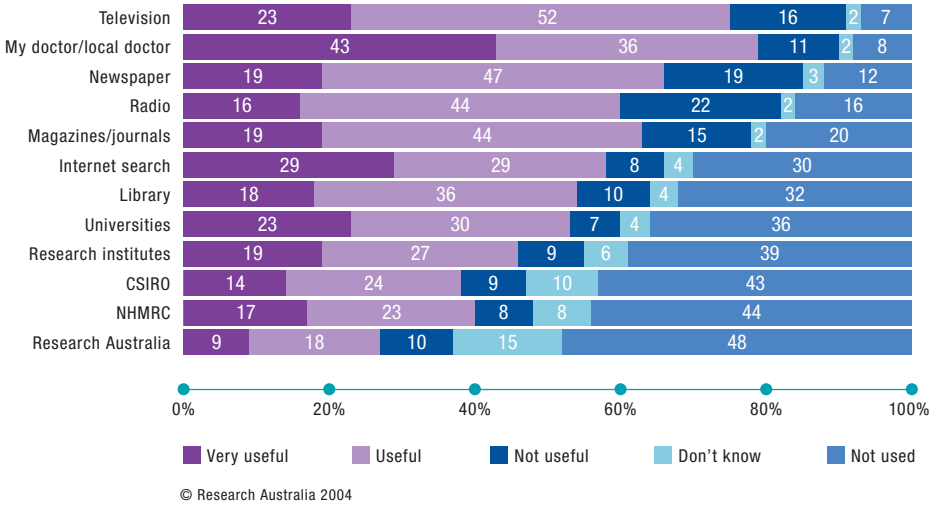

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# Sources of information

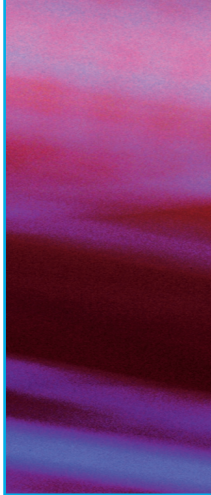
## USE AND USEFULNESS OF INFORMATION SOURCES

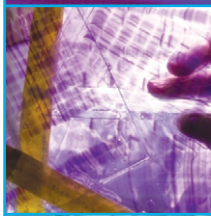
**Question: Of the following list of information sources, how useful have you found each as an information source about health and medical research?**

- The **most commonly used** sources of information are television (93%), local doctor (92%) and newspapers (88%).
- The **most useful** source of information is the local doctor, with 79% finding their doctor to be a useful source of information and 43% rating them as very useful.
- When asked specifically about access to information about Australian health and medical research, 69% said they wanted better access to information.




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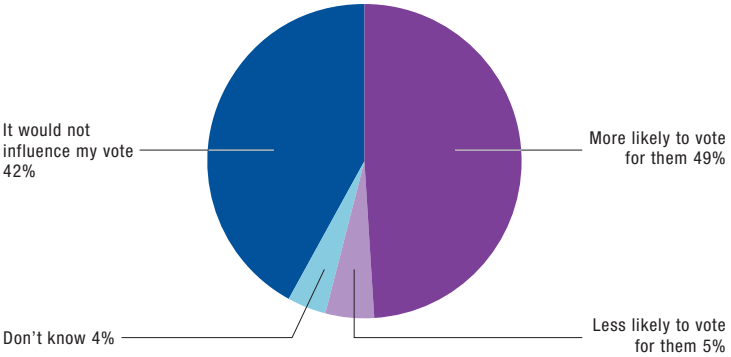


# Government support of health research

## VOTER INFLUENCE

**Question: Would a commitment to increase health and medical research funding influence your voting preference in an election?**

- Nearly half of respondents (49%) said a commitment to increase health and medical research funding would influence their vote positively.
- A slightly smaller proportion (42%) said a commitment to increase health and medical research funding would not influence their vote.
- Only 5% of people said they would be influenced negatively.



