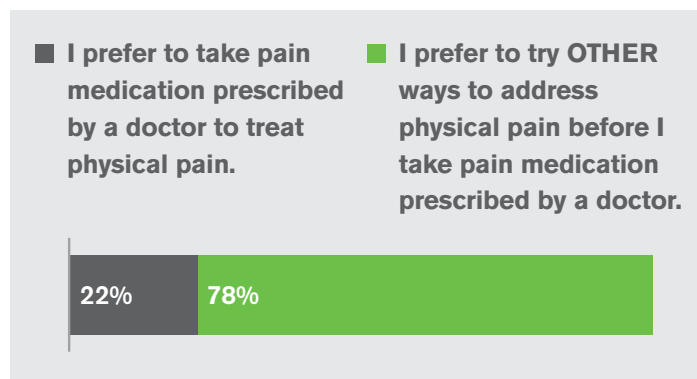


Americans Prefer Drug-Free Pain Management Over Opioids

Americans prefer drug-free pain management. While 22% of U.S. adults prefer to take pain medication prescribed by a doctor to treat their physical pain, 78% prefer to try other ways to address their physical pain before they take pain medication prescribed by a doctor. This finding is based on data collected from February through March 2017 as part of the Gallup-Palmer College of Chiropractic Annual Study of Americans.

Which of the following best describes you? n=6,206



The United States is experiencing an opioid overdose epidemic. More than 33,000 people died from an opioid overdose in 2015 — with more than 22,000 of those deaths involving prescription opioids, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine and fentanyl.¹ The number of opioid overdose deaths has more than quadrupled since 1999.²

Gallup's research from a July 2016 telephone survey of Americans shows that Americans are very aware of the dangers associated with opioid abuse. In fact, Americans view opioids as the most serious local drug problem. Forty-four percent of Americans see prescription painkillers as a "crisis" or "very serious problem" in their local area. This is significantly higher than the percentages who see cigarettes, alcohol, cocaine or marijuana as a "crisis" or "very serious problem."

78%

prefer to try other ways to address their physical pain before they take pain medication prescribed by a doctor.

This finding is based on data collected from February through March 2017 as part of the Gallup-Palmer College of Chiropractic Annual Study of Americans.

¹ Rudd, R. A., Seth, P., David, F., & Scholl, L. (2016). Increases in drug and opioid-involved overdose deaths – United States, 2010-2015. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm655051e1>; Opioid data analysis. (2017). *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/analysis.html>

² Understanding the epidemic. (2017). *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>

Americans also see multiple causes for the opioid problem, suggesting that the public believes the problem needs to be attacked on multiple fronts. Slightly more than half of Americans who have heard of or read about the prescription opioid problem place “a lot” of blame on “the pharmaceutical industry encouraging doctors to use opioids” (55%) and on “doctors overprescribing painkillers to their patients” (53%). Meanwhile, slightly less than half attribute a lot of the blame to a “lack of public knowledge about the dangers of opioids” (49%) and to “patients demanding that they be given a prescription to ease their pain” (47%).³

