



AngusReidStrategies™



Media Science Forum

Public Opinion
Research Results

Final Research Report
December 2007

Research Canada
An Alliance for Health Discovery

Recherche Canada
Une alliance pour les découvertes en santé

Methodology

From November 23 to November 27, 2007, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,020 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to Statistics Canada's most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a representative sample of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics.

Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.

Survey Distribution

| Region | # of Respondents | Margin of Error (95% confidence) |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| British Columbia | 144 | +/- 8.2% |
| Alberta | 97 | +/- 10.0% |
| The Prairies | 74 | +/- 11.4% |
| Ontario | 372 | +/- 5.1% |
| Quebec | 244 | +/- 6.3% |
| Atlantic Canada | 89 | +/- 10.4% |
| TOTAL | 1,020 | +/- 3.1% |

Executive Summary

The State of Science and the Media: A Story of Unfulfilled Potential

- **Canadians want to see more information about science and health in the media: these topic areas combine to make up the media's greatest information gap currently.**
- **When Canadians do see/read/hear this information, it affects them greatly; nearly nine out of 10 Canadians confirm making specific behavioural changes as a direct result of media reports on health research.**
- **There is a sense that scientists and the media need to improve their perceived utility as a source for health research information. As it stands, Canadians find medical health care professionals particularly useful sources of health research information, but regard scientists and the media as less useful than books or family members.**

Bridging the Gap: A Story of Cooperation and Convergence

- In reporting health research, scientists and the media both have their own perceived strengths and weaknesses. The media appear strong in ease of understanding but lacking in credibility. Meanwhile, scientists appear strong in accuracy but lacking in ease of understanding. This is a story about convergence. By working together more closely, the media can help with improving clarity for the scientific community, while scientists can help with accuracy in the reporting of health research findings. The end result would likely be improved credibility for both.
- One specific modification that can be made towards improved credibility is the inclusion of more scientific background information in media reports on health research. Canadians overwhelmingly say there is currently too little background information included in such reports. But balance is critical: the media must find a way to provide more background information without jeopardizing the ease of understanding element at which it currently excels. Continuing to foster a cooperative atmosphere between the scientific and journalistic communities would help to optimize this balance.
- The key information delivery channels are television and the Internet. Even among those who are more likely to prefer newspapers (i.e., those aged 55+ or those with a university education), this medium still falls below TV and the web. It should be remembered, though, that newspaper articles – notably health features – play a significant role in feeding information to both broadcast and electronic media.

Executive Summary

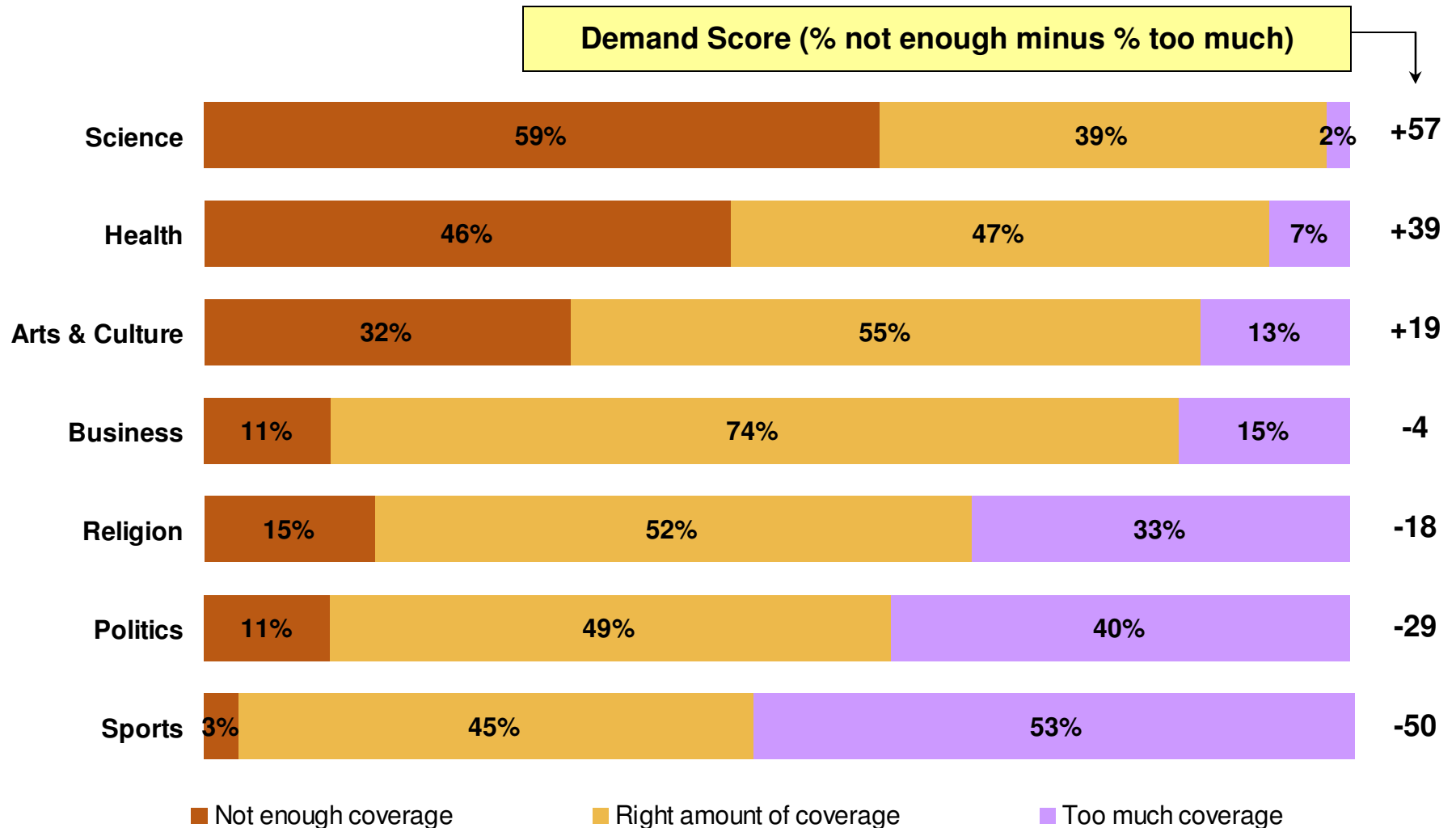
Canadian Perceptions of Obesity

- **Canadians generally find the cause of obesity to be rooted in personal issues, but increasingly embrace the idea of societal solutions to obesity.**
- **There may be an opportunity for education to play a role in highlighting the impact of systemic and individual health factors (i.e., elements over which people have no control) as being significant factors in causing obesity.**
- **A focus on promoting awareness of these not-within-personal-control elements that contribute to obesity may help to locate the solution within the health care system and society as a whole (as opposed to only residing within the individual).**

Assessing Media Coverage Areas

The Canadian public wants more coverage of science and health issues

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Q1. In your opinion, do you think each of the following receives too much media coverage, about the right amount, or not enough media coverage? [n=1020]

Utility of Health Information Sources

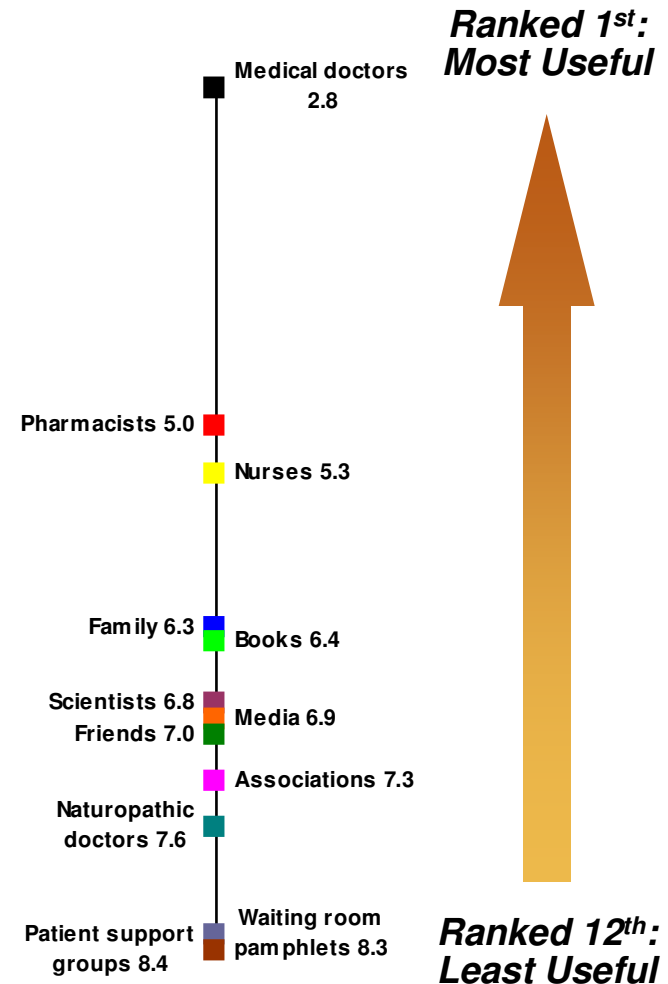
Doctors and other medical health care professionals are the most useful sources of health information; scientists ranked 6th, media ranked 7th

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Instead of merely ranking each item from 1 to 12, the chart on the right shows the mean ranked position for each item, thus revealing the ranking of each item *in relation to each other*.

As such, not only are medical doctors seen to be the top ranked source of information for Canadians who are making decisions about their health, but indeed they are seen to be in a class of their own, far above the second and third ranked sources, pharmacists and nurses.

Canadians rank the utility of scientists and the media sixth and seventh, respectively, in terms of sources of information for making decisions about their health. This places scientists and the media behind family and books, and alongside friends.



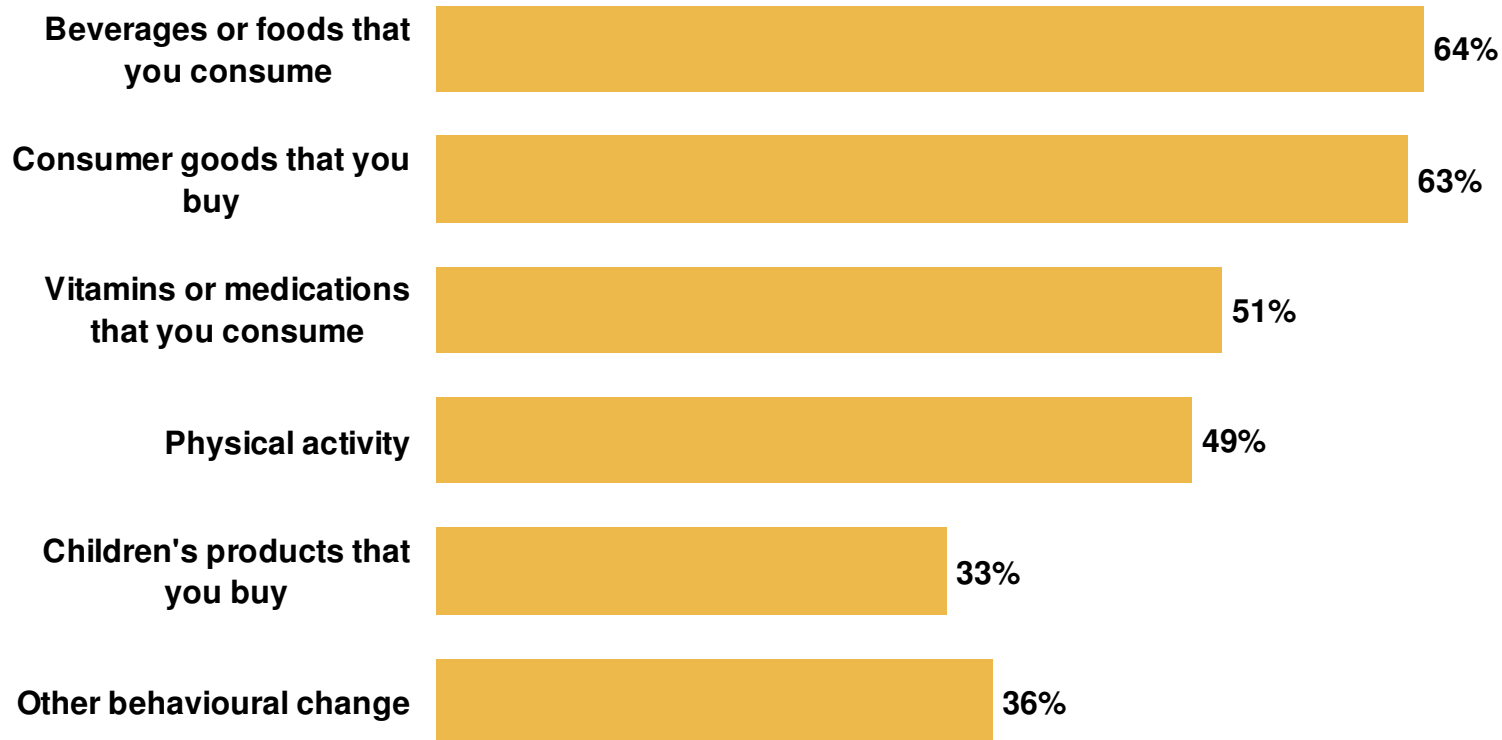
Q2. How useful do you find the following sources when making decisions about your health? Please rank the items from 1 to 12, where "1" is most useful, "2" is second most useful and so on to "12" for least useful. [n=1020]

Changing Behaviours Due to Media Health Reports

Health reports in the media have produced significant behavioural change among Canadians within the past five years, on a variety of fronts

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Of the potential behavioural changes due to health reports in the media tested, each has been made by a noteworthy proportion of the population. A majority have changed the foods/drinks they consume and the products they buy, while half have changed the vitamins/medications they take or their physical activity as a result of a health story. A healthy minority have made a change with regard to the children's products that they buy.



