

Trends in Humane Giving

New Survey Caps Nine-Year Analysis Showing Increasing Support for Charities That Do Not Fund Animal Experiments

A Report from the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine
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In recent decades, the public has become increasingly sensitized to animal welfare issues. Of the various uses of animals that engender social concern, animal use in laboratories is among the most controversial. Many consumers have become increasingly willing to base their decision of which personal care and household products to purchase on whether or not a company conducts safety testing using animals. Many companies have committed to the use and development of exclusively non-animal tests, and others have invested millions of dollars to move in that direction.¹

Similarly, this controversy is expected to influence charitable giving, since some health charities still fund medical research using animals. Past surveys have suggested that a substantial portion of the public would, if given the choice, preferentially support health charities that do not fund animal experimentation. To assess long-term trends in giving preferences, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) conducted a series of public opinion surveys over nine years to gauge changing attitudes about charitable giving and animal experiments.

PCRM commissioned Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, New Jersey, to conduct random telephone surveys of the general adult public in November 1996, November 2001, and July 2005 that asked individuals about their views on donating to health charities that do or do not fund animal research.

The surveys show that a steadily increasing percentage of respondents view the allocation of donations to animal experiments as unnecessary and prefer to donate to charities that fund only human-based research. In the 2005 survey, 71 percent of respondents said it is important to them that their donations be used for innovative non-animal research rather than animal experiments. Sixty-seven percent said they are more likely to donate to a health charity that has a policy of never funding animal experiments than to one that does—an increase of 20 percent from 2001 and 31 percent from 1996.

Support for humane giving, generally higher in younger age groups, is now growing faster in older populations. In 1996, 70 percent of young people were more likely to support health charities that never funded animal experiments, compared to 35 percent of those over age 65. But in 2005, while the average percentage of those under age 35 who support humane giving increased to a new high of 81 percent (a 16 percent increase), on average 55 percent of older donors felt similarly, an increase since 1996 of 57 percent.

Survey Details

Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, New Jersey, conducted random telephone surveys of the general adult public. The survey questions and response mechanisms differed slightly in each survey. The questions are listed in the box to the right.

Data collection efforts for all surveys took place at Opinion Research Corporation's Central Telephone Facility in Tampa, Florida, and/or Tucson, Arizona, using a computer-assisted CARAVAN® telephone-interviewing system. This allows for the most accurate form of interviewing, data collection, and entry protocols. Households were selected for interviewing by an unrestricted random sampling procedure that controls serial bias. One interview was conducted per household, and four attempts to complete an interview were made for all numbers.

Interviews were weighted by age, sex, geographic region, and race to ensure an accurate representation of the total adult (over 18 years of age) population. The weighted total of adults polled for each year was 1,000. Actual totals were 1,006, 1,001, and 1,012 for 1996, 2001, and 2005, respectively. The use of replicable sampling, representative weighting, and standardized interviewing procedures gives all CARAVAN® studies parallel measure, making trend and tracking analyses appropriate.

Responses were given in total, and also categorized according to sex, age, geographical region, race, household income, household size, education, and number of children in household.

Results

All results are given in percentage of respondents who indicated a specific answer. Table 1 (see Appendix) shows the results of each survey by sex and age group. Complete results by all categories are available upon request.

Figure 1 clearly shows that over the past nine years, increasing percentages of survey respondents support humane giving concepts. In 2005, 58 percent of respondents are unlikely to give to charities that fund animal experiments. This is an increase from both 2001 (49 percent) and 1996 (47 percent) numbers. Furthermore, 67 percent of 2005 respondents said they are more likely to donate to a health charity that has a policy of never funding animal experiments than to one that does—up from 56 percent in 2001 and 51 percent in 1996.

Survey Questions/Statements

2005: Respondents were asked to qualify the question based on a "likely/unlikely" scale.

1. How likely would you be to donate to a health charity if you knew that the charity funds animal experiments?
2. How likely would you be to donate to a health charity that had a policy of never funding any type of animal experiments?
3. When donating to a health charity, how important is it that your donation be used for innovative research without animals rather than animal research?

1996/2001: Respondents were asked to qualify the statement based on an "agree/disagree" scale.

1. I would be less likely to donate to a health charity if I knew that the charity funds animal research experiments.
2. I would be more likely to donate to a health charity that had a policy of never funding any type of animal experiments.

Respondents could also answer, "I don't know," or "I don't donate to health charities." These responses are given as "Other" in the results section.

In 1996, slightly less than half the total population (47 percent) agreed with the statement, “I would be less likely to donate to a health charity if I knew that the charity funds animal research experiments” (Figure 1, Question 1). More women than men agreed with that statement (52 percent versus 41 percent respectively) (Figure 2, Question 1). As shown in Figure 3, at least half of 18- to 24-year-olds (56 percent) and 25- to 34-year-olds (51 percent) would not donate to charities that fund animal experiments.

Similarly, 51 percent of respondents agreed that they would be more likely to donate to a health charity that never funded animal experiments (Figure 1, Question 2). Again, a higher percentage of women (60 percent) than men (52 percent) (Figure 2, Question 2), and those in younger age groups (70 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds) favored donating to a humane charity (Figure 3, Question 2).

Figure 1: Percentage Respondents for All Years

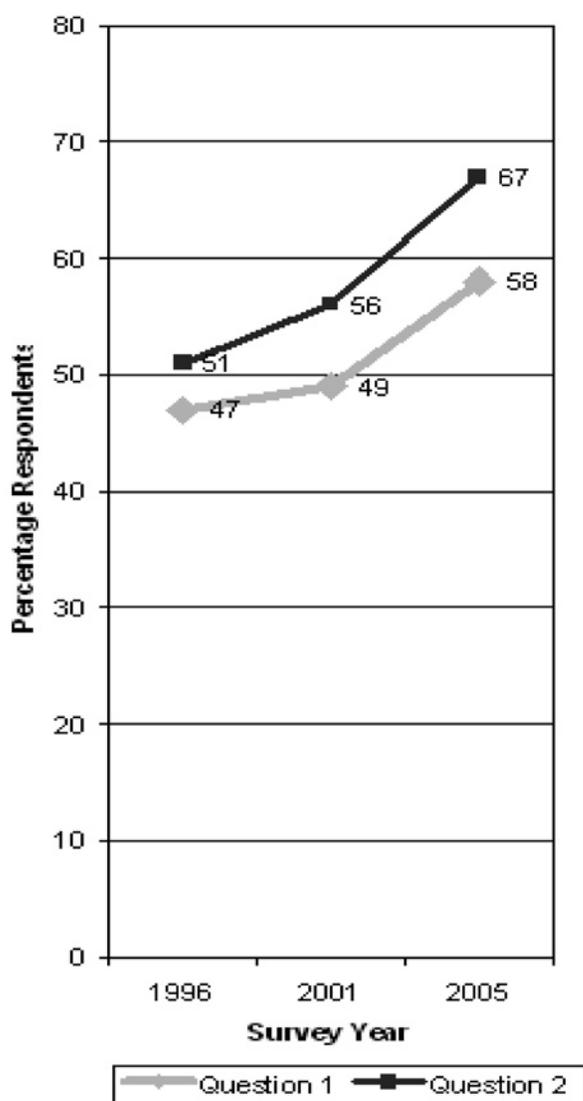


Figure 2: Percentage Respondents by Sex

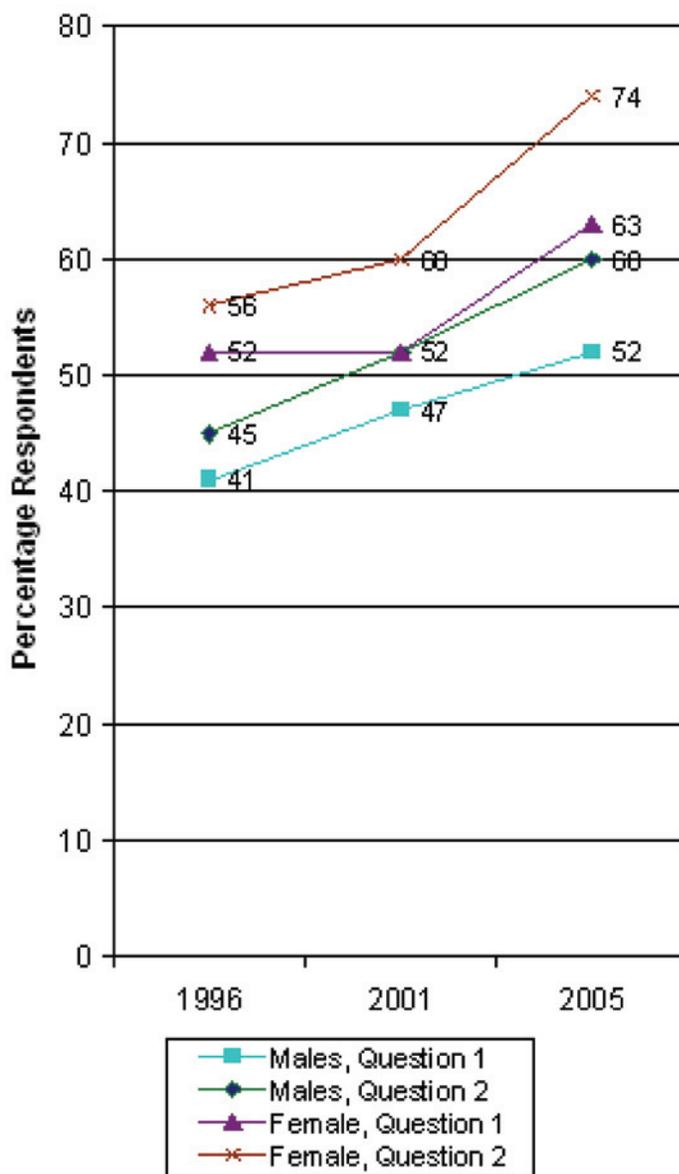
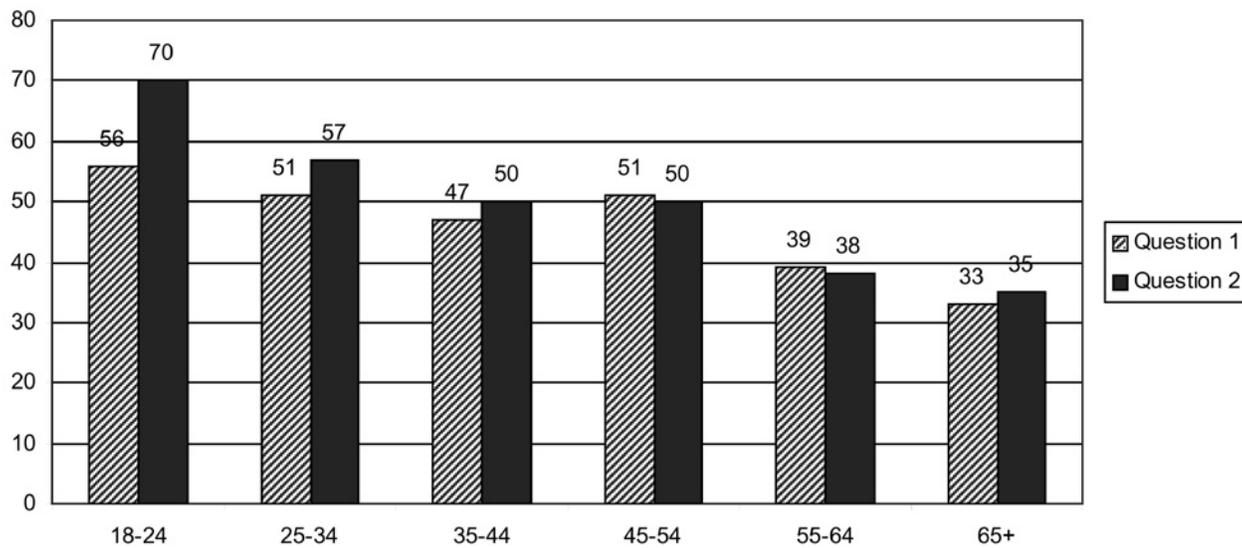
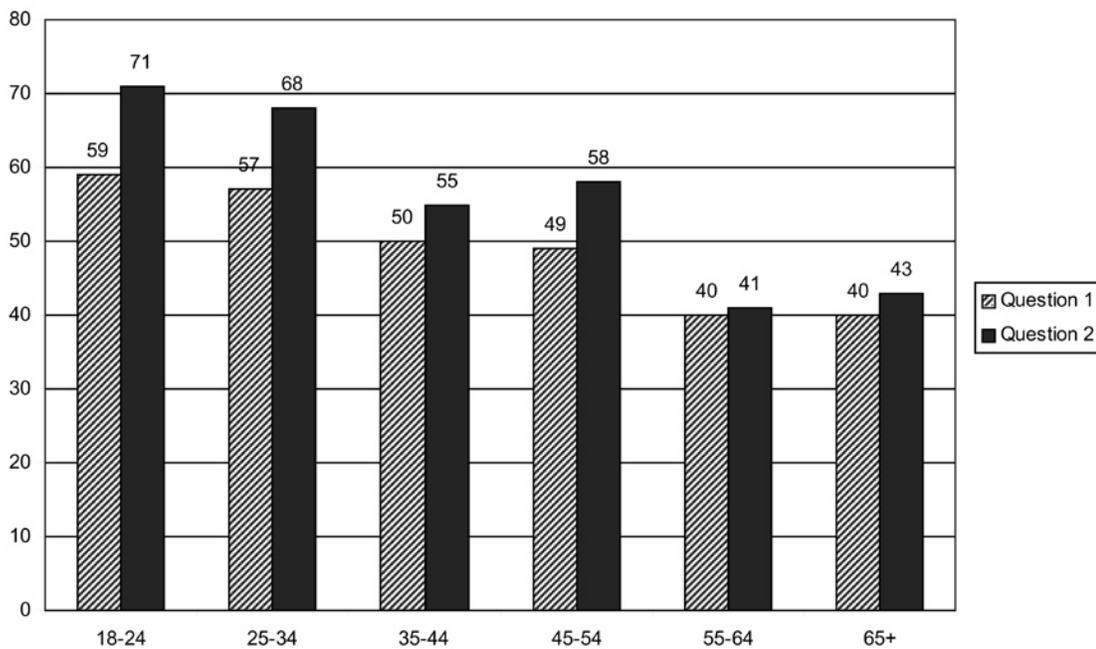


Figure 3: Percentage Respondents Across Age Groups for 1996



By 2001, support for humane giving had increased slightly (Figures 1, 2, 4). Most notable are the percentages of respondents who agreed that they would more likely support health charities that had a policy of never funding animal experiments. Greater than 50 percent of respondents of both sexes and of all age groups up to age 54 did so (Figures 2, 4, Question 2), with about one-third of those under 35 years old strongly agreeing (Appendix: Table 1).

Figure 4: Percentage Respondents Across Age Groups for 2001



In any given year or over time, opinions did not differ predictably by a respondent’s geographical region or income (data not shown).

2005 Survey

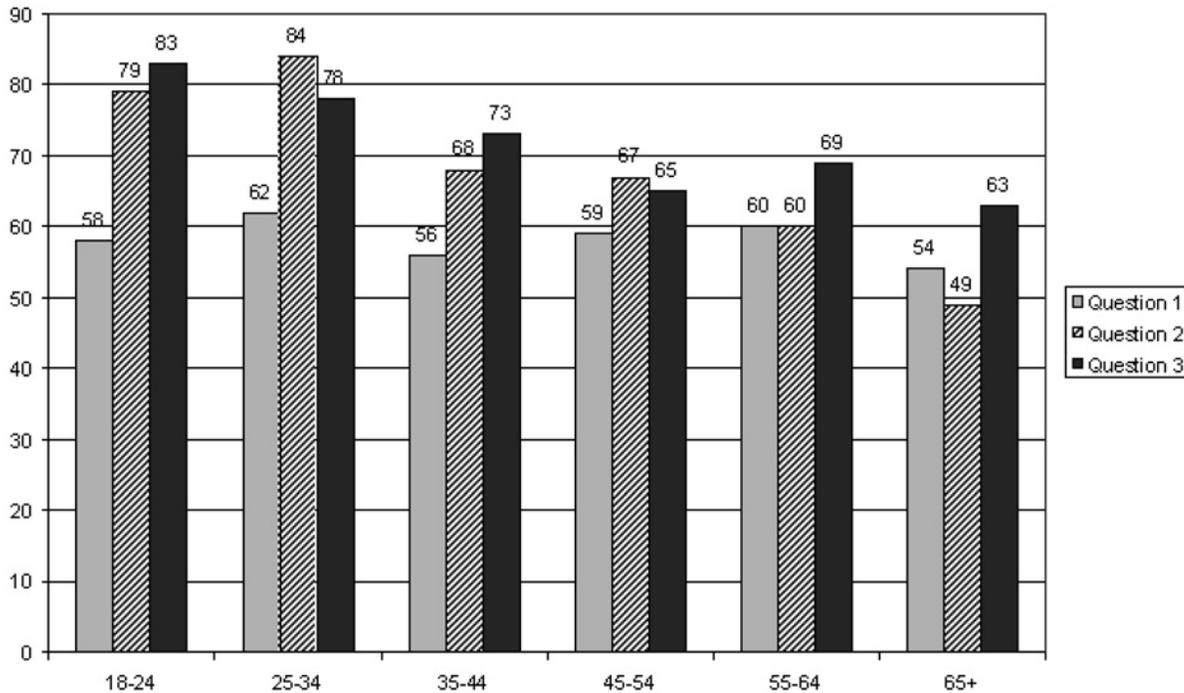
In 2005, 58 percent of those polled said that they are not likely to donate to a health charity that funded animal experiments, and 36 percent are not at all likely to do so. Additionally, 67 percent of respondents stated that they are likely to donate to a health charity that never funded animal experiments, with 29 percent extremely or very likely to do so (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Seventy-one percent of respondents stated that it is important that their health charity donations be used for innovative research without animals rather than animal research; 44 percent of the total population and 51 percent of 18- to-24 year-olds believe this is very or extremely important (Figure 1 and Table 1).

This sentiment is consistent throughout the country, regardless of geographical region or income (data not shown).

In 2005, higher percentages of women than men, for each question, indicated support for humane giving (Appendix: Table 1). Additionally, for questions 2 and 3, more people in younger age groups—18 to 24 and 25 to 34—did so (Figure 5). This is consistent with data from previous years.

Figure 5: Percentage Respondents Across Age Groups for 2005



Discussion

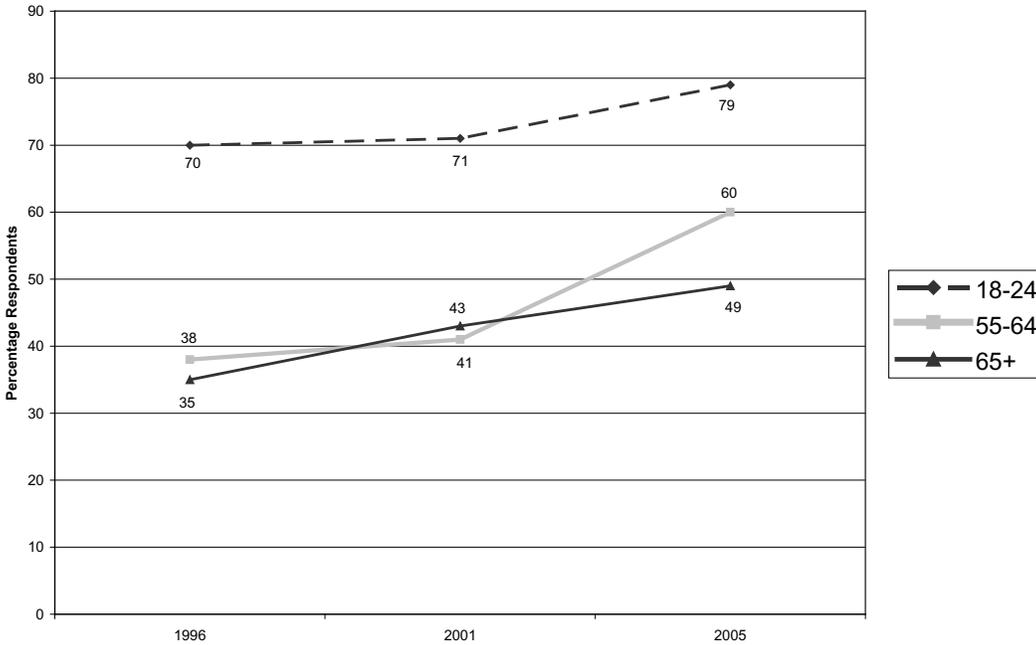
These data show that the concept of humane giving is increasingly popular among the general public. Currently, more than half of Americans endorse statements saying they are unlikely to donate to health charities that fund animal experiments, more than two-thirds are likely to donate to health charities that do not fund any animal experiments, and nearly three-quarters believe it is important that health charities fund innovative non-animal research instead of animal experiments. These numbers have increased over the past decade. As can be seen by Table 1 (see Appendix), the number of people who feel strongly about this issue—those who gave answers like “strongly agree” or, in the case of 2005, “not at all likely” and “extremely likely”—is also increasing.

Additionally, over all years, women are more likely than men to support humane giving principles, which is noteworthy since more women than men give to charity.²

In 1996, young people were more likely than any other age group to be concerned about health charities that fund animal experiments. Interestingly, however, the gap between young and old seems to be closing. The average percentage difference from the highest (younger age groups) to lowest (older age groups) responses for each year is decreasing. In 1996, the average percentage difference was 85 percent. In 2001, that number decreased to 60 percent and is down to a 43 percent difference in 2005.

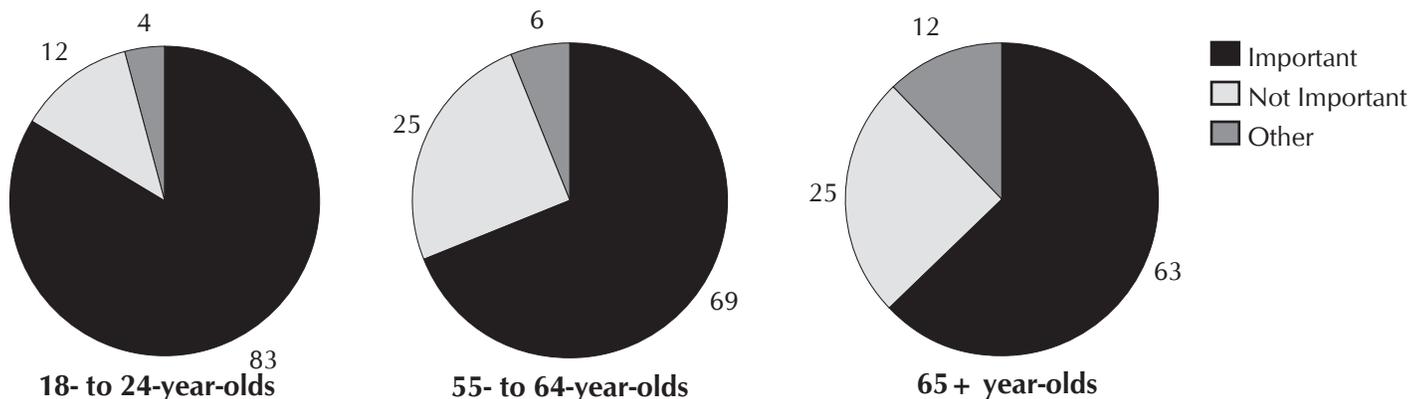
To further illustrate, Figure 6 compares percentages of respondents who stated that they are likely to donate to a health charity that didn't fund animal experiments in age groups that are most likely to interest health charities: tomorrow's major donors (18- to 24-year-olds) and the current donor population (55+). While young people are fairly consistent in their attitudes over the nine-year period, the 2005 survey shows a large increase in support of humane giving in older populations.

Figure 6: Percentage Respondents for Question 2 by Age Group



A third survey question, which was added in 2005, provides a glimpse into the importance the public places on the type of research funded by health charities with donated dollars. Figure 7 shows a series of pie charts that illustrate the importance people place on innovative non-animal research in select age groups. These results send a clear message to health charities: People from all age groups who donate to charities prefer non-animal research to animal experiments.

Figure 7: Percentage Respondents by Age Group for 2005: Question Three



When analyzed across all years, percentages of respondents supporting humane-giving principles did not differ according to categories such as income or geographical region.

References

1. Fleetwood C. In Vitro Testing Is Coming to Aid, If Not Yet Succeed, the Guinea Pig. *The Wall Street Journal Online*. 2004 September 29. Available at: <http://webreprints.djreprints.com/108256043305.html>. Accessed October 26, 2005.
2. Coffman S. Women and Philanthropy. *GuideStar News Articles*. 2000. Available at: <http://www.guidestar.org/news/features/women.jsp>. Accessed November 16, 2005.

Appendix

Table 1: Overall Percentage Results

1996										
			MALE	FEMALE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
I would be less likely to donate to a health charity if I knew that the charity funds animal research experiments.	Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	47	41	52	56	51	47	51	39	33
	Strongly Agree	22	19	25	29	25	22	22	16	14
	Somewhat/ Strongly Disagree	49	53	44	43	45	47	47	53	60
	Other	5	5	4	2	3	6	2	8	6
I would be more likely to donate to a health charity that had a policy of never funding any type of animal experiments.	Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	51	45	56	70	57	50	50	38	35
	Strongly Agree	25	18	32	33	32	27	26	15	13
	Somewhat/ Strongly Disagree	45	50	40	30	41	46	47	52	56
	Other	4	5	4	0	2	3	3	9	9

2001

		TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
I would be less likely to donate to a health charity if I knew that the charity funds animal research experiments.	Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	49	47	52	59	57	50	49	40	40
	Strongly Agree	23	17	28	23	28	26	20	18	19
	Somewhat/ Strongly Disagree	44	47	41	36	40	43	47	49	49
	Other	7	6	7	5	4	7	3	11	11
I would be more likely to donate to a health charity that had a policy of never funding any type of animal experiments.	Strongly/ Somewhat Agree	56	52	60	71	68	55	58	41	43
	Strongly Agree	28	23	33	33	35	26	30	24	19
	Somewhat/ Strongly Disagree	37	41	32	27	28	39	39	45	45
	Other	7	7	7	2	5	6	2	14	12

2005

		TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +
How likely would you be to donate to a health charity if you knew that the charity funds animal experiments?	Not likely/Not at all likely	58	52	63	58	62	56	59	60	54
	Not at all likely	36	31	40	34	40	34	37	42	35
	Extremely Likely/ Very Likely/ Somewhat Likely	36	41	31	38	37	37	36	35	34
	Other	6	6	6	4	2	7	5	5	13
How likely would you be to donate to a health charity that had a policy of never funding any type of animal experiments?	Extremely Likely/ Very Likely/ Somewhat Likely	67	60	74	79	84	68	67	60	49
	Extremely or Very Likely	29	22	34	25	38	34	27	25	19
	Not Very Likely/ Not at all Likely	26	34	19	16	16	26	28	34	38
	Other	6	7	6	5	1	7	5	5	14
When donating to a health charity, how important is it that your donation be used for innovative research without animals rather than animal research?	Extremely Important/ Very important/ Somewhat Important	71	64	77	83	78	73	65	69	63
	Extremely or Very Important	44	36	51	51	49	42	44	43	38
	Extremely Important	16	13	19	14	21	15	16	19	11
	Very Important	28	23	32	37	28	27	28	24	27
	Somewhat Important	27	28	26	32	29	31	21	25	25
	Not Very Important	11	14	9	3	12	10	16	17	11
	Not at all Important	11	16	6	9	9	11	13	8	14
	Not Very Important/Not at all Important	22	29	16	12	21	21	29	25	25
	Other	6	6	6	4	2	7	6	6	12