Self Care: A National View in 2007 Compared to 2004-05

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
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The Executive Summary, Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3 of this study are available as separate documents. Pages are numbered separately for each of the parts. Please follow the page numbering accordingly.

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
PART 2: Views on Self Care of People with LTCs

Two in five British adults say they have a long term health condition (42%). The most commonly mentioned conditions are ‘back or other pain’ by around one in ten (12%) – almost doubling among people aged 55-64 (20%). Cardio-vascular diseases (11%) and musculoskeletal diseases such as arthritis and rheumatism (11%) are the next most common mentions.

These findings are in line with those from the 2004-05 study.

General Wellbeing and Lifestyle of People with Long Term Conditions

People with long term health conditions are significantly less likely to say they are satisfied with their life than those who do not have a long term condition (71% versus 76%). Similarly, they are less likely to say they have control over their life (69% with a long term condition say they have control ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time, compared with 74% of those who do not have a long term condition).

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1 Data are based on respondents who say they have a long term health condition.

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Self Care: A National View in 2007 Compared to 2004-05

People with long term health conditions are more likely to say they lead a healthy lifestyle than those who do not have a long term health condition (69% vs 63%). They are also more likely to treat any minor ailments themselves (71% vs 66%). At the same time, they are significantly less likely to exercise regularly (40% vs 47%).

**Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions**
The proportion of people saying they lead a healthy lifestyle has increased since 2004, while the proportion of people saying they treat themselves for minor ailments has decreased since 2004.

**Taking an active role: 2004**

Q: How often do you take an active role in...

- **Leading a healthy lifestyle: LTC**
  - 23% All the time
  - 35% Most of the time
  - 19% Quite often
  - 14% Sometimes
  - 6% Hardly ever
  - 3% Never

- **Leading a healthy lifestyle: no LTC**
  - 22% All the time
  - 35% Most of the time
  - 21% Quite often
  - 14% Sometimes
  - 5% Hardly ever
  - 2% Never

- **Treating any minor ailments yourself: LTC**
  - 45% All the time
  - 34% Most of the time
  - 11% Quite often
  - 5% Sometimes
  - 3% Hardly ever
  - 1% Never

- **Treating any minor ailments yourself: no LTC**
  - 39% All the time
  - 36% Most of the time
  - 12% Quite often
  - 8% Sometimes
  - 3% Hardly ever
  - 2% Never

*Base: 1,846 adults (666 with a LTC and 680 with no LTC) 2004*

Fewer people with a long term health condition drink at least 5 glasses of water per day as compared to those who do not have a long term condition (28% vs 36%).

**Water consumption in 2007**

Q: How many glasses of water do you drink in an average day?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 or more

*Base: 918 who have long term health condition and 1,099 who do not (2007)*

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Fruit and vegetable consumption among people with LTCs

People who have a long term health condition are more likely to say they have at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day (37% compared to 30% who do not have an LTC). The pattern was similar in 2004, though the proportion increased in 2007.

**Fruit and vegetable consumption in 2007**

*Q* How many portions of fruits and vegetables do you eat in an average day?

- **All who have an LTC**
  - 0 portions: 26%
  - 1 portion: 37%
  - 2 portions: 15%
  - 3 portions: 13%
  - 4 portions: 9%
  - 5 portions: 2%
  - 6 portions: 6%
  - 7 or more portions: 2%

- **All who do not have an LTC**
  - 0 portions: 21%
  - 1 portion: 16%
  - 2 portions: 25%
  - 3 portions: 17%
  - 4 portions: 15%
  - 5 portions: 8%
  - 6 portions: 2%
  - 7 or more portions: 6%

*Basis: 819 who have long term health condition and 890 who do not (2007)*

**Fruit and vegetable consumption in 2004**

*Q* How many portions of fruits and vegetables do you eat in an average day?

- **All who have an LTC**
  - 0 portions: 22%
  - 1 portion: 16%
  - 2 portions: 21%
  - 3 portions: 19%
  - 4 portions: 13%
  - 5 portions: 9%
  - 6 portions: 1%
  - 6 or more portions: 1%

- **All who do not have an LTC**
  - 0 portions: 16%
  - 1 portion: 16%
  - 2 portions: 21%
  - 3 portions: 21%
  - 4 portions: 16%
  - 5 portions: 4%
  - 6 portions: 9%
  - 6 or more portions: 4%

*Basis: 968 who have long term health condition and 880 who do not (2004)*

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Leisure activities among people with LTCs

People with long term health conditions are more likely to watch TV/ listen to the radio or recorded music more than seven times a week than those who do not have long term health conditions (62% vs 54%). People with long term health conditions are also less likely to say they go to the pub at least once a week (42% vs 48%), and more likely not to take part in sports (73% do not take part in any sports in an average week compared to 52% who do not have an LTC).

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Active self care among people with LTCs

Over three-quarters of adults with a long term health condition say they play an active role in treating their condition ‘all or most of the time’ (78%). These findings are broadly in line with the 2004-05 study.

More than four in five older people aged 55-64 say they take care of their long term condition ‘all or most of the time’ (85% compared to 80% aged 15-24) as do those in the higher social grades (89% compared to 76% social grades DE).

However respondents from ethnic minority groups are less likely to take an active role ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time (59%), as are Londoners (48%).

Responsibility for self care among people with LTCs

The majority of adults with a long term health condition say they feel ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ comfortable taking responsibility for the care of their condition (88%), including half who say they feel very comfortable (51%). This has risen since 2004-05 (85%).

People in the higher social grades are more likely to feel comfortable taking responsibility for their care than those in the lower social grades (95% vs 83%). Older people aged 55-64 (93%) and 65+ (90%) are more comfortable with this than younger people aged 25-44 (82%).

Those who say they ‘always’ play an active role in treating their condition are far more comfortable taking responsibility than those who ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’ take an active role (95% compared to 65% and 61% respectively).

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Preparing questions when visiting professionals

Three in five people with a long term health condition say that they prepare questions ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time for when they visit health or social care professionals such as doctors, nurses or social workers (60%). This has increased since 2004-05 when only around half said they prepared questions for health professionals (52%).

The profile of people who are more likely to prepare questions for health professionals is in line with those who say they lead a healthy lifestyle. They are more likely to be in the higher social grades (69% vs 53% in social grades DE), and are more likely to have a degree or higher qualification (74% vs 55% with no formal qualifications). Women are more likely to prepare questions compared to men (65% versus 54%). Half of Londoners say they prepare questions (53%).

Q: When you see a health or social care professional such as a doctor, nurse, therapist or a social worker for a health problem, how often, if at all, would you say you prepare question for them, either on paper or in your mind?

Base: All respondents with a long term health condition 2007 (878), 2005 (1,941)
Confidence in discussing LTCs

Four in five adults with a long term health condition say they feel confident discussing their condition when visiting a health or social care professional ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time (80%), including more than half who say they feel confident ‘all of the time’ (56%). Four percent do not feel confident asking questions.

Those who ‘always’ take an active role in treating their condition are significantly more likely (87%) to feel confident discussing their condition than those who sometimes (53%) or never (63%) do active self care.

However, this varies with age and social grade. More than four in five people aged 45-64 (86%) are confident discussing their condition compared to 65% of those aged 25-34, and people in the higher social grades (87%) are more confident discussing their condition than those in the lower social grades (73%). Additionally, although men are less likely than women to prepare questions, they are more likely to say they feel confident (84%) discussing their condition compared to 76% of women.
Self care support desired by people with LTCs

Around 45% of respondents with a long term health condition gave their suggestions as to what would better support them to self care for their health and long term condition.

The most commonly mentioned factor that would better support people to self care is **better knowledge and understanding of their condition** (17%), followed by **better knowledge and understanding of the treatment** (10%).

The other mentions include better understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle; more advice, support and encouragement from professionals to gain confidence and skills to self care; more self care information; better awareness of available self care devices and self care skills training courses; and better understanding of prevention.

Those who ‘sometimes’ take an active role in treating their condition are more likely to be able to identify things that would support them to do active self care than those who either ‘always’ or ‘never’ take an active role (65% of those who say ‘sometimes’ self care gave suggestions compared to 42% of those who ‘always’ self care and 30% of those who ‘never’ self care). This may be since those who ‘always’ play an active role in treating their own condition do not face any barriers in self caring. On the other hand, those who ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ treat their own conditions may not be sure what might help them to do more self care; while those who ‘sometimes’ self care may feel that they could do more self care with right advice, information, tools and skills.

### Self care support that people with LTCs want

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would better help you to self care and take a greater role in the care of your long term health condition?</th>
<th>Top 10 mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better knowledge/understanding of long term health condition</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better knowledge/understanding of treatment for long term health condition</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of healthy eating</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More advice/guidance on self care from health/social care professionals</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More support/encouragement from health/social care professionals to gain confidence in self care</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of how to do regular exercise and physical activity</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More health information</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of medicines</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of available information/devices/courses/support groups</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of how to prevent accident/worsening of health condition</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents with a long-term condition (171)
Self Care: A National View in 2007 Compared to 2004-05

As in 2007 having a ‘better understanding of the long term condition and its treatment’ was thought to be most helpful in taking care of long term conditions in the 2004-05 studies (37%)\(^2\). Also, in 2005 around a third of respondents (34%) felt that ‘more advice and guidance from family doctors’ would be most helpful and a quarter (24%) felt that ‘encouragement from professionals to gain confidence’ would enable them to better look after their long term condition.

The perceived advantages of self care

In 2007 as well as in 2005, the most commonly mentioned advantage of self care was independence (30%), particularly among older people aged 65+ (34%) compared to 24% among those aged 35-44. This is followed by the advantage of ‘no longer having to just depend on medical experts’ (14%) and ‘becoming an expert myself in the care of my condition’ (14%), both of which can allow the individual to do enhanced self care. A third of those who already do active self care can see the clear advantages in these terms (32%) compared to five percent of those who are not currently active self carers.

However, around one in five adults with a long term health condition (22%) are unable to perceive an advantage in taking a greater role in the care of their health and condition and a further 15% do not know whether or not there are any advantages. It would be important to investigate further particularly among the latter group of people as to why they do not seem to have an opinion, and what the potential is to increase awareness amongst these groups.

![Advantages of greater self care - 2007](image)

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\(^2\) In 2007 the question was unprompted, however in 2005 respondents were asked to choose from a list of statements.

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Awareness and use of self care skills training courses

Around 12% of the respondents with a long term health condition say they have heard of a training course that would provide them self care skills. People who take an active role in treating their own condition are more likely to have heard of such courses. This rises to nearly one in five among those with a degree (18%) compared to one in ten among those with no formal qualifications (10%); nearly one in five in the Midlands are aware of such courses (18%) compared to two percent in London. Among those who have heard of a course, more than a quarter have used one (28%).

Data suggest therefore that four in five adults with a long term health condition say they have not heard of a training course that would help them learn skills to self care for their health and condition (81%), showing a decrease from 2005 where 86% of respondents said they had not heard of such courses. The findings indicate that while there is perhaps an increase in awareness of self care skills training courses, there is still huge potential to make people with long term conditions more aware of the availability of such courses. Moreover, less than a third of those who know about the courses have actually used them. There is therefore potential also to encourage people to take more courses in the future in order to acquire skills which they have said in the survey they want.

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
How NHS can provide self care support to people with LTCs

Around half of the respondents with a long term health condition have suggested as to how the NHS could provide them self care support (42%).

As seen above, those who ‘sometimes’ take an active role in treating their own condition are more likely to know what might be able to further support them than those who ‘always’ or ‘never’ treat themselves. One in five of those who ‘sometimes’ treat themselves (19%) would like more information on medicines and 17% would like access to a wider range of medicines.

Of all suggestions, the most common request is for the NHS to provide more information on how to look after long term health conditions (16%).

People in the age groups 35-44 and 45-54 are more twice as likely to say they would like more information from the NHS on looking after long term health conditions (20% and 21% respectively) than older people aged 55-64 (10%). Information on long term health conditions is also twice as likely to be requested by those with qualifications at GCSE (21%) or A-level equivalent (23%) than those with no formal qualifications (11%).

NHS support for self care for people with LTCs

Q What more, if anything, do you think the NHS could do to help you care for your long term health condition?

- Provide more information on how to look after long term health conditions
- More information on medicines
- Access to a wider range of medicines
- Improved GP appointment systems
- More home visits
- Improved hospital outpatient care
- Improved aftercare
- Improved access to equipment needed to monitor long term health condition
- Provide help to build community support groups and networks of care and people with similar long term health conditions
- Improved home care/community care/social care
- Don't know
- Nothing

Top 10 mentions

- Provide more information on how to look after long term health conditions 15%
- More information on medicines 8%
- Access to a wider range of medicines 6%
- Improved GP appointment systems 6%
- More home visits 5%
- Improved hospital outpatient care 4%
- Improved aftercare 4%
- Improved access to equipment needed to monitor long term health condition 3%
- Provide help to build community support groups and networks of care and people with similar long term health conditions 3%
- Improved home care/community care/social care 3%
- Don't know 12%
- Nothing 46%

Base: All respondents with a long term condition (871)
Seeking Self Care Support

Two in five adults with a long term health condition say they have not approached any person or organisations for advice on self care or information on their long term health condition (41%). Among those who have approached a person or organisation, the most frequently mentioned source is the family doctor/GP (42%), followed by the practice nurse (14%), local pharmacist/chemist (13%) and hospital doctors (11%).

Who provides self care support?

Q: In the last 6 months, have you approached anyone, any organisations, support groups or sources of information for self care advice or information on your long term health condition?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice nurse</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local pharmacist/chemist</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hospital doctor</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family, friends or colleagues</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health websites on the Internet</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health books/manuals/magazines</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hospital nurse</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapists such as occupational therapist, physiotherapist, etc</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS Direct telephone helpline</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Encouraging people to self care

People visiting their practice nurse are more likely than those visiting GPs, hospital doctors or pharmacists to be encouraged to self care and play a more active role in caring for their long term condition.

More than four in five of those visiting their practice nurse said that they were encouraged to self care (83%). A significant proportion (62%) who visited their local pharmacist also felt encouraged to self care.

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Encouraged to self care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Advice</th>
<th>% No</th>
<th>% Yes, a bit</th>
<th>% Yes, a lot</th>
<th>Don't know/Can't remember</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your practice nurse</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family doctor/GP</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hospital doctor</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your local pharmacist</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents who have approached relevant body about their condition.

Satisfaction with source of advice and information

People who have visited their practice nurse are also the most likely to be ‘very or fairly’ satisfied with the standard of information or advice they obtained from them. Almost nine in ten of those who approached their practice nurse were satisfied with the information (87%), closely followed by GP (85%) and hospital doctor (80%). Satisfaction with information is lowest among those who approached their local pharmacist (71%), as more than a quarter say they do not know about the quality of information and advice from pharmacists (26%).

**Very few are dissatisfied with the information they received**, although five percent of visitors to hospital doctors say they are very dissatisfied.
Information sought from health professionals

The following table shows that those who approached a GP, pharmacist, nurse or hospital doctor were either looking for information on how to better look after their health in general; lifestyle (exercise and healthy eating); medicines; treatments; and on their long term condition.
Preferred source of information

For most people, the preferred source of information and advice about long term health conditions in the future is the GP (66%). Other preferred sources of information are practice nurses (23%), local pharmacists (17%) and hospital doctors (17%).

These top four mentions match the ranking of sources that people with long term health conditions currently approach for information and advice.

### Future advice sources

**Q** Which of these sources, if any, would you wish to use in the future for advice or information on your long term health condition?

- **Your family doctor/GP**: 66%
- **Practice nurse**: 23%
- **Local pharmacist/chemist**: 17%
- **Hospital doctor**: 17%
- **Health websites on the Internet**: 11%
- **Hospital nurse**: 3%
- **Therapists such as occupational therapist, physiotherapist, etc**: 3%
- **Your family, friends or colleagues**: 3%
- **Health books/manuals/magazines**: 3%
- **NHS Direct telephone helpline**: 7%

Base: All respondents with a long term condition (571)

Awareness of self care services offered by pharmacists

**Four in five people** with a long term health condition say they know that pharmacies **offer information and advice on the use of medicines** (79%), while three quarters know that they also offer advice on treating minor problems/symptoms of long term health conditions (74%). Around half (49%) are aware that pharmacies can offer sign-posting to other health and social care professionals who can support self care and half (51%) are aware that they can monitor the symptoms of some of the long term health conditions.

Compared to a third in 2004-05 (34%), **more than half** of respondents say they are aware that pharmacies can provide medicine reviews for people on multiple medicines (51%). However, the proportion that are aware that pharmacies can offer information and advice on the use of medicines has fallen from 84% in 2004-05 to 78% in 2007.

