

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Thank you participating. I would like to ask you a few questions to find out your opinions about public health authorities. We are trying to understand the level of trust people have in government authorities that provide information about issues related to health. The interview should take about 30 minutes. It is completely voluntary. It is also anonymous, which means I will not ask for your name or any other personally identifying information. Please try your best to answer each question, but we can skip questions if you do not feel comfortable answering. Let's start with some questions about yourself.

Demographic

1. What age range do you fall into? (18-45 or 46 and up)
2. What race do you identify with?
3. Which category best describes your educational status? (some high school, completed high school, completed a bachelor's degree, completed a graduate degree)
4. Do you have children?
 - a. If yes, for each child, what age range do they fall into? (0-4, 5-10, 11-17, 18 or more)

I am now going to ask you some questions about the role of public health authorities in identifying, treating, and preventing disease outbreaks. We will start with an example. Several years ago, there was an outbreak of Ebola in West Africa. Ebola is an infectious disease that spreads rapidly and can cause death in just a few weeks. Many Americans were worried about Ebola spreading to the US.

5. What information, if any, did you receive or read about the outbreak? Which sources did you receive this information from?
6. Why did you choose these sources to receive this information from? In general, what other sources do you look to about issues related to protecting your health? Let's say that you are looking for information about how to protect your family from mosquitoes. Where would you seek information about this?
7. How did you feel about the information you received or read about the Ebola outbreak from these sources? Did you feel reassured with the information? Did you feel scared? Was there information missing?
8. How did the information you received or read affect you, in terms of taking action? Did you do anything with the information you received/read?

I am now going to ask you questions related to your opinion about public health authorities.

9. Can you tell me what the term 'public health authorities' means to you? (which organizations or who do you think is a public health authority, what is their role). Do you know any public health authorities? It's okay if you don't, *some examples are: US Department of Health, CDC, FDA, Maryland State Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, Baltimore City Health Department.*
10. What is the role of public health authorities, if any, on health decisions you make for you or your family? For example, do any authorities have any impact on your decisions related to nutritional needs, or, the types of foods you buy for your family? What about any decisions you make related to protecting your family against mosquitoes or ticks, for example?
11. The broad role of public health authorities is to provide information about health issues that affect you and your family, they are however, different from your primary care physician. Can you tell me a bit about your level of trust of public health authorities? Do you trust public health authorities more, less than or equal to other government agencies, such as (INCLUDE agencies that interviewees would be familiar with, IRS, Department of Commerce) or Congress?

12. What does trust in public health authorities mean to you? How would you think about whether or not you trusted a public health authority? What would they have to do so that you would trust them?

13. Let's say you hear about a health issue happening in Baltimore, something like drowning, Lyme disease, or lead exposure. Who would you go to to obtain information about this health issue? Why would you go to that person or organization?

14. What attributes or characteristics would the person or organization need to have for you to trust the information and take the recommended action to protect yourself and your family surrounding this health issue?

The next set of questions focus on your perception of the role of public health authorities. Public health authorities refer to authorities that are typically not your primary care physician, such as state health departments, the CDC, academic institutions, etc.

Transparency

15. A disease outbreak refers to a situation where a disease is spreading and affecting the health of the community. Let's think about an example where there was a recent disease outbreak that you were aware of (Zika, Lyme disease, Ebola, West Nile, Legionnaires, etc). When the outbreak was occurring, do you think public health authorities, such as (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) told the public immediately about the disease spreading?

16. Still thinking about this outbreak, do you think that (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) provided the most important information you would need to protect yourself and your family from the outbreak?

17. Do you think (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) did not provide all of the relevant information? If so, what was missing? Why do you think they did not release this information?

Beneficence

18. Thinking about outbreaks generally, and health issues generally, do you think that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) work to protect and promote the health of the community? Why or why not?

19. Additionally, do you think that that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) provides the best recommendations as to how you can protect you and your family's health, regardless of cost?

Competence

20. Still thinking about that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH), do you believe that if there were an infectious disease outbreak in Baltimore, such as Ebola, for example, that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) would be able to control the spread of the disease rapidly? Why or why not?

