



## COVID-19 Survey Summary: September 18, 2020

*The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).*

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Six in 10 Americans know someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus, 39 percent know someone who's been hospitalized or died from it, 3 percent say they themselves have tested positive and one in 10 is "pretty sure" they've had it, albeit undiagnosed. Still, only about half the public – 54 percent in one survey this week, 51 percent in another – intends to get vaccinated, including just 32 percent of Black people, despite their disproportionate risks. Another survey shows heavy financial impacts on Latinos, and further results from a 13-nation study find that a median of 74 percent rated their own country's response to the pandemic positively, as did 37 percent for China, vs. 15 percent who said the United States has handled it well.

### Contact and Concern

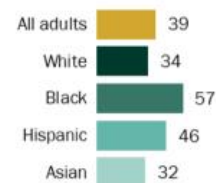
Even as the summer surge has subsided, personal experiences of the coronavirus outbreak continue to grow: Six in 10 Americans now know someone who has tested positive for the virus and nearly a quarter know someone who has died from it ([Axios/Ipsos 9/11-9/14](#)). In another measure, as of the first half of August, four in 10 personally knew someone who has either been hospitalized or died, almost double the number in late April and early May.

Nearly six in 10 Blacks (57 percent) know someone who has been hospitalized or died, compared with 46 percent of Hispanics and a third of non-Hispanic whites (34 percent) and Asians (32 percent). It's also higher in the Northeast (46 percent) and South (43 percent) vs. the Midwest (35 percent) and West (30 percent).

Fourteen percent overall say they personally have tested positive for the coronavirus or its antibodies (3 percent) or are "pretty sure" they have had it despite not receiving an official diagnosis (11 percent). Blacks (5 percent) and Hispanics (7 percent) are more likely than whites (2 percent) and Asians (1 percent) to have tested

### Majority of Black adults in U.S. know someone who was hospitalized or died due to coronavirus

*% who say they personally know someone who has been hospitalized or died as a result of having COVID-19*



\*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.  
Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 3-16, 2020.

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positive, and it's 5 percent among lower-income earners vs. 2 percent of those with middle and upper incomes.

Among those who've tested positive or are pretty sure they've had it, almost half (45 percent) experienced mild symptoms and 17 percent experienced no symptoms at all. Three in 10 describe their symptoms as moderate, 9 percent as severe ([Pew 8/3-8/16](#)).

In terms of the pandemic's trajectory, three in 10 registered voters think it's completely (11 percent) or mostly (19 percent) under control, up from 19 percent in mid-August. Still four in 10 think it is not at all under control, down from 49 percent. More than eight in 10 say they're at least somewhat concerned about the spread of the coronavirus in the United States, about matching its level in June ([Fox News 9/7-9/10](#)).

Indeed, nearly two-thirds think their personal risk of contracting the coronavirus is about the same as it was in April. Fifteen percent feel they're at greater risk, while two in 10 see lower risk ([Axios/Ipsos 9/11-9/14](#)). That said, the share who are extremely or very worried that they or someone in their family will be infected has declined from 49 percent in mid-July to 38 percent now ([AP-NORC 9/11-9/14](#)).

### Vaccines

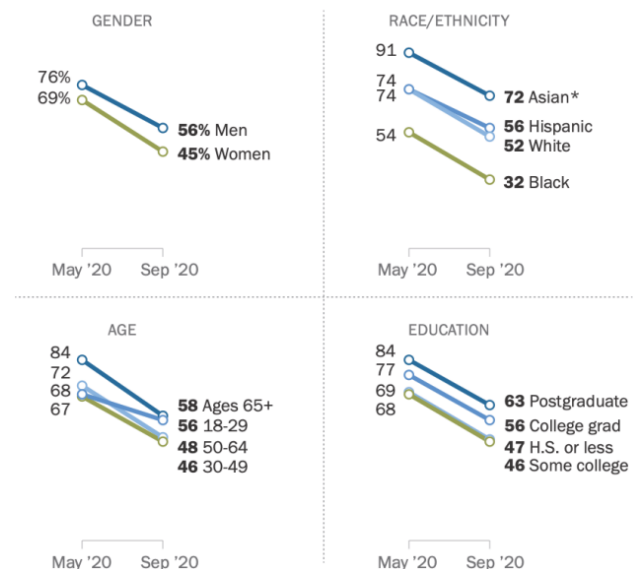
Fifty-four percent of registered voters plan to get vaccinated against the coronavirus when available, essentially unchanged since August but down 6 percentage points since May ([Fox News 9/7-9/10](#)). In another measure, a similar 51 percent say they would definitely or probably get a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 if it were available today, down more steeply since May, by 21 points. Just two in 10 say they'd definitely get vaccinated, half the number who said so in May.

