Working Papers Project on the Public and Biological Security Harvard School of Public Health

10.

SARS

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Survey Finds SARS Worries Down: But One-Third of Americans Think SARS Made Canada Travel Unsafe

Also Steep Drop in Concern Over a Smallpox Terrorist Attack; Public Still Wants Voluntary Vaccination of MD's and Nurses to Continue

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Boston, MA - A new study by the Harvard School of Public Health *Project on the Public and Biological Security* finds that concern about a terrorist attack using smallpox decreased sharply from a high of 51% of the public reporting that they were very or somewhat concerned in December 2002 to 28% in May 2003. Over that same period the share of Americans who said they would take the smallpox vaccine if it were available to them dropped from 61% to 45%. Despite media stories about serious side effects from the smallpox vaccine, the majority of Americans (74%) continue to support the Bush Administration's plan for voluntary vaccination of doctors and nurses.

"Though fewer Americans say they would take the smallpox vaccine, they still want their health care professionals to be prepared in the event of a biological attack," said Robert J. Blendon, Professor of Health Policy and Political Analysis at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Public Response to SARS

The percent of Americans who thought it was very or somewhat likely that they or an immediate family member would contract SARS in the next 12 months decreased from 25% in April 2003 to 17% in May 2003. About one-third of Americans (35%) believed that SARS had made it unsafe to travel to Canada. Canadian economists estimate that the SARS crisis could produce a net loss of up to \$1.5 billion dollars as a result of lost tourism and business related travel. The World Health Organization lifted its travel advisory on Toronto on May 14, after the survey was completed.

Between April 2003 and May 2003, the percent of the public who said they were avoiding Asian restaurants and stores due to worries about SARS fell from 14% to 9%. Likewise, the percentage of Americans avoiding people who they thought had recently traveled to Asia fell from 16% in April 2003 to 11% in May 2003. Other actions taken in response to reports of SARS included using a disinfectant at home or work (16%), consulting a website (8%), avoiding public events (7%), talking with a physician about health issues related to SARS (6%), carrying something to clean objects that may have been in contact with someone who had SARS (6%), and purchasing a face mask (3%). Among those who had traveled internationally in the past 12 months, 9% reported avoiding international air travel due to concerns about SARS.

Airline and government policies to contain the spread of SARS

Seventy-one percent of the public said that showing a video on international flights that describes SARS and what to do in the event of exposure to the disease would be helpful. Only 26% thought it would needlessly alarm people.

The survey also asked about the use of face masks during air travel as a precaution against SARS. Sixty-one percent of Americans said they would want to use a face mask on a domestic flight if another passenger were coughing a lot and the airline made these masks available. Seventy-three percent would want a face mask on an international flight if there were someone coughing on the plane.

"If cases of SARS continue to grow internationally, many Americans are going to want airlines to show that they are taking precautions to protect travelers," said Blendon.

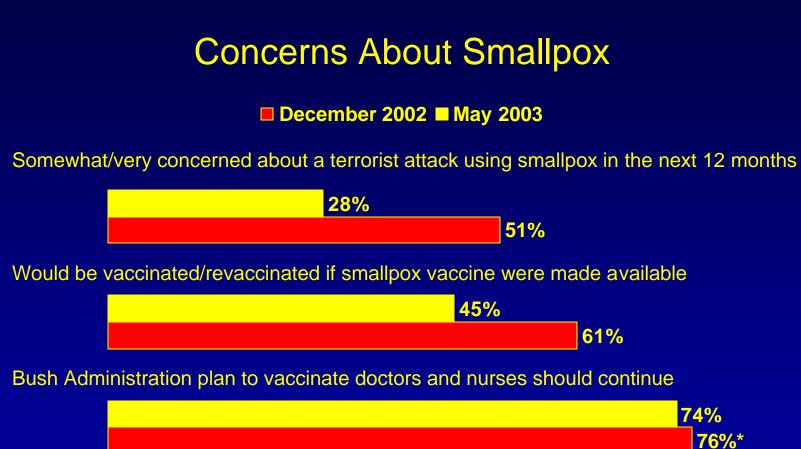
Eight-four percent of Americans knew that SARS was a disease that required people to be quarantined in order to prevent further spread. The vast majority said they would agree to isolation if diagnosed with the disease (95%) or quarantine (93%) if health officials determined it was necessary.