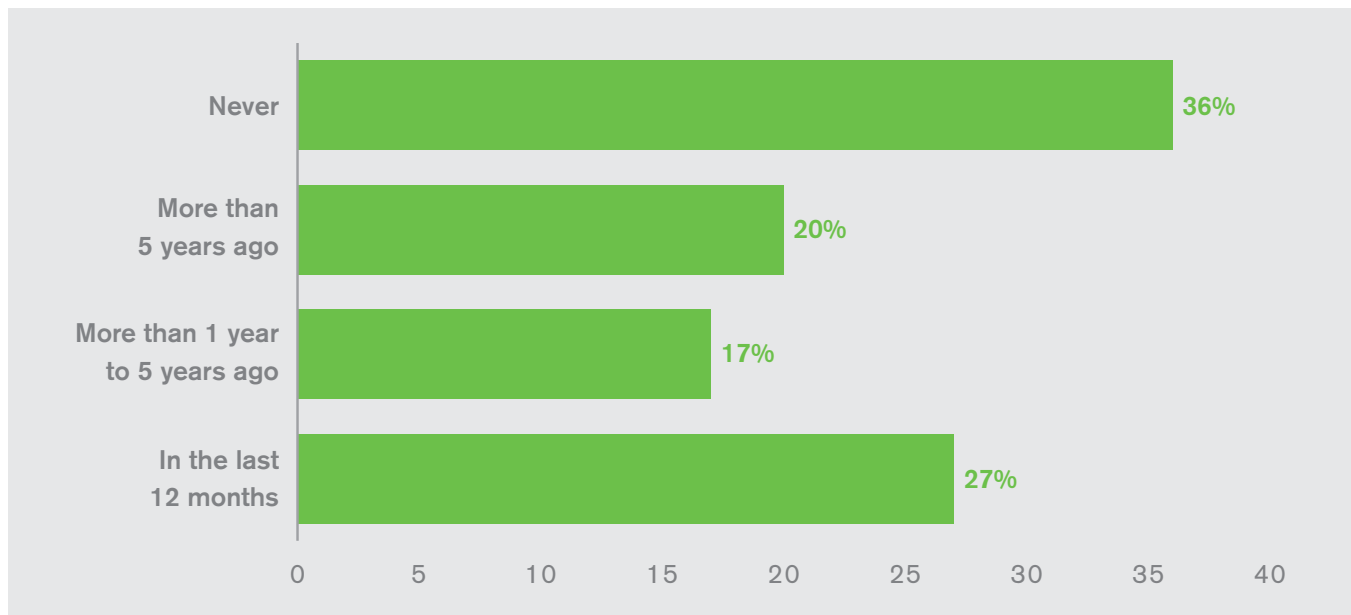
In 2017, Americans rated both the pharmaceutical industry and the healthcare industry more negatively than positively. In fact, these two industries rated among the lowest of the 25 industries measured.⁴

Many Americans Have Significant Neck and Back Pain

Low back pain is one of the most common sources of pain. In fact, compared with migraine pain, neck pain and face pain, low back pain is the most commonly reported type of pain that lasted a whole day or more in the U.S., according to CDC research.⁵ In the 2017 Gallup-Palmer College of Chiropractic Annual Study of Americans, Gallup finds that nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults (64%) have had neck or back pain significant enough that they saw a healthcare professional for care at some point in their lifetime.

About one in four adults in the U.S. (27%) have seen a healthcare professional for significant neck or back pain in the last 12 months. More than half of those adults (54%) have had an ongoing problem with neck or back pain for five years or more.

When was the last time that you had neck or back pain significant enough that you saw a healthcare professional for care? n=6,073