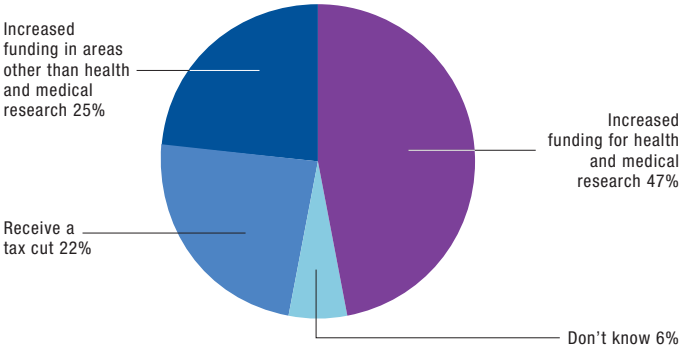

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# Government support of health research

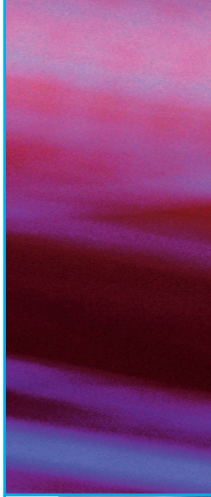
## MORE HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTEAD OF A TAX CUT

**Question: How would you prefer to have surplus government funds distributed? Would you prefer to receive a tax cut, have increased funding for health and medical research or have increased funding in areas other than health and medical research?**

- Nearly half of respondents (47%) would prefer that surplus government funds be used for increased funding for health and medical research while 22% would prefer a tax cut.
- One quarter of respondents would prefer that surplus funds be invested in areas other than health and medical research.

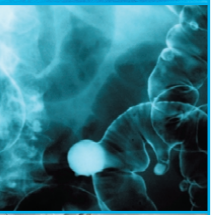



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# Pharmaceutical and biotechnology company investment

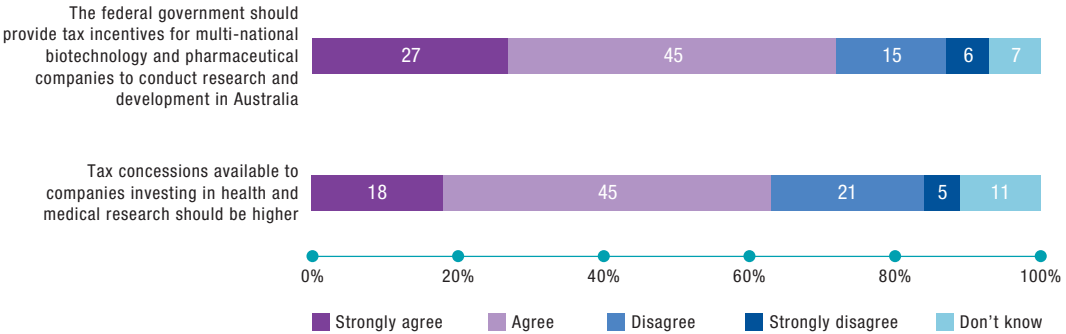
## TAX CONCESSIONS FOR HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Question: Do you agree or disagree that the Federal Government should provide tax incentives for multi-national biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies to conduct research and development in Australia?**

- The majority of people (72%) agreed that the Federal Government should provide tax incentives for multi-national biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies to conduct research and development in Australia.

**Question: Do you agree or disagree that tax concessions available to companies investing in health and medical research should be higher?**

- Nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents thought tax concessions available to companies investing in health and medical research should be higher.