The drop in the share who say they'd probably or definitely get a vaccine if it were available today reflects widespread concerns about a rushed development process. Among them:

- About three-quarters (77 percent) think it's likely that a COVID-19 vaccine will be approved and used before its safety and effectiveness are fully understood.

### Widespread declines in the shares who say they would get a COVID-19 vaccine

*% of U.S. adults who say they would definitely/probably get a vaccine for COVID-19 if one were available today*



\* Asian adults were interviewed in English only.  
 Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown.  
 White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.  
 Source: Survey conducted Sept. 8-13, 2020.  
 "U.S. Public Now Divided Over Whether To Get COVID-19 Vaccine"

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- Nearly eight in 10 say their greater concern is that the approval process will move too fast, without fully establishing safety and effectiveness, compared with 20 percent who are more concerned that approval will move too slowly.
- Just two in 10 have a great deal of confidence that the research and development process will produce a safe and effective vaccine. An additional 45 percent have a fair amount of confidence.

Willingness to get vaccinated has lessened across political and demographic groups, but differences remain. Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party are 14 points more likely than leaned Republicans to say they'd definitely or probably get vaccinated, 58 vs. 44 percent. Intention is 11 points higher among men than women, 56 vs. 45 percent. And it's just 32 percent among Blacks, compared with 52 percent of whites, 56 percent of Hispanics and 72 percent of Asians.

Among those who say they probably or definitely would not get a vaccine if it were available today, three-quarters cite concern about side effects as a major reason and 72 percent would want to know more about how well it works. Thirty-one percent don't think they need it, while 13 percent expect that it would cost too much.

Among those who definitely or probably would get vaccinated, 57 percent say they would be a lot (21 percent) or a little (36 percent) less likely to get the vaccine if they had to pay out of pocket to get it; 57 percent also would be a lot (14 percent) or a little (43 percent) less likely if many people experienced minor side effects. Fifty-five percent would be at least a little less likely to get the vaccine if it were only effective about 60 percent of the time; three in 10 would be at least a little less apt to get the vaccine if they needed to get it again every year or so.

Overall, 53 percent think it's likely that enough Americans will get vaccinated to curb the spread of the disease, 46 percent think this is unlikely. Half think it's unlikely that everyone who wants the vaccine will have quick and easy access to it ([Pew 9/8-9/13](#)).

(See [last week's summary](#) for additional vaccine results.)

### Health Insurance

A new analysis of [Household Pulse Survey](#) data from the U.S. Census Bureau finds that 3.3 million adults younger than 65 lost employer-sponsored health insurance between late April and mid-July amid the COVID-19 recession. Nearly half of those who lost insurance (1.6 million) were Hispanic adults. Younger adults, men and people without a college degree also were impacted disproportionately ([Urban Institute/RWJF](#)).

### Restaurants and Bars

Using aggregated cellphone location information and coronavirus case counts, a new analysis suggests states that reopened bars experienced a doubling in the rate of coronavirus cases about three weeks later, on average ([Washington Post](#)).

That analysis did not find as strong a relationship between restaurant reopenings and a rise in cases. However, a CDC study found that a random sample of adults who had tested positive at one of 11 outpatient healthcare facilities were about twice as likely to have reported dining at a restaurant than were age- and sex- matched controls who tested negative for the virus at the same facility. Participants who had tested positive but did not have close contact with someone infected also were more apt to report going to a bar/coffee shop. There were no such differences in reports of going shopping, visiting a salon, going to the gym, using public transportation or attending a church/religious gathering. (Because the study focused on participating health care facilities, results might not be representative of the United States population ([CDC 7/1-7/29](#))).

### Trust Amid the Pandemic

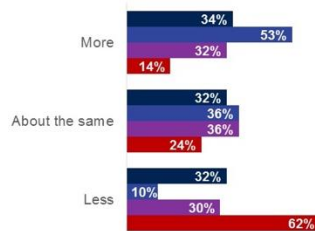
Only a third of Americans believe the actual number of coronavirus deaths is about the same as has been reported. The rest divide about equally on whether the reported death toll overstates or understates actual deaths, essentially unchanged since July.

