



PRESS RELEASE

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## 8 out of 10 French people have confidence in medicines

The results of the 2018 *Observatoire sociétal du médicament* survey confirm that confidence is high

Ipsos today published the results of Leem's 8<sup>th</sup> survey wave of the *Observatoire sociétal du médicament* <sup>(1)</sup>. The survey presents a mixed picture of, on the one hand, renewed confidence in medicines and the role that pharmaceutical companies play in the healthcare system and, on the other hand, a decline in standards of ethics and transparency.

### Pharmaceutical companies: key players in the healthcare system

Nearly 8 out of 10 French people view pharmaceutical companies as key players in the healthcare system, especially in research into diseases and the discovery of new treatments. They are perceived as useful (85%), cutting edge (78%) and at the forefront of research into new treatments (77%).

Another strong signal is that, according to 66% of the French public, they are contributing to longer life expectancy, are offering an increasing number of innovative medicines (65%) and have a positive impact on employment in France (61%).

These positive indicators legitimise the sector's involvement in many areas of health: investing in R&D (88%), providing information on medicines to healthcare professionals (82%), supporting public research through public/private partnerships (79%), but also informing patients about treatments for their illnesses (74%), participating in debates on the challenges facing the healthcare system (66%) and lending support to patient associations (65%).

### Medicines and vaccines: a new-found trust

After a steady decline since 2015 (8 points in the period 2015 - 2017), confidence in medicines is levelling out. **8 out of 10 French people express confidence in medicines in general (77%) and even more so in the medicines they take (83%).** Better still, this confidence is intensified as the number of French with "complete confidence" in medicines (+9 points, to 15%) increases sharply, irrespective of age or occupation. Confidence levels reach as high as 84% in patients with chronic disease.

In detail, although confidence in reimbursable medicines, prescription medicines and branded medicines has been declining in the last two years, they still enjoy a higher level of confidence (84%, 83%, and 79%

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<sup>1</sup> Ipsos online survey conducted for Leem between 28 August and 5 September 2018 amongst 1,000 respondents (representative sample of the French population aged 18 years and over) and 250 patients with chronic disease aged 18 years and over.

respectively) than non-reimbursable medicines (66%), non-prescription medicines (65%) or generic medicines (69%).

As for information on medicines, caregivers this year again enjoy the highest levels of trust: 92% for family doctors, 91% for nurses, 90% for medical specialists, 88% for researchers and 84% for pharmacists. Sources of information outside the scientific community: patient associations (78%) and relatives (76%) emerge as the second channel of information.

Vaccines display the same trend. After the symptomatic decline to 69% in vaccine confidence observed in 2016, **vaccine confidence levels have risen again this year to 71%, 22% of which representing *complete confidence***. In line with these results, the benefit/risk ratio associated with vaccines has bounced back: 52% of French people now believe that vaccines have more health benefits than risks. This upturn is all the more remarkable given that its highest level is in the 25-34 year-old age group (49%, i.e. an 18-point increase), an age group in which young parents feature most prominently and are therefore the first to be concerned.

### **... and yet the industry's image is still fragile**

Despite medicines themselves yielding positive results, the picture remains mixed when it comes to the image held of pharmaceutical companies: only a small majority of French people (51%) at present believe they are credible. Pharmaceutical companies are called into question by a majority of the French public over showing concern for patients by considering the risks of developing treatment side effects, supporting patients throughout their illness and being receptive, only 37%, 36% and 36% respectively holding a positive view on these matters.

Ethics and transparency are also areas on which pharmaceutical companies are still rated very poorly: Only 34% of French people think that pharmaceutical companies are ethical and 16% that they are transparent.

However, one feature of this latest wave of Leem's annual survey is **the slight rise in French confidence in pharmaceutical companies (+2 points) to 49% (55% for patients with chronic disease)** against a background of positive changes that benefit all sectors.

**The level of confidence in pharmaceutical companies remains close to average**, behind aeronautics (77%) or digital technology (58%) but ahead of other sectors such as nuclear (37%), retail (36%) or banking and insurance (34%).

### **Access to innovations in medicines is a concern for the French**

**Today, nearly 7 in 10 French people would like a genetic profile analysis to find out if they are at risk of developing diseases.**

Moreover, a clear majority of French believe that by 2030 **advances in health will be achieved primarily through medicines** (immunotherapy, gene therapy, etc.) **but also through cell regeneration treatments**, according respectively to **63% and 59%** of French people.

There is still a very low level of awareness among the French of innovations in medicines: only 1 French person in 10 has detailed knowledge of immunotherapy and gene therapy drugs (although confidence levels are high, at around 8/10).

The French also have questions concerning access to innovation. **A small majority of the French public (53%) finds access easy at present but anticipates greater difficulty in 5 years' time: only 51% believe that the most innovative medicines will be easier to access.**

**Easier access to innovation is more readily conceivable by the under 35s and senior executives, as opposed to the over 60s, pensioners or people living in rural areas.** This gap may reflect a view among the French that innovative medicine is reserved for certain categories of the population.

**It should be noted that nearly 7 in 10 French people are aware that companies are constrained by drawn-out administrative processes that slow down patient access to new treatments.** Similarly, they believe that R&D for new medicines is becoming increasingly expensive for pharmaceutical companies (67%).

The full findings are available at: [www.leem.org](http://www.leem.org)

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