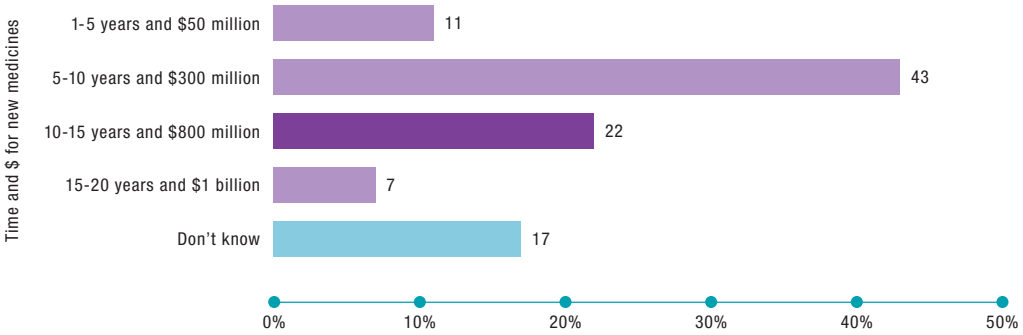

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# Pharmaceutical and biotechnology company investment

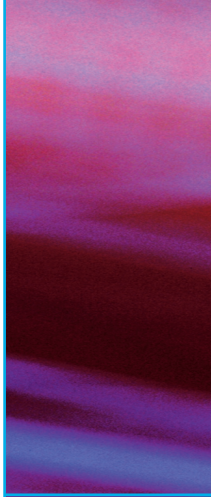
## TIME AND COST FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MEDICINES

**Question: On average, how many years and how much does it cost to develop a new medicine and make it available to the public?**

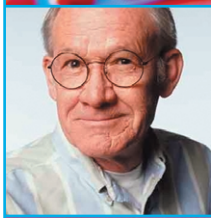
- The majority of people (54%) thought it would take less than 10 years and less than $300 million to develop a new medicine and make it available to the public.
- 17% did not know.
- On average it takes between 10 and 15 years and $800 million.




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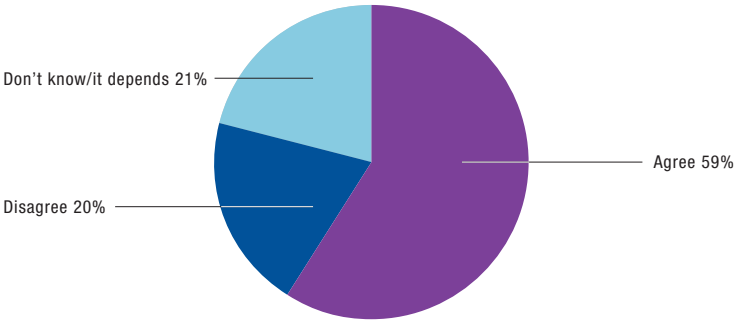


# Clinical trials

## ATTITUDES TOWARD PARTICIPATION IN CLINICAL TRIALS

**Question: If you required treatment and were asked to participate in a clinical trial of a new medical treatment would you agree to be involved?**

- 59% of respondents indicated that they would agree to be involved in a clinical trial.
- 20% said they would not agree to be involved.
- 21% said they did not know.



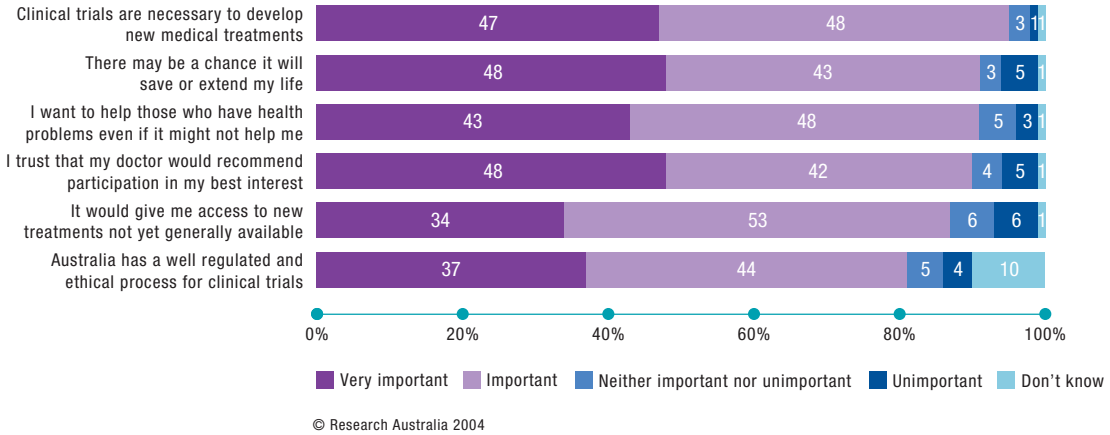

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# Clinical trials

## AGREE... reasons for agreement to be involved in a clinical trial

**Question: How important are each of the following reasons for your agreement to be involved?**

- Of the 59% who agreed, an average of 89% of respondents thought each of the suggested reasons to participate in a clinical trial were important.