#### Americans have little trust when it comes to pandemic

Most do not think the official death toll is accurate, and trust in various institutions is relatively low

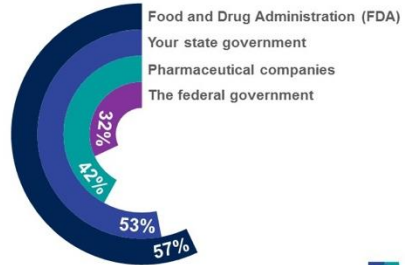
Do you believe the actual number of Americans dying from the coronavirus is more, less, or about the same as the number of deaths that have been reported?

■ All Americans ■ Democrats ■ Independents ■ Republicans



How much trust do you have in each of the following to look out for the best interests of you and your family?

% A great deal or a fair amount



Trust in some of the agencies critically involved in the

coronavirus response varies. Fifty-seven percent have at least a fair amount of trust in the Food and Drug Administration to look out for their best interests and 53 percent trust their state government. Fewer trust the pharmaceutical companies (42 percent) or the federal government (32 percent) ([Axios/Ipsos 9/11-9/14](#)).

Similar to trust in the federal government overall, 31 percent trust what President Trump says about the pandemic a great deal (13 percent) or good amount (18 percent). More than half (52 percent) don't trust what he has to say at all. In comparison, 51 percent say they trust what Joe Biden says about the pandemic, while a quarter don't trust him at all ([ABC/Ipsos 9/11-9/12](#)).

### Racial/Ethnic Disparities

Additional results released from a July poll conducted both nationally and in the nation's four largest cities ([see last week's summary](#)) highlight the particular financial challenges faced by Latino, Black and Native Americans during the pandemic, three groups also at high risk for getting severely ill from the coronavirus. Among the results:

- Seventy-two percent of Latino households have faced serious financial problems since the start of the outbreak, as have six in 10 Black households and 55 percent of Native American households compared, with 36 and 37 percent of white and Asian households.

- About four in 10 or more Latino (46 percent), Black (41 percent) and Native American (41 percent) households report having used up all or most of their savings since the outbreak, compared with about a quarter of white (25 percent) and Asian (23 percent) households.
- Sixty-three percent of Latinos report that an adult household member has lost their job, lost their businesses, been furloughed or had hours or wages reduced since the start of the outbreak, compared with 42 to 46 percent of Native Americans, Blacks, whites and Asians alike.
- A quarter of Latino households have had problems affording medical care during the pandemic and 20 percent say someone in their household has been unable to get medical care for a serious problem when they needed it. Among Blacks, 18 percent both report serious trouble affording care and say someone was unable to get needed care. Among Native American households, fewer (12 percent) had trouble affording care, but 32 percent report that someone in their household was unable to get needed medical care.
- Two-thirds of Latino households with children reported serious problems caring for their children, as did nearly six in 10 Black (59 percent) and white (57 percent) households, compared with 27 percent of Asian households. Among the most commonly reported difficulties was keeping children's education going – 39 percent of white households, 36 percent of Latino households, 29 percent of Black households and 10 percent of Asian households reported serious problems with this ([NPR-RWJF-Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health 7/1-8/3](#)).

### Government Response

Sixty-three percent of Americans think their governor cares about the safety and health of their community, 54 percent think he or she has communicated a clear plan of action in response to the coronavirus and 53 percent have confidence in their governor to manage emerging health challenges successfully. Views of President Trump are less positive – 36 percent think he cares about the safety of their community, 35 percent have confidence he can manage emerging health challenges and 30 percent think he's communicated a clear plan of action.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention falls somewhere in the middle – 53 percent think it cares about the safety and health of their community, 40 percent have confidence it can successfully manage emerging health challenges and 32 percent think it has communicated a clear plan of action. Views of governors, Trump and the CDC on these measures have been relatively stable since June ([Gallup 8/17-8/30](#)).

Two thirds say Trump acted too slowly in dealing with the pandemic, 31 percent say he acted at about the right pace and just 1 percent feel he moved too quickly ([ABC/Ipsos 9/11-9/12](#)). Nearly six in 10 (57 percent) say he is sending the wrong message in response to the outbreak and two-thirds think he and his administration only sometimes (28 percent) or hardly ever (38 percent) get the facts right about the virus. By contrast, 57 percent think the CDC and other public health

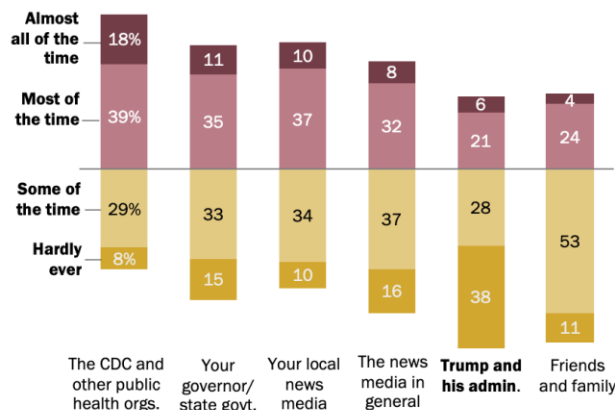
organizations get the facts right all or most of the time, 46 percent say the same of their state governor and local news media and 40 percent say this about the news media in general.