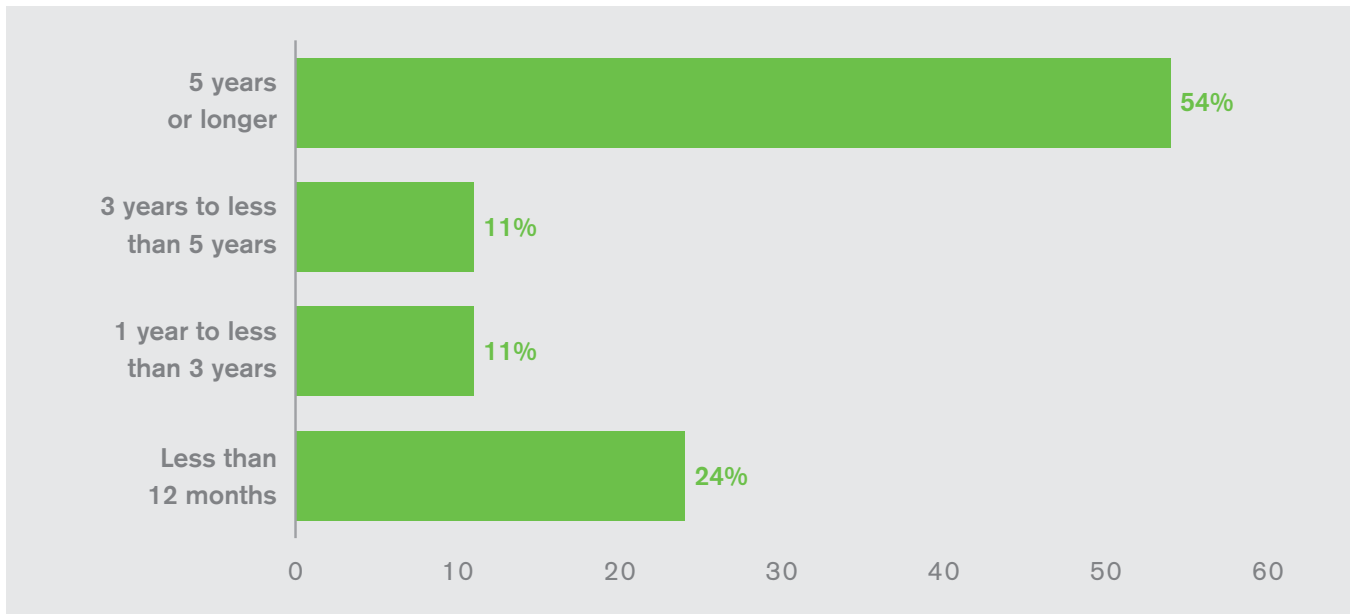


³ Davis, A. (2016). In U.S., opioids viewed as most serious local drug problem. *Gallup*. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/194042/opioids-viewed-serious-local-drug-problem.aspx?g_source=opioids&g_medium=search&g_campaign=tiles

⁴ Saad, L. (2017). U.S. business sectors gain or hold steady in public esteem. *Gallup*. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/216284/business-sectors-gain-hold-steady-public-esteem.aspx?g_source=mn2-us

⁵ National Center for Health Statistics. (2006). Health, United States, 2006: With chartbook on trends in the health of Americans. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/06.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/06.pdf)

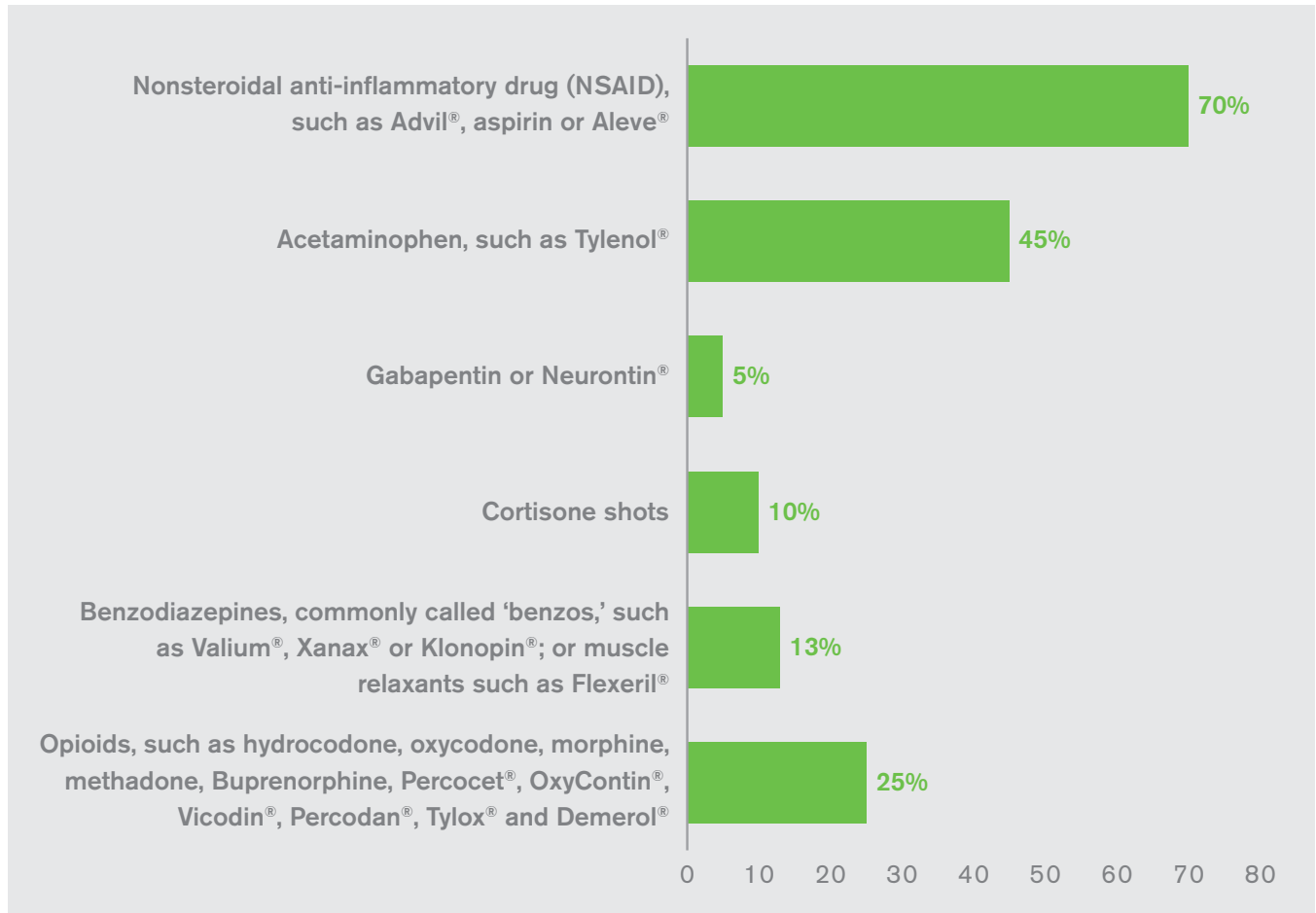
How long has neck or back pain been an ongoing problem for you? (Asked of those who saw a health professional for significant neck/back pain in the last 12 months) n=1,662



