



the british  
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## SURVEY

# Prescribing rights for psychologists: What does the public think?

A survey about psychologists having prescribing rights was carried out by YouGov in September 2020. The purpose of the survey was to capture the thoughts of the public on whether some psychologists should have prescribing rights, as well as to understand how this opinion may differ according to contact with psychological services, and views on medication.

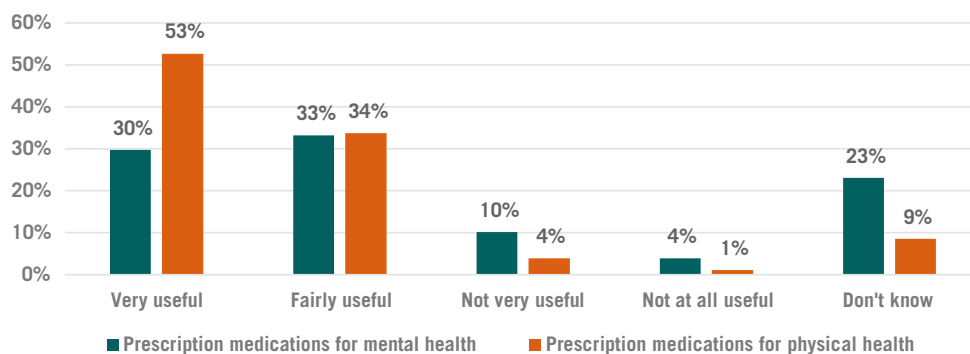
The total sample size was 2,070 people. YouGov's omnibus panel is made up of a representative sample of adults from across the UK.

A summary of the results is outlined below:

59% of people had themselves (or a close family member) been treated by a psychological professional, psychological therapist or psychiatrist.

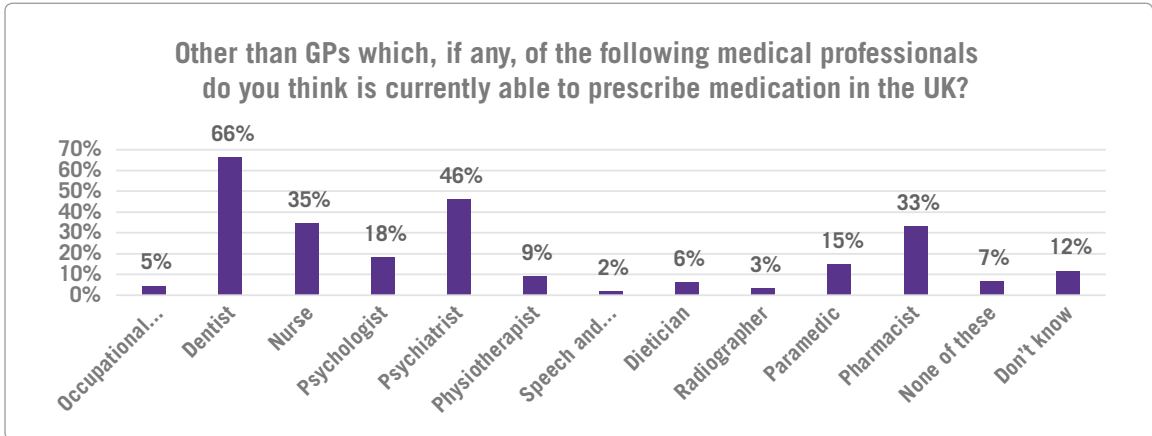
45% of people had (or a close family member had) been prescribed medication for a mental health condition and 70% of people had (or a close family member had) been prescribed medication for a physical health condition.

63% of people felt medication for mental health conditions was useful and 86% of people felt medication for physical health conditions was useful.

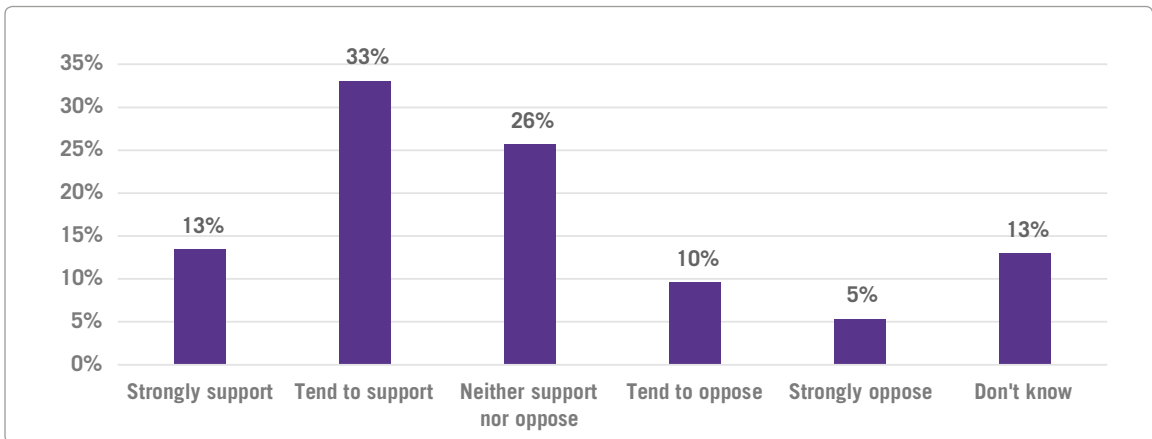


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18% of respondents thought that psychologists can currently prescribe medication.



Overall 46% of respondents support and 15% oppose psychologists having the right to prescribe medication.



Of those that oppose psychologists having prescribing rights (310 people), the main reasons were:

Medical doctors should prescribe medication, not psychologists (64%).

Psychologists don't have enough training to prescribe medication (35%).

Psychologists should only concentrate on talking (17%).

It's not helpful to use medical diagnoses to label people's mental distress (12%).

People would have less trust in their psychologist if they could prescribe medication (8%).

(NB: People could tick all that apply.)

Of those that support psychologists having prescribing rights (957 people) the main reasons were:

People wouldn't then have to see two professionals for one condition (71%).

People wouldn't have to wait for their medication (53%).

People would have more trust in their psychologist to prescribe medication appropriately (40%).

Psychologists could help decrease the amount of medication prescribed to people (34%).

*(NB: People could tick all that apply.)*

Across gender, age groups, social classes and UK regions there was more support for psychologists to have prescribing rights than opposition to it.

This is also true within:

People who have seen a mental health professional (Support=57% Oppose=14%: 683 people).

People who have ever taken medication for their mental health (Support=56% Oppose=12%: 925 people).




People who think medication for mental health conditions is not useful (Support=38% Oppose=29%: 283 people).

Across ethnicities, there is mostly more support for psychologists to have prescribing rights than opposition to it. The exceptions to this are people from Irish, White & Asian and Pakistani backgrounds where more people were opposed to prescribing by psychologists. There were less than 30 people identifying as each of these ethnicities. This means it is difficult to draw a reliable conclusion with small sample sizes.



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St Andrews House,  
48 Princess Road East,  
Leicester LE1 7DR, UK

 0116 254 9568  [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)  [info@bps.org.uk](mailto:info@bps.org.uk)