Americans’ Views of Mercury in Flu Shots

Submitted to:
putchildrenfirst.org

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I. Methodology and Sample Characteristics

Methodology

Zogby International conducted online interviews of 9,204 adults. Panelists who have agreed to participate in Zogby polls online were invited to participate in the survey. The online poll ran from 10/27/06 through 10/30/06. The margin of error is +/- 1.1 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. Slight weights were added to region, party, age, race, religion, and gender to more accurately reflect the population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>9,204</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>2,106</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>2,381</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central/Great Lakes</td>
<td>2,838</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>1,831</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer region</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>1,835</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>3,669</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer age</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6,815</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/mixed</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer race</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in large city</td>
<td>3,383</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in small city</td>
<td>1,896</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in suburbs</td>
<td>2,334</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in rural area</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer where live</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>2,428</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>4,496</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (religion)</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Characteristics (continued)</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Valid Percent*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer religion</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent of child under 17</td>
<td>2,430</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not parent of child under 17</td>
<td>6,735</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $25,000</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$34,999</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000-$49,999</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$74,999</td>
<td>1,865</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000-$99,999</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer income</td>
<td>1,208</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4,411</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4,741</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not answer gender</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.
II. Narrative Analysis

1. How likely is it that you will get a flu shot this year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat likely</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unlikely</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-half of adults (49%) are likely to get a flu shot this year, and half (50%) are unlikely to do so. Representing the bulk of each of these groups are people who are either very likely (37%) or very unlikely (39%) to get a shot.

2. Which of the following percentages best describes your belief on how many flu shots contain mercury, a known neurotoxin?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None of them</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of them</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three-fifths of adults (59%) have no idea how many flu shots contain mercury. One in six (17%) does not think that any flu shots contain mercury. Otherwise, 7% of people say 10% of shots are tainted; 4% of people think 35% of shots are tainted; 3% of people say that 60% of shots are tainted; 2% of people say 75% of shots are tainted; 3% of adults believe 90% of shots are tainted; and 7% of people think that every flu shot contains mercury.

3. Do you agree or disagree that our government should warn pregnant women not to get a flu shot containing mercury?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A vast majority of nearly three in four Americans (73%) – and 82 percent of parents – agree that the government should warn pregnant women not to get a flu shot containing mercury. Only 6% disagree, while one in five (21%) is not sure.
4 – 8. For the following series of statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each.

| Table 1. Agreement with Statements (ranked by % agree)                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Mercury should not be an ingredient in flu shots or other vaccines, especially those given to pregnant women or children | Agree: 77 | Disagree: 3 | Not sure: 20 |
| Congress should take action to make sure that mercury and other toxins are not in flu shots and other vaccines | Agree: 72 | Disagree: 16 | Not sure: 12 |
| The doctors who administer flu vaccines are responsible for the safety of the vaccines they give to children and pregnant women | Agree: 72 | Disagree: 24 | Not sure: 4 |
| Professional organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics are responsible for the safety of vaccines they give to children and pregnant women | Agree: 71 | Disagree: 23 | Not sure: 6 |
| Mercury in childhood vaccines has played a role in the current autism epidemic | Agree: 31 | Disagree: 17 | Not sure: 52 |

(*Agree and disagree each combine “strongly” and “somewhat.”*)

Large majorities from seven-in-ten to three-in-four agree with each of these statements, with the sole exception of whether mercury in childhood vaccines has played a role in the current autism epidemic. With this statement, people are still almost twice as likely to agree than disagree, but a majority is unsure.
9–12. Now I am going to read to you a series of statements. For each, please tell me if you would be much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to get a flu shot after you hear each.

Table 2. Likelihood of Getting a Flu Shot (ranked by % less likely)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>More likely*</th>
<th>Less likely</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you knew that mercury was a neurotoxin that disrupts development in children (get a flu shot for your child)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you knew that seven years ago, the Centers for Disease Control warned that mercury in vaccines was dangerous and that it should be taken out of all vaccines</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you knew that mercury is an ingredient in over 90% of flu shots</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you knew that there are warnings for pregnant women and children to avoid eating tuna and other seafood because of the high level of mercury in them</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*More likely and less likely each combine “much” and “somewhat.”)

Each of these four statements turns off large majorities of respondents from getting a flu shot. From 69% to 86% of adults are less likely to get a flu shot after knowing this information. And 86% of parents say they are unlikely to get a flu shot for their own child now.

13. How willing would you be to pay a few dollars more for a flu shot that did not contain mercury?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willingness</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very willing</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat willing</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unwilling</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unwilling</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Willing 80%

Unwilling 11%

Four-fifths of Americans (80%) are willing to pay a few dollars more to get a flu shot that did not contain mercury. This includes a majority overall (54%) who is very willing to do so. More than 82 percent of parents are willing to pay more. One in nine of total respondents (11%) are unwilling to pay more.

14. Certain groups have been warned to avoid eating fish and tuna because of high levels of mercury. Which one of the following groups, if any, do you know who has been warned not to eat fish and tuna? (Choose only ONE.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women and children</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with chronic diseases</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or those who are ill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A seven-in-ten majority (69%) says they know that pregnant women and children have been warned not to eat fish and tuna due to high levels of mercury. Nine percent say they know that everyone has been warned; 3% say that people with chronic diseases or those who are ill have been warned; and 1% each says that the elderly and teens/pre-teens have been warned. One in six (17%) is not sure.