Fifty-six percent of Americans say they've been following what Trump has been saying about the outbreak at least fairly closely, down 14 points since June. However, 82 percent say they're following news about the virus very or fairly closely, nearly as high as the 86 percent in June ([Pew 8/31-9/7](#)).

Most disapprove of the way Trump has responded to the pandemic overall, though polls differ on the size of the majority - in one, 53 percent of registered voters disapprove ([Fox News 9/7-9/10](#)), in another, 60 percent of all adults disapprove ([AP-NORC 9/11-9/14](#)), in a third it's 65 percent ([ABC/Ipsos 9/11-9/12](#)). When asked who they trust to do a better job handling the coronavirus, more registered voters pick Biden than Trump by an 8-point margin, 51 vs, 43 percent ([Fox News 9/7-9/10](#)).

**Only about one-quarter say Trump administration gets COVID-19 facts right most or almost all of the time; similar assessment for friends and family**

*% of U.S. adults who say each gets the facts right when it comes to the coronavirus outbreak ...*



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer or who said "not sure" are not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 31-Sept. 7, 2020.

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More than seven in 10 (72 percent) continue to say the country is headed in the wrong direction, including 53 percent of Republicans and 90 percent of Democrats ([AP-NORC 9/11-9/14](#)).

Foreign Policy

In a July poll, more than six in 10 said the coronavirus outbreak has made it clear that it is more important for the United States to coordinate and collaborate with other countries to solve global issues, while 36 percent instead said it's made it clear that it's more important for the country to be self-sufficient so we don't need to depend on others. Partisanship differences are vast – 80 percent of Democrats support coordination and collaboration while 58 percent of Republicans view self-sufficiency as more important ([Chicago Council 7/2-7/19](#)).

The Presidential Election

Given the pandemic, 64 percent of registered voters favor allowing all U.S. citizens to vote by mail if they want to in the upcoming presidential election. Fifty-five percent are at least somewhat confident that mail-in ballots will be received and counted accurately, though just a quarter are very confident in this.

Just three in 10 think we will know on election night which presidential candidate won, two in 10 think we'll know the day after, 19 percent think it'll be two or three days later and 27 percent think it'll take longer than that. About six in 10 (61 percent) are at least somewhat comfortable

with the vote count going on beyond election night, including 69 percent of Democrats, compared with 53 percent of Republicans ([Fox News 9/7-9/10](#)).

## State Results

In California, six in 10 say they're at least somewhat concerned about getting the coronavirus and needing to be hospitalized, about the same as in May, when there were about half as many daily cases in the state. Fifty-one percent feel the worst of the pandemic is behind the country, while 42 percent feel the worst is yet to come; in May, the divide was 46 vs. 48 percent. Still, a third want more restrictions because of the coronavirus outbreak in their area, up from 25 percent in May; a quarter want fewer (essentially unchanged) and four in 10 want about the same number as there are now (down from 46 percent). Sixty-two percent approve of Gov. Gavin Newsom's handling of the pandemic, down from 69 percent in May. Three in 10 approve of how Trump is handling the outbreak, essentially unchanged ([PPIC 9/4-9/13](#)).

In Wisconsin election polls, roughly six in 10 registered voters are at least somewhat worried that they or a family member might catch the coronavirus ([ABC/Post 9/8-9/13](#)) and are at least somewhat worried about the outbreak in their community ([CNN 9/9-9/13](#)). Forty-two percent of likely voters think the state is easing social distancing restrictions and reopening at about the right pace, while the rest roughly divide between thinking it's moving too slowly or too quickly. By an 11-point margin, more think the federal government's priority should be to limit the spread of the virus, even if it hurts the economy (51 percent) than to restart the economy, even if it increases the risk to public health (40 percent) ([NYT/Siena 9/8-9/10](#)). A majority of registered voters (54 percent) disapproves of Trump's handling of the outbreak ([ABC/Post 9/8-9/13](#)) and more trust Biden over Trump to better handle it ([ABC/Post 9/8-9/13](#); [CNN 9/9-9/13](#); [NYT/Siena 9/8-9/10](#)).