21. If there were an Ebola outbreak here, do you think that that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) would be able to provide you with accurate and the most relevant information to keep you and your family safe? Why or why not?

22. Do you think that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) would use the resources available to them in the best way they could to respond to the outbreak? Why or why not?

Efficiency

23. If a natural disaster, like a storm, led to health issues, do you think that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) would be able to prioritize and attend to each individual? Why or why not?

24. Do you think that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) spend money responding to a particular issue, such as a storm, effectively and efficiently? Why or why not?

Innovativeness

25. As you may or may not know, Zika is a newer disease that is spread by mosquitoes, that can cause birth defects. Zika has been spreading in South America. As it is a newer disease, do you think public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) use new methods, or are able to come up with different and new solutions, to prevent the spread of diseases? Why or why not?

26. Do you think public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) invest enough money into finding new solutions and to prevent diseases? Why or why not?

Objectivity

27. Do you think that public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) provide health recommendations based on science and facts? Why or why not?

28. Do you think that public health authorities' health recommendations are primarily made to protect the community? Or, are recommendations provided in a way to benefit drug companies and manufacturers? Why or why not?

Honesty

29. Do you think public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) tell the public the real risks, symptoms and effects of diseases? Why or why not?

30. Do you think public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) tell the public the real risks of drugs and vaccines? Why or why not?

Responsiveness

31. Do you think public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) respond to threats as soon as they are discovered? Meaning, do you think they act quickly enough? Why or why not?

32. Do you think public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) are prepared to quickly respond to diseases caused by natural disasters? Why or why not?

33. Do you believe public health authorities are able to quickly respond to a school outbreak (e.g. chickenpox) quickly to prevent any further kids from contracting the disease? Why or why not?

Equity

34. Let's say that you heard on the news that there was a lot of lead in particular areas of Baltimore. Lead exposure can cause developmental delays in children. Do you think public health authorities generally and (AUTHORITY THEY ARE MOST FAMILIAR WITH) would dedicate more resources to certain races over others? Why or why not?

35. Do you think public health authorities care more about people who live in wealthy neighborhoods? Why or why not?

36. Do you think public health authorities care more about residents in bigger cities like New York than in smaller cities like Baltimore? Why or why not?

Reliability

37. Do you believe public health authorities have the knowledge to provide solutions to every health problem that arises?

38. Do you think public health authorities have the resources to respond to all disease outbreaks with equal effort?

Adherence to Recommendations

39. Did you take the flu vaccine during the last flu season?

a. If not, would you take the vaccine if someone you knew got the flu?

40. (if parents) To you your knowledge, are your children up-to-date on their vaccinations?

. If not, would you get your children immunized if there was a chickenpox outbreak at their school?

41. Let's say that you find out that the Baltimore water system has been contaminated with high levels of lead and infectious bacteria. The CDC, as well as the Baltimore City Health Department, issues a warning that asks all residents to not drink water directly from the tap. What would be your response to this warning?

42. Have you thought of any other attributes or characteristics that a person or organization providing you health information would need to have for you to trust the information and take the recommended action to protect yourself and your family surrounding health issues like disease outbreaks?

43. These are some characteristics that you and other members of the public think are important to trust public health authorities. Can you tell me which of these characteristics would be grouped together? Meaning, which characteristics are similar to you?

Transparency, Beneficence, Competence, Efficiency, Innovativeness, Objectivity, Honesty, Responsiveness, Equity, and Reliability.

We are trying to understand which characteristics are most important to you in trust public health authorities. We have listed the characteristics and a brief definition below. Please rank the characteristics in order of importance (1 being the most important and 10 being the least important).

Transparency: to provide all of the information available

Rank __

Beneficence: to do good

Rank ____

Competence: the capability of completing tasks

Rank ____

Efficiency: to use money, time and human resources in an appropriate manner

Rank ____

Innovativeness: usage of new solutions

Rank ____

Objectivity: to be neutral

Rank _____

Honesty: to tell the truth

Rank _____

Responsiveness: to respond quickly

Rank _____

Equity: to be fair

Rank _____

Reliability: to perform consistently and accurately

Rank _____

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

1. I trust the Baltimore City Health Department.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. I trust the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I trust the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree