

2015 Survey on Prescription Drugs

Background

AARP surveyed 50+ Americans to learn about their prescription drug use and any struggles they face with regard to prescription drug costs. The survey also examined their views on how prescription drugs and pharmaceutical companies are regulated, whether drug companies influence politicians and health care professionals, and what should be done to help reduce prescription drug costs.

Key findings:

- Three-quarters (75%) of 50+ adults take prescription medication on a regular basis. This figure is even higher for seniors with over eight in ten (86%) taking regular prescription medication compared to two-thirds (67%) of adults age 50-64.
- Most 50+ adults (81%) think prescription drugs are too expensive and most (87%) say it is important for politicians to support efforts to make prescription drugs more affordable.
- Over four in ten (44%) 50+ adults are concerned about being able to afford their medication.
- 50+ adults want more regulation of prescription drugs. They think there is not enough regulation when it comes to: Limiting the price of prescription drugs (76%), making sure statements about prescription drugs are accurate (44%), and making sure prescription drugs are safe (50%).
- Over half of 50+ adults believe that drug companies have a lot of influence over Congress/state legislatures (59%) and health care professionals (53%) but just over one-third (36%) believe they have influence over their own health care professional.
- Most 50+ adults think that pharmaceutical companies spend too much money on advertising to patients (73%) and health care professionals (61%).
- Over eight in ten (83%) 50+ adults think that drug companies make too much profit and that they should be required to publicly explain how they price their products (84%).
- A large majority (80%) of 50+ adults say it should be legal to buy prescription drugs in Canada and Europe.
- Over nine in ten (93%) 50+ adults support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.
- Over eight in ten (85%) oppose the efforts of drug companies to delay the availability of lower-cost generic substitutes.

Methodology

An online survey was conducted for AARP by GfK on December 1-11, 2015 among a nationally representative sample of 1,834 adults age 50+. Additional interviews were conducted to reach: 400 Hispanic/Latino adults age 50+ and 405 African-American adults age 50+. The data was weighted by age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status, household income, and primary language (Hispanics/Latinos only). The margin of error for the national sample of 1,834 adults age 50+ is +/- 2.8%. The margin of error among subgroups is higher.

<https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00122.002>

For media inquiries, contact Gregory Phillips at 202-434-2544 or gphillips@aarp.org