Q3. Within the past five years, did you make a change to any of the following behaviours in response to a health report that you saw, read or heard in the media? [n=1020]

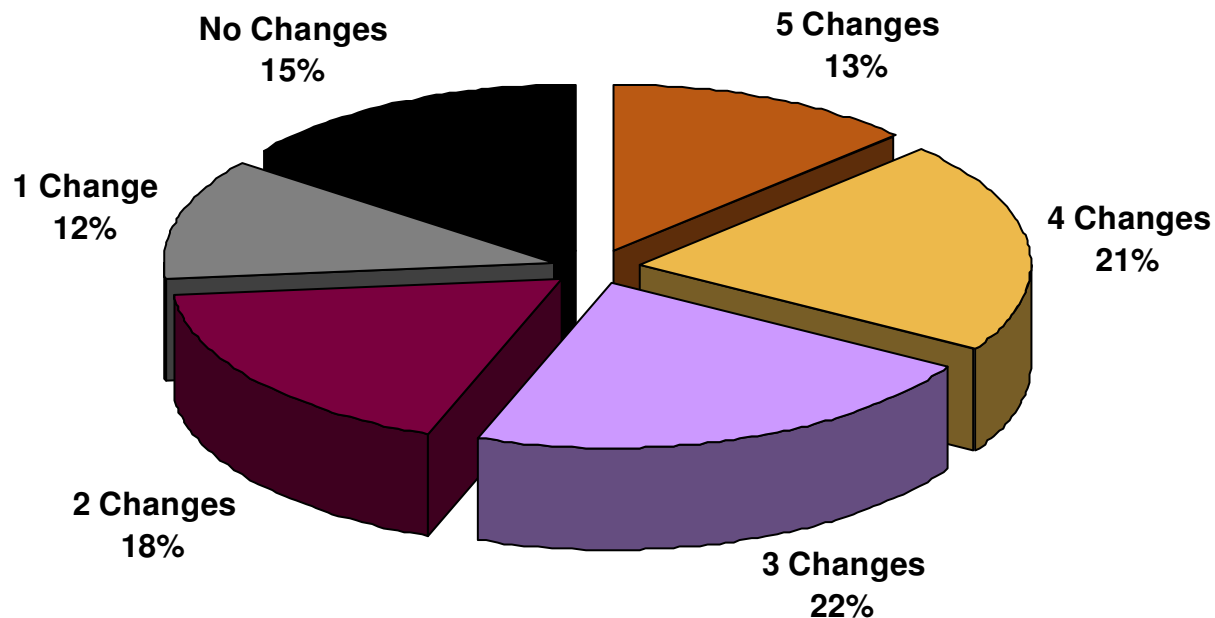
Changing Behaviours: A Basic Segmentation

85% of Canadians have made at least one behavioural change as a result of media health reports

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Of the five specific behavioural changes discussed on the previous slide, 85% of Canadians have made at least one as a result of a health report they saw, read or heard in the media. In fact, a third of Canadians have made at least four of the five described changes.

This high-response group (4+ changes) is primarily comprised of individuals who are affluent, highly educated, and female. Meanwhile, the low-response group (1 or 0 changes) are significantly more likely to include males.

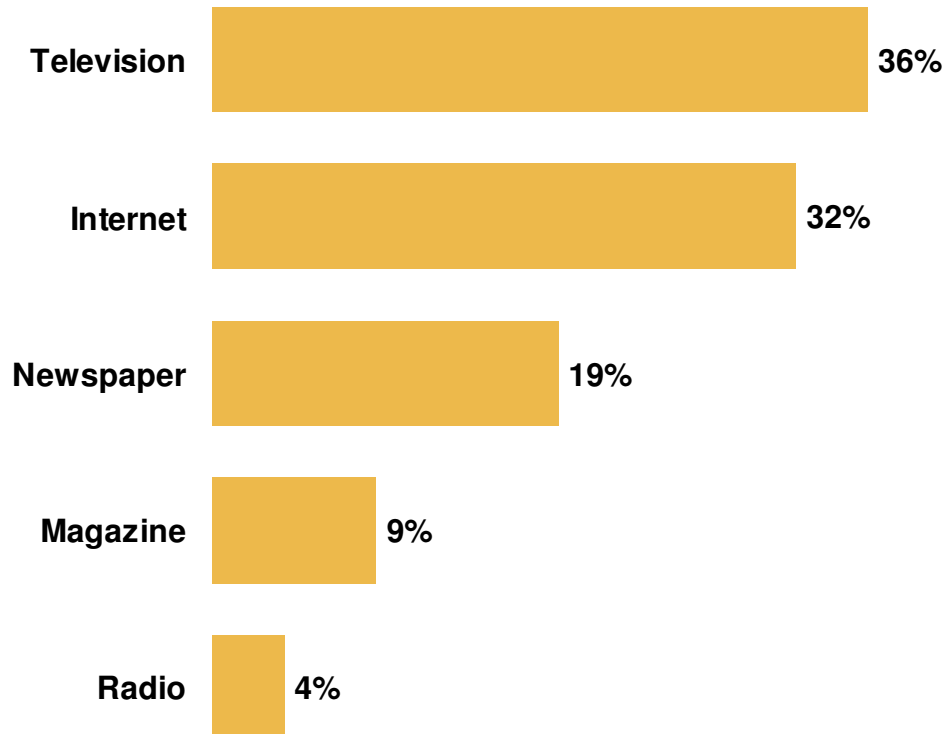


Preferred Media Source for Health Research Info

TV and the Internet rank as the top media choices for health research reports

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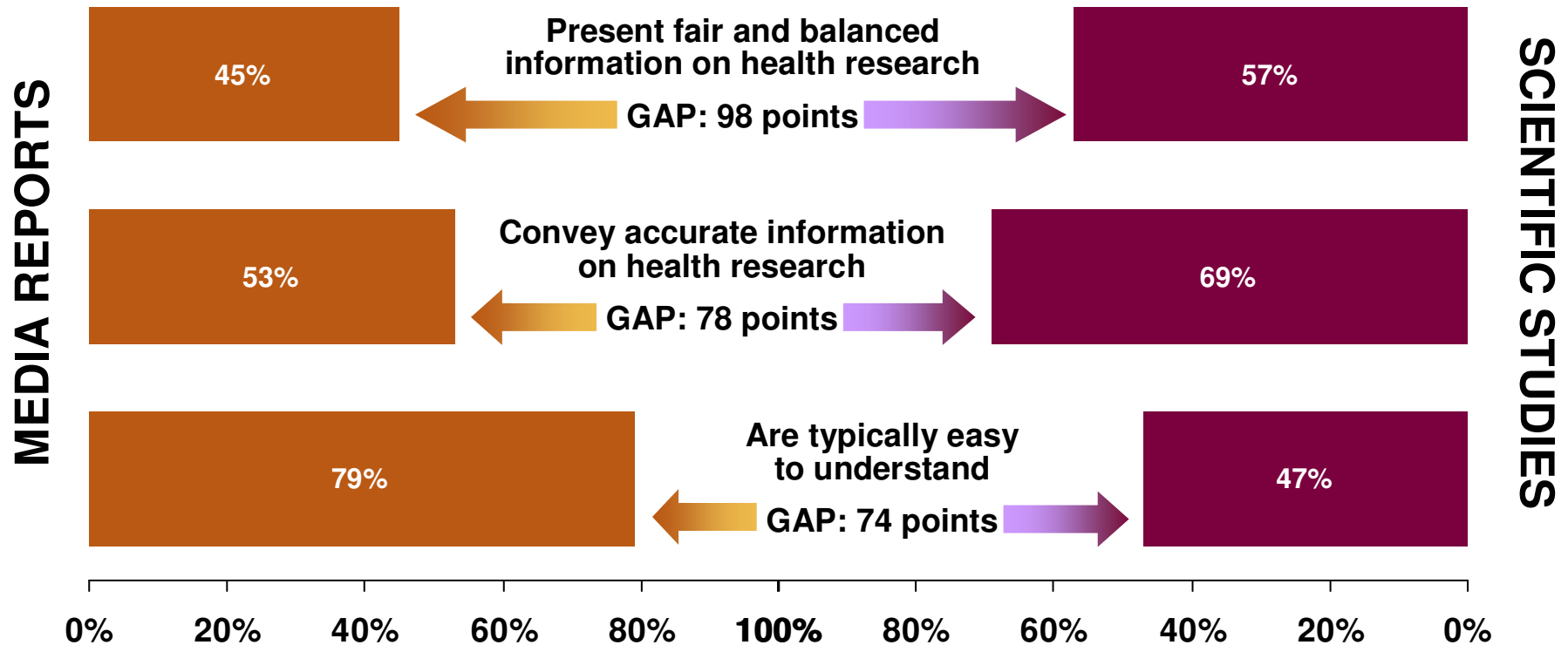
Television is most preferred in Quebec (47%), among women (41%) in households with an annual income under \$50,000 (43%), and among those without post-secondary education (45%).



Health Research: Quantifying the Gap

Largest gap exists in presenting fair and balanced information on health research

If there is a priority for media reports and scientific studies in terms of meeting the health research information needs of Canadians, it is that they should improve perceptions that they present fair and balanced information. Accuracy is a strength of scientific studies, while clarity is a virtue of media reports.

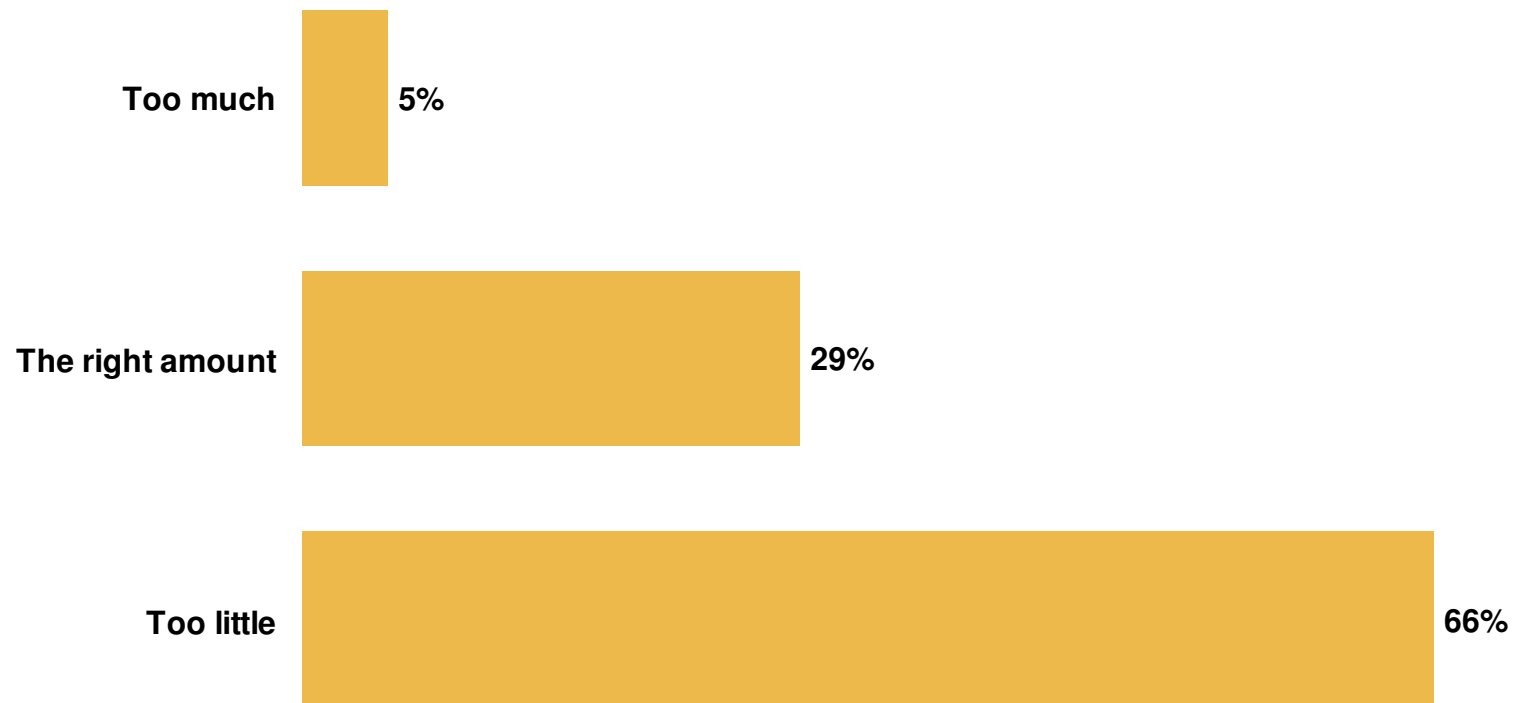


Why the Credibility Gap?

Two thirds of Canadians say media accounts of health research include too little scientific background information

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One way to improve the credibility of media reports and scientific studies on health research is for the media to include a greater amount of scientific background information in its stories. Doing so, however, should not come at the expense of ease of understanding – as this is the core strength of health reports in the media. A delicate balance between including more background information and keeping stories understandable for ordinary Canadians must be struck; but that balance is currently skewed too far to the “dumbing science down” end of the spectrum.



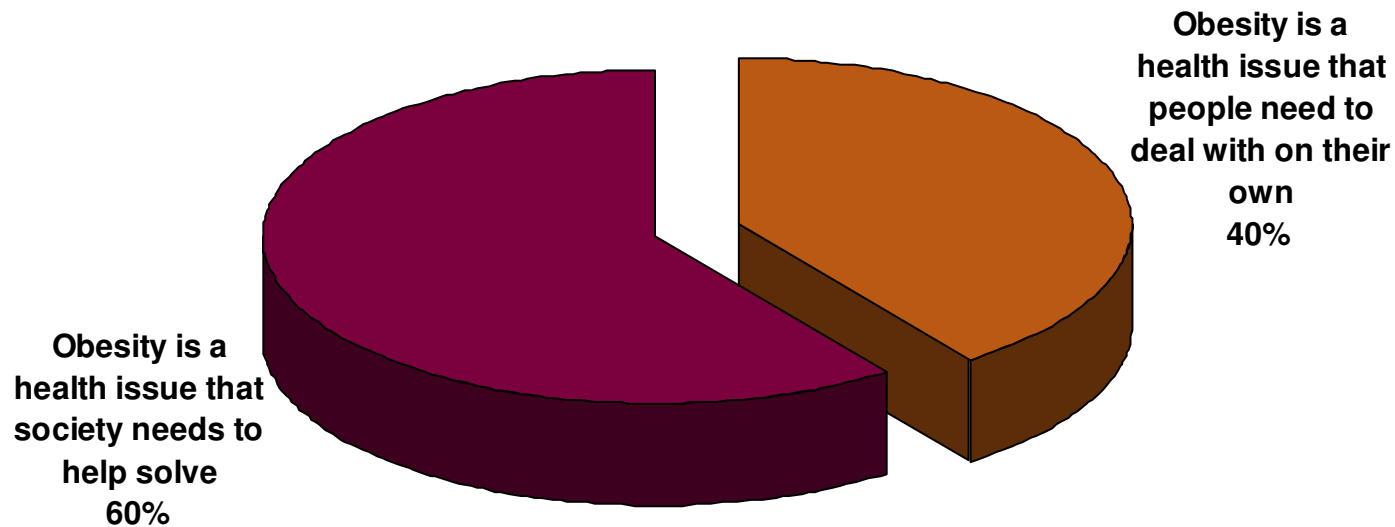
Q11. In your opinion, do media accounts of health research include too much, the right amount, or too little scientific background information? [n=1020]