Americans Manage Neck and Back Pain With Prescription and Nonprescription Drugs

Among those who have had ongoing neck or back pain for less than 12 months, seven in 10 have taken a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), such as Advil®, aspirin or Aleve®, to manage the pain, and 45% have taken acetaminophen, such as Tylenol®. One in four of these new neck or back pain sufferers say they took an opioid for pain management.

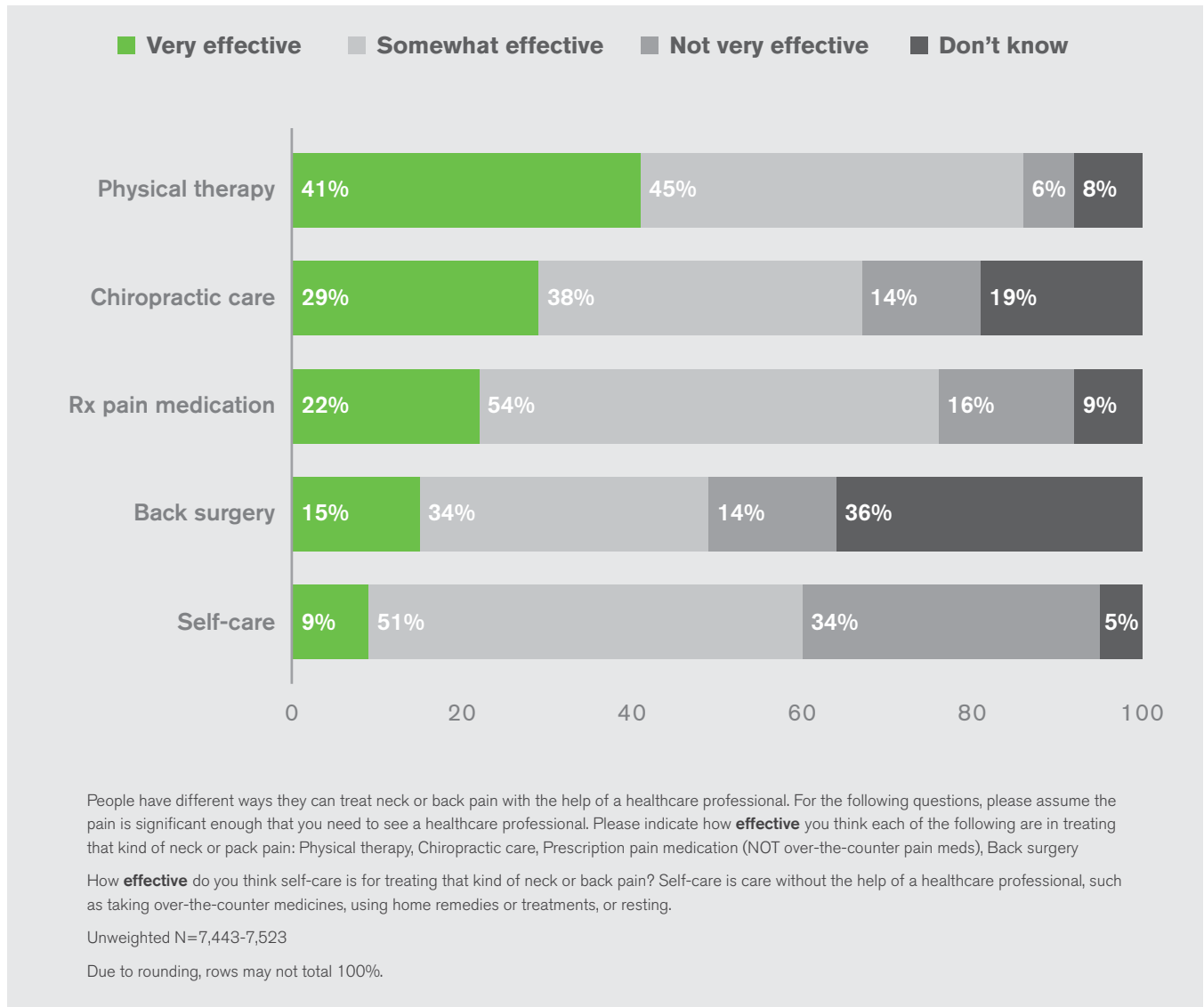
Did you take any of the following for your neck or back pain in the last 12 months? (Asked of those who saw a health professional in the last 12 months for significant neck/back pain that had been ongoing for 12 months or less) n=364



