Value of science in everyday life

How useful is knowledge of science when it comes to people’s everyday life and health?

The overwhelming majority of the public think it is useful for people to have an understanding of science in their daily lives.

People also acknowledge the impact medical research has on their lives. Other findings from the survey show that almost all adults believe medical research will lead to an improvement in the quality of life in the UK in the next 20 years.

Nevertheless, people do not always find it easy to decipher what they see and hear about science and medical research, suggesting that this information could sometimes be made more accessible. Questions in the Monitor show that only two in five people say they usually understand the science stories they come across in the news, and not all of this group feel confident discussing such stories with their friends.

Usefulness of science

How useful is understanding science to everyday life?

87% think it is useful for people in general

66% say it is useful for them personally

Making health-related decisions

How confident are people in making health-related decisions?

90% say they are confident making informed decisions about their health

96% of those who have university or college science qualifications say the same

87% of those who have no science qualifications say the same

Talking to health professionals

Do people query medical professionals’ conclusions?

48% of people liken themselves to someone who is confident querying a medical professional’s conclusions

58% of those who have university or college science qualifications say the same

45% of those who have no science qualifications say the same