

National Survey Finds 40% Believe Cancer Can Be Cured Without Medicine



By Hank Campbell — October 30, 2018



Credit: Storyblocks

America may be the most science literate country in the world, we may be dominant in Nobel prizes and science output, and at least we are not France, but a new survey by Harris shows that we still have a long way to go.

[The results](#) ^[1] reveal that 47 percent of those aged 18 to 37 have become convinced by efforts to promote alternatives to medicine and think they can cure cancer with food or supplements or ancient Chinese wisdom - and that population bump brings the average to 40 percent overall.

How did we get here?

Three ways.

First is that in 1994 President Clinton took alternatives to medicine away from U.S. Food and Drug Administration oversight **by signing the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994** - with a wave of the pen alternative companies could sell products making all kinds of suspect claims, as long as they noted that FDA had not evaluated their claims. Magic potions and useless placebos are now a \$25 billion annual industry and an FDA which mandated that businesses spend [an additional 14 million hours](#) ^[2] every year just to comply with new regulations on food labels for vending machines can't be bothered to tell companies to stop claiming turmeric will cure their disease.

Second is the manufactured belief promoted by trial lawyers and activist groups (and often the trial lawyers in activist groups) that **companies are inherently evil**. The recent judgment against Monsanto over a weedkiller that can't possibly harm humans is not a one-off, it was just a lucky

case of a plaintiff arriving in a coastal city where the lawyer knew they'd have a friendly jury. Johnson & Johnson is routinely sued over baby powder and the belief that Teflon can be harmful and 3M knew it [is still being perpetuated without evidence](#) [3]. (1)

Finally, **the public are disenfranchised from critical thinking**. America is the world's wealthiest country. Our poor people are often obese, have two televisions, and have more living space than a middle class country in France. Those are actually good things (yes, obesity is a public health problem, though it only requires cultural maturity to overcome the evolutionary inheritance of not knowing when our next meal would be, and therefore better than famine) but as a result of our success we have lost touch with science and technological reality. Today, only 2 percent of Americans are farmers and so people now know little about food and are easily scared by trial lawyers at Center for Food Safety or Center for Science in the Public Interest (insert Environmental Working Group or any of the others if you'd like) into believing our food supply is dangerous and evil "factory" farms are running small farmers into extinction (2) and growing science-y food that is less healthy than if a small farmer(!) grew it.

Food is food regardless of the process to grow it or the revenue of the grower, and our food is incredibly safe. We haven't had huge numbers of people die from organic foodborne illnesses like Europe has had. Not even at Chipotle, [and they really tried](#) [4]. Our energy is affordable and clean. In 2003 while French young people protested American involvement in Iraq, 14,000 elderly people died in a heat wave because energy was too expensive to run air conditioning. In America, [our energy emissions have dropped to such an extent we didn't even need a Clean Power Plan](#) [5]. The free market achieved what would have been the 2025 regulation target in 2017.

We don't know anyone with Polio in the U.S. today so some people think it was never a problem and that vaccines are a Big Pharma scam. No one remembers the 1918 Flu so people don't realize we only lose 50,000 people per year from the flu today *because* of vaccines and other advancements in public health.

But it isn't just people who want to believe the flu is a worse cold that undermine trust in science, **22 percent of cancer patients and survivors** believe wacky stuff like that dietary changes, vitamins, or oxygen therapy will cure them, or did. The mortality rate among people who refuse to accept medical science over nonsense is 250 percent higher. See Steve Jobs who, like most believers in shamanism, was a wealthy coastal pseudo-intellectual.

Government does nothing to rein in the nonsense that these alternatives to medicine claim. We let doctors include alternatives as "adjuvants" to treatment, under the belief that positive thinking would help, and now almost half of young people believe the music therapy can replace the chemotherapy.

What *has* government done? Nothing good. While marijuana, "enzyme" therapy, and manipulating the chakras of patients is passed off as beneficial thanks to hands-off federal rules, they have demonized actual cancer patients who take opioids for pain. On the survey, commissioned by the [American Society of Clinical Oncology](#) [6], 40 percent of cancer patients reported having trouble getting pain medicine, while 73 percent said those restrictions were just fine, thanks to the government's high-profile war on pain patients.

NOTES:

(1) Even that is a problem for itself science created by being terrific. Thanks to advancements, we can now detect anything in anything, so it is trivial to "detect" some chemical in blood or urine or breast milk. Then lawyers just have to convince a jury it could be harmful. Given the survey results here, a critical thinking jury will become harder and harder to find.

(2) In reality, farming is dominated by 2.2 million small farms, nearly half of whom generate just enough revenue to pay their real estate taxes. If that is factory farming then having two children will get you called a "factory family."

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/10/30/national-survey-finds-40-believe-cancer-can-be-cured-without-medicine-13556>

Links

[1] <https://www.asco.org/sites/new-www.asco.org/files/content-files/research-and-progress/documents/2018-NCOS-Results.pdf>

[2] <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/fda-says-it-will-take-vending-machine-ow>

[3] <https://theintercept.com/2018/07/31/3m-pfas-minnesota-pfoa-pfos/>

[4] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/07/19/chipotle-or-shark-attack-youre-safer-sharks-11582>

[5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/05/18/how-american-science-made-government-regulations-emissions-unnecessary-12979>

[6] <https://www.asco.org>