

Findings at a glance: Nutrition research scientists

About half of Americans have a positive view of nutrition research scientists, but minorities of U.S. adults think they can count on nutrition researchers to do a good job, show concern for the public interest or provide fair and accurate information about their research. And most Americans are skeptical of nutrition research scientists when it comes to issues of transparency and accountability for mistakes or misconduct, according to a new [Pew Research Center report](#).

Overall views

51% of Americans have a positive view of nutrition research scientists, while 11% have a negative view and 38% have neither positive nor negative views.

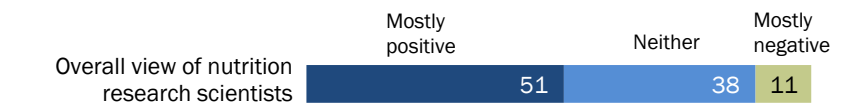
Trust and mistrust

Roughly three-in-ten say nutrition researchers care about the public's best interests (29%) or do a good job conducting research (28%) all or most of the time. About a quarter (24%) think nutrition researchers provide fair and accurate information about their findings with the same frequency.

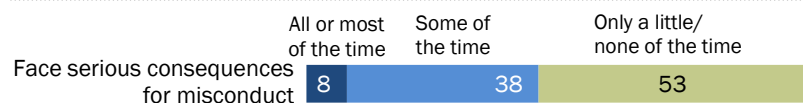
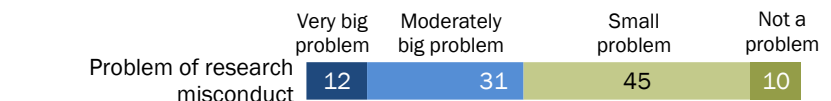
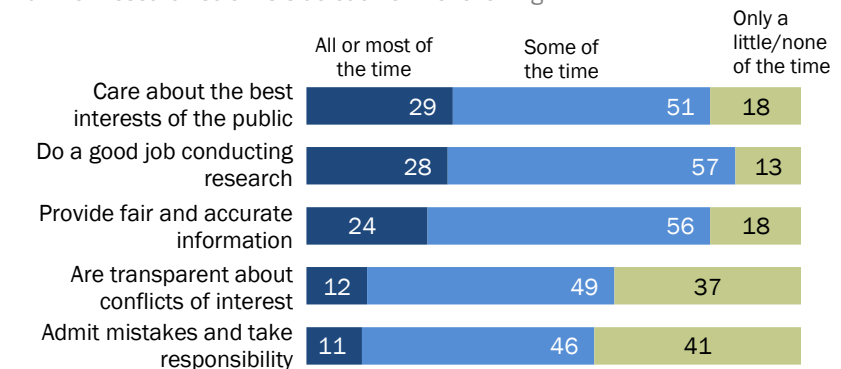
Few believe nutrition researchers are transparent about potential conflicts of interest with industry (12%) or take responsibility for professional mistakes (11%) all or most of the time. The public is far more likely to say nutrition researchers rarely or never are transparent about conflicts of interest or take responsibility for mistakes (37% and 41%, respectively).

About half of the public has a positive view of nutrition research scientists

% of U.S. adults who say the following about nutrition research scientists



Nutrition research scientists do each of the following ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown. "Neither" means "neither positive nor negative."

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 7-21, 2019.

"Trust and Mistrust in Americans' Views of Scientific Experts"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

About four-in-ten Americans (43%) say research misconduct among nutrition scientists is a moderately or very big problem. Just 8% say misconduct leads to serious consequences all or most of the time; another 53% say they face consequences only a little or none of the time.

Other notable findings

- Just 10% of U.S. adults say they know a lot about the work of nutrition researchers; another 63% say they know a little about what these researchers do. News reports are the most common source of information.
- Familiarity with the work of nutrition researchers makes a difference in people's views. For example, people who know a lot about nutrition research scientists are more likely than those who are unfamiliar with the profession to view nutrition researchers positively (64% vs. 36%, respectively).
- Americans have [more positive and trusting views](#) of dietitians than nutrition researchers. For example, 28% say nutrition researchers do a good job all or most of the time compared with 54% for dietitians.

About the survey

The nationally representative survey from Pew Research Center was conducted among U.S. adults ages 18 and older. About half of the survey respondents (N=2,226) were asked about nutrition research scientists; these responses have a margin of sampling error of +/- 2.7 percentage points. Before answering questions about this group, respondents were given the following brief description: “**Nutrition research scientists** conduct research about the effects of food on health.”