



New Zealanders for  
**HEALTH RESEARCH**  
*Ngā Tāngata o Aotearoa mō  
te Rangahau Hauora*

**KANTAR**

# New Zealand Speaks!

2020 Kantar NZHR Opinion Poll

“health research system  
fails the team of 5 million”

**HEALTH RESEARCH SAVES LIVES**



## A Message from New Zealanders for Health Research

When it comes to what's important, New Zealanders continue to put health and health research right up the top.

That's the strong message that once again comes through in our 2020 and fifth successive annual New Zealanders for Health Research public opinion poll where three of the top ten priorities for spending relate to "looking after our health". Furthermore kiwis rank health research more highly than improving education standards and outcomes, helping the environment, addressing climate change and scientific research and development generally.

The poll was undertaken in late May, a few days after both Budget day on 14th May and the commencement of Covid 19 level 2 lockdown, about a month before the release of the Health and Disability System Review report and nearly four months prior to New Zealand's 19th September General Election.

We believe that one of the takeaways from this report is that kiwis – the "team of five million" – have been failed by New Zealand's lack of commitment to health research. About 12,000 New Zealanders per year are dying prematurely, yet the Health and Disability System Review report fails to make any recommendations that would embed health research as an essential component of health service delivery, and the 2020 Budget's meagre health research allocation of 0.76% of health care costs is even less than what was allocated in 2019 – and falling.

Having experienced the powerful impact of the health research led response to the Covid 19 epidemic we believe that kiwis will have a heightened appreciation of the value of health research. We note that 35% of our poll respondents said that they would be more likely to vote for a party which promised to increase the government's health research budget, and we call on all political parties contesting the 2020 General Election to produce election manifestos which respond to what voters are saying.

New Zealanders for Health Research is a dedicated national public education and advocacy alliance. Our goal is to make health research a higher priority, attracting greater investment from government, industry and philanthropy. To do so will generate big wins for our nation. It will save lives, improve the health of New Zealanders, boost productivity and generate new knowledge-based businesses and jobs.

Modelled on highly successful sibling organisations in Australia, Canada, the USA and Sweden, New Zealanders for Health Research is New Zealand's peak body representing the entire health and medical research pipeline. We are an independent and diverse alliance supported by health service consumers, clinical research organisations, universities, philanthropic research funders and industry.

This report provides a snapshot of the 2020 poll results. The separate NZHR members' report presents comparisons with the 2019 and earlier poll results, and provides insights into how the results vary with age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and living with a disability. NZHR members may request further detailed information and will also be given an opportunity to propose additional questions for inclusion in the 2021 poll.



**Chris Higgins**

Chief Executive | New Zealanders for Health Research



**Graham Malaghan**

Chair | New Zealanders for Health Research



### Acknowledgements

The polling for our four previous reports was undertaken by Roy Morgan, Australia, to whom New Zealanders for Health Research (NZHR) is indebted for their support for our cause as a platinum NZHR member. The polling for this report was conducted by Kantar New Zealand, with whom we look forward to a continuing collaboration as a silver member. In order to reduce the risk of this year's survey results being distorted by transitioning from Roy Morgan to Kantar the methodology for the 2020 poll replicates Roy Morgan's methodology, with the exception that this year's poll samples 1000 New Zealanders, whereas the Roy Morgan polls comprised samples of 500.