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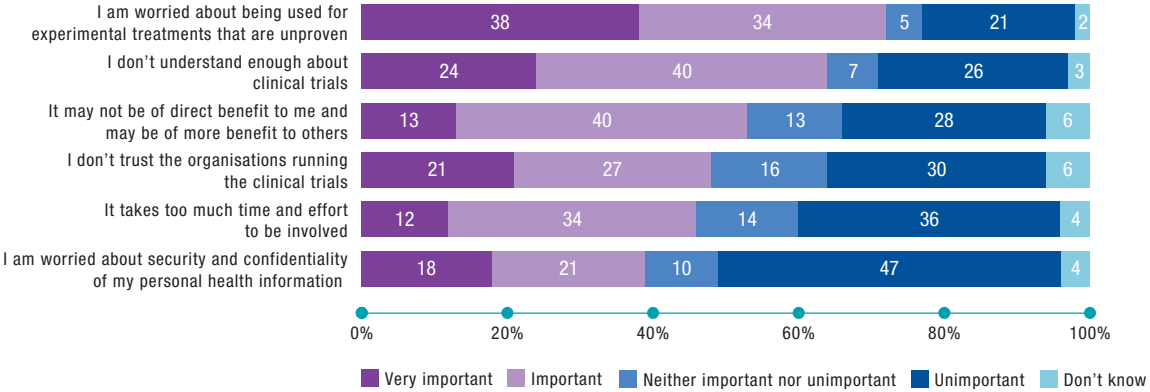


# Clinical trials

## DISAGREE... reasons for not wanting to be involved in a clinical trial

**Question: How important are each of the following reasons for you not wanting to be involved?**

- Of the 20% who would not agree to participate in a clinical trial, the most important reasons are worries about being used for experimental treatments that are unproven (72%) or lack of understanding about clinical trials (64%).
- On average, half of respondents said concerns about whether they would benefit, trust in those running the trial and the time/effort required were important to them.



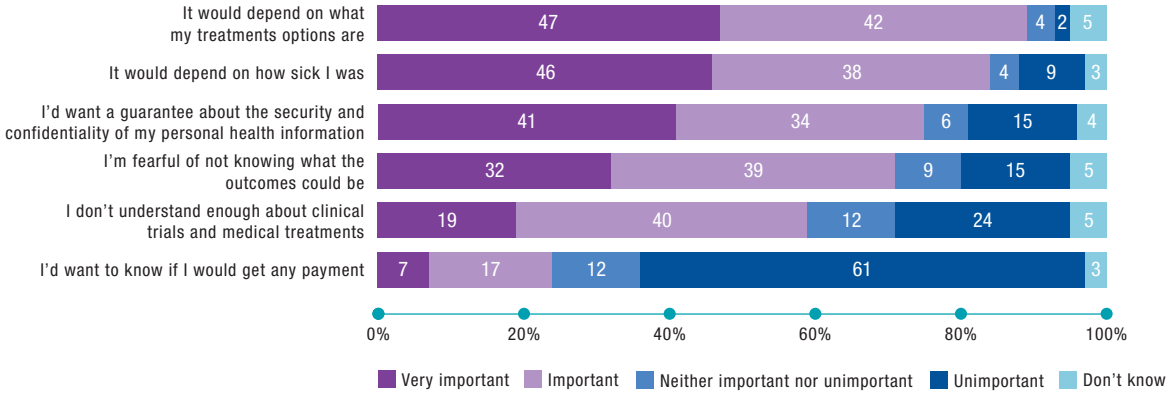

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# Clinical trials

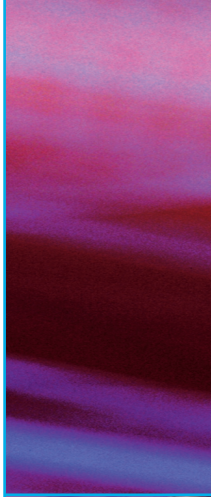
## DON'T KNOW/IT DEPENDS... reasons for uncertainty about being involved in a clinical trial

