



# Blind Trust

Generic Drugs & Patient Knowledge

---



GENERICS | ACCESS | PROJECT

JUNE 2023

## Introduction

Every year in the United States, about 91% of prescriptions are filled as generic drugs. The FDA has approved more than 32,000 such medications.

Indeed, generic drugs are a critical part of the U.S. health care system. They bring down health care costs and help millions of patients access the treatment they need.

But even as patients readily take generic medications, how well do they understand them? What is their level of trust in generics' efficacy, safety and manufacturing?

To answer these and related questions, the Generics Access Project conducted a survey of 303 patients from across the country ranging in age from 18 to over 65.

### At a Glance

A generic drug is created to be the same in dosage form, safety, strength and administration as the brand-name drug that preceded it.

These drugs go through a rigorous FDA approval process. Generics tend to cost less.



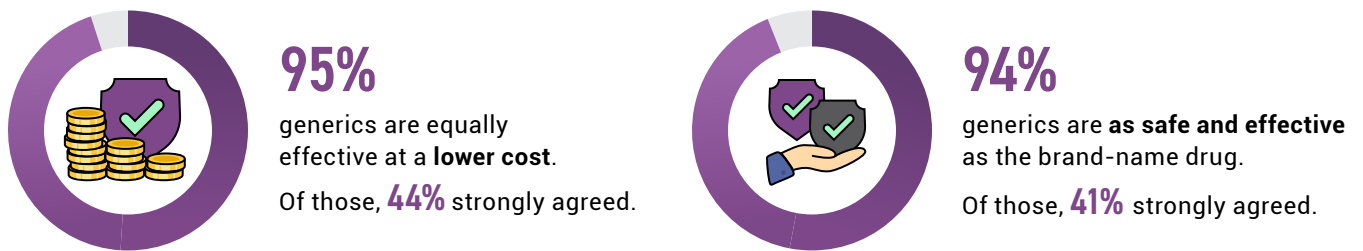
# High Levels of Acceptance

Overall, patients are accepting of generic drugs, with 82% of respondents saying that they have taken a generic.

Likewise, most respondents reported a general understanding of generic drugs. When asked about the basics, respondents understood the relationship between generics and their brand-name counterparts, correctly answering that generic drugs:



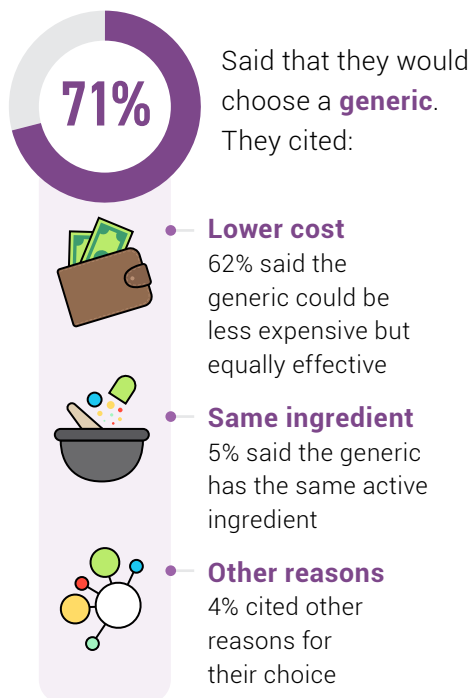
When asked about their confidence in specific aspects of generic drugs, patients agreed that:



Of people who had taken both generic drugs and brand-name drugs,

**64%** said they did not perceive any difference.

If given the choice between a **generic** and a **brand-name drug**:

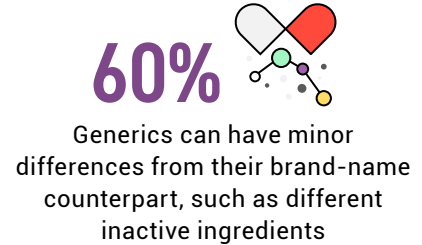
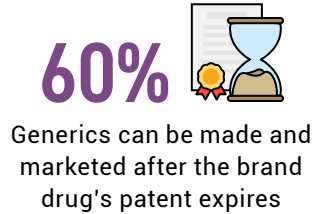
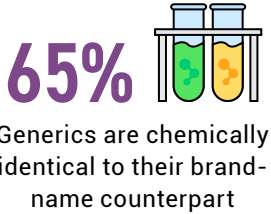


