

Boom or Bust: A comparison between the health care expectations of those currently older than 65 and the Baby Boom cohort

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Lay Abstract

Study Purpose: The American health care system is unprepared for the aging of the Baby Boom generation and will strain at the rapid influx of patients if policy issues are not identified and in-place before-the-fact. It is unclear how much change in the way medicine is currently practiced will be needed. By comparing the expectations of those elderly individuals currently seen in the medical practice to those that will populate the waiting rooms of the future, important policy issues can be addressed efficiently. This initial survey will concentrate on the areas of long-term care, financial preparedness, use of alternative therapies, and general expectations.

Study subjects: Study subjects will include individuals from New York City born prior to 1964. Subjects will be identified using a random digit dialing and recruited for a telephone interview.

Study procedures: Interviewers will conduct a one-time fifty question telephone interview.

Issues: As with any telephone-based survey, there is an unavoidable risk of selection bias. No ethical issues are foreseen.

The IRB Protocol

A. Study Purpose and Rationale

In 2011, the Baby Boomer cohort-those individuals born between 1946 and 1964-start turning 65. To give some idea of the rapid demographic swing this will generate, consider that from 1988 to 2008, the number of individuals older than 65 will increase from 30 million to 40 million individuals. It will take only 7 additional years to increase that number by another 10 million people. This most populous of American generations is also the most educated, wealthiest, and healthiest. Though these variables are interdependent, the later will most certainly have the greatest impact on how medicine is practiced in the 21st century.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the medical establishment is prepared to care for a massive and prolonged growth in the population of older Americans who have both the numerical clout and the purchasing power to fully realize their expectations. The next decade provides a fleeting window of opportunity to ready ourselves for the demands this generation will place on the healthcare system. A unique approach to determine how this cohort will alter the clinical experience is to compare the attitudes and expectations of the future members of the "geriatric" patient population to that of the elderly patients we are accustomed to treating in our current practices. If we can appreciate the differences between these two groups, we will be better able to make the necessary adaptations in the way we practice medicine, if, indeed any adaptations are necessary.

B. Study Design and Statistical Analysis

Using a survey modeled after the National Health Interview Survey, participants will be asked to participate in a telephone interview. Participants from the boroughs of New York City will be divided into two categories: (1) older than 65 years and (2) between 47 and 55 years. Participants will be identified by random digit dialing with a goal of 800 per category.

Analysis of the responses will use the chi square test.

C. Study Questionnaire

Attached

D. Confidentiality of Study Data

Each participant will be assigned a unique code number. Names, addresses, phone numbers or other identifiers will not be recorded.

E. Compensation and Costs to Subjects

There will be no compensation to subjects for the phone interview. No costs will be incurred by the participants.

Interviewing Form

Name: _____ Screening number: _____
 Date: ____/____/____
 Language of interview: _____

Interviewer Introductory Statement:

The number of people living in the United States who are older than 65 is the fastest growing segment of the population. When the generation of people born between the years 1946 and 1964-the baby-boom generation-began to reach the age of 65 in the year 2011, the number of people older than 65 living in the U.S. will begin increasing dramatically. In order to meet the healthcare needs and demands of the aging population, we must first understand what these needs and demands are and determine whether our current healthcare systems and practices are sufficient or whether they need to be adjusted

We would like to take a short amount of time to ask you a series of questions. The total length of this survey is approximately 30 minutes. If we ask a question that you do not understand, please ask us to repeat or explain the question.

Sociodemographic Characteristics:

First, we would like to ask you some general questions about your self

1. Gender (confirm with the interviewee)
 0. Male _____
 1. Female _____
2. How old are you? _____
3. Date of birth _____/____/____
4. Marital Status _____
 0. Married living with spouse
 1. Married not living with spouse
 2. Separated
 3. Divorced
 4. Widowed
 5. Never married living alone
 6. Never married living with significant other of opposite sex
7. Never married living with significant other of same sex
 5. Ethnicity _____
 0. Hispanic _____
 - a. Dominican
 - b. Mexican
 - c. Puerto Rican
 - d. Cuban
 - e. Other, specify _____
 1. African American
 2. White non-Hispanic
 3. African non-Hispanic
 4. Caribbean non-Hispanic
 5. Native American
 6. Mixed, specify _____

Mobility

5. What is the highest level of education you completed? _____
6. Are you currently employed? _____
 0. Yes
 1. No
7. Where you employed in the last year? _____
 0. Yes
 1. No
8. If yes, for how many months? _____
9. Including wages, salaries, self-employment, and any other source of income, what was the total household income during the last twelve months? USD _____

Health Insurance

2. Other relative, specify_
3. Friend
25. If no, do you anticipate in the future that you will have to rely on one of the following to provide care for you? _____
0. A spouse
1. A child
2. Other relative, specify_
3. Friend
26. Do you anticipate having to spend time in a nursing home? _____
0. Yes 1. No

The following questions pertain to a patient's right to die

27. Do you feel that a person should be able to decide when he/she wants to die? _____
0. Yes 1. No
28. Do you feel that a physician should be able to provide assistance if a person asks them to help them die? _____
0. Yes 1. No
29. Do you feel comfortable talking to your physician about this issue? _____
0. Yes 1. No
30. Do you know what a living will is? _____
0. Yes 1. No
31. Do you have a living will? _____
0. Yes 1. No

Financial Preparation

The following questions are about how you planned or are planning to pay for your healthcare in the future

32. At age 65, did you or do you expect most of your income to come from _____
0. Social Security
1. Savings/Investments/Pensions
2. Other, specify _____
33. Do you think you have enough savings and guaranteed income to cover your postretirement years? _____
0. Yes 1. No
34. At age 65, did you or do you expect most of your healthcare expenses to be covered by _____
0. Insurance plan/1-MO
1. Medicare
2. Medicaid
3. Savings/Investments/Pension
4. Family
5. Other, specify _____
35. What age did you or do you expect to retire? _____

Alternative Therapy

Now we would like to ask you some question about different types of therapy that some people use.

35. Have you ever taken medicines or herbs that your doctor did not know about? _____
0. Yes 1. No
36. Do you make it a point to tell your doctor about every type of medicine you take? _____
0. Yes 1. No
37. Does your doctor ask if you take medicines other than the ones that are prescribed? _____
0. Yes 1. No
38. Have you ever visited one of the following? (may circle more than one)
0. Acupuncturist
1. Massage Therapist
2. Herbal healer or medicine man

3. Chiropracter

39. If yes, did your doctor know that you were seeing this other practitioner? _____

0. Yes 1. No

40. Have you ever used a medicine that promised to make you live longer? _____

0. Yes 1. No

41. Have you ever used a medicine that promised to make you look younger? _____

0. Yes 1. No

Patient Expectations

42. On average, how many times a year should a person see his or her physician? _____

43. Would you be comfortable having a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant as your primary care provider instead of an M.D.?

0. Yes 1. No

44. Where do you get most of your health information? _____

0. M.D. or other healthcare provider

1. Friends/Family

2. TV

3. Internet

4. Newspaper or magazine

45. Do you think there should be doctors who specialize in the care of the elderly? _____

0. Yes 1. No

46. How satisfied with the current healthcare system are you? _____

0. Very Satisfied

1. Satisfied

2. Not satisfied

47. Do you feel like you have the ability to change the things with the healthcare system that you do not like? _____

0. Yes 1. No