In Minnesota, 63 percent of registered voters worry that they or a family member might catch the virus ([ABC/Post 9/8-9/13](#)). Here, more than in Wisconsin, 53 percent of likely voters, think their state is moving at about the right pace to ease social distancing restrictions and reopen; three in 10 think it's moving too slowly, 14 percent too fast. By 10-point margin (similar to Wisconsin), more think the federal government's priority should be to limit the spread than to restart the economy, 51 vs. 41 percent ([NYT/Siena 9/8-9/10](#)). Six in 10 registered voters disapprove of Trump's handling of the outbreak ([ABC/Post 9/8-9/13](#)), and by double-digit margins more trust Biden over Trump to do a better job on it ([ABC/Post 9/8-9/13](#); [NYT/Siena 9/8-9/10](#)).

In Nevada, 46 percent of likely voters think their state is moving at about the right pace to ease restrictions and reopen; 36 percent think it's moving too slowly, 14 percent too fast. Forty-nine percent think the federal government should prioritize limiting the spread while four in 10 think the focus should be on restarting the economy ([NYT/Siena 9/8-9/10](#)).

Saying the state is moving at about the right pace to reopen peaks in New Hampshire, at seven in 10; the rest split between saying it's moving too quickly or too slowly. Here the public by nearly 2-1 (58-32 percent) prioritizes limiting the spread over restarting the economy ([NYT/Siena 9/8-9/11](#)).

	WI	MN	NV	NH
State reopening at the right pace	42%	53%	46%	70%
Prioritize limiting the spread	51%	51%	49%	58%

Data source: [NYT/Siena](#). Results are among likely voters.

In North Carolina, 60 percent of likely voters are at least somewhat worried about the coronavirus outbreak in the community where they live. Fifty-two percent think Biden would better handle the pandemic, while 46 percent pick Trump ([CNN 9/9-9/13](#)).

In Florida, registered voters divide on Gov. Ron DeSantis' performance handling the outbreak, 48 vs. 47 percent. Fifty-three percent say Trump has done a bad job handling it and about half (51 percent) lack confidence in his ability to put the country on the road to recovery. Biden doesn't fare any better – a 49-49 percent split on whether he can put the country on the road to recovery ([Monmouth 9/10-9/13](#)).

In Arizona, registered voters divide 48 vs. 49 percent on whether Gov. Doug Ducey has done a good or bad job handling the pandemic. For Trump, it's 42 vs. 55 percent. As in Florida, half are confident Trump can put the country on the road to recovery; it's virtually identical for Biden (51 percent) ([Monmouth 9/11-9/15](#)).

Election polls in Kentucky, South Carolina and Maine find differing views of Trump's handling of the coronavirus response. In Kentucky, 54 percent of likely voters approve; in South Carolina, 49 percent; and in Maine, 37 percent. Trump leads Biden in Kentucky as better for handling the response, 56 vs. 40 percent. In South Carolina, it's a split – Trump 50 percent, Biden 46 percent, and in Maine, Biden has 23-point advantage, 60 vs. 37 percent ([Quinnipiac 9/10-9/14](#)).

The California Health Interview Survey released preliminary estimates based on data collected in May. Among the results, 77 percent in the state said they would get a vaccine if it were available and 11 percent thought they'd had COVID-19 ([CHIS May 2020](#)).

### International Results

Newly released analyses of data collected from June to August in 13 nations shows broad dismay with the U.S. coronavirus response, with the share in each country who said the United States has done a good job ranging from a low of 6 percent in South Korea to a high of 20 percent in Spain. In 11 of the 13 countries surveyed (all but Japan and Sweden), half or more said the United States has done a very bad job dealing with the outbreak.

In each country, the public's assessments of their own country's response, and the responses of the World Health Organization, the European Union and China, were at least numerically higher than ratings of the United States, and generally substantially more positive. For example:

- In Canada, 16 percent said the United States had done a good job dealing with the outbreak, while 88 percent thought their own country had done a good job. Thirty-six percent said China had done a good job, and roughly two-thirds said the same of the EU (65 percent) and the WHO (67 percent).

