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

PART 1: Views of the General Public
Self Care: A National View in 2007 Compared to 2004-05

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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 1: Views of the General Public on Self Care

Introduction

The Department of Health commissioned Ipsos MORI to undertake a longitudinal study, exploring attitudes of the public towards self care. This report presents the results of the 2007 study. The study aims to:

- Investigate the general public’s perceptions and behaviour with regard to self care of their health as well as with regard to the NHS and social care
- Capture the attitudes and behaviour of people with long term health conditions with regard to self care of their health and condition and their use of health and social care services.

Where possible, comparisons are made to two previous baseline studies: *Public Attitudes to Self Care – Baseline Survey*¹
*Views on Self Care of People with Long Term Conditions – Baseline Study*².

Methodology

The study was carried out through an Ipsos MORI national Omnibus, and face to face in-home interviews were conducted with a representative sample of the population. Fieldwork was conducted between 16 and 22 March 2007, and 1,975 interviews with British adults were achieved. All interviews were conducted using CAPI - Computer Aided Personal Interviewing. Attachment 1 gives further details on the method of research. A copy of the questionnaires and topline summary results of the 2007 as well as the 2004-05 studies can be found in Attachment 2. Both Attachments are available as a separate document.

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¹ 1,638 face-to-face interviews with members of the general public between 12-16 August 2004 and 1,652 interviews between 20-24 January 2005

² 4,083 face-to-face interviews with members of the general public and people with long term conditions during August and September 2005

Part 1: Views of the General Public
General Wellbeing & Lifestyle

Three-quarters of people (74%) say they feel satisfied with their life ‘all or most of the time’, which has fallen slightly from 77% in 2004-05. Satisfaction with life appears to be influenced by factors such as age, social grade, region, marital status, education and housing tenure. In particular it is notable that:

- Older people aged 65+ are more satisfied with their life than younger people aged 25-34 (79% and 68% respectively).
- People in the lower social grades are less likely to be satisfied. Two-thirds of respondents in social grades DE say they are satisfied (66%), rising to three-quarters among social grades C1C2 (74%) and four in five among those in social grades AB (82%).
- Those with no formal qualifications tend to be less satisfied (71%) than those with A-levels or higher qualifications (77%).
- People who own their house outright (78%) or who are buying it on a mortgage (75%) are more satisfied with their life than social renters (68%).
- People who are married or live as a couple (79%) are more likely to be satisfied with their life than those who are single (66%) or widowed/divorced (69%).
- Londoners are significantly less satisfied with life than people living in other parts of the country (60% versus 74%).
- 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%).

Part 1: Views of the General Public
As with life satisfaction, a clear majority of respondents say they feel in control over their life 'all or most of the time' (72%) while few feel 'never or hardly ever' (4%). The proportion of people (74%) who are satisfied with their life ‘all or most of the time’ has fallen slightly since 2004-05 (77%).

As well as being more satisfied with their life, older people aged 65+ are more likely to say they have control over their life (80%), as are those in social grades AB (81%) and those who own their house outright (78%). Conversely those who are less likely to feel in control are aged 25-54 (65%), those with children in their household (68%), and single people (66%).

How healthy is the British public?

Half of respondents say their health has been ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ over the last six months (49%), slightly higher than in 2004-05 (46%); and a further 43% say that it has been ‘good’ or ‘fair’. Around 7% report ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ health.

People’s quality of health deteriorates with age. Almost two-thirds of respondents aged 15-24 say their health has been ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ over the last six months (63%) compared to a third of those aged 65+ (34%). People in the higher social grades are more likely to report ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ health (55%), than those in the lower social grades (39%).

In terms of leading an active life, around two in five say that they take part in regular exercise or physical activity ‘all or most of the time’ (44%). However, the frequency with which people exercise declines with age. Younger people and those in the higher
social grades are more likely to exercise regularly; more than half of those aged 15-24 (56%) exercise regularly, as do 48% of those in social grades AB, compared to 39% of those in social grades DE.

Although younger people take more exercise, older people and those in the higher social grades (AB) have a healthier diet and also do not smoke or drink excessively. Only around half of people aged 15-24 say they have a healthy diet compared to more than four in five among those aged 75+ (82%). More than four in five people in social grades AB have a healthy diet (81%) compared to 53% of people in social grades DE. The pattern is identical in terms of self care of minor ailments.

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 64%). 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%).

More than three-quarters of British adults say they drink five glasses of water or fewer per day (78%). Nearly 10% of the adults say they do not drink any water in an average day although this has fallen four percentage points since 2004-05 (14%).

As with doing exercise, water consumption is higher among younger people and those in higher social grades. Almost a third of respondents aged 25-34 say they drink the recommended seven or more glass a day (30%) compared to 12% of those aged 65+. More than a quarter of respondents in the higher social grades say they drink seven or more glasses a day (28%) compared to 17% of those in the lower social grades.

Part 1: Views of the General Public
Fruit and vegetable consumption

Two-thirds of adults say they eat less than the daily recommended intake of five portions of fruit and vegetables during an average day (66%).

However, this has improved significantly since 2004-05, when seven in ten people said they ate fewer than five portions of fruit and vegetables a day (70%). This may in part be due to the Department of Health’s ‘Five a Day’ campaign, which was launched in 2003, aimed at increasing fruit and vegetable consumption.

Unlike water consumption, fruit and vegetable consumption increases with age. Two in five respondents aged 65+ say they eat five or more portions a day (41%) – around twice as many as those aged 15-24 (22%).

Fruit and vegetable consumption is higher among people in the higher social grades. More than twice as many people in social grades AB say they eat five portions of fruit or vegetables a day than those in social grades DE (46% vs 22%). **Women are more likely than men** to consume the recommended five portions a day (38% versus 28%).
Leisure activities

Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently in an average week they engage in a range of leisure activities. The most popular leisure activity by far is watching TV or listening to the radio/music, which almost six in ten adults say they do at least seven times a week (57%). Half the people say they ‘generally relax’ (50%) and one in five visit friends and family at least four times a week (20%).

Leisure activities

Q: How many times, if any, in an average week would you say you ...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>Twice or three times</th>
<th>4 - 7 times</th>
<th>More than 7 times</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV/listen to radio/music</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit family/friends</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally relax</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit Pubs or Clubs</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema/Theatre/Live music concerts</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event/sport as spectator</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake spiritual activities</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for a community organisation</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a class outside formal education</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 1,975 adults, 10-22 March 2007
Use of health services

Two-thirds of respondents have made use of their family doctor, GP or practice nurse in the last six months (65%), and two in five have used their local pharmacy (39%). However, a quarter of people say they have not used any of these services in the past six months (25%).

Those aged 65+ are the most likely to have used these services (80%, 52% and 22% respectively), although they are no more likely to use accident and emergency (casualty) services than people in other age groups. Conversely, those aged 15-24 (42%) are most likely not to have used a health service during the previous six months.

Women are more likely than men to have used these services such as consulting their GP (71% vs 59%), pharmacist (43% vs 34%), or hospital doctor (18% vs 13%).

Hospital admissions

One in ten people say they have spent time in hospital as inpatient during the past six months (10%). However, over two-thirds of hospital patients stayed for less than 24 hours as day cases (37%).

Women are significantly more likely than men to have been hospital inpatients during the past six months (12% versus 8%).
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Hospital stay

- **How many nights, if any, did you spend in hospital in total?**
  - Less than 24 hours: 37%
  - 1 night: 13%
  - 2 nights: 13%
  - 3 nights: 10%
  - 4 nights: 6%
  - 5 nights: 4%
  - 6 nights: 4%
  - 7 nights: 4%
  - 7 – 14 nights: 3%
  - 15 – 26 nights: 3%
  - 27 – 42 nights: 1%
  - More than 42 nights: 1%
  - Don’t know: 1%

Base: All those who have been in hospital as a patient in the last 6 months (591)

Provision of care plan or written instructions

As in 2004-05, under half of those who have been in hospital in the past six months say they were provided with written instructions for taking medicines (47%); around a third say they were given a care plan (35%).

Over half of people in social groups DE (55%) and C1C2 (54%) say they received written instructions for taking medicines compared to 31% of those in groups AB.

Self care plans and Written instructions

- **During or after your stay in hospital, were you provided with either . . . ?**
  - None of these: 37%
  - Care plan: 35%
  - Written instructions for taking medicines: 47%

- **During or after your stay in hospital, were you provided with either . . . ?**
  - None of these: 36%
  - Care plan: 37%
  - Written instructions for taking medicines: 48%

Base: All those who have been in hospital as a patient in the last 6 months (591)
The vast majority of patients who received written instructions say they took their medicines regularly ‘all or most of the time’ (91%), including 80% who say they took them ‘all of the time’.

Following written instructions regularly

Q: Following your stay in hospital in the last 6 months, how often did you take your medicines regularly?

Base: All those who have been provided with written instructions for taking medicines (88)

The vast majority of patients provided with a care plan say they followed it ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time (91%). The proportion of people saying they followed their care plan ‘all of the time’ has risen from 68% to three-quarters (74%) since 2004-05.

Following self care plans

Q: Following your stay in hospital in the last 6 months, how often did you follow your care plan?