Nondrug Treatments Perceived as Most Effective for Neck and Back Pain

Multiple treatment options are available for adults who suffer from significant neck or back pain. When asked how effective physical therapy, chiropractic care, back surgery, prescription pain medication and self-care are at treating significant neck or back pain, U.S. adults are most likely to describe physical therapy (41%) as “very effective.” Nearly three in 10 (29%) describe chiropractic care as “very effective,” and 22% say prescription pain medication is “very effective.” Fewer describe back surgery (15%) and self-care (9%) as “very effective.”

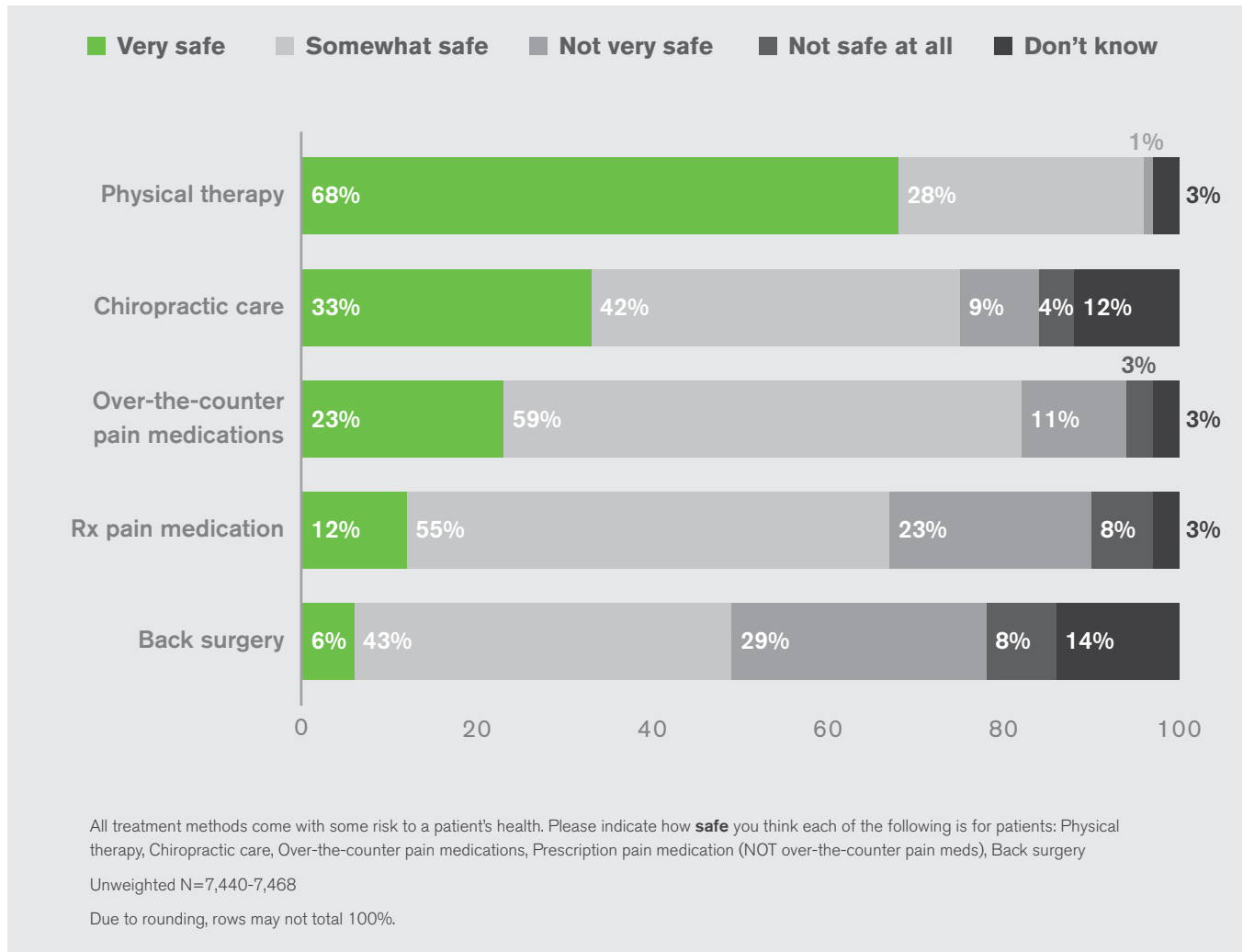
Perceived Effectiveness of Different Neck/Back Pain Treatments



