Public Say Prevention Is Single Most Important Area For Research Into Age-Related Ill-Health

Contributed by MORI
Tuesday, 25 July 2006
Last Updated Wednesday, 13 September 2006

Public Say Prevention Is Single Most Important Area For Research Into Age-Related Ill-Health
26 July 2006

Preventing ill-health is the public's single most important area for research into ageing, an Ipsos MORI study published today has found. More than twice as many adults in the UK chose research into prevention over research into cure. Research focused on managing conditions and how best to support and care for people who have ill health came second to prevention ahead of cure.

The study also asked the public about research funding decisions. The public identified improving quality of life as a funding priority, both for the effects of ageing and how to cope with age-related ill-health. The question asked the public to list what they felt were the two or three most important factors for allocating funds. Improving quality of life was the most popular, followed by prevention of future heath problems, the need to look for cures, and then consideration of the number of people who will benefit from the research.

Overall, nine out of ten of the c. 2,000 UK adults agreed that research into ageing was vital to help understand how we can maximise quality of life for people as they grow older.

Saturday workshop discussions held as part of the study (among c. 50 participants) showed that people tend to view ageing negatively and associate it with deteriorating mental and physical health rather than as part of a natural life process.

The Ipsos MORI study was conducted for the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Medical Research Council (MRC) on behalf of Research Councils UK (RCUK). The results will be used to help inform the Councils' strategic decision-making, and will be discussed with other Research Councils including those that fund research into the social and economic aspects of ageing and managing the environment for older people. The Councils will also consider whether current public involvement in their decision-making meets public demand as identified in this study.

In the workshop discussions, improving quality of life and benefit for the greatest number of people were key criteria participants identified as most relevant to research fund allocation. This reflected the findings of the opinion poll. Other key factors identified in the workshops were, value for money, an element of public consultation and scientific excellence. These factors are broadly similar to the criteria already used by research councils to allocate funds.

Â Technical details

Research was carried out amongst the general public by the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute. Three public workshops were held on 11, 18, 25 March in Sutton, Stirling and Cardiff, to gather qualitative information. More than 50 members of the public aged between 16-82 years old took part.

in-home, face-to-face interviews with 2,162 people aged 15+ in 212 sampling points across the UK. The survey was conducted from 25-30 May 2006, with data weighted to the known profile of the UK population.