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Q Did you know that pharmacists can now . . .?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
<th>% No</th>
<th>% Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer advice on treating minor problems and symptoms of your long term health condition(s)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor some of the symptoms of long term health conditions</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer signposting to other health and social care professionals</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide medicine reviews for people on multiple medicines</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer information and advice on the use of medicines</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(see chart on next page)

Impact on health

Friends and family (78%), followed by leisure (64%) and pets (44%), are the most likely factors to be mentioned by respondents as having a beneficial effect on a person’s long term health condition.

Leisure activities generally thought to have a positive impact on health, the positive impact having risen from 58% in 2004-05 to 64% in 2007.

Compared to 10% in 2004-05, nearly a third of respondents (29%) thought that social care services have a positive impact on health.

(see chart on next page)
Conclusion

Between 2004-05 and mid-2007, a few clear improvements have occurred in terms of self care behaviour of people with long term conditions. However, overall it appears that more time would be required for the full impact to be felt of the various self care support policies and programmes that have been implemented during this period for people with long term conditions, such as:

- Mainstreaming of the Expert Patients Programme
- Whole System Demonstrator Programme projects
- NHS SDO research projects
- Integrated Service Improvement Programme pilots
- Copying letters pilots

3 Not all parts to this question were asked in 2004-05.

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Self Care: A National View in 2007 Compared to 2004-05

- Information Prescriptions pilots
- The local and regional strategies and plans to support self care such as in NHS South West, Birmingham East and North PCT, Derbyshire County and Derby City PCTs or North West NHS.

The key changes in behaviours and views on self care of people with long term conditions that have emerged between 2004-05 and mid-2007 are as follows:

**Factors remaining the same over time**
1. Around two in five British adults (42%) continue to say they have a long term condition.
2. More than three-quarters of the people with long term conditions continue to say they play an active role in self care of their condition.
3. The preferred source of information and advice among people with LTCs continues to be the family doctor.
4. However, it is practice nurses and GPs (not hospital doctors or pharmacists) who continue to be the professionals who are more likely to encourage people with long term health conditions to self care.

**Changes over time among people with long term conditions**
1. People with a long term health condition who say they feel ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ comfortable taking responsibility for self care of their condition has risen from 85% in 2004-05 to 88% in 2007.
2. People with LTCs who say they do not drink any water in an average day has fallen from 14% in 2004-05 to 11% in 2007.
3. The proportion of people with LTCs who say they eat less than the daily recommended intake of five portions of fruit and vegetables during an average day has fallen from 65% in 2004-05 to 62% in 2007.
4. The proportion of people who think that leisure activities generally have a positive impact on health has risen from 58% in 2004-05 to 64% in 2007.
5. In 2007, three in five people with a long term health condition have said that they prepare questions ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time when they visit health or social care professionals such as doctors, nurses or social workers (60%), compared to 52% in 2004-05 showing a considerable increase.
6. More than half (51%) of respondents in 2007 say they are aware that pharmacies can provide medicine reviews for people on multiple medicines, compared to only a third (34%) in 2004-05, showing a considerable increase.
7. Compared to one in ten (10%) in 2004-05, nearly a third (29%) of the respondents in 2007 thought that social care can have a positive impact on health.
8. The proportion of people with LTCs who say they feel satisfied with their life ‘all or most of the time’ has fallen from 75% in 2004-05 to 72% in 2007.

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*The changes here are not statistically significant and should be treated as indicative only.*

Part 2: Views of People with Long Term Conditions
Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Anna Carluccio and Katy O’Malley at Ipsos MORI for carrying out the survey and preparing the draft report. Thanks are also due to Angela Hawley, Ayesha Dost and Debbie Goulding at the Department of Health for designing and developing the project, the questionnaire and the final report. Most of all, thanks are due to the 1,975 respondents who participated in this study without whose input the research would not have been possible.

Copyright and Publication of Data

All data are copyright of the Department of Health and any press release or publication of the findings of this study requires the advance approval of the Department.

Attachments

For Attachments, please see separate document.

Attachment 1: Details on the method of research
Attachment 2: Questionnaires and Topline Results of 2007 and 2004-0