



UCS Food and Drug Administration Scientists' Survey Centers for Drugs, Food Safety, Biologics and Devices

The 2006 Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) sent a survey of 38 questions to 5,918 scientists at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In addition, scientists at four FDA Centers received additional questions specific to their mission.

Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER)

CDER oversees the development, marketing, and monitoring of prescription and over-the-counter drugs as well as some products such as fluoride toothpaste and sunscreens.

- Almost one in five (19 percent) CDER scientists reported that they have “been pressured to approve or recommend approval” for a New Drug Application “despite reservations about the safety, efficacy, or quality of the drug.”
- Close to half (43 percent) were not at all or only somewhat confident that “CDER’s final decisions adequately assess the safety of a drug.”
- About two thirds (66 percent) were not at all or only somewhat confident that the “FDA adequately monitors the safety of prescription drugs once they are on the market.”

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN)

CFSAN oversees the safety of the nation’s food supply and cosmetic products.

- Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of CFSAN scientists were not at all confident that the “FDA adequately protects the public from risks due to herbal and other dietary supplements.”
- Nearly half (49 percent) were not at all or only somewhat confident that “FDA adequately protects the public from diets high on saturated/trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium, which contribute to disease.”
- More than half (58 percent) were not at all or only somewhat confident that “FDA adequately protects the public from deceptive food labeling.”

Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) and Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH)

CBER is responsible for assuring the safety and effectiveness of products such as the blood supply and vaccines. CDRH regulates medical and radiological devices and certifies mammography facilities.

- More than one quarter (28 percent) say they have been pressured to approve a product “despite reservations about the safety, efficacy, or quality of the product.”
- Two in five (40 percent) were not at all or only somewhat confident that their “Center’s final decisions adequately assess the safety of a product.”
- Nearly three quarters (74 percent) were not at all or only somewhat confident that “FDA adequately monitors the safety of products once they are on the market.”