For further information please see:

<u>Figure 1</u> -- Concerns About Smallpox <u>http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/press/releases/blendon/520slide1.gif</u> <u>Figure 2</u> -- Precautions Against SARS <u>http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/press/releases/blendon/520slide2.gif</u> <u>Top Line (PDF File) http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/press/releases/blendon/520topline.pdf</u>

[i] SARS Leaves a Scar on Toronto. Business Week Online. Accessed at http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/may2003/nf2003051_7814.htm

This study was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health. The project director is Robert J. Blendon of the Harvard School of Public Health. The research team also includes Catherine M. DesRoches, John M. Benson, Kathleen Weldon and Liz Raleigh of the Harvard School of Public Health and Melissa J. Herrmann of ICR/International Communications Research. Fieldwork was conducted via telephone by ICR/International Communications Research of Media (PA) between May 2 - 6, 2003. The survey was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,025 adults age 18 and over. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3 percentage points.

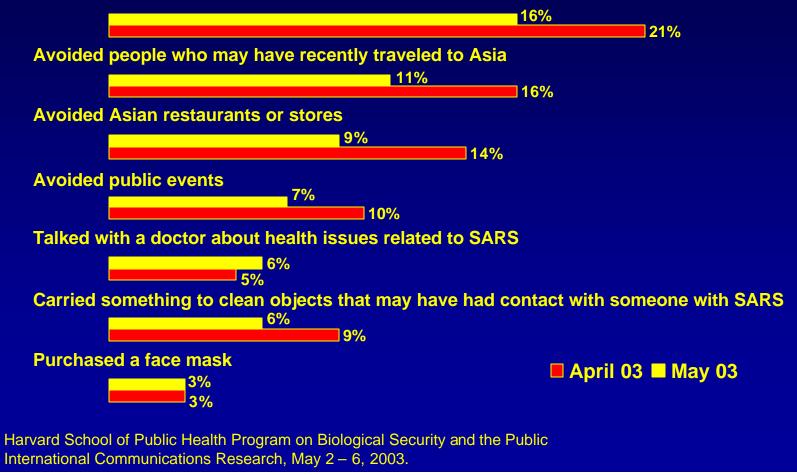


* Asked April 2003

Harvard School of Public Health Program on Biological Security and the Public International Communications Research, May 2 – 6, 2003.

Precautions Against SARS

Used disinfectant at home or work



Project on Biological Security and the Public Harvard School of Public Health

SARS AND SMALLPOX SURVEY

May 2-6, 2003 N=1025 adults nationwide

Research Team:

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH

PROGRAM ON BIOLOGICAL SECURITY AND THE PUBLIC HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH SARS and Smallpox **Topline Results**

This study was conducted by telephone May 2-6, 2003 among a nationally representative sample of 1025 adults 18 years of age and older. Field work by ICR/International Communications Research of Media, PA. The margin of error for this sample is +/- 3.1 percentage points.

SA-1. Have you heard or read anything in the news recently about a new form of flu in Asia, known as SARS, or haven't you?

	Have heard of SARS	Have NOT heard of SARS	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	91	9		
4/15/03**	93	7	*	

**Trend SARS1, n=1003

(Asked of one half of total respondents; n = 509)

SA-2. I'm going to read you a list of things and ask you how likely it is that each of them will happen to you or someone in your immediate family during the next 12 months. First, (INSERT FIRST ITEM)? Do you think that is very likely to happen to you or someone in your immediate family, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

a. Contracting SARS, the new form of flu from Asia

		LIKELY			NOT LIKELY			
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	17	3	13	81	37	44	3	
4/15/03**	25	5	20	72	42	31	2	

**Trend SARS1, n=503

b. Contracting anthrax

		LIKELY			NOT LIKE	LY	Don't	
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	8	3	5	91	36	54	1	
4/15/03**	12	3	9	86	37	49	2	*
12/8/02***	12	4	9	86	33	53	1	
11/12/02****	10	4	6	85	34	52	5	
5/21/02+	10	2	8	87	31	57	3	
12/3/01++	9	3	6	88	34	54	3	
10/28/01+++	14	4	10	82	43	39	4	

