

Table PPS-3

**Confidence in scientists to act in the best interests of the public, by indicator of scientific method understanding: 2020**

(Percent)

Perception of the scientific method	A great deal	A fair amount	Not too much	None at all
Understanding of the use of control groups in a hypothetical scientific study about the effectiveness of a medication				
Create a control group that does not receive the medication ( <i>n</i> = 4,432)	44	43	11	2
Other responses <sup>a</sup> ( <i>n</i> = 1,851)	32	48	16	4
Understanding what a hypothesis is				
Selected "hypothesis" as answer ( <i>n</i> = 3,725)	47	41	10	2
Selected answer other than "hypothesis" ( <i>n</i> = 2,558)	31	49	16	3

<sup>a</sup> Includes "not sure," incorrect responses, and refusals.**Note(s):**

Percentages may not add to 100% because the nonresponse category for level of confidence is not shown. See Table SPPS-13 for standard errors. Responses are to the following: *How much confidence, if any, do you have in [scientists] to act in the best interests of the public?*

*A scientist is conducting a study to determine how well a new medication treats ear infections. The scientist tells the participants to put 10 drops in their infected ear each day. After 2 weeks, all participants' ear infections had healed. Which of the following changes to the design of this study would most improve the ability to test if the new medication effectively treats ear infections? Create a second group of participants with ear infections who do not use any ear drops. Create a second group of participants with ear infections who use 15 drops a day. Have participants use ear drops for only 1 week. Have participants put ear drops in both their infected ear and healthy ear. Not sure.*

*The time a computer takes to start has increased dramatically. One possible explanation for this is that the computer is running out of memory. This explanation is a scientific... Hypothesis. Conclusion. Experiment. Observation. Not sure.*

**Source(s):**

Pew Research Center, American Trends Panel Wave 79 (2020), conducted 18–29 November 2020.

*Science and Engineering Indicators*