Nondrug Treatments Perceived as Most Safe for Neck and Back Pain

Nearly a third of Americans say prescription pain medication is either “not very safe” (23%) or “not safe at all” (8%). Few Americans (12%) describe prescription pain medication as “very safe.” Adults are more likely to say that physical therapy methods are “very safe” than to say this about the other treatment options given. About two-thirds of adults (68%) describe physical therapy as “very safe,” and one-third say the same about chiropractic care. Back surgery is the least likely to be described as “very safe” (6%).

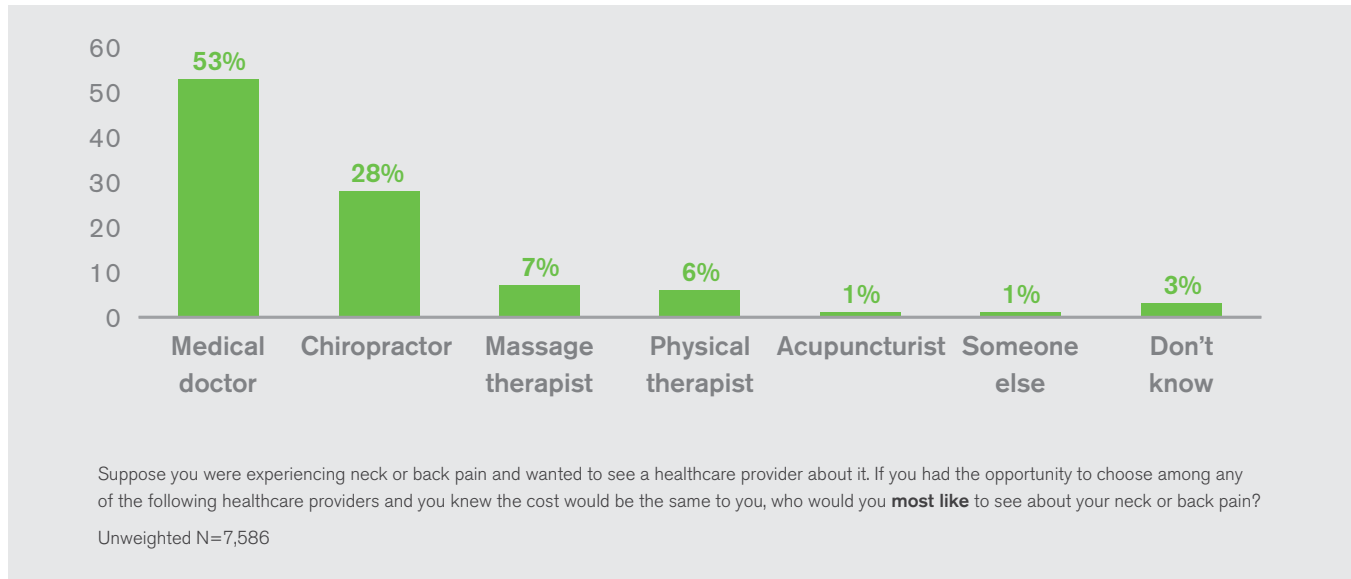
Perceived Safety of Different Neck/Back Pain Treatments



