

The Commonwealth Fund 1998 International Health Policy Survey

Accompanies May/June 1999 *Health Affairs* Article

**Charts Originally Presented at the 1998 International
Symposium on Health Care Policy**

Methodology

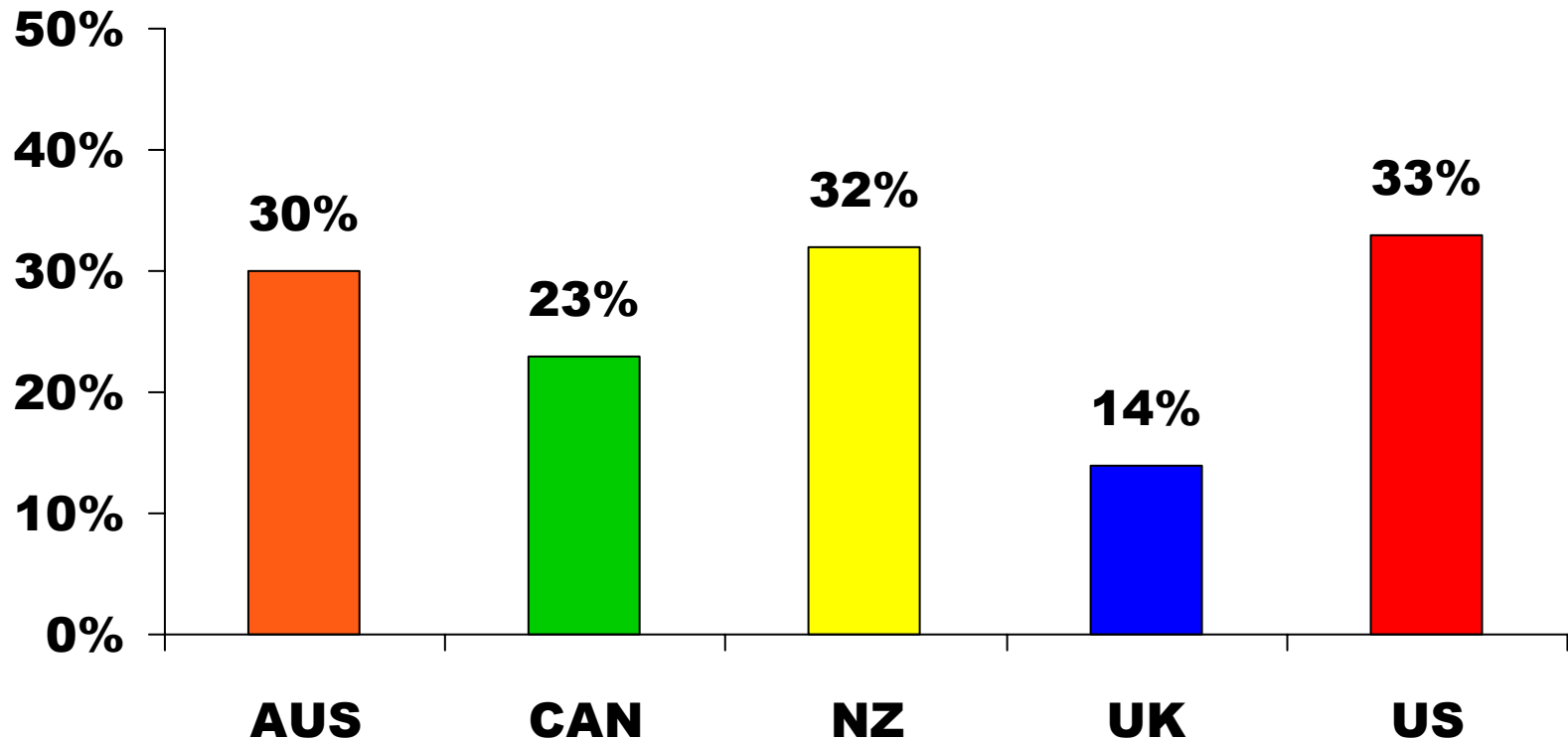
- **Survey of ~1,000 adults in five nations: Australia (1,001), Canada (1,006), New Zealand (999), the United Kingdom (1,043), and the United States (1,010).**
- **Telephone survey conducted by Louis Harris & Associates and their international affiliates from April-June 1998.**
- **Interviewees were asked about their views of their nation's health care system, including their attitudes about its structure and recent system reforms, as well as experiences getting and using health care services.**

Overall View of the Health Care System

Percent reporting:	AUS	CAN	NZ	UK	US
System works well, only minor changes needed	19%	20%	9%	25%	17%
Some good things, but fundamental change needed	49%	56%	57%	58%	46%
System has so much wrong with it, it needs complete rebuilding	30%	23%	32%	14%	33%

Support for Major Health System Change

Percent saying the health care system needs to be rebuilt



Views of Health Care System in Five Nations - Trends

	Rebuild Completely		Minor Changes Needed	
	1988*	1998	1988	1998
Australia	17%	30%	34%	18%
Canada	5%	23%	56%	20%
United Kingdom	17%	14%	27%	25%
United States	29%	33%	10%	17%

*Harvard/Harris/Baxter, 1988 (Canada, UK, and US)
 Commonwealth Fund 1998 International Health Policy Survey
 Commonwealth Fund/Harvard/Louis Harris & Associates

Most Important Problem

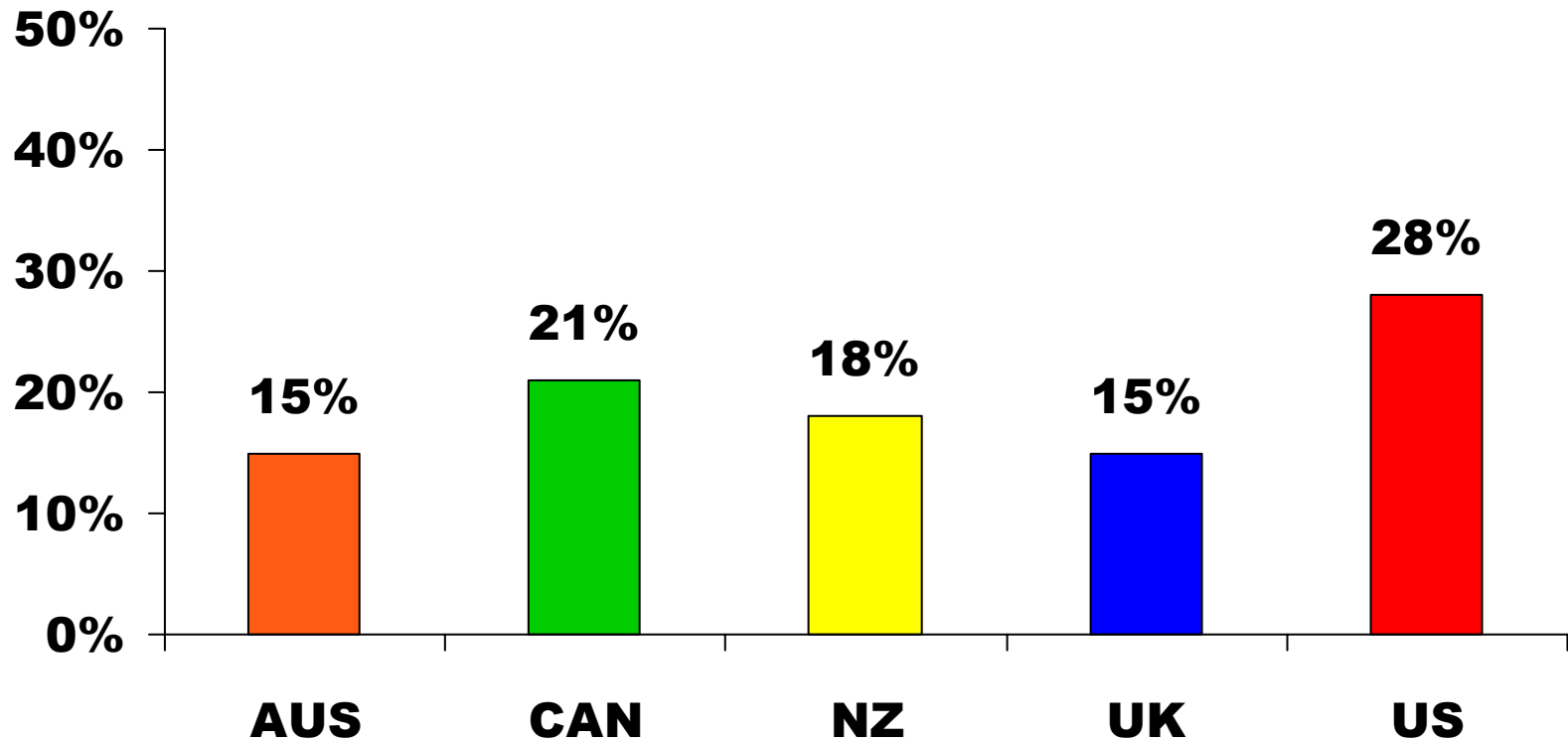
	Problem (%)
Australia	Waiting times (23%)
Canada	Level of government funding (25%) Administration & resource management (25%)
United Kingdom	Waiting times (29%) Level of government funding (29%)
United States	Inability to afford medical care (30%)

Access Concerns

Percent reporting:	AUS	CAN	NZ	UK	US
Unable to get needed medical care	8%	10%	12%	10%	14%
Difficulties getting needed care	15%	21%	18%	15%	28%
Difficulties seeing specialists and consultants	35%	47%	34%	29%	39%
Waiting more than four months for non-emergency surgery	13%	10%	21%	29%	1%
No regular doctor	19%	23%	14%	20%	30%

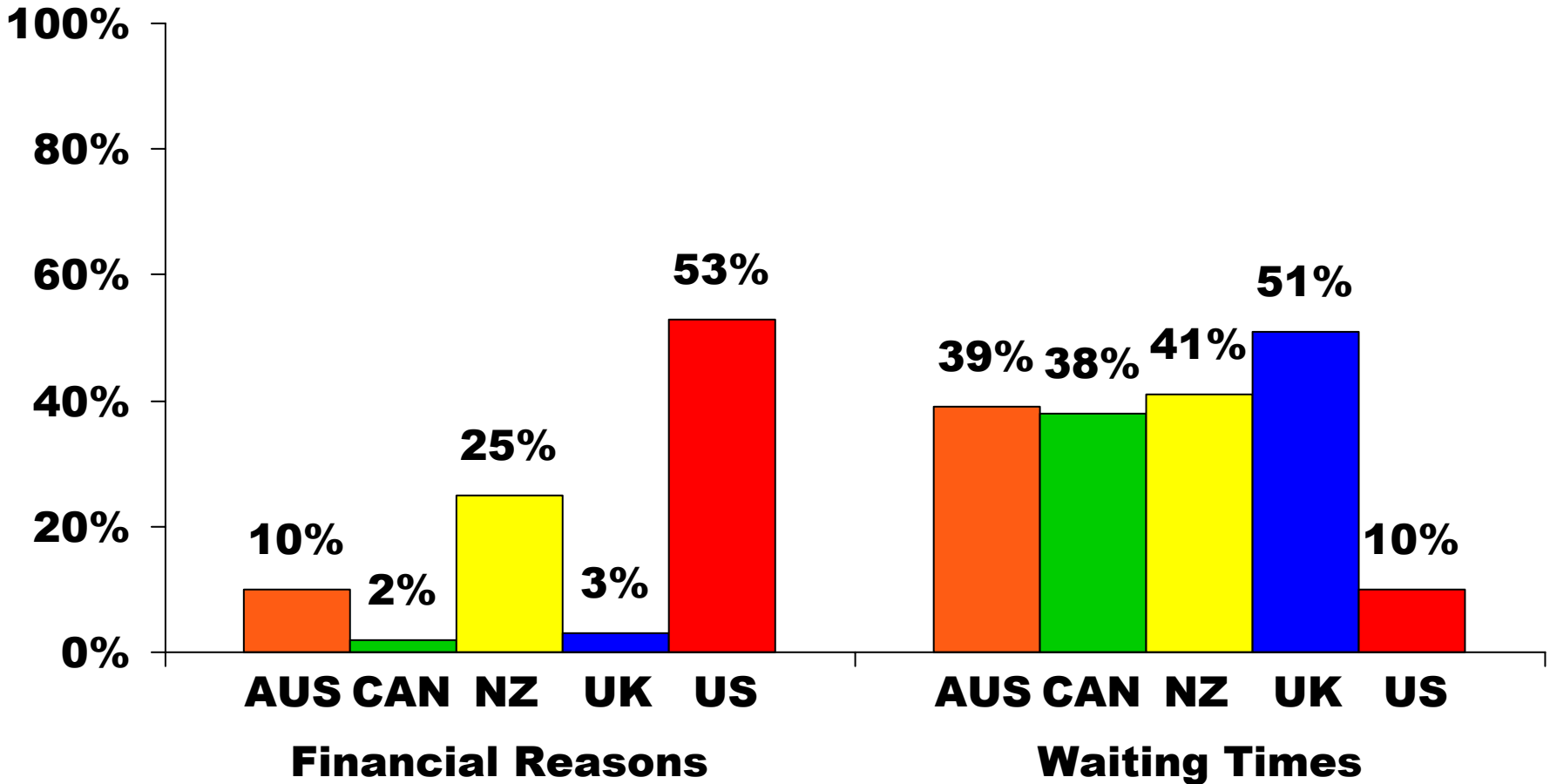
Difficulties Getting Needed Health Care

Percent finding it extremely, very, or somewhat difficult to get care when needed

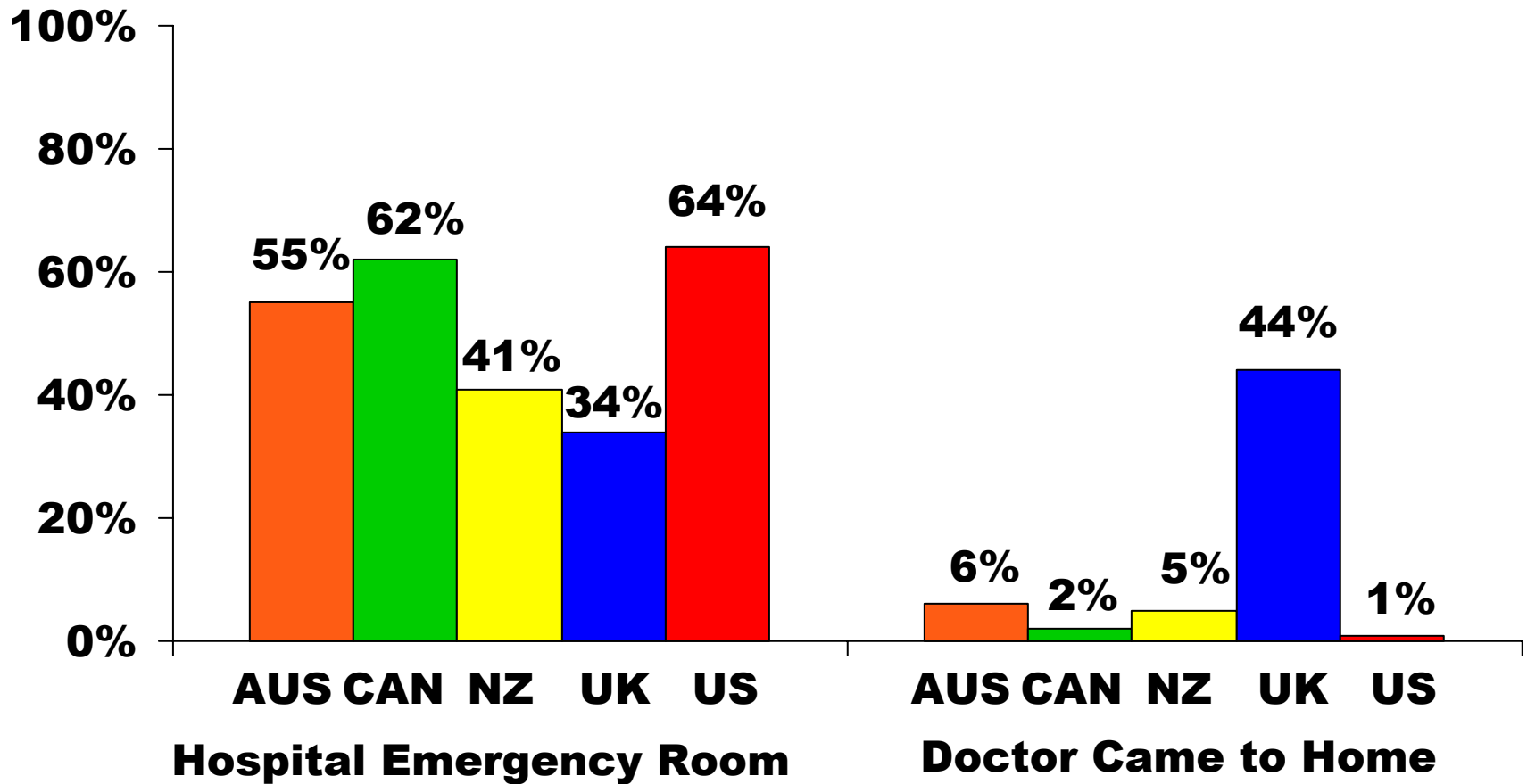


Reasons People Did Not Get Needed Medical Care

Percent



Site of Medical Care on Evenings and Weekends

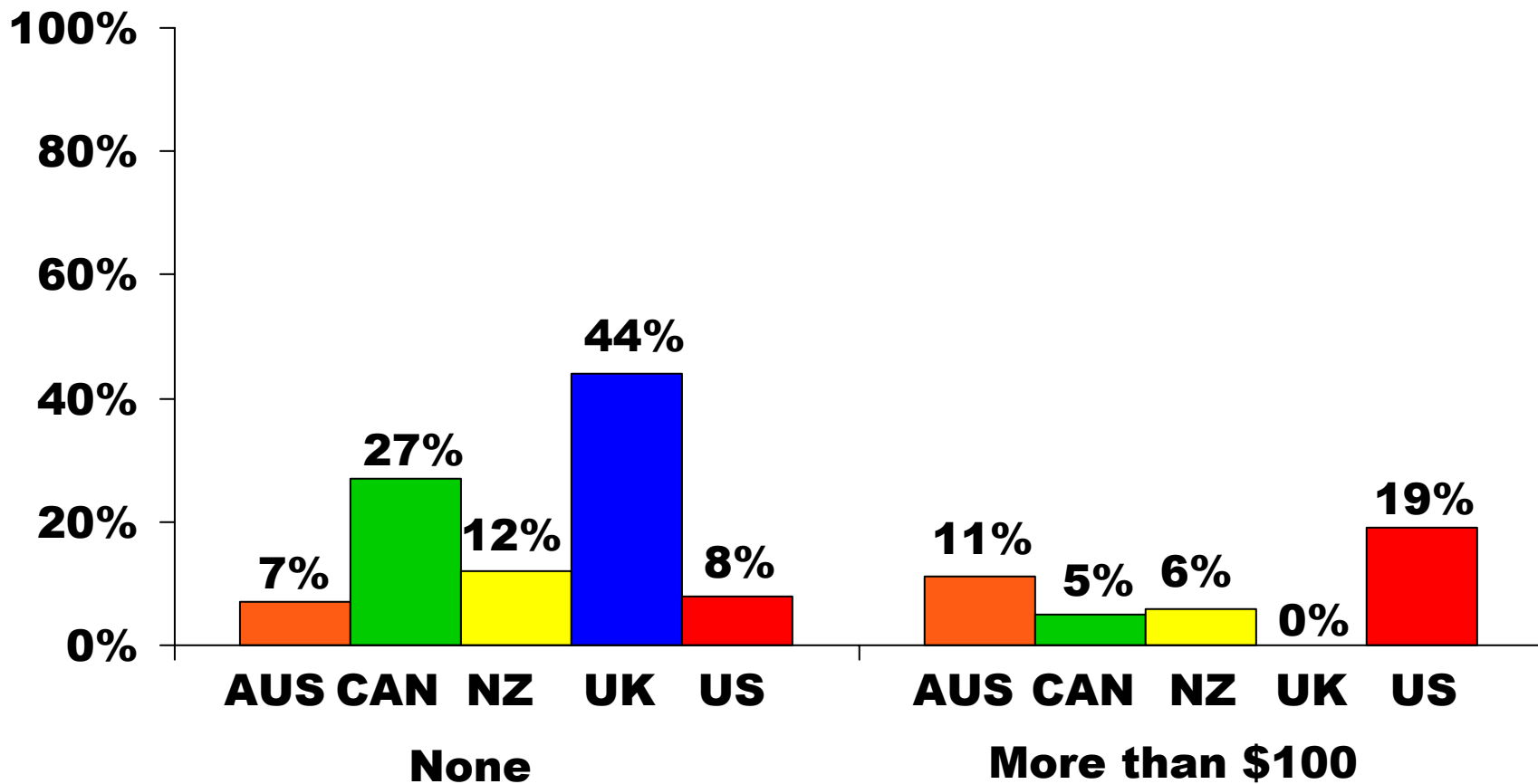


Base: Those who used evening or weekend care
 Commonwealth Fund 1998 International Health Policy Survey
 Commonwealth Fund/Harvard/Louis Harris & Associates

Cost Concerns

Percent reporting:	AUS	CAN	NZ	UK	US
Financial problems paying medical bills	10%	5%	15%	3%	18%
Not filling prescriptions due to cost	12%	7%	15%	6%	17%
Did not get needed care due to financial reasons	10%	2%	25%	3%	53%
Spent more than \$750 out-of-pocket for medical care in the past year	19%	10%	11%	1%	29%

Amount Spent in the Past Year on Medical Bills Not Covered by Insurance

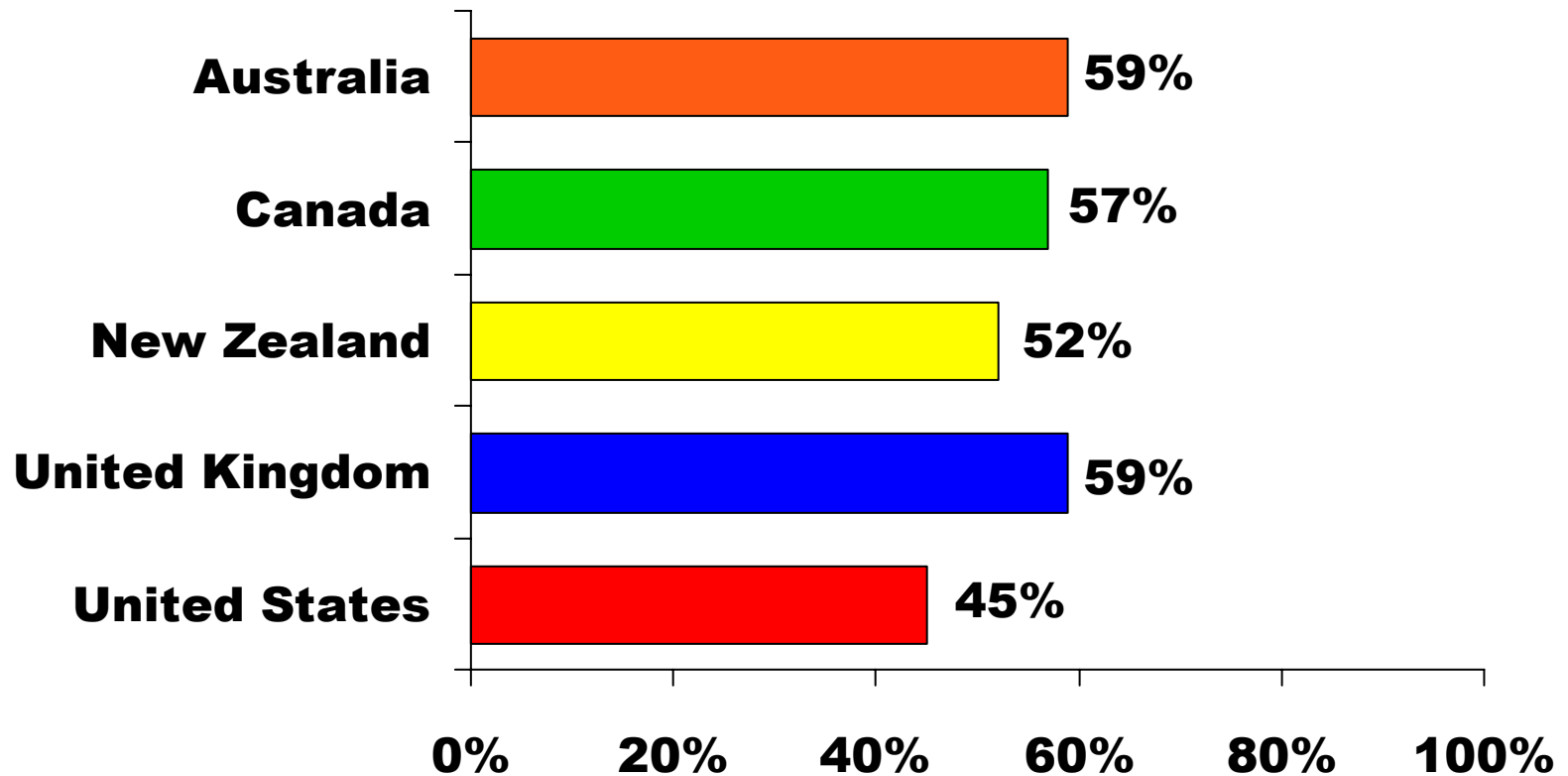


Quality Ratings

Percent rated the following as “excellent”:	AUS	CAN	NZ	UK	US
Overall care received in past year	19%	24%	20%	15%	20%
Care received at most recent doctor visit	36%	37%	34%	19%	29%
Overall hospital experience	27%	28%	24%	28%	26%