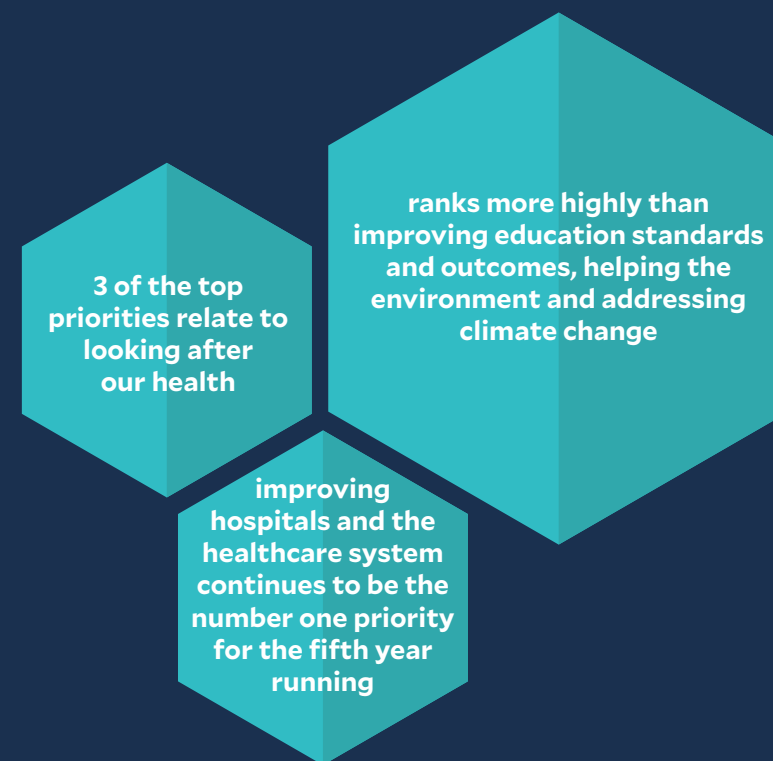
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# Priorities for the New Zealand Government

## New Zealanders' top 15 priorities for the Government in 2020

RANK			SCORE %	
2019	2020		2019	2020
1	1	Improving hospitals and the health care system	92	89
4	2	Keeping the national economy strong	81	88
8	3	Providing strong leadership	78	87
14	4	Improving employment opportunities	73	84
3	5	Managing the government budget	81	83
5	6	Improving national infrastructure	81	81
20	7	Maintaining a strong focus on domestic border control, including security at ports and airports	64	81
12	8	Creating more skilled jobs and apprenticeships	76	80
16	9	Communicating definite plans and goals for New Zealand's future	69	79
9	10	More funding for health and medical research	78	79
7	10	Increasing preventative healthcare funding and programmes	79	79
6	12	Addressing domestic and family violence	79	78
2	13	Improving education standards and outcomes	84	77
10	14	Doing more to keep prices and cost of living down	76	77
13	14	Reducing crime and improving law and order	74	77



We asked people to rate 27 randomly presented issues in terms of importance for the Government to focus on over the coming 2–3 years. Each issue was rated using a 0–10 scale, where 0 meant that it is not important, and 10 meant it is a critical priority. The figures in this table represent the proportion of respondents rating the item as either 7, 8, 9 or 10 on this scale. In the context of moving into a post Covid 19 recovery phase, note the importance of issues such as a strong economy, strong leadership, improved employment opportunities and domestic border control.

## Valuing Health and Medical Research

### High value placed on health and medical research



82%

of New Zealanders are either somewhat interested or very interested in health and medical research



61%

say that health research is part of the solution to reducing health care costs

### All types of health and medical research are valued

The importance of research into antibiotic resistance to infectious diseases and research to make our health system more effective and efficient continued to be ranked among the top areas for health research, with a new question on the importance of research on finding vaccines for new infectious diseases such as Covid 19 coming in at second place.


Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who considered the randomly presented research areas as extremely or very important

RANK		SCORE %
2020		2020
1	Important to do research to make our health system more effective and efficient	80
2	Important to do research on finding vaccines for new infectious diseases such as Covid 19	79
3	Important to do research into antibiotic resistance to infectious diseases	77
4	Important to work in collaboration with researchers around the world...	77
5	Important to do research focused on finding ways to prevent illness and promote good health	75
6	Important to invest in better research facilities and equipment	72
7	Important to invest in national programmes and equipment for all health researchers	72
8	Important to make new discoveries about human health and disease	70
9	Important to turn discoveries into new drugs and treatment	68
10	Important to do more research into the things we can do to improve our health	66
11	Important to do research into the effects of climate change on health	48

### Kiwis willing to be personally involved?

It is concerning to see the relatively low level of willingness to share personal information for health research and improving health care, particularly in the context of the importance of contact tracing as New Zealand seeks to control the incidence and prevalence of Covid 19.

69%   
Willing to share personal health information to advance medical research


62%   
Willing to share personal health information to improve patient care

53%   
Willing to share personal health information to track illness and disability and causes

## Awareness and beliefs

New Zealanders for Health Research is pleased to present for the second successive year responses to its set of questions testing the extent to which kiwis feel that they are informed about health research, and their knowledge and beliefs about the safety and effectiveness of a randomly presented set of health research validated measures for improving health outcomes.

	AGREE %	DISAGREE %	DON'T KNOW %
Vaccinations are a safe and effective way of keeping people healthy	88	10	2
A vaccination will be a safe and effective way of preventing people from catching Covid 19	78	13	9
Adding fluoride to public water supplies is a safe and effective way of reducing tooth decay	71	18	11
Adding folic acid to flour and bread is a safe and effective way of preventing spina bifida and neural tube defects	55	15	30
Genetically modifying organisms is a safe and effective way of making new medicines	46	30	24
Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy	96	3	1
Regular exercise is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy	97	2	1
Cutting down on sugary food and drinks is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy	95	4	1
Cutting down on salt is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy	84	12	3



**44%**  
said that they were very well or somewhat well informed about health and medical research in New Zealand.

- Except for genetically modifying organisms to make new medicines a majority of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that every one of the listed measures was a safe and effective way of staying or becoming healthy.
- Compared with 2019 fewer respondents agreed and more disagreed that vaccination is a safe and effective way of keeping people healthy.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore only 78% agreed, while 13% disagreed, that a vaccination will be a safe and effective way of preventing people from catching Covid 19. This apparently increasing anti-vaccination sentiment could become a barrier to effectively eliminating Covid 19 (and other infectious diseases) from New Zealand and suggests the need for an urgent and concerted pro-vaccination communications and access campaign.
- Given the increasing role of genetic modification in the development of new medicines (such as vaccine based anti-cancer therapies) improved communication about their safety and efficacy also appears to be required.
- Significant minorities responded “don’t know” to, or disagreed or strongly disagreed with, statements relating to fluoridation of public water, adding folic acid to flour and bread, and consumption of salt. 35 % of females between 18 and 34 years old responded “don’t know” to the question relating to the safety and effectiveness of adding folic acid to bread and flour.
- Although only 44% of respondents said that they were well informed about health and medical research in New Zealand the PUHRR (Personal Understanding of Health Research Results) index - comprising the average agreement with the eight measures introduced in 2019 – stood at 79%. Nevertheless, if New Zealand is to make gains in health status and outcomes it seems that as a first step the health and medical research community has work to do in raising public awareness of, and belief in, the results of health research. The second step is to persuade people to act in ways that are more consistent with what they believe.

<sup>1</sup> See also Wellcome Global Monitor: How does the world feel about science and health? June 2019. <https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/wellcome-global-monitor-2018.pdf>. According to this international Gallup poll 73% of New Zealanders agree that vaccines are safe, 82% agree that they are effective, and 93% of parents said that their own children had been vaccinated against one or more diseases. Results based on 1002 telephone interviews undertaken in September 2018.

## Government Investment

76% agreed or somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the government should invest more funding in health research. Furthermore 57% rated the current annual budget of \$140m for health research as too low.

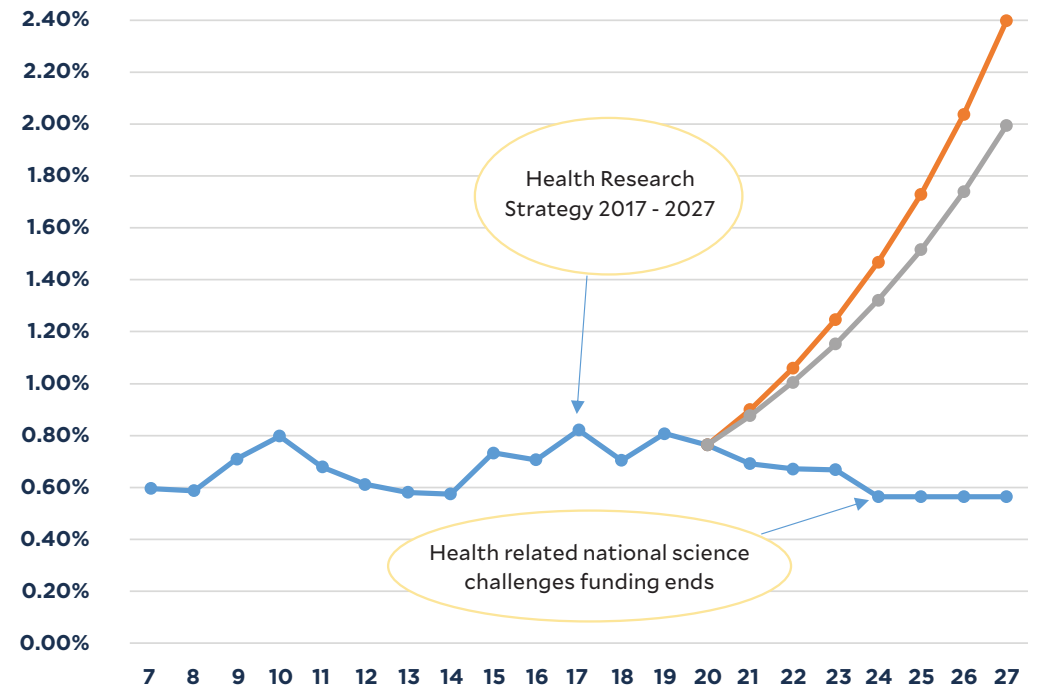
New Zealanders for Health Research agrees. Since 2007/08 the government's direct specific investment in health research averaged 0.7% of health care costs. NZHR maintains that the government should be aiming to lift this to 2.4% of health care costs by 2027<sup>2</sup>, which is the timeframe for implementing its Health Research Strategy.

The graph on the right illustrates the extent of the problem:

- The blue line reflects actual to date levels of investment and NZHR forecasts – dropping from the current 0.76% of health care costs to 0.56% from 2024/25 onwards
- The orange line represents the trajectory required to achieve NZHR's 2.4% target by 2027 - annual increases of 21.35%
- The government has established a generic aspirational ten-year R&D investment target of 2% of GDP, requiring annual increases of 18.2% to achieve by 2027 if applied to health research, as represented by the grey line.

<sup>2</sup> New Zealanders for Health Research. Government health research investment trajectories 2007 – 2031. June 2019. <https://www.nz4healthresearch.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/government-health-research-investment-trajectories-090619.pdf>

Government health research investment as a % of health care costs 2007 - 2027



- gov't health research investment % of health care costs
- gov't health research investment % of health care costs required for 2.4% target = 21.35% pa
- gov't health research investment % of health care costs required for 2% target = 18.2% pa



76%

2020

somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the government should invest more funding in health research.

## Philanthropic Investment

63% somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that philanthropic organisations (charities) should invest more in health research

38% somewhat or strongly agreed that individuals should donate more to health research

32% confirmed that they currently donate to health research (almost all of whom donated \$500 or less per year). This is indicative of an overall decline in confirmed donors since 2016 when the figure was 50%.

The percentage of respondents who cited not having been asked as a reason for not donating was 57%.

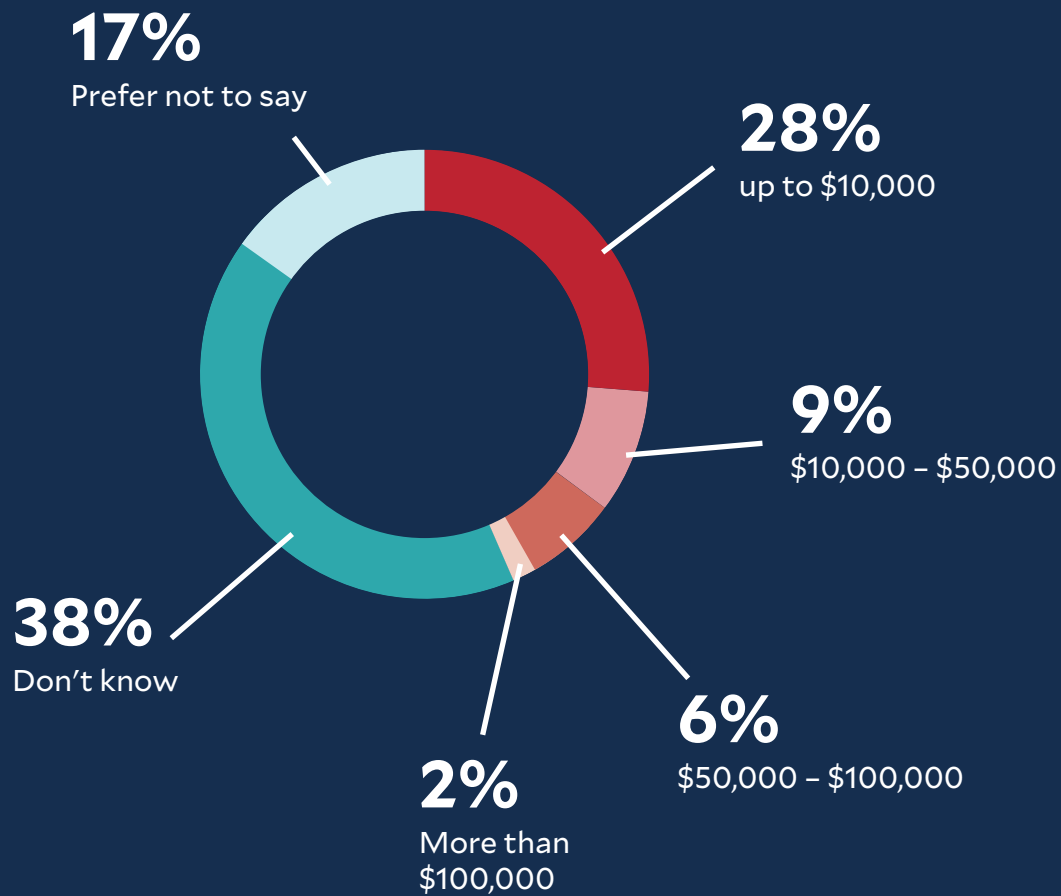
## Reasons for not donating or leaving a bequest

Not donating %		Not leaving a bequest %
2020		2020
74	Can't afford it	64
70	Government's responsibility	59
69	Don't know how money will be spent	61
67	Support charities in other areas	60
57	Don't know who to donate to	50
57	Haven't been asked	42
40	Health research already well supported	44



## Philanthropic Investment

22% of respondents said they were likely or very likely to leave a bequest to medical research. Of those who said they would be likely or very likely to leave a bequest:



# Industry Investment in Health Research

Most industry funded health research takes the form of clinical trials of new medicines, devices and other therapies.

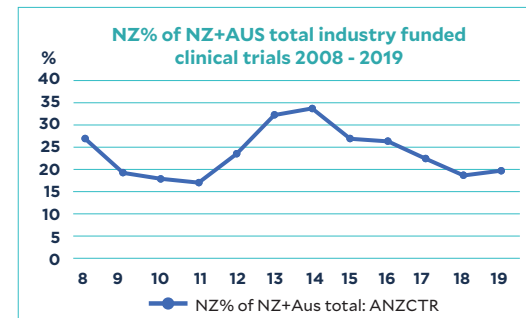
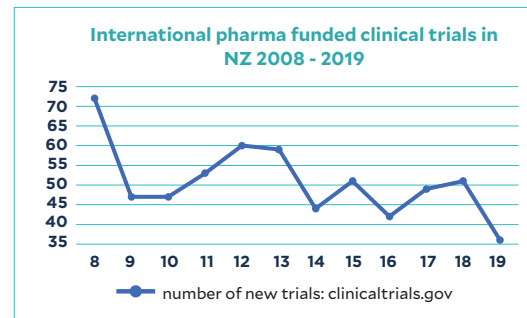
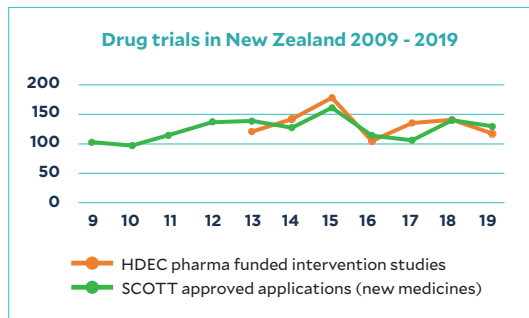
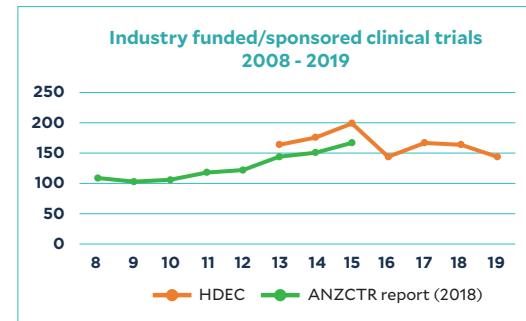
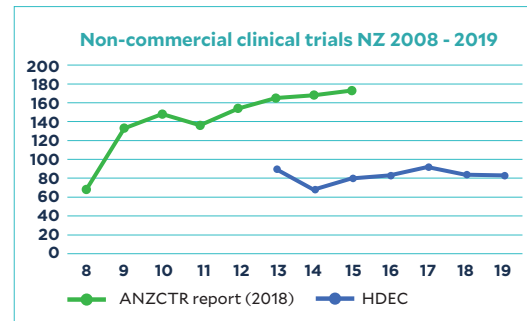
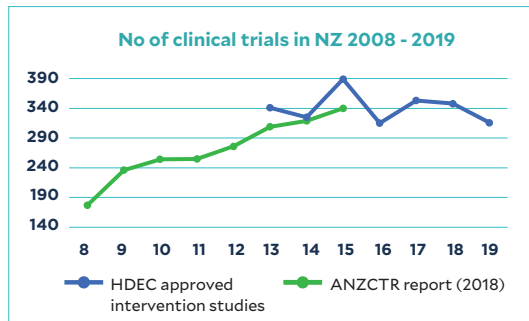


84%

somewhat agree or strongly agree that industry (i.e. pharmaceutical companies etc.) should invest more in health research

## Clinical Trials

Clinical trials in New Zealand are funded by government, industry and philanthropy. It may be inferred from the modest or declining performance indicated by the selection of graphs below<sup>3,4</sup> together with the reported participation rates presented in the pie charts on the next page, that there is considerable scope for growth and development.

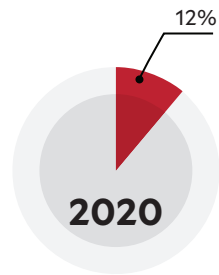


<sup>3</sup> New Zealanders for Health Research. Clinical Trials in New Zealand: a discussion paper. March 2019. <https://www.nz4healthresearch.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Clinical-trials-in-New-Zealand-NZHR-op-ed-130319-V2.pdf>

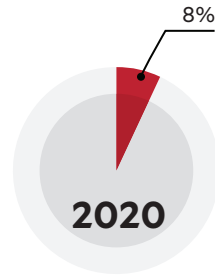
<sup>4</sup> The clinical trials landscape in New Zealand 2006-2015. ANZCTR. 2018. [http://www.anzctr.org.au/docs/NZ\\_Report\\_2006-2015](http://www.anzctr.org.au/docs/NZ_Report_2006-2015)

# Clinical Trials (continued)

The pie charts below indicate that despite the high value that New Zealanders place on clinical trials (albeit that the figures have dipped since 2019), actual participation rates and invitations to participate are relatively low<sup>3</sup>.



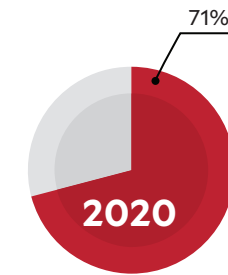
Ever asked to participate in a clinical trial



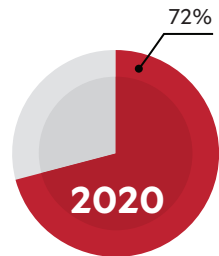
Ever participated in a clinical trial



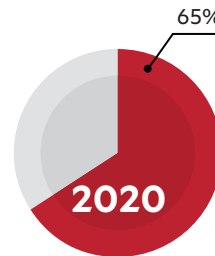
Currently participating in a clinical trial



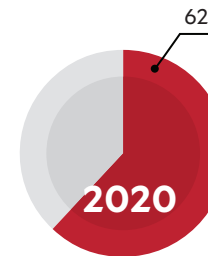
Important that New Zealanders are able to participate in clinical trials



Willing to participate in a clinical trial of a new medicine



There should be more opportunities for New Zealanders to participate in clinical trials for new medicines



Participating in clinical trials for new medicines is as important as donating blood

The last four sets of graphs reflect percentages of respondents who strongly or somewhat agreed with each statement.

In order to promote increased investment in clinical trials NZHR is addressing the following priorities:

- strengthening incentives and removing disincentives to improve industry investment in clinical trials
- public awareness campaign to promote participation in clinical trials
- mandating publicly funded health service provider commitment to health research and clinical trials
- publicly funded health service provider workforce development to create research capacity
- clinician discussion about clinical trials being a routine aspect of patient care
- ACC coverage to be extended to harm resulting from clinical trials

<sup>3</sup> See also Yeojeong J, Jameson M et al; Investigating strategies to improve clinical trial opportunities for patients with cancer in New Zealand—INSIGHT. NZMJ. 12th July 2019, Volume 132 Number 1498. Results showed that although 86% of cancer patients would consider going on a trial only 19% had actually been on one.

# Opinion Polling Questions

## Priorities for the New Zealand Government

Firstly, please think about what priorities you think the Government should be focusing on over the next 2–3 years. As you read through the following list of issues, please rate how important you personally think each issue is, as a priority for the Government to be focusing on over the next 2–3 years. Please use a 0 to 10 scale, where a 0 means that it is not important up to a 10 that means it is extremely important or a critical priority for the Government to be focusing on over the next 2–3 years.

## Valuing Health and Medical Research

### High value placed on health and medical research

How interested are you in health research? Are you ... Very interested? Somewhat interested? Not very interested? Not at all interested?

### All types of health and medical research are valued

Please rate the importance of research in the following areas:

- Making new discoveries about human health and disease
- Turning discoveries into new drugs and treatments
- Investing in better facilities and equipment in our health and medical research organisations
- Investing in national programs and equipment that can be used by all health and medical researchers to make their work more effective.
- Research to make our health system safer, more effective and efficient
- Research focused on finding ways to prevent illness and promote good health
- Antibiotic resistance to infectious diseases
- Research into the effects of climate change on health
- More research into the things we can do to improve our health
- Research on finding vaccines for new infectious diseases such as Covid 19

## Kiwis willing to be personally involved

For which of the following reasons would you be willing to share your personal health information, such as the results of diagnostic tests, or the outcome of treatments administered?

- So health care providers can improve patient care
- So public health officials can better track disease and disability and the causes
- To advance medical research
- None of the above

## Research can reduce health care costs

When it comes to rising healthcare costs, do you think that research to improve health is part of the problem because it will increase costs or part of the solution as it will help reduce costs?

## Awareness and Beliefs

How well informed are you about health and medical research in New Zealand?

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Vaccinations are a safe and effective way of keeping people healthy
- A vaccination will be a safe and effective way of preventing people from catching Covid-19
- Adding fluoride to public water supplies is a safe and effective way of reducing tooth decay
- Adding folic acid to flour and bread is a safe and effective way of preventing spina bifida and neural tube defects
- Genetically modifying organisms is a safe and effective way of making new medicines
- Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy
- Regular exercise is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy

- Cutting down on sugary food and drinks is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy
- Cutting down on salt is a safe and effective way of keeping healthy

## Who should pay?

How would you rate the current budget of \$140 million per year for health research in New Zealand? (\$140 million is 0.71% of health care costs).

