



The Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll

2019 Executive Summary



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Lloyd's Register Foundation is an independent global charity that helps to protect life and property at sea, on land, and in the air. To do this, we support education, research and public engagement, and promote scientific excellence.

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ABOUT GALLUP

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organisations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 80 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviours of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organisation in the world. For more information about Gallup, please visit www.gallup.com/contact.

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Preface

A crucial part of making the world safer is understanding the range of risks that people face and how they view them. The Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll provides the first global picture of how the world's citizens see risk and safety and the differences between perception of risk and actual experience.

Much of the data, collected by Gallup as part of its World Poll, is from people who have never been surveyed before and from places where official figures are unavailable or unreliable. This brings a new depth to our understanding of risk. The research includes 150,000 people in 142 countries. They were interviewed face to face in the majority of cases, including in some of the most remote and challenging parts of the world. Their responses give us a window into lives in which danger and the threat of injury, and sometimes death, are an everyday part of life.

Understanding the threats people face is integral to improvement. Our purpose is not just to illustrate the issues but to translate knowledge into action that empowers communities to shape their responses. We are working with governments, regulators, NGOs and researchers to form evidence-based interventions to make people safer. As each round of the poll takes place, we will have richer data and knowledge to inform those actions.

The first World Risk Poll was carried out in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst the original objectives for the poll remain, the data have assumed a new value as one of the last comprehensive snapshots of the world before so much changed. Issues such as trust in government, perception of personal safety and what worries people most will undoubtedly have changed when the next round of collection gets underway in 2021. With the first round as a benchmark, we will be able to assess what those changes are because of the unique timing and scope of the World Risk Poll.



Professor Richard Clegg

Chief Executive

Lloyd's Register Foundation

Foreword

Nearly half a century ago, my colleagues and I began to study risk attitudes and perceptions of some 30 hazardous activities and technologies among small samples of the American public and the emerging community of risk analysts and scholars. Because our data were quantitative in nature, our approach became known as the psychometric paradigm for studying perceived risk. The topic was clearly recognized as vital to public safety and health, and the early findings enticed others to replicate and extend our studies and consider their implications for risk theory, risk communication, and risk-management policies. Fast forward to 2019, when Lloyd's Register Foundation, guided by the insights gained from decades of previous studies, launched by far the most ambitious risk poll ever attempted. Some 150,000 persons coming from representative samples in 142 countries, answered an extensive battery of questions about the meaning of risk to their lives, the risks of greatest concern to them, their confidence that they and their public officials could effectively manage the risks they faced, and more.

The results, presented in this report, display the extraordinarily diverse personal and social perspectives of the world's people in a way never before seen. The knowledge contained in these summary statistics is rich indeed and will be greatly enhanced by plans to make the data widely available.

An unexpected benefit is the timing of the survey. Conducted in 2019, it documents attitudes and opinions formed in the pre-COVID era. Comparisons between the current data and those from the next World Risk Poll, scheduled for 2021, will provide a valuable glimpse at how the powerful pandemic has affected people everywhere.



Dr. Paul Slovic

Professor of Psychology
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World Risk Poll: **Executive Summary**

If the world is to become a safer place, we need to understand the risks people face and how those risks are perceived

In the first global study of worry and risk, Lloyd's Register Foundation has set a benchmark for insight, giving a voice to people from all walks of life and painting a picture of universal experiences of risk across the world.

Until now, many people's views on safety and risk have not been heard

- The World Risk Poll surveyed 150,000 people in 142 countries, including people in remote regions frequently excluded from comparative polls. The breadth of the research provides a more accurate picture of global attitudes toward risk and safety than has ever been achieved before.
- In many countries around the world, official data sources do not collate certain information as records are not kept or are not reliable or informative. The World Risk Poll is a unique opportunity to fill many data gaps and gather data from countries across the world to understand more about the risks people worry about, fear they will experience or have experienced themselves.
- Because the poll will be conducted at least four times, the weight of accumulated knowledge will make a more significant contribution to world safety than any past research on the global public understanding of risk.



Insight into action

The Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll aims to reduce risk around the world and improve safety.

The World Risk Poll results have been shared globally, so regulators, businesses, governments and researchers can work with communities to develop relevant and relatable policies that empower people to take action that saves lives and helps them feel safer.

1 People's perceptions of risks differed from the likelihood of experiencing them

If governments and regulatory bodies are to effectively introduce meaningful change, they need to understand not just the likelihood of risks occurring but also how people perceive those risks and the reasons for any differences.

- Many people did not think they faced any safety risks when asked about top threats to their safety in their daily lives. At the global level, 19% of people said they face 'no risk,' and an additional 21% cited only one.
- People in high-income countries and territories were more likely to identify road-related risks as one of the top two threats to their safety than people in lower-income countries. However, official statistics show high-income countries generally experience lower traffic-related fatality rates. People in low-income countries worried about traffic-related risks, but they often raised other risks — such as violence and crime and health — as being more significant.
- People tended to rate the likelihood of being in an aeroplane accident on the same level as drowning, even though an estimated 320,000 people die each year by drowning, compared to aeroplane accidents killing hundreds of people annually.

2 Demographic factors were generally a better predictor of risk perception than experience

Safety interventions that do not address socioeconomic, cultural and demographