

**CARP Prescription Drug Poll Report
May 17, 2013**

KEY FINDINGS

For the first time since CARP began polling its members (in October, 2008), the Liberals lead the Conservatives in voter preference, while the NDP has sunk to far third place. This is significant, in that it marks the culmination of a trend which began last fall, and the CARP membership has always previously preferred the Conservatives to the Liberals by about two to one.

CARP members take, on average, more than three prescription medications (including those who take none), most are prescribed by the same doctor and all are purchased at the same pharmacy.

This is important, because members agree that medicine reviews by pharmacists when scrips are being filled are the best way to avoid drug interactions. Members also believe pharmacists are the best source of information on drug interactions, rather than doctors. Pharmacists are generally seen to be the first line of defense against drug complications.

While members mostly accept their doctor's recommendations on medications, almost all also research their medications themselves. Half have had, or know someone who has had a drug interaction, most likely dizziness/balance or GI problems.

Virtually all members have been vaccinated as adults, mostly for flu and shingles. Few of those vaccinated for flu subsequently caught it. Vaccines are seen to be best taken at doctors' offices and pharmacies.

Members do not assume drugs are tested in Canada for their effects on seniors, but they agree they should be. One half thinks drug interactions in Canada are common. Many members take naturopathic drugs, but few take them exclusively, just as few take no medications at all.

Ontario members find the recent budget to be an election document packed with targeted goodies designed to appease the NDP. However, they agree the new funding and wait times for home care are a good thing, and that wait times for initial assessment will come next.

Detailed Findings

CARP members take, on average, just over 3 prescription medications, including those who take none.

How many different prescription medications do you take on an ongoing basis?

None	14%
One	16%
Two	16%
Three	14%
Four	12%
Five	10%
Six or more	19%
AVG. #	3.2

In most cases, one doctor prescribed them (74%) and in all cases, they come from the same pharmacy (99%).

Were these all prescribed by the same doctor/ Are they all customarily purchased at the same pharmacy?

	Same Doctor	Same Pharmacy
Yes	74%	99%
No	26%	1%

Three quarters of members have had conversations with their doctor (74%) or pharmacist (76%) about drug interactions.

Have you had a conversation with your doctor about the interactions between the prescription medications you take/Have you had a conversation with your pharmacist about the interactions between the medications you take?

	Doctor	Pharmacist
Yes	73%	76%
No	27%	24%

Members are most likely to find the pharmacists advice most useful (68%) rather than the doctor's (23%).

Whose advice on drug interactions do you find most useful?

Pharmacist	68%
Doctor	23%
Neither	9%

The wide majority do their own research on the drugs they are prescribed (84%).

Do you personally research or try to learn more about the drugs you're on?

YES	84%
New prescriptions only	36%
All prescriptions	48%
No	16%%

The vast majority, nonetheless, take their doctor's advice (83%).

When you are prescribed medication, do you accept the doctor's recommendation or do you seek other advice?

Accept doctor's recommendation	83%
Seek second opinion	17%

Consulting with the pharmacist (47%) and doctor (30%) are seen to be the best ways to learn about drug interactions. Government websites are not seen to be as useful (10%).

How would you most like to learn about interactions between the drugs you take?

Consultation with pharmacist	47%
Regular part of doctor visit/physical	30%
Govt. website listing reports of interactions	10%
E-mail alerts based on your medications	6%
Public service information in media	1%
Information from pharma manufacturers	1%
OTHER	2%
DON'T KNOW	3%

Mandatory reporting by pharmaceutical manufacturers is seen to be the best way to track drug interactions (40%), followed by mandatory reporting by doctors (20%) and patient reporting assisted by local pharmacies (14%).

What is the best way to acquire and share knowledge about drug interactions?

Mandatory reports by pharma manufacturers	40%
Mandatory reports by doctors	20%
Patient reporting coordinated by pharmacy	14%
Patient reporting to government website	4%
Voluntary reports by doctors	4%
Voluntary reports by pharma manufacturers	2%
Media investigations	2%
OTHER	3%
DON'T KNOW	11%

One half of members (48%) have themselves (23%) or know someone who has suffered a drug interaction (25%).

Have you or has anyone you know suffered from a prescription drug interaction?

YES	48%
Me	23%
Someone I know	25%
No	52%

The effect of the drug interaction was most likely to be dizziness and balance problems, or nausea and GI problems (19% each).

What was the effect of this interaction?

Dizziness/loss of balance/falling/headaches	19%
Nausea/GI problems	19%
Weakness/fatigue	7%
Weight gain/loss	4%
Insomnia	3%
Heart attack/stroke	1%
OTHER CONDITION REQUIRING ER VISIT	14%
OTHER	32%

Virtually all members have had adult vaccinations (93%), mostly for flu (42%) and shingles (16%).

Have you been vaccinated as an adult? If so, for what?

YES	93%
Flu	42%
Shingles	16%
Tetanus/polio	11%
Hepatitis A/B	10%
Pneumonia	10%
Measles	1%
OTHER	3%
No	7%

Of those vaccinated for flu, the minority caught it anyway (18%).

If you were vaccinated for the flu, did you catch it anyway?

Yes	17%
No	83%

Vaccines are seen to most accessible at a doctor's office (34%) at a pharmacy (31%) or at a local health clinic (12%).

What would make it easier for you to get the vaccinations recommended for adults and/or for travel?

Vaccinations at doctor's visit	34%
Vaccinations at pharmacy	31%
Vaccinations at local health clinics	12%
Govt. coverage for vaccines	9%
Reminders in the media	4%
More public awareness of vaccine benefits	3%
OTHER	2%
DON'T KNOW	5%

Most members don't know whether drugs in Canada are tested for use with seniors (61%), but most who have an opinion think they aren't (29%).

As far as you know, are prescription drugs specifically tested for use by seniors before being licensed in Canada?

Yes	10%
No	29%
DON'T KNOW	61%

Do you agree or disagree prescription drugs licensed for use by seniors in Canada should be tested specifically on seniors first?

There is wide agreement (82%) drugs licensed in Canada should be tested for use on seniors.

AGREE	82%
Agree strongly	42%
Agree	40%
DISAGREE	8%
Disagree	6%
Disagree strongly	2%
DON'T KNOW	11%

One half think drug interactions in Canada are common (49%), although just one seventh think they are very common (15%).

How common do you think serious or fatal drug interactions are in Canada?

COMMON	49%
Very common	15%
Somewhat common	34%
NOT COMMON	34%
Not very common	26%
Not common at all	5%
Very rare	3%
DON'T KNOW	17%

Pharmacists reviewing drugs at every scrip is seen s the best way to avoid drug interactions (57%), followed by a doctor review (21%) or an electronic database against which all prescriptions could be checked (15%).

As far as you know, what is the best way to avoid potential prescription drug interactions?

Pharmacist drug review when filling every scrip	57%
Doctor review of all drugs when prescribing	21%
Database of all drugs prescribed to flag interactions	15%
More testing of drug interactions before licensing	3%
Govt. website with detailed information	1%
Consultation at local health clinics	*
OTHER	1%
DON'T KNOW	2%

More than half of members find pill packs a valuable idea (58%).

Pill packs, or compliance packs, are blister packs of your daily medication, sorted, packaged and labeled by the pharmacist to help you take your medication at the right time and in the right combinations. How valuable would you find such convenience packs (for you or someone you know)?

VALUABLE	58%
Very valuable	34%
Somewhat valuable	24%
Neither valuable nor not valuable	14%
NOT VALUABLE	20%
Not very valuable	12%
Not valuable at all	8%
DON'T KNOW	7%

Close to 4-in-10 take naturopathic remedies (39%), close to one tenth exclusively (7%). One half take only pharmaceuticals (50%) and one tenth take no medications (12%).

Do you take any alternative or naturopathic drugs?

YES	39%
Only those, not pharmaceuticals	7%
In conjunction with pharmaceuticals	32%
NO	62%
Pharmaceuticals only	50%
No meds at all	12%

On a scale from 1 to 10, members rate Canada’s drug testing protocols just below 6.

How would you rate the safety of Canada’s drug testing protocols?

AVG. RATING ON 10 POINT SCALE	5.99
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Most members did not like the Ontario budget (43%), because it provided no coherent vision, played to the NDP and looked like just another election budget. Those who like it (28%) do so because it shows a government willing to compromise.

ONTARIO RESIDENTS ONLY: The Ontario budget was tabled yesterday. What is your overall reaction to the budget?

GOOD THING	28%
Government willing to compromise	12%
Homecare, welfare good for seniors	9%
Balances cutting and spending	7%
Neither good nor bad thing	15%
NOT SUCH A GOOD THING	43%
Just an election budget with goodies	15%
No coherent vision for aging, just staying in power	15%
Let’s NDP set priorities	13%
DON’T KNOW	14%

Home care funding (31%) and auto insurance reductions (27%) are the items most liked in the Ontario budget.

ONTARIO RESIDENTS ONLY: Which of the following budget items do you favour the most?

\$260 million in home care	31%
15% reduction in auto insurance	27%
Modest CPP enhancement	12%
\$300 million youth employment	11%
\$100 million infrastructure	6%
\$200 a month welfare exemption	5%
OTHER	3%
DON'T KNOW	6%

Members have mixed feelings about the budget, including that it missed opportunities (31%), pandered to the NDP (27%) and failed, while addressing home care, to address drug costs (21%).

ONTARIO RESIDENTS ONLY: CARP advocated for bold political leadership to promote a new vision for aging in Ontario, including pension reform, addressing seniors' poverty, home care, discriminatory insurance rates, and pharmacare. To what extent do you think the budget met these goals?

Budget failed to set vision for seniors	31%
Designed to appeal to NDP	27%
Home care good/drug costs important	21%
Bold vision for aging in Ontario	2%
Home care good, no need for big plan	2%
OTHER	1%
DON'T KNOW	16%

Most members welcome the promised reductions in auto insurance rates (33%), while some worry benefits will be reduced (21%) or older Ontarians will pay more (18%) or be dropped (14%).

ONTARIO RESIDENTS ONLY: Insurers have complained that the proposed 15% reduction in insurance rates will force them to reduce benefits, coverage or even move out of the province. How do you react to this?

15% reduction welcome	33%
Worried benefits will be reduced	21%
Reduce higher rates for older drivers	18%
Worried insurers will drop older drivers	14%
OTHER	3%
DON'T KNOW	7%
DON'T HAVE A CAR	4%

One half of Ontario CARP members think the new funding for home care in the Ontario budget is a first good step (51%), and a further one fifth don't want an election triggered because the NDP will lose and the promise of wait times won't be kept (18%). Just one fifth think wait times call for an election (18%).

ONTARIO RESIDENTS ONLY: While new funds were provided for homecare in the budget and wait times were set for service delivery after initial assessment, there was no provision for a 5 day wait time guarantee for initial needs assessment, as called for by CARP. The NDP has threatened to trigger an election if this demand is not met. What do you think?

Funding good first step/work on wait times next	51%
Don't trigger election/NDP will lose/	18%
Trigger election	18%
FUNDING/WAIT TIMES NOT NECESSARY	3%
OTHER	1%
DON'T KNOW	8%

Electoral Preference

For the very first time since we began polling CARP members (during the federal election of 2008), the Liberals (39%) lead the Conservatives (37%) in member preference. This is a significant turnaround for a population which has always favoured the Conservatives by a factor of two at least. The NDP is firmly in third place (18%) after briefly leading our poll for one cycle last April, just after Tom Mulcair was elected leader.

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

More than 1700 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between May 3 and 6, 2013. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20