

STERIS OMNIBUS SUMMARY OF RESULTS October 2005

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

In October 2005, Steris Corporation sponsored an omnibus survey to determine consumer attitudes about hand washing and hospital infection rates.

The telephone survey was conducted by ORC International's Caravan® Survey from October 14-18, 2005. The Caravan® Survey is based on a random-digit-dialing (RDD) probability sample of all households in the United States. The data is weighted to ensure the results reflect a representative U.S. population in terms of age, gender, geographic region, and ethnicity. Overall, 1,007 respondents age 18 and older participated in the study, for a sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

KEY FINDINGS

Nearly half (48%) of Americans have recent experience with hospitals.

When asked if they, a family member, or a close friend have been hospitalized within the past two years, about half said "yes" (48%) and half said "no" (51%).

Cleanliness tops the list of factors consumers consider when choosing a hospital.

Survey respondents were asked how important each of a list of factors would be if they had to choose a new hospital right now.

The vast majority (94%) rate "clean" as very important to their decision.

Relatedly, 85% consider low infection rates very important in hospital selection.

Insurance coverage also plays a key role: 88% of consumers rate a hospital's acceptance of their insurance as very important.

Majorities also consider a hospital's reputation (79%), friendly staff (68%), and high staff-to-patient ratio (64%) to be very important. Only about half rate previous experience with a hospital (54%) or close to home (49%) as very important to their decision.

Question: If you had to choose a new hospital right now, would you consider each of the following reasons to be very important, somewhat important, or not important at all in making your decision?				
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Clean	94%	5	*	*
Whether they accept your insurance	88%	7	3	1
Low infection rates	85%	8	4	2
Good reputation	79%	18	2	1
Friendly staff	68%	27	4	*
High staff-to-patient ratio	64%	28	5	3
Previous experience with hospital	54%	33	10	3
Close to home	49%	41	9	1

* Less than one-half of one percent

Consumers are most likely to avoid a specific hospital due to higher-than-average infection rates.

Respondents were asked how important each of a list of factors would be when choosing to avoid or not go to a specific hospital. Nearly nine in ten (87%) say higher-than-average infection rates is a very important reason to avoid a hospital.

Four in five (79%) respondents say lack of cleanliness is a very important reason to avoid a hospital.

Other very important reasons to avoid a hospital include:

- ◆ The hospital is understaffed (74%)
- ◆ It is the best hospital in your area, but does not accept your insurance (63%)
- ◆ You or someone you know had an unpleasant experience there (60%)
- ◆ The staff is knowledgeable, but not friendly (42%)

Question: How important would the following reasons be in choosing to avoid or not go to a specific hospital? Would they be very important, somewhat important, or not important?				
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
They have higher-than-average infection rates	87%	7	4	2
You have seen or heard it is not clean	79%	15	5	1
They are understaffed	74%	20	4	1
They are the best hospital in your area, but do not accept your insurance	63%	25	10	3
You or someone you know had an unpleasant experience there	60%	30	9	1
The staff is knowledgeable, but not friendly	42%	45	10	2

Four in five consumers say they would ask healthcare staff to wash or sanitize their hands, if prompted to do so.

Respondents were asked, “If you were in a hospital, and the staff asked you to be a partner with them by reminding all your physicians, nurses, and other staff to wash or sanitize their hands before examining or treating you by saying, ‘Did you wash or sanitize your hands,’ would you do this?”

Four in five (80%) consumers say they would do this, while 18% say they would not, and 2% don't know.

Slightly more than half (52%) of consumers noticed a healthcare worker using gloves rather than washing their hands on their last hospitalization or doctor visit.

Infection Rates, Cleanliness Top List of Factors Consumers Consider When Choosing a Hospital



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Survey Shows Infection Rates and Cleanliness Are Among Patients' Top Three Concerns

Four Out of Five Patients Ready to Take Infection Control Matters Into Their Own Hands -- Literally

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 13 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Consumers cite infection rates and cleanliness as two of the three most important factors when choosing a hospital, outranking other factors such as reputation and proximity, according to a survey released today by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania.