**Question: How important are each of the following reasons for making you feel uncertain about involvement in a clinical trial?**

- Of the 21% who were uncertain about participation in a clinical trial, the most important reasons were that it would depend on treatment options (89%) or how sick they were (84%).
- Security and confidentiality of personal health records was also important to most people (75%), as was being fearful of what the outcomes could be (71%).
- The majority of respondents (73%) did not think payment was an important incentive for involvement.




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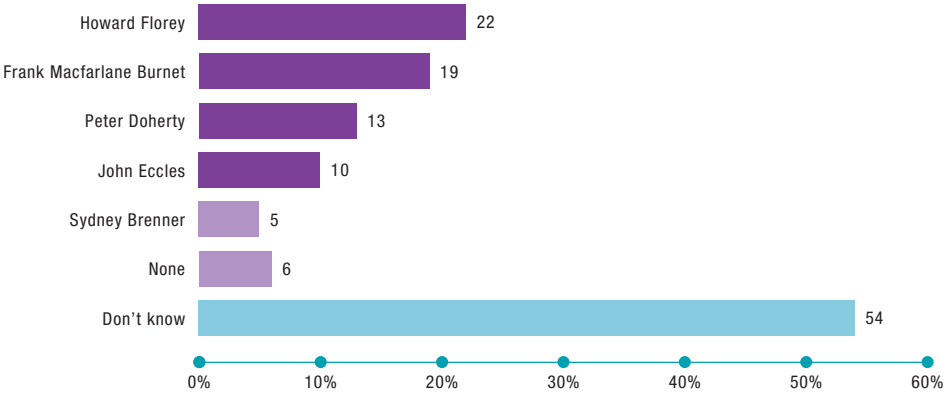


# Knowledge about Australian health and medical research

## AUSTRALIAN NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

**Question: Of the following Nobel Prize Winners for Physiology or Medicine, which were Australian? (can choose more than one)**

- The majority of people (54%) did not recognise any of the named Nobel Prize winners as Australian.
- The most commonly identified Australian Nobel Prize winner was Howard Florey (22%).
- Of the names listed, only Sydney Brenner is not Australian.



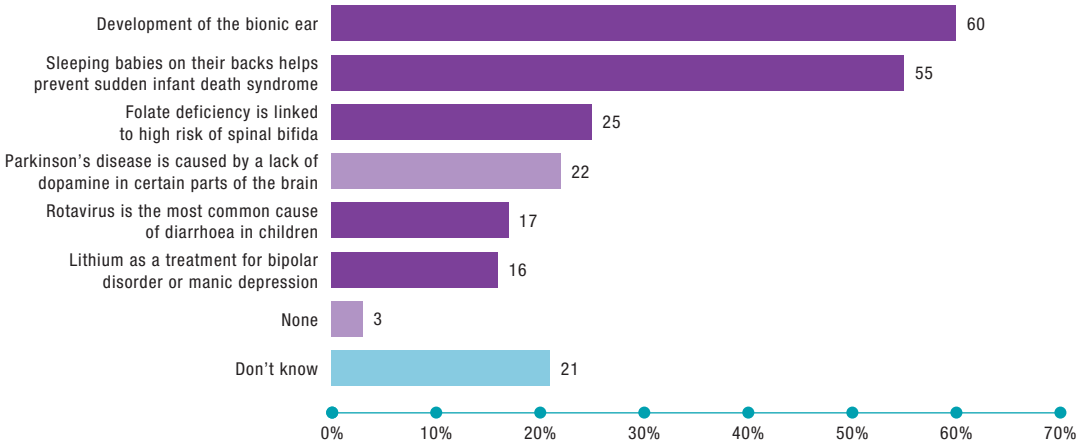

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# Knowledge about Australian health and medical research

