

“On the Front Lines of Care: Primary Care Doctors’ Office Systems, Experiences and Views in Seven Countries,” *Health Affairs* Web Exclusive, November 2, 2006.

The Commonwealth Fund 2006 International Health Policy Survey of Primary Care Physicians in Seven Countries

Survey Design and Methods

The survey consisted of interviews with representative samples of primary care physicians in seven countries using the same questionnaire. The definition of primary care included general and family physicians in all countries and also general internists and pediatricians in Canada, Germany and the U.S. in proportion to their share of primary care physicians in each country. Practicing physicians were randomly selected from lists available from private or government sources.

Harris Interactive, Inc., country affiliates, and, in the Netherlands, the Center for Quality of Care Research (WOK), Radboud University Nijmegen, conducted interviews by a combination of mail and telephone from late February through July 2006.¹ The final study includes over 6,000 physicians: 1,003 physicians in Australia, 578 in Canada, 1,006 in Germany, 931 in the Netherlands, 503 in New Zealand, 1,063 in the United Kingdom and 1,004 in the United States.

The Commonwealth Fund provided core support for the study and U.S. and Dutch samples, and partnered with the Health Foundation (U.K.) and the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute for expanded samples to enable within-country analyses. The German Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care funded the German sample.

Researchers at the Commonwealth Fund and Harris Interactive designed the questionnaire, with advice and review by experts in each country. The four-page questionnaire focused on indicators of primary care practice capacity to manage care well and payment incentives to support quality improvement. The survey was conducted in German in Germany, Dutch in the Netherlands, and English in the other countries.

The analysis weights final samples to the distribution of physicians by region of the country, gender, primary care specialty (GP, internist or pediatrics) and, in the U.S. whether office or hospital-based. In general, country samples closely matched initial characteristics available from lists of physicians. For sample sizes of 1,000 and 500, the margin of sample error ranges from +/- 3 percent to +/-5 percent, respectively, at the 95 percent confidence level. Exhibits in the *Health Affairs* article indicate where country differences are significant ($p < .05$).

¹ Canadian, Dutch and U.S. interviews were by mail. Following survey practices recommended in other countries, Harris affiliates conducted the German and U.K. interviews primarily by phone and used a combination of phone recruitment and mail/fax in Australia and New Zealand.