

Confidence in FDA Hits New Low, According to WSJ.com/ Harris Interactive Study

*U.S. Adults Concerned About Safety
of Prescription Drugs*

Majorities of U.S. adults give negative ratings for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on a number of measures, such as ensuring new drugs come to market quickly (60% negative) and managing recalls or withdrawals when safety concerns arise (53%). The perception that the FDA does a good job ensuring the safety and efficacy of new prescription drugs (35% positive) has declined from 45 percent in 2007 and 56 percent in 2004, even though the general population considers this to be the most important task for the FDA to focus on (61%).

Further, only 26 percent think the FDA does a good job ensuring the safety of prescription drugs that are manufactured outside the U.S. This is no surprise, particularly coming on the heels of the recent Heparin contamination incident, which stemmed from materials made in China.

These are some of the results of an online survey of 2,476 U.S. adults conducted by Harris Interactive between April 1 and 4, 2008 for the Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition.

According to Rick Millard, Group President, "Recent analyses suggest that approving drugs more quickly could save lives, and along those lines the FDA has shortened its process from 33 months in 1991 to only 19 months in 2001. While last-minute approvals are becoming more common, studies indicate drugs approved near the FDA's deadline are more likely to have severe safety problems. Ultimately, the FDA does not win."

Adults are still concerned about the series of toy recalls over the past year, many of which related to toys manufactured in China. Confidence in the safety of toys manufactured outside the U.S. dropped dramatically from 44 percent in 2007 to 22 percent in 2008. In fact, there is little confidence in the safety of various other products made in developing countries like China, India or South Africa. And U.S. adults are torn on where the responsibility lies – 48 percent say it is the responsibility of the country that makes the products, while 42 percent think it should fall on the country that imports them.

Health-Care Poll

Table 1
Rating the FDA

"Based on what you know or have heard, how good a job do you think the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) does on...?"

Base: All adults

		Positive*	Excellent	Good	Negative**	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
Ensuring the safety as well as the efficacy of new prescription drugs	2004 %	56	14	43	37	27	10	7
	2006 %	36	7	29	58	35	23	6
	2007 %	45	7	37	49	29	20	6
	2008 %	35	5	30	58	33	25	7
Ensuring that prescription drugs come to market more quickly	2008 %	30	4	26	60	34	26	10
Ensuring the safety of prescription drugs that are manufactured outside the United States	2008 %	26	3	22	62	31	31	12
Managing prescription drug recalls or withdrawals when safety concerns arise	2008 %	39	6	33	53	32	21	8

*Excellent or good.

**Fair or poor.

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2
FDA's Most Important Task

"Which of these tasks do you think is *most* important for the FDA to focus on?"

Base: All adults

	Total
	%
Ensuring the safety as well as the efficacy of new prescription drugs	61
Ensuring the safety of prescription drugs that are manufactured outside the United States	14
Managing prescription drug recalls or withdrawals when safety concerns arise	8
Ensuring that prescription drugs come to market more quickly	8
Not sure	8

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Table 3

Confidence in Products Manufactured in Developing Countries

“Based on what you know or have heard, how confident are you in the safety of the following types of products when they are produced or manufactured in developing countries like China, India or South Africa?”

Base: All adults

			Very/ Somewhat Confident (NET)	Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Very/ Not at All Confident (NET)	Not Very Confident	Not at All Confident	Not Sure
Children’s toys	2007	%	44	10	34	48	22	26	9
	2008	%	22	4	18	72	30	42	6
Personal care products like toothpaste, moisturizer, or shampoo	2007	%	39	13	26	55	23	32	6
	2008	%	38	10	28	56	26	30	6
Over-the-counter medications like antacids, sleep aids, or cough and cold medicines	2007	%	31	8	23	63	26	37	6
	2008	%	29	5	23	63	30	34	8
Prescription drugs, including generic and brand name drugs	2007	%	30	10	21	63	23	40	6
	2008	%	28	5	23	63	27	36	8
Herbal remedies or nutritional supplements	2007	%	29	5	23	64	28	36	7
	2008	%	28	5	22	64	27	37	8
Packaged or prepared foods	2007	%	32	7	26	61	25	36	6
	2008	%	29	5	24	65	30	34	6

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Table 4

Responsibility for Import Product Safety

“Which do you think should be primarily responsible for the safety of products that are imported from other countries...?”

Base: All adults

	Total
	%
The countries that produce the products	48
The countries that import the products	42
Not sure	10

Health-Care Poll

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp.

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between April 1 and 4, 2008 among a national cross section of 2,476 adults age 18 and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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