Overt Attitudes Regarding Obesity

Canadian split on solution for obesity – lean more towards society helping to solve the issue

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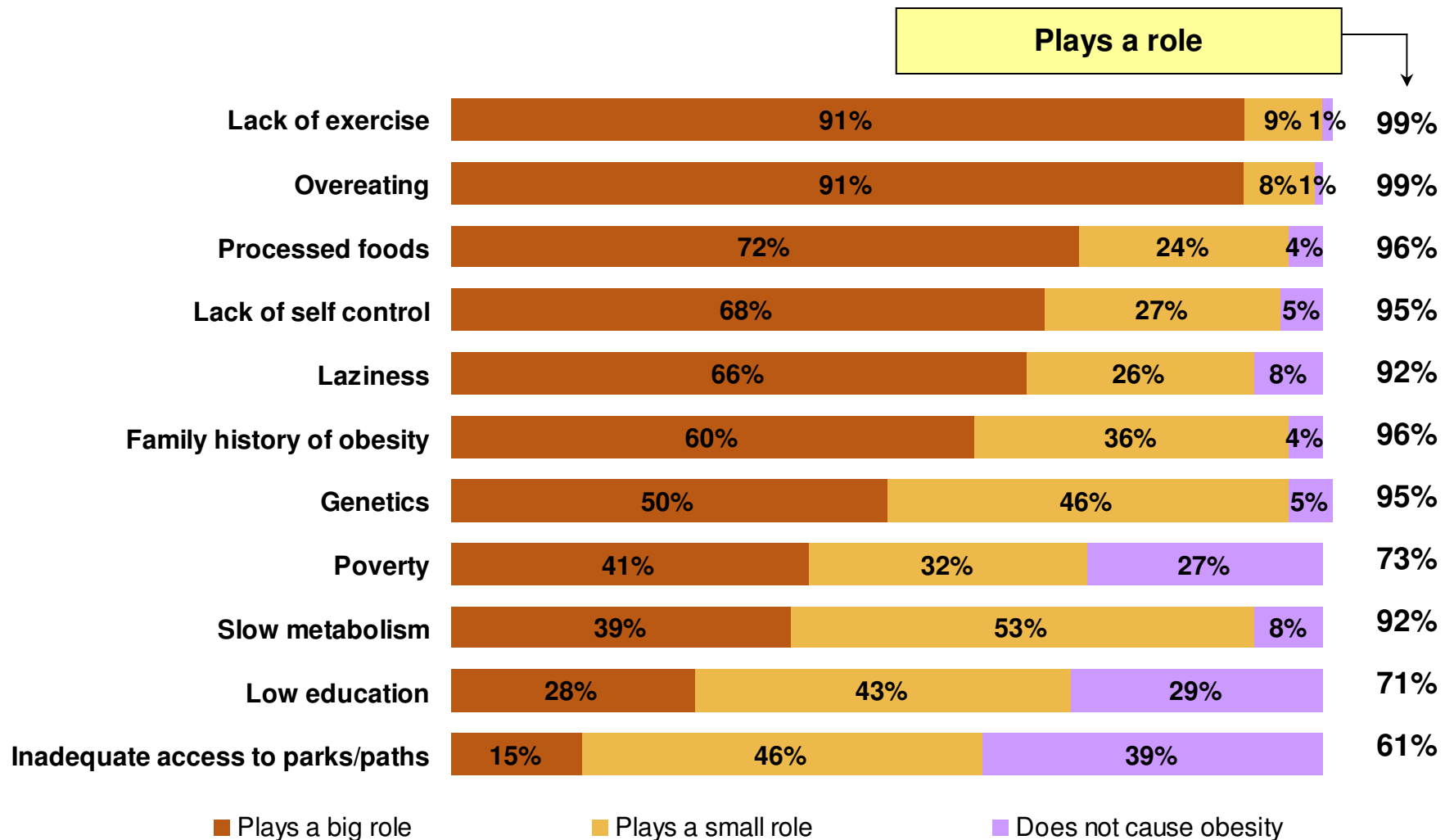
Sixty percent of Canadians say society needs to help solve the obesity issue, compared to 40% who say obese people need to deal with it on their own. Those who see it as a societal issue are generally more educated, and more likely to be female.



Causes of Obesity

Personal issues like lack of exercise, overeating top list of causes; societal issues like city planning, education, poverty play a relatively lesser role

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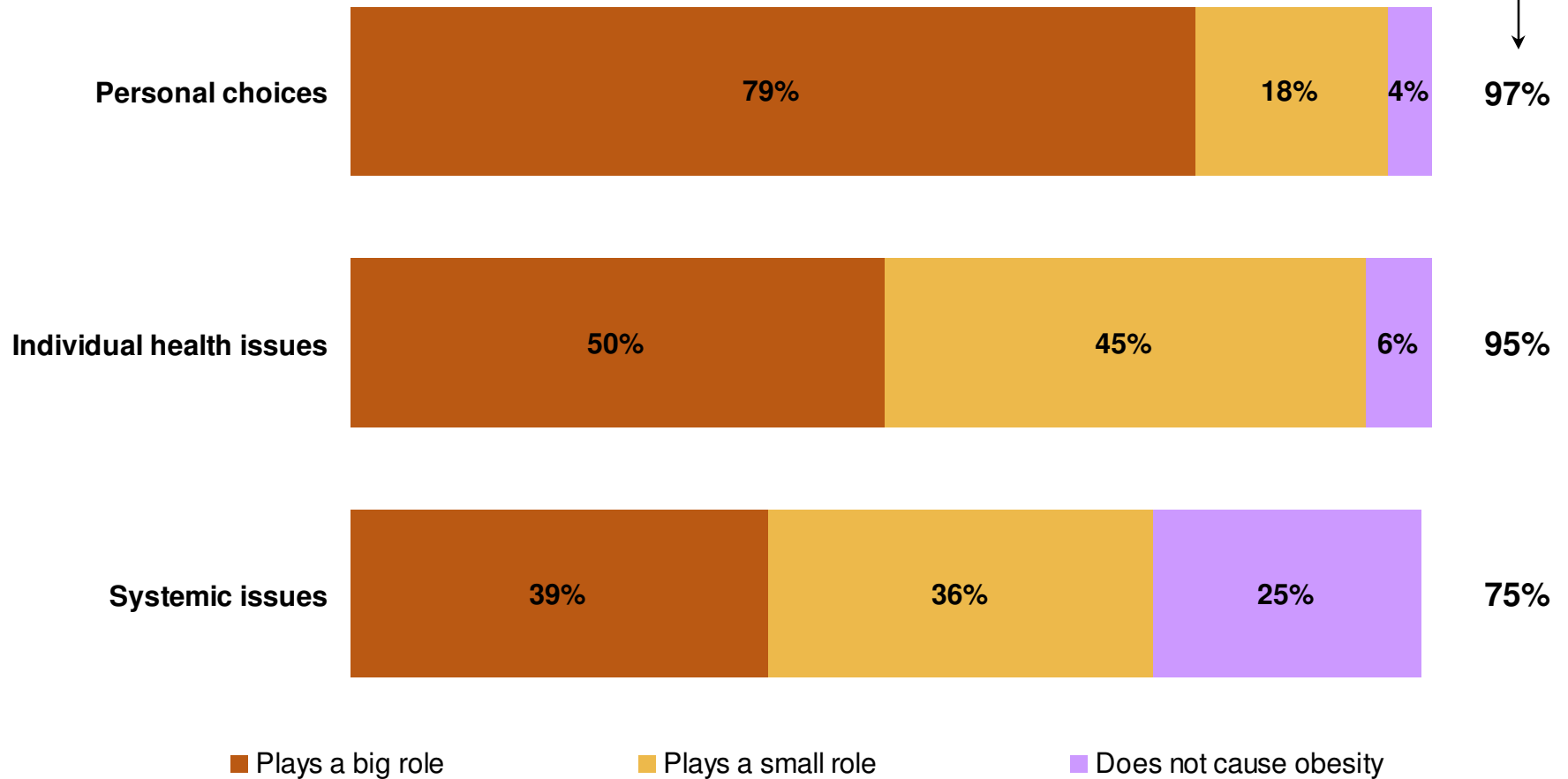


Causes of Obesity

Categorized causes (average of components): People attribute more responsibility to the individual than to society in causing obesity

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Plays a role





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