According to the survey, when information about hospital acquired infection (HAI) rates is made available, patients are likely to choose institutions with the lowest rates. More than 30 states have either considered or are now considering legislation requiring public reporting of hospital acquired infection (HAI) rates. The survey also signaled that patient empowerment will play an increasingly important role in the HAI issue, with four in five consumers saying they would ask hospital staff to wash their hands, if prompted to do so.

As many as 2 million patients acquire infections in U.S. hospitals each year, resulting in 90,000 deaths annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the CDC has said hand hygiene is the single most important factor in reducing HAIs. In fact, infection control programs that include hand hygiene compliance measurement can reduce HAIs by one-third.

According to the survey:

- Cleanliness tops the list of factors consumers consider when choosing a hospital. Survey respondents were asked how important each of a list of factors would be if they had to choose a new hospital right now. The vast majority (94 percent) rate "clean" as very important to their decision. Relatedly, 85 percent consider low infection rates very important in hospital selection.

Cleanliness outranked the second most important factor, insurance coverage (88 percent), proximity (49 percent), and several other factors as reasons cited for selecting a particular hospital.

- Access to hospital-infection-rate data will impact patients' choices. The vast majority (93 percent) of consumers say knowing infection rates for a hospital or doctor would influence their selections. Nearly nine in ten (87 percent) say higher-than-average infection rates would be a very important reason to avoid a hospital. Four in five (79 percent) say lack of cleanliness would be a very important reason to avoid a hospital.
- Patients aren't afraid to demand better hand hygiene to help fight infection. Respondents were asked, "If you were in a hospital, and the staff asked you to be a partner with them by reminding all your physicians, nurses, and other staff to wash or sanitize their hands before examining or treating you by saying, 'Did you wash or sanitize your hands,' would you do this?" Four in five (80 percent) consumers say they would.

Dr. Maryanne McGuckin, a senior researcher at the University of Pennsylvania and creator of the Partners in Your Care hand hygiene program, said the survey shows that patients will take matters into their own hands -- literally.

"The results of this survey show that if armed with the right information, patients are willing to become a part of the solution," Dr. McGuckin said. "Once we tell them that we welcome their reminders, patients will become active members of their healthcare team by asking their healthcare workers to wash their hands."

Dr. McGuckin, who served on the 2002 CDC task force that developed hand hygiene guidelines for healthcare workers, created Partners in Your Care to help fight HAIs. The program, which combines monitoring and patient empowerment, is used in more than 300 hospitals and has shown a mean improvement in hand hygiene compliance of 59 percent.

"Today many healthcare workers wash their hands less than 50 percent of the time between patient contacts -- either because they forget, their hands are too sore from previous washings with harsh products, or they mistakenly believe that gloves reduce the need for frequent hand washing," said Robert Mosher, vice president of applied infection control for STERIS Corporation, sponsor of Partners in Your Care.

"When patients and healthcare workers combine forces, we can reverse this trend and reduce HAIs," Mosher said.

About the Survey

The telephone survey was conducted by ORC International's Caravan(R) Survey from October 14-17, 2005. The Caravan(R) Survey is based on a random-digit-dialing (RDD) probability sample of all households in the United States. The data is weighted to ensure the results reflect a representative U.S. population in terms of age, gender, geographic region, and ethnicity. Overall, 1,007 respondents age 18 and older participated in the study, for a sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. The survey was developed by researchers at University of Pennsylvania and sponsored by STERIS Corp.

To view a copy of the summary of findings, visit <http://www.steris.com/aic/partners.cfm> .

About Dr. Maryanne McGuckin and Partners in Your Care

For more information about Dr. McGuckin, her areas of expertise, research and the Partners in Your Care Program, visit the University of Pennsylvania Web site hand hygiene content area at:

<http://www.med.upenn.edu/mcguckin/handwashing/> .

About STERIS Corp.

The mission of STERIS Corporation (NYSE: [STE](#)) is to provide a healthier today and safer tomorrow through knowledgeable people and innovative infection prevention, decontamination, and health science technologies, products and services. The company's more than 5,000 dedicated employees around the world work together to supply a broad array of solutions by offering a combination of equipment, consumables and services to healthcare, pharmaceutical, industrial and government customers. The company is listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol STE.

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Web Site: <http://www.steris.com/aic/partners.cfm>

<http://www.med.upenn.edu/mcguckin/handwashing>

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