**Trend HSPH SARS1 (asked of one-half of total), n=503

***Trend HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

****Trend HSPH West Nile Virus, n=1001

+Trend HSPH ER Survey, n=3011

++Trend HSPH Bioterrorism2, n=1009

+++*Trend HSPH Bioterrorism1*, n=1015

c. Contracting smallpox

		LIKEL	Y		NOT LIKE	LY	Don't	
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	8	3	5	91	40	51	2	
4/15/03**	13	3	9	86	41	45	2	
12/8/02***	12	3	9	87	33	54	1	
11/12/02****	8	1	7	89	34	56	2	
5/21/02+	8	3	5	90	28	63	2	
12/3/01++	8	2	6	89	27	62	2	
10/28/01+++	9	3	6	88	38	50	3	

**Trend HSPH SARS1 (asked of one-half of total), n=503

***Trend HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

****Trend HSPH West Nile Virus, n=1001

+Trend HSPH ER Survey, n=3011

++*Trend HSPH Bioterrorism2*, *n*=1009

+++*Trend HSPH Bioterrorism1*, n=1015

d. Contracting West Nile Virus

	LIKELY				NOT LIKE	LY	Don't	
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	23	6	18	72	36	35	5	
4/15/03**	30	4	25	67	40	27	4	
12/8/02***	25	5	20	73	38	35	2	
11/12/02+	23	6	17	73	39	33	5	*

**Trend HSPH SARS1 (asked of one-half of total), n=503

***Trend HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006 (Getting West Nile Fever)

+*Trend HSPH West Nile Survey, n=1001 (Getting sick from West Nile virus)*

(Asked of one half of total respondents; n = 516)

SA-3. Are you concerned that you or someone in your immediate family may get sick from SARS during the next 12 months, or aren't you concerned about that?

(Asked of total who are concerned about SARS; n = 121)

SA-3a. How concerned are you? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not very concerned?

(Based on one-half total respondents; N=516)

SA-3/SA-3a. Combo Table

	Concerned about SARS			Not concerned	Don't know		
	NET	Very	Somewhat	Not very	about SARS		Refused
5/6/03	26	9	14	2	72	2	*
4/15/03**	32	15	15	2	68	*	

(Based on one-half total respondents; N=516)

SA-4. Are you concerned that there will be a terrorist attack using smallpox in the U.S. during the next 12 months, or aren't you concerned about that?

(Asked of total who are concerned about an attack; n = 135)

SA-4a, How concerned are you about such an attack: very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not very concerned?

SA-4/4a Combination Table

	Concerned about Smallpox			Not concerned	Don't know		
	NET	Very	Somewhat	Not very	about Smallpox		Refused
5/6/03	28	9	15	4	70	2	*
12/8/02*	51	22	26	3	49	1	

*Trend HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

SA-5. To the best of your knowledge, is SARS, the new form of flu from Asia, a disease that is contagious, meaning that it can be passed from one person to another, or is it not contagious?

	Contagious	Not contagious	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	89	3	8	*
4/15/03*	92	2	6	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

SA-6. To the best of your knowledge, how easily does SARS spread? Is it spread very easily, somewhat easily, not too easily, or not easily at all?

		EASILY			NOT EASILY			
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	81	44	37	11	9	2	8	*
4/15/03*	82	46	35	9	8	2	9	

SA-7. I'm going to read you a list of some ways people can get a disease. As I read each one, please tell me whether or not you think it is possible to contract SARS that way.
INTERVIEWER, IF R SEEMS HESITANT OR UNSURE, ASK: If you don't know, just tell me. First (READ FIRST ITEM). To the best of your knowledge, is it possible to contract SARS that way, or not? How about (READ NEXT ITEM)?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	70	23	6	1
4/15/03*	71	23	6	

a. Shaking hands with someone who has an active case of SARS

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

b. Eating food that has been prepared by someone who was infected

with or had been exposed to SARS

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	66	24	10	1
4/15/03*	73	21	6	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

c. Being in close contact with someone who has SARS

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	88	7	4	1
4/15/03*	91	6	2	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

d. Being on the same airplane with someone who has SARS

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	76	17	6	*
4/15/03*	78	18	5	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

e. Eating undercooked chicken

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	14	74	12	*
4/15/03*	20	71	9	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

f. Touching objects or surfaces that have been in contact with someone who has SARS

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	64	28	8	*
4/15/03*	66	29	5	

g. Blood transfusions

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	58	29	12	*
4/15/03*	62	28	9	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

SA-8. Have you traveled to Canada at any time during the past 12 months?

	Traveled to Canada	Have not traveled to Canada	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	6	93		*

SA-9. Do you think that it is currently safe to travel to Canada, or do you think that SARS has made it unsafe to go to Canada?