Base: All those who have been provided with a care plan (88)

Part 1: Views of the General Public
Following instructions from professionals

The vast majority of people say they follow instructions given to them by a doctor, nurse or pharmacist when taking medicines ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time (84%), including six in ten who follow instructions ‘all the time’ (61%). A small minority say they ‘never or hardly ever’ follow instructions (4%).

Older people are more likely to follow instructions, with 91% of those aged 65+ saying they follow instructions ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time compared to three-quarters of those aged 15-24 (76%). Married couples are also more likely to follow instructions (86%) compared to three-quarters (74%) of single people.

Women are more likely to follow instructions ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the time than men (81% versus 86%). Regionally, Londoners are the least likely to follow instructions (67%) compared to nine in ten in the Midlands (90%).

How NHS can provide self care support for general public

When asked ‘what more, if anything, could the NHS do to better help you look after yourself and your family?’, 43% of the respondents provided suggestions on what the NHS could do to support self care.

Among those who felt that the NHS could do more to support self care, the most popular suggestions were around allowing people to have more say and increased independence in their own care (8%); encouraging people to take more exercise (8%); providing more information on healthy eating (7%) and self care of general health (7%); providing support to prevent illness (6%); and encouraging people to take greater responsibility in their self care (5%).

Part 1: Views of the General Public
What more can the NHS do to support self care

Q: What more, if anything, do you think the NHS could do better to help you look after yourself and your family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allow people to have more say in independence in their own care</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage people to take more exercise</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more information on healthy eating</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information on how to better look after general health</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NHS should invest more in the prevention of illness</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more exercise on prescription</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More support on preventing illness/injury</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage people to take greater responsibility for own healthcare</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More services (e.g. diabetes clinics) in primary care</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more options for cholesterol exercise</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More encouragement to stop smoking</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved access to equipment needed to monitor health, such as blood sugar, blood pressure, etc</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More services for alcohol/drugs problems</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide training so that people can understand and use health information more effectively</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information on how to use NHS facilities e.g. when to use pharmacist, doctor or ambulance</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved access to self care skills training courses</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide help to build self care support groups and networks in the community</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide self care trainers</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents (1,697)
Self care of personal health

The vast majority of British adults think that people should take responsibility for their own well being (89%). Londoners and those who ‘sometimes’ take an active role in caring for their long term health condition, are only somewhat less likely to agree (75% and 78% respectively).

More than four in five British adults also believe that health education and skills training are essential to enable people to take better care of themselves (84%). Once again this is lower among Londoners (71%) and those who ‘sometimes’ take an active role in their long term health condition (74%). Agreement is also somewhat lower among people in the lower social grades (80% vs 88% in the higher social grades).

What will enable people to self care better

| Statement | % Disagree | % Agree | N/A
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for their own well-being</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health education/skill training for people to enable them to take better care of themselves</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be involved in support groups/what works to get support from others</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be involved in support groups/what works to give support to others</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with long term conditions should be responsible for regular monitoring of that condition</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 1975 adults, 16-22 March 2007

Three-quarters of respondents think that people need the opportunity to be involved in self care support groups and networks in the community so as to either get support from others or give support to others (75% each). However, older residents aged 65+, widows/divorcees and those in social grades DE are among those least likely to agree with this.

Three-quarters of respondents think that people with long term health conditions should be responsible for regular monitoring of their condition (74%). Over half of those who play no active role in the treatment of their condition say they should be responsible for regular monitoring (53%), compared to four in five of those who take an active role all of the time (79%).

Part 1: Views of the General Public
Conclusion

Between 2004-05 and mid-2007, a few clear improvements have occurred in terms of self care behaviour of the general public. 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, notably

- Working in Partnership Programme
- Whole System Demonstrator Programme projects
- NHS SDO research projects
- Integrated Service Improvement Programme pilots
- Copying letters pilots
- 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 of the general public on self care that have emerged between 2004-05 and mid-2007 are as follows:

Factors remaining the same over time

1. Around two in five (42%) British adults continue to say they have a long term condition.

2. The preferred source of information and advice continues to be the family doctor for all groups of people.

Changes over time among the general public

1. The proportion of people who say their health has been ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’ over the last six months has increased from 46% in 2004-05 to 49% in 2007.

2. The proportion of people who say they feel satisfied with their life ‘all or most of the time’ has fallen from 77% in 2004-05 to 73% in 2007.

3. People who say they do not drink any water in an average day has fallen from 14% in 2004-05 to 10% in 2007.

4. The proportion of people who say they eat less than the daily recommended intake of five portions of fruit and vegetables during an average day has fallen from 70% in 2004-05 to 66% in 2007.

5. The proportion of people saying they followed their care plan ‘all of the time’ has risen from 68% in 2004-05 to 74% in 2007.