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Canadian health care comes up tops in study

By Marilyn Dunlop
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Canadians believe they have one of the best, if not the best, health-care systems in the world, a Canadian Medical Association doctor says.

Canadians' love of the system was made clear in a recent survey of public attitudes on health care in Canada, the United States and Britain. Dr. Judy Kazimirski, chairman of the association's board, told a meeting in Toronto this week.

Conducted by the U.S. Baxter Foundation, the survey found 95 per cent of Canadians prefer the Canadian health-care system over the U.S. system and 91 per cent prefer it to the British system.

Ad campaign

On the other hand, 61 per cent of Americans polled wish they had the Canadian system. And 28 per cent of Britons questioned said they'd rather have the Canadian one.

Kazimirski said a \$2.5 million advertising campaign being conducted in the U.S. by the American Medical Association and other organizations is aimed at discrediting Canada's medicare system. The campaign is being run out of fear that Americans' dissatisfaction may lead to a government-run health insurance program, she said.

The survey found 94 per cent of Canadians "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the care they received from their doctors in the previous 12 months, compared with 89 per cent of the British and 86 per cent of the Americans.

Cost of care

Only 3.6 per cent of Canadians said they didn't get the care they needed, compared to 4.7 per cent of the British and 12.6 per cent of Americans. And more than half of those Americans said the reason was financial. In Canada, only 0.6 per cent blamed the cost and in Britain only 0.1 per cent.

When asked to rate their own health-care system, 56 per cent of Canadians said it works pretty well and needs only minor changes, compared with 10 per cent of Americans and 27 per cent of the British.

The survey involved 1,026 adults in Canada and 1,066 in Britain who were interviewed in their homes and 1,250 adults in the U.S. interviewed by telephone. A survey of this size has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, 95 per cent of the time.

The article EM9014 reprinted above is used in Figure 4.10 of the STAT 220 Course Materials and also in Statistical Highlight #99.