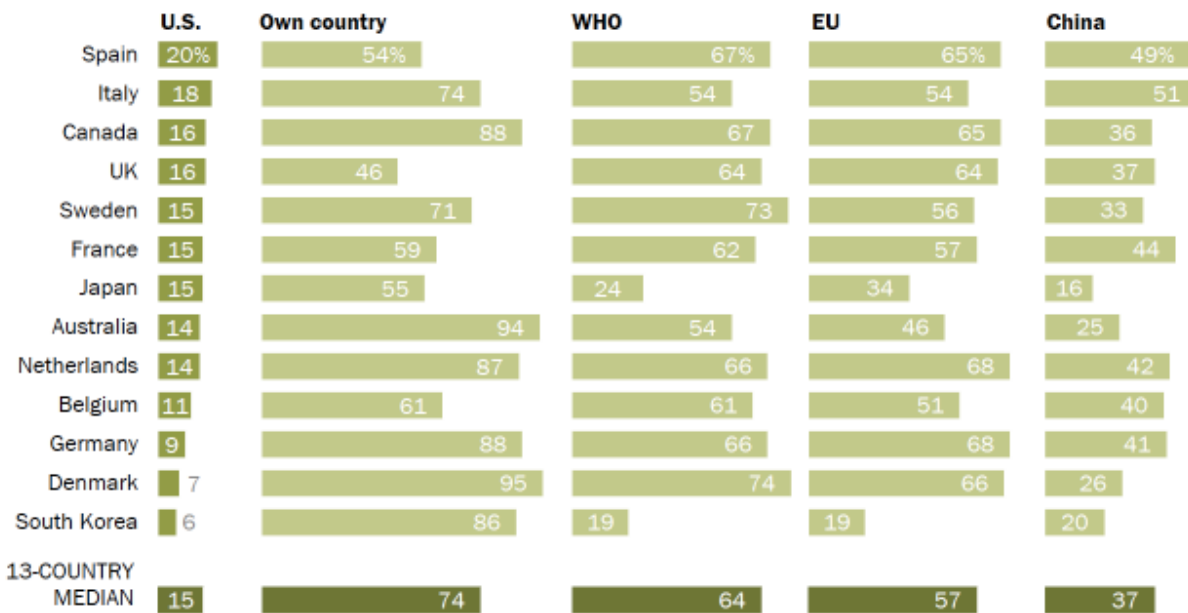


- In the United Kingdom, 16 percent felt the U.S. response was good, compared with 46 percent who said the same of their own country’s response. Sixty-four percent thought the EU and WHO had done a good job and 37 percent said so about China.
- In Japan, about equal numbers said United States (15 percent) and China (16 percent) had done a good job. A quarter said the WHO has done a good job, while 34 percent said the same of the EU and 55 percent said that their own country has done well.

Across the 13 countries, a median of 74 percent said their own country’s response was good. Sixty-four percent said the WHO did a good job, 57 percent said the EU did a good job and 37 percent said the same of China, vs. 15 percent for the United States ([Pew 6/10-8/3](#)).

### All publics surveyed rank the U.S. coronavirus response lowest

% who say \_\_\_ has done a **good job** dealing with the coronavirus outbreak



Note: In Australia and Canada, the question was asked about “COVID-19.” In Japan, it was asked about “the novel coronavirus,” and in South Korea, it was asked about “Corona19.”

Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey, Q10a-e.

“U.S. Image Plummets Internationally as Most Say Country Has Handled Coronavirus Badly”

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In other international results, concern about the coronavirus in Turkey remained at record-high levels for a second month, with eight in 10 worried about it. To combat the pandemic, three-quarters say celebrations such as weddings and engagements should be banned. More than half also say shopping malls should be closed (59 percent), schools should not reopen (56 percent) and there should be curfews in place (55 percent). The public divides more evenly on whether there should be travel restrictions (50 percent) or if restaurants should close (49 percent). Nearly three-quarters do not agree that the existing restrictions are sufficient in combatting the outbreak ([Istanbul Economic Research 9/4-9/5](#)).

In Chile, six in 10 remain very or quite concerned about the possibility of being infected with the coronavirus, essentially unchanged in the past week. Thirty-seven percent approve of the government's management of the situation, down 5 points. Just 4 percent prefer that face-to-face classes resume in the coming months; instead 58 percent prefer a continuation of online classes and 36 percent support ending the school year early. Fifty-two percent agree with finding solutions so students can return to in-person classes in communities where there are no coronavirus infections. It's 44 percent if students can access outdoor education, 36 percent for students with special education needs and three in 10 for students in overcrowded conditions or at high risk of dropping out ([Cadem 9/9-9/10](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

*Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).*