Years with Doctor

Percent with doctor for more than five years

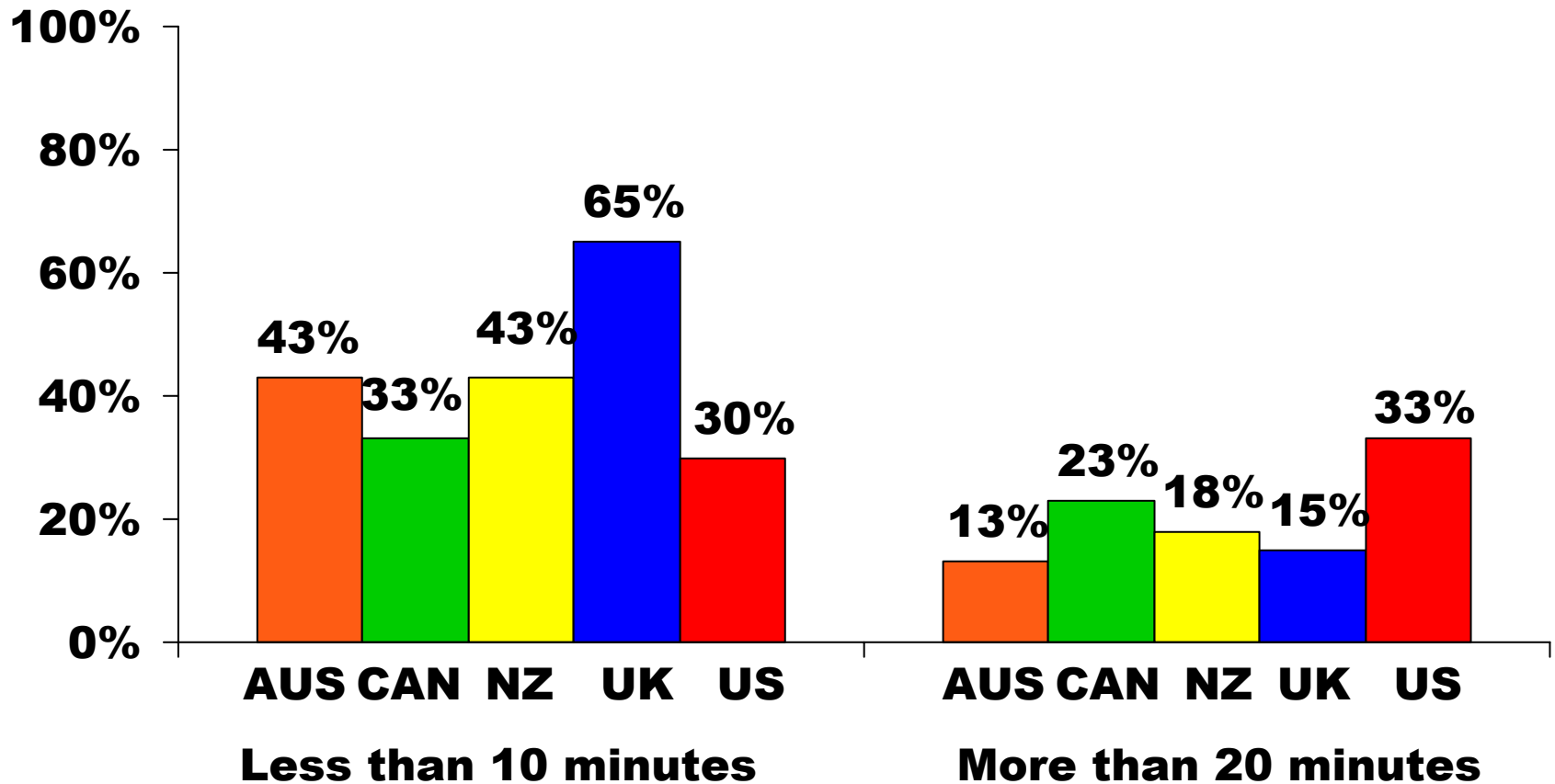


Base: Those with a regular doctor

Commonwealth Fund 1998 International Health Policy Survey

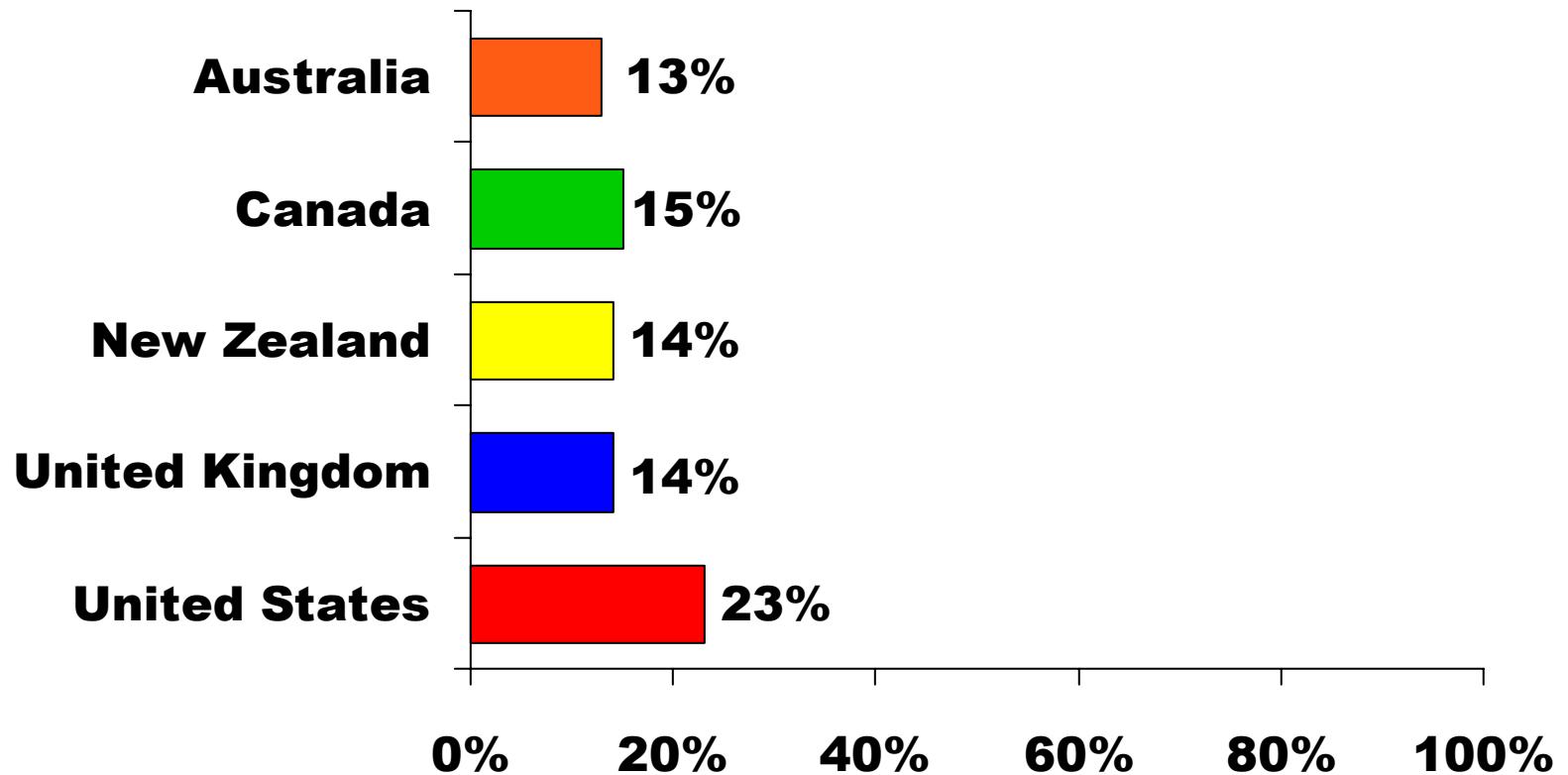
Commonwealth Fund/Harvard/Louis Harris & Associates