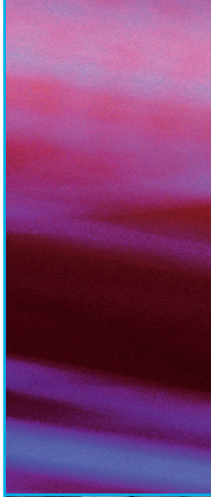
## AUSTRALIAN DISCOVERIES

**Question: Of the following health and medical discoveries, which were made in Australia? (can choose more than one)**

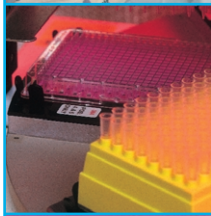
- Just over half of the respondents knew that Australian health and medical research discoveries include the development of the bionic ear (60%) and that sleeping babies on their backs helps prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (55%).
- Just over one fifth of people (21%) did not know if any of the discoveries were made in Australia.
- Only the Parkinson's disease discovery was not made in Australia.

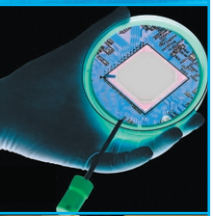



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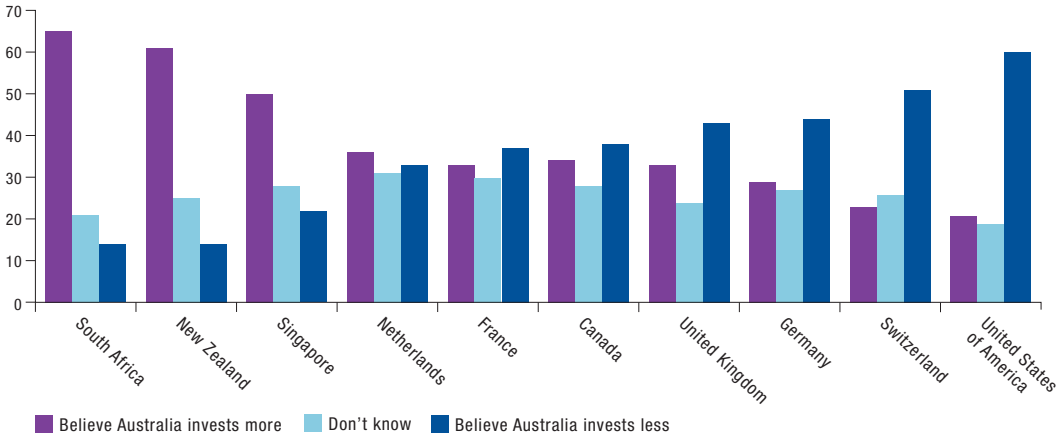
# Knowledge about Australian health and medical research

## AUSTRALIA'S INVESTMENT IN HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES

**Question: How do you think Australia ranks compared to other countries in total investment in health and medical research? Do we invest more or less per head of population than the following countries?**

- In general, respondents thought Australia invests more in health and medical research than South Africa, New Zealand and Singapore, but thought Australia invests less than the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland and the United States of America.
- On average, over a quarter (26%) of people did not know where Australia would rank internationally.
- In 2000 Australia actually invested more than South Africa and New Zealand but less than all other countries listed.

(Source: National Health and Medical Research Council Performance Measurement Report 2000-2003).