Those that said they would choose a **brand-name drug** cited:



# Lack of Clarity on the Details

While patients are confident, they lack a detailed understanding of the nuances of generics. Compared to questions about generics' efficacy, fewer respondents correctly answered that:



The correct response rate for these more detailed questions on generics were 20-32 percentage points lower than correct responses about the more basic aspects of generic drugs.

Despite knowing less about the details, patients still place a high level of trust in generics.

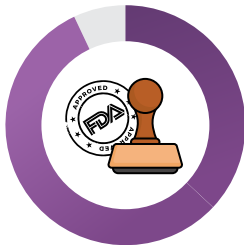
Patients were confident:



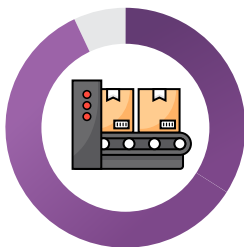
**94%**  
That the generic manufacturer has proven that its drug is **as effective as the brand-name drug**  
Of those, **38%** strongly agreed.



**92%**  
That the generics manufacturing, packaging and testing sites have passed the **same quality standards** as those of brand-name drugs.  
Of those, **37%** strongly agreed.



**93%**  
In the **FDA's approval** process for generics  
Of those, **37%** strongly agreed.



**93%**  
That the manufacturer will make the generic **correctly and consistently**.  
Of those, **34%** strongly agreed.

## TRUST IN GENERICS

When asked directly what their level of trust in generics was, respondents' answers varied, with just over half saying they had a high level of trust.



**58%**  
**HIGH**  
level of trust



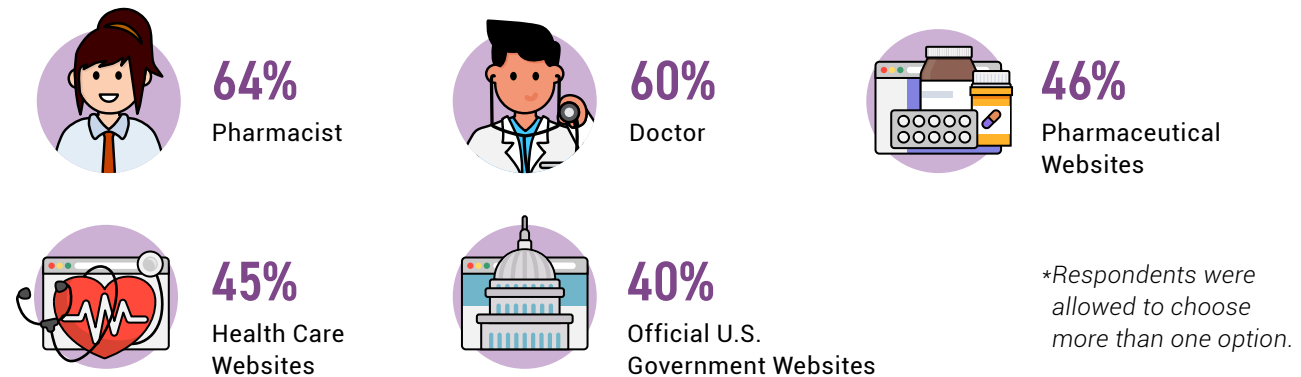
**36%**  
**MEDIUM**  
level of trust



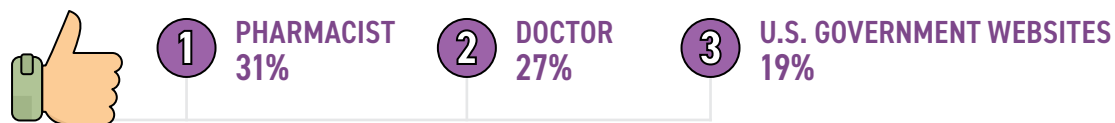
**6%**  
**LOW**  
level of trust

# Trust in Health Care Providers & Benefits

The survey also explored patients' trust in their pharmacists and doctors on the topic of generics. When asked where they would go to learn more about generics, respondents answered:



Patients were then asked which of these options was the most reliable. According to respondents, the top three most reliable sources were:



Additionally, 52% of respondents said that, if their doctor prescribed the brand-name drug but their pharmacist dispensed the generic, they would not request the brand-name.

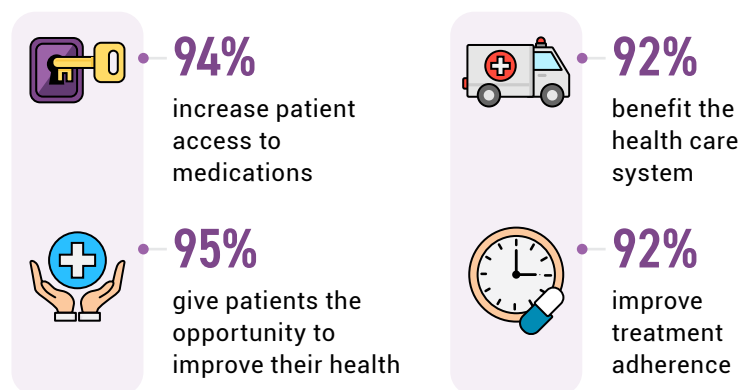
## Societal Benefit

Overall, respondents agreed that generics benefit society.

Although unclear on some of the processes related to generics:



Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that generics:



## Conclusion

Survey findings confirm that patients are relatively knowledgeable about generic medications. They recognize that generics can help patients save on health care costs and can improve access to medications. They also place a high level of trust in their health care providers and pharmacists.

Survey responses show that outright trust in generics varies, however. This may be because people lack a thorough understanding of the processes behind generics, such as the FDA's approval process and the manufacturing process.

As policymakers, health care providers and pharmacists seek to further inform the public about generic drugs, education efforts could focus on:

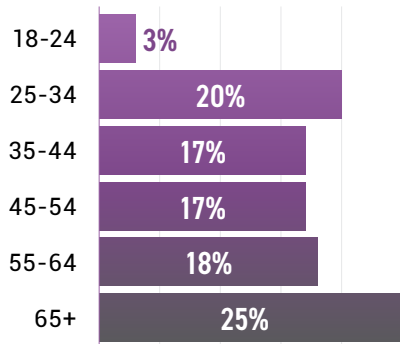
- **SAFETY**, including the FDA's approval process.
- **MANUFACTURING**, including quality standards of manufacturing sites.
- **CHEMICAL MAKEUP**, showcasing the fact that generics are required to demonstrate the same efficacy as their brand-name counterpart.

**Generic drugs save the health care system billions of dollars every year and help increase access to medicine. With greater awareness and more education, generics can benefit still more patients across the country.**

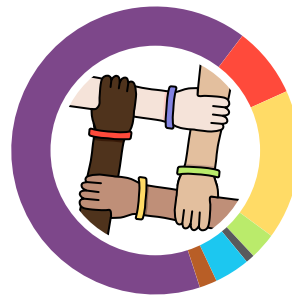


# Survey Demographics

## Age



## Race



- 66% White
- 8% Black
- 17% Hispanic
- 3% Asian
- <1% Native American
- 4% Two or more races
- 2% Other

## Gender



52%  
Male



47%  
Female



1%  
Non-Binary



GENERICS | ACCESS | PROJECT

## ABOUT THE GENERICS ACCESS PROJECT

The Generics Access Project advocates for policies that promote generic competition and efficient approval of generic medicines.

[GenericsProject.org](http://GenericsProject.org)