Length of Most Recent Doctor Visit



Time Spent with Doctor

Percent reporting time their doctor spent with them was too short

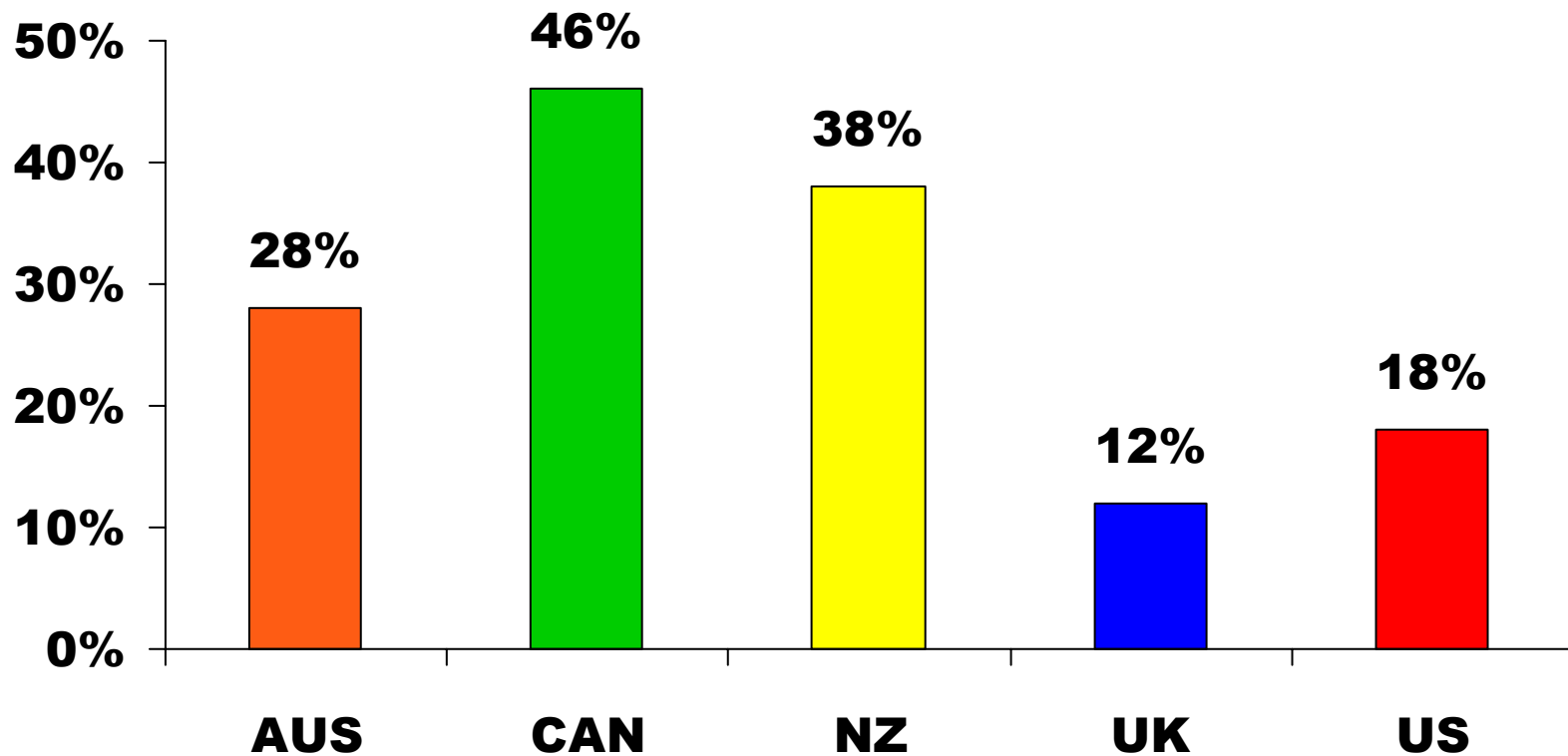


Effect of Recent System Change on Quality

Percent responding change will:	AUS	CAN	NZ	UK	US
Improve quality	15%	19%	16%	27%	27%
Harm quality	28%	46%	38%	12%	18%
Have little impact	41%	31%	36%	50%	46%

View of Effect on Quality of System Changes

Percent who believe recent changes will harm quality



Worries About Future Illness

Percent very worried that:	AUS	CAN	NZ	UK	US
Won't be able to get advanced care if seriously ill	19%	29%	38%	16%	21%
Won't be able to afford needed medical care	25%	22%	42%	14%	23%
Won't be able to pay for long-term care of family member	37%	31%	50%	17%	36%
Will wait too long to get non-emergency care	25%	20%	38%	12%	14%

Variations by Insurance Coverage in the United States

Percent responding	Total	Insured	Uninsured
Rebuild system	33%	28%	59%
Didn't get needed care in past year	14%	10%	37%
Difficult to get care when needed	27%	20%	65%
Difficult to see specialist when needed	40%	34%	67%
Problems paying medical bills	18%	13%	42%
Didn't fill prescription due to cost	17%	13%	42%
Very worried won't be able to get most advanced care	21%	14%	53%
Very worried won't be able to get the medical care they need because they can't afford it	23%	15%	65%

Methodology

The Commonwealth Fund 1998 International Health Policy Survey elicited the health care system views and experiences of nationally representative cross-sections of the public in each of five countries — Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S. Conducted from April-June 1998 by Louis Harris & Associates and their international affiliates, interviewees were asked about their views of their nation's health care system, including their attitudes about its structure and recent system reforms, as well as experiences getting and using health care services.

The instrument was developed by teams from The Commonwealth Fund and Harvard and reviewed by experts in each of the nations surveyed. Interviews were conducted by telephone in all nations except the U.K., where they were conducted in-person. Interviews were completed with 1001 respondents in Australia, 1006 in Canada, 999 in New Zealand, 1043 in the UK and 1010 in the US. The average interview length was 11 minutes.