



2006 UCS and PEER Survey of FDA Scientists SURVEY METHODOLOGY

■ WHO

From November of 2005 to January of 2006, we gathered information on job titles, job descriptions, and the scientific training of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) employees. Using web pages and other publicly available information we identified a group of 5,946 FDA employees who had scientific job titles (such as biologist or chemist), scientific duties (such as consumer safety officer or medical officer), or scientific qualifications necessary for their jobs (such as project management officer). Approximately 34 percent of the surveys were mailed to consumer safety officers, 15 percent to chemists, 7 percent to biologists, 7 percent to microbiologists, 7 percent to medical officers, 3 percent to pharmacologists, 3 percent to engineers, 3 percent to statisticians, and 19 percent to over 30 other job titles that could reasonably be construed to be scientists. A total of 28 surveys were returned because of address changes.

■ THE QUESTIONNAIRE

With the assistance of current and former FDA employees, we created a 38 question questionnaire that was sent to 5,918 scientists across the country in 7 centers and the Office of the Commissioner. In addition, scientists at the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research were sent 3 questions that had been included in a 2002 Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General survey. Scientists in the Center for Food Safety and Nutrition, the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, and Center for Devices and Radiological Health were sent additional questions that specifically pertained to their missions. Although the questionnaires were anonymous, we recorded the center from which it was returned.

■ RETURNS

Returns came by business reply envelope and were tabulated and typed by an outside firm. A total of 997 scientists returned surveys and 502 of those supplied narrative answers to the following question:

“The integrity of the scientific work produced by the FDA could best be improved by:”

WHO WERE THE SCIENTISTS?

- Sixty-two percent of the respondents were General Service (GS) 13-15, 34 percent were GS 9-12, and only 5 scientists were GS 7 or lower.
- Thirty-three percent of the respondents had been at the FDA more than 15 years and another 19 percent had been there 6-10 years.