

Public Omnibus Survey – Topline Results

PMI Providers

Of the 2039 adults surveyed, 27% said they currently have or have in the past had private medical insurance (PMI). Of those who have had private medical insurance, 60% received it through their employer while 38% said they have a personal private medical plan.

Open Referral and PMI Statements

Comparison between adults with PMI and those without reveals some interesting differences. Overall, adults who currently have PMI or have held a policy in the past are more likely to express concern regarding the implications of the 'open referral' scheme, being more likely to agree with each of the statements tested.

	Agree		Disagree		Don't know	
	PMI holders	Non PMI holders	PMI holders	Non PMI holders	PMI holders	Non PMI holders
I would rather see a consultant recommended by my GP than to choose one from a list provided by my private medical insurer.	76%	66%	13%	6%	11%	28%
An "open referral" private medical insurance policy could prevent patients from seeing a consultant who has been treating them previously.	70%	52%	10%	10%	20%	38%
Private medical insurance companies should be able to direct their customers to approved consultants only if it can be shown to keep private medical insurance premiums low.	65%	44%	17%	15%	18%	41%
Private medical insurers should not be allowed to pay cash incentives to their customers to have their treatment on the NHS for free, rather than in the private healthcare sector	64%	56%	20%	11%	17%	33%
An "open referral" private medical insurance policy directly threatens patient choice.	53%	44%	20%	13%	27%	43%

Figure 1.1: Agreement with Private Medical Insurance statements

Base: All adults with PMI vs. all adults without PMI

Adults who currently have or have previously held PMI are more likely to see an “open referral” policy as directly threatening patient choice, with 53% agreeing with this statement, compared to 44% among non PMI holders.

Indeed, there is an even more significant difference between the percentage of PMI and non PMI holders who believe that an “open referral” policy could prevent patients from seeing a consultant who has been treating them previously: 70% of adults who hold PMI, compared to 52% who do not have private medical insurance.

Similarly, 65% of PMI holders think that private medical insurance companies should be able to direct their customers to approved consultants only if it can be shown to keep private medical insurance premiums low. 44% of non PMI holders agree with this statement, while 41% answer ‘don’t know’. This indicates that adults without private medical insurance, or who have not held such insurance in the past, are less likely to hold an opinion on the subject than those who do or have.

The majority of adults with PMI agree that they would rather see a consultant recommended by their GP than choose one from a list provided by their insurer (76%). This statement elicits the broadest and indeed the strongest support of all those tested – 66% agree overall, 33% strongly.

Adults with private medical insurance are also somewhat more likely to agree that private medical insurers should not be allowed to pay cash incentives to their customers to have their treatment on the NHS for free, than non PMI holders, at 64% and 56% respectively.

Methodology

ComRes interviewed 2039 GB adults online between 18th and 20th November 2011, of which 545 stated that they currently had or have previously had private medical insurance. Data were weighted to be representative demographically of all GB adults. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules (www.britishpollingcouncil.org).