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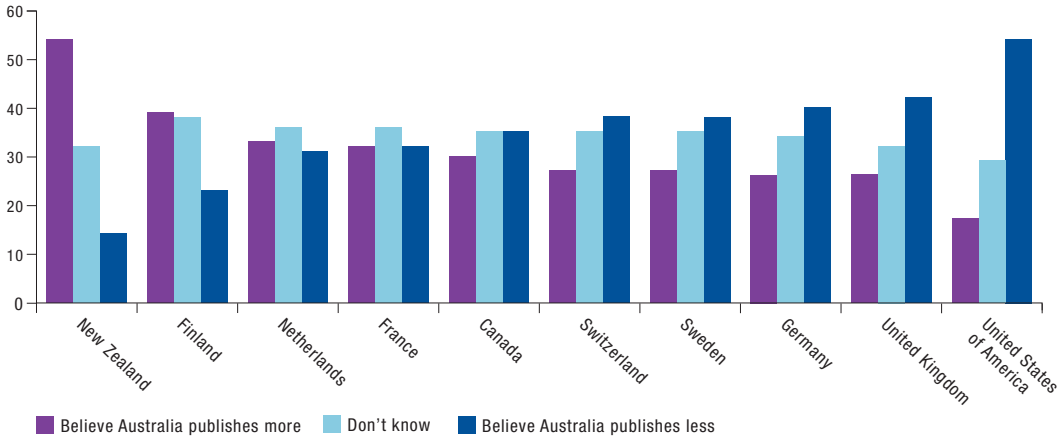
# Knowledge about Australian health and medical research

## AUSTRALIA'S PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLISHING DISCOVERIES IN HEALTH COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES

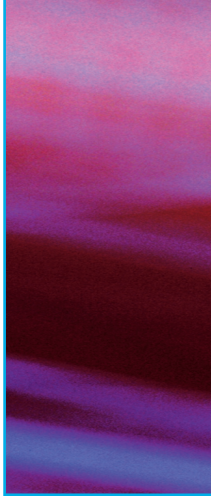
**Question: How do you think Australia ranks compared to other countries in publishing discoveries in the field of health? Do we publish more or less per head of population than the following countries?**

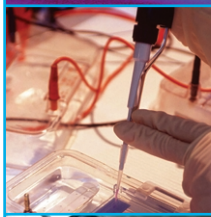
- In general, respondents thought Australia publishes more per head of population than New Zealand and Finland, but less than Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, United Kingdom and the United States of America.
- On average, more than one third (34%) did not know where Australia's productivity in publishing health discoveries would rank.
- In 1999 Australia's actual ranking in publishing discoveries in health was top, above all other nations listed.

(Source: National Health and Medical Research Council Performance Measurement Report 2000-2003).




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# Study design and sample profile

Research Australia commissioned TNS to conduct a national survey of the general public, to measure their attitudes and perceptions toward health and medical research. The target population was the Australian general public aged 16 years or over, yielding 1,005 interviews. The survey was conducted 27-29 August 2004 using TNS's PhoneBus.

Data is weighted to represent the Australian population aged 16 years and over. The maximum margin of error at the 95% confidence level is ± 3.1%.

| | | Number of respondents | Weighted respondents ('000) | Weighted percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Total** | 1005 | 13769 | |
| **GENDER** | Male | 503 | 6949 | 50.47% |
| | Female | 502 | 6820 | 49.53% |
| **AGE** | 16-34 | 281 | 4623 | 33.58% |
| | 35-49 | 286 | 3906 | 28.37% |
| | 50-64 | 258 | 2904 | 21.09% |
| | 65 + | 180 | 2336 | 16.97% |
| **STATE** | NSW | 301 | 4736 | 34.40% |
| | VIC | 270 | 3084 | 22.40% |
| | QLD | 183 | 2737 | 19.88% |
| | SA/NT | 101 | 1223 | 8.88% |
| | WA | 70 | 1411 | 10.25% |
| | ACT | 40 | 226 | 1.64% |
| | TAS | 40 | 350 | 2.54% |
| **CITY/COUNTRY** | Capital cities | 700 | 9499 | 68.99% |
| | Rest of State | 305 | 4270 | 31.01% |

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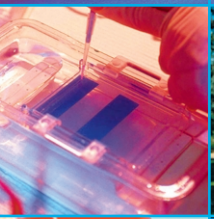
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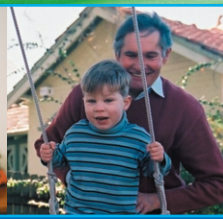
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