	Safe to traveled to Canada	Not safe to travel to		
		Canada	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	57	35	8	*

SA-10. Have you traveled to any other country outside the United States or Canada during the past 12 months?

	Traveled outside of US/Canada	Have not traveled outside of US/Canada	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	10	90		*

SA-8/SA-10 Combination Table

	Traveled outside of US	Have not traveled outside of US/Don't know
5/6/03	14	86

(Item E asked of those who have traveled to Canada in the last 12 months; N=74) (Item F asked of those who have traveled outside of the US in the last 12 months; N=171)

SA-11. In response to reports of SARS, have you or has someone in your household done any of the following? Have you (INSERT ITEM)?

a.	a. Consulted a website for information about now to protect yourself against SARS					
		Yes	No	Don't know	Refused	
5/6/03		8	91	*	*	
4/15/03*		9	90	*		

Consulted a website for information about how to protect yourself against SARS

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

b. Avoided public events

5/6/03 7 92	t know	Refused
	*	*
4/15/03* 10 89	*	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

Talked with your doctor about health issues related to SARS c.

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	6	93	*	*
4/15/03*	5	94	*	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

d. Purchased a face mask

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	3	96	*	*
4/15/03*	3	96	1	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

e. Avoided travel to Canada (among those who have traveled to Canada in the last 12 months; n = 74)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	5	95		

Avoided international air travel, that is airline travel outside the United States (among f. those who have traveled outside the US in the last 12 months; n = 171)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	9	91	*	

Avoided Asian restaurants or stores g.

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	9	90	*	*
4/15/03*	14	86	*	

h. Carried something to clean any objects you think might have come into contact with someone who has SARS

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	6	94	*	*
4/15/03*	9	90	1	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

i. Used a disinfectant at home or work to protect against SARS

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	16	83	*	*
4/15/03*	21	78	*	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

j. Avoided people you think may have recently visited Asia

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	11	87	3	*
4/15/03*	16	82	2	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

SA-12. From what you have heard or read, have medical experts identified the virus that causes SARS, or haven't they yet identified the virus?

	Yes, identified virus that	No, have not identified virus that		
	causes SARS	causes SARS	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	36	49	15	*

SA-13. To the best of your knowledge, is there a vaccine against SARS, or isn't there one?

	Yes, there is a vaccine	No, there is no vaccine	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	4	88	8	*
4/15/03*	6	84	9	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

SA-14. To the best of your knowledge, is there an effective treatment for people who have contracted SARS, or doesn't such a treatment exist?

	Yes, there is treatment	No, there is no treatment	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	36	47	17	*
4/15/03*	36	51	13	

SA-15. Of people who get SARS, about how many do you think die from the disease? Less than one in ten, about one in four, about half, or about three-quarters?

	Less than	About one in	About half	About three-	Don't know	
	one in ten	four		quarters		Refused
5/6/03	52	16	11	10	10	*
4/15/03*	53	17	14	10	7	*

^{*}Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

(Asked of those who say SARS is one of the diseases that must be quarantined;

n=881)

SA-17. To the best of your knowledge, are any people in the United States currently being quarantined for SARS, or not?

SA-16/SA-17. Combo Table

		Must be quarantined				
		People are being	People are not being	be quarantined	Don't	
	NET	quarantined	quarantined		know	Refused
5/6/03	84	33	35	9	7	*
4/15/03*	83	41	29	12	5	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

SA-18. If you had SARS and health officials told you that you needed to be isolated for two or three weeks in a health care facility to prevent spreading the disease, would you agree to go, or wouldn't you?

	Yes, agree to be isolated	No, would not be isolated	Don't know	
				Refused
5/6/03	95	3	2	*
4/15/03*	94	4	2	*

SA-16. Some contagious diseases require people who have been exposed to the disease to be quarantined in order to keep the disease from spreading. To the best of your knowledge, is SARS one of the diseases where people who are exposed need to be quarantined, or isn't it?

SA-19. Suppose you were exposed to someone who has SARS but you didn't know if you had the disease or not. If health officials told you that you and your family needed to be quarantined in your home for up to ten days away from other people in order to prevent spreading the disease, would you agree to do that, or wouldn't you?

	Yes, agree to be quarantined in home	No, would not be quarantined in home	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	93	5	2	*
4/15/03*	92	7	1	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

SA-20. Recently President Bush signed an executive order adding SARS to the list of diseases for which people can be quarantined. Do you think this order threatens or does not threaten your personal rights and freedoms?

(Asked of those who think executive order threatens person rights and freedoms;

n =111)

SA-20a. Is that a major threat or a minor threat?

SA-20/SA-20a. Combo Table

	Threatens personal rights			Does not threaten	Don't	
	NET	Major threat	Minor threat	personal rights	know	Refused
5/6/03	13	3	10	83	4	*
4/15/03*	13	5	8	85	2	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

SA-21. Some people have proposed showing a video about SARS on airplanes during flights to other countries. The video would describe the disease and what to do if you have been exposed to SARS. Do you think showing such a video on flights would be helpful because it would provide information on what to do, or do you think it would needlessly alarm people?

	Video is helpful	Video will needlessly alarm people	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	71	26	2	1

(Asked of one half of total respondents; n =509)

SA-22. Suppose you were on an airplane traveling within the United States and someone there was coughing a lot. If the airline made face masks available, would you want one you could wear during the flight, or wouldn't you think this was necessary?

	Yes, want face mask	No, face mask not necessary	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	61	33	5	*

(Asked of one half of total respondents; n =516)

SA-22a. Suppose you were on an airplane traveling to another country outside the United States and someone there was coughing a lot. If the airline made face masks available, would you want one you could wear during the flight, or wouldn't you think this was necessary?

	Yes, want face mask	No, face mask not necessary	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	73	22	4	1

Now, on a different subject...

	Yes, vaccinated	No, not vaccinated	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	69	25	6	*
4/15/03*	71	25	4	
3/16/03**	55	36	9	
12/8/02***	66	29	5	
5/21/02****	56	31	13	

SA-23. To the best of your knowledge, have you ever been vaccinated for smallpox, or not?

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

Trend HSPH Smallpox Insert, n=1009 *Trend HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006 ****Trend HSPH ER Survey, n=3011

SA-24. As you may know, a vaccine for smallpox exists, but it may produce serious side effects in a small number of cases. If such a vaccine were made available to you, would you go get (vaccinated/re-vaccinated) as a precaution against a terrorist attack using smallpox, or wouldn't you get such a vaccination?

	Yes, would get (vaccinated/re-vaccinated)	No, would not get (vaccinated/re-vaccinated)	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	45	48	6	*
4/15/03*	43	51	6	
12/8/02**	61	36	3	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

**HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

SA-25. If you were to be (vaccinated/re-vaccinated) for smallpox, how likely do you think it is that you would experience the following sorts of side effects from the vaccination?

How about (INSERT ITEM)? Do you think that it is very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

a. A sore	arm
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		LIKELY			NOT LIKELY			
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not very	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	74	44	30	20	12	8	6	*
4/15/03*	83	47	36	14	8	6	3	*
12/8/02**	90	57	34	9	4	4	1	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

**HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

b. A fever or extreme tiredness

		LIKEI	LY		NOT LIKE	LY	Don't	
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not very	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	63	26	37	27	18	10	10	*
4/15/03*	71	24	46	24	16	7	5	*
12/8/02**	81	33	47	17	12	5	2	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

**HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

c. Serious illness

	LIKELY				NOT LIKELY			
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not very	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	30	11	19	63	42	20	7	*
4/15/03*	39	12	28	55	38	17	5	*
12/8/02**	41	11	30	58	40	18	1	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003 **HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

d. Death

		LIKELY			NOT LIKELY			
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not very	Not at all	know	Refused
5/6/03	19	7	12	74	37	37	7	*
4/15/03*	26	8	18	70	37	33	4	*
12/8/02**	25	6	19	73	41	32	2	

*Trend HSPH SARS1, n=1003

**HSPH Bioterrorism4, n=1006

SA-26 A few months ago, the Bush Administration asked governments at all levels to vaccinate a number of doctors and nurses against smallpox on a voluntary basis. Some of the doctors and nurses vaccinated have had serious side effects and a few have died after being vaccinated. Some people say that because of this, the government effort to vaccinate doctors and nurses should stop. Other people say that the program should continue because it is necessary to have some doctors and nurses vaccinated so that they will be prepared to vaccinate other people if there is a smallpox outbreak. Which of these views comes closer to yours: should the program be stopped, or should it continue?

	Stopped	Continue	Don't know	Refused
5/6/03	19	74	6	1
4/15/03*	20	76	4	*