Medical Doctors Preferred for Neck or Back Pain

About half of Americans (53%) say they would prefer to see a medical doctor if they were to experience significant neck or back pain and they knew the cost would be the same to them regardless of which healthcare provider they saw. About one in four adults would prefer to see a chiropractor over other healthcare professionals for significant neck or back pain.

Medical Doctors, Chiropractors Top Choices for Neck/Back Pain



Conclusion

While public perceptions of options for drug-free pain management vary, these findings suggest that Americans are aware of the dangers associated with opioid misuse and are open to drug-free alternatives for pain management.

As concern over the opioid epidemic has grown, nondrug pain management options have garnered more attention and acceptance within the medical community. Medical organizations, such as the Joint Commission and the American College of Physicians, have taken important steps to tackle the national opioid epidemic. The Joint Commission, the largest U.S. accreditation body for healthcare facilities, revised its hospital performance measures for pain management to include a requirement that hospitals provide drug-free pain treatments. Drug-free treatment options include, but are not limited to, osteopathic manipulation, chiropractic care, massage therapy and acupuncture therapy.⁶ The American College of Physicians, the largest medical specialty organization in the U.S., developed new guidelines for low back pain treatment, recommending the use of noninvasive, nondrug treatments before resorting to prescription drug treatment.⁷

These developments could be a sign of a future where patients and healthcare professionals alike are trying drug-free treatment options before relying on opioids.

⁶ The Joint Commission. (2017). Joint Commission enhances pain assessment and management requirements for accredited hospitals. *The Joint Commission Perspectives*. Retrieved from https://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/Joint_Commission_Enhances_Pain_Assessment_and_Management_Requirements_for_Accredited_Hospitals1.PDF; National Nursing Home Quality Improvement Campaign. (2017). Evidence-based non-pharmacologic interventions for pain. Retrieved from https://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/files/Guide_to_Evidence-based_NonPharmacologic_Interventions_for_Pain.pdf

⁷ Clinical Guidelines Committee of the American College of Physicians. (2017). Noninvasive treatments for acute, subacute, and chronic low back pain: A clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Retrieved from <http://annals.org/aim/article/2603228/noninvasive-treatments-acute-subacute-chronic-low-back-pain-clinical-practice>

Methods

The results are based on a nationally representative Gallup Panel™ web and mail study completed by 6,305 national adults aged 18 or older, with 5,826 completions from the web and 479 from mail. This study was conducted from Feb. 8-March 13, 2017. The Gallup Panel is a probability-based longitudinal panel of more than 100,000 United States adults whom Gallup selects using random-digit-dial phone interviews that cover landline and cellular telephone numbers. Gallup also uses address-based sampling methods to recruit Gallup Panel members.

The Gallup Panel is not an opt-in panel, and members do not receive incentives for participating. The sample for this study was weighted to be demographically representative of the United States adult population, using 2015 Current Population Survey figures. For results based on this sample, one can say that the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error are higher for subsamples. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error and bias into the findings of public opinion polls. The study was commissioned by Palmer College of Chiropractic.

About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.

About Palmer College of Chiropractic

Palmer College of Chiropractic is the founding college of the chiropractic profession, and is known as *The Trusted Leader in Chiropractic Education*®. It was founded in 1897, in Davenport, Iowa, by D.D. Palmer, the discoverer of chiropractic. More than 2,200 students attend Palmer College campuses in Davenport, Iowa; Port Orange, Fla.; and San Jose, Calif. Palmer's nearly 30,000 practicing alumni comprise almost half of the doctors of chiropractic in the United States.