Thinking specifically about funding for health and medical research in New Zealand, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- Government should invest more funding in health research
- Thinking about New Zealand's September 2020 general election, how likely is it that you would vote for a party which promised to significantly increase the government's government health research budget?
- Industry (ie pharmaceutical companies etc) should invest more in health research
- Philanthropic organisations (charities) should invest more of their resources into health research
- Individuals should donate more to health research

## Philanthropic Investment in Health Research

On average, about how much money in total would you donate to health and medical research each year?

- None
- \$1-\$100 a year
- \$101-\$500 a year
- More than \$500 a year – please specify
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

How important are each of the following as reasons why you do not donate more (or at all) to health and medical research?

- I think it is a government responsibility
- I haven't been asked

- I support charities in other areas
- Health and medical research already gets a lot of support
- I don't know which health and medical research organisations to donate to
- I don't know where or how the money will be spent
- I can't afford to make donations

How likely would you be to leave a bequest to medical research in your will?

How important are each of the following as reasons why you are not likely to leave a bequest to medical research in your will?

- I think it is a government responsibility
- I haven't been asked
- I support charities in other areas
- Health and medical research already gets a lot of support
- I don't know which health and medical research organisations to leave a bequest to
- I don't know where or how the money will be spent
- I can't afford to leave a bequest

## Clinical Trials

Clinical trials are used to test the effectiveness of new medical treatments and drugs before they are commercially available.

- Have you ever been asked to participate in a clinical trial in New Zealand?
- Have you ever participated in a clinical trial in New Zealand?
- Are you currently participating in a clinical trial in New Zealand?

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- It is important that New Zealanders are able to participate in clinical trials for new medicines
- I would be willing to participate in a clinical trial of a new medicine if I had a condition that it might be able to treat
- There should be more opportunities for New Zealanders to participate in clinical trials for new medicines
- Participating in clinical trials for new medicines is as important as donating blood.

# Methodology

Research Overview	
Statement of compliance with international standards	This research was carried out in compliance with ISO20252:2012. All procedures and processes were also compliant with the RANZ Code of Practice and the NZ Privacy Act. As a global company, Kantar also complies with the EU GDPR
Client name:	New Zealanders for Health Research
Research provider name:	Kantar New Zealand
Research objectives:	To collect attitudes in New Zealand towards health research
Quantitative Research details	
Target group:	New Zealanders aged 18 years and older
Proposed sample size:	1,000
Actual sample size:	1,001
Fieldwork period:	20 – 26 May 2020
Sampling method:	Members of Kantar’s ConsumerLink panel, 18 years and older, living in New Zealand, were emailed an invitation to participate in the survey.
Data collection method:	Online survey (CAWI – Computer Assisted Web Interviewing)
Response rate:	36.5%
Quotas:	Quotas were put on interlocking age / gender samples, region and Māori / non-Māori
Weighting process:	Weighted proportional to population by age, gender and region
Sample population representation	Sample is broadly representative of New Zealand’s population by sex, age and area and has a representative Māori sample
Confidence interval in statistical testing / Margin of Error	95% / +/-3.1%
Incentive type	10 FlyBuys points

# About New Zealanders for Health Research

New Zealanders for Health Research is a national, dedicated public education and advocacy alliance committed to making health research a higher priority in New Zealand.

Our members span industry, patient advocacy groups, charities and research institutions. Together, our diverse alliance represents the interests of a broad community all working together to promote health and prosperity for New Zealanders.

Investment in health research is of vital importance. Not only does it improve the health and quality of people's lives now and in the future, it also supports New Zealand's economy through the emergence of new businesses and knowledge-based jobs for kiwis. Our voice promotes health and prosperity for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

New Zealanders for Health Research is a fully independent organisation, and all our activities are funded by membership subscriptions. Our public opinion data, advocacy programs and publications reach the public and decision makers to help advance medical, health and scientific research. By joining our alliance, you leverage resources to help enable the large scale advocacy efforts needed to increase health research funding and speed the development and translation of health benefits to our population.

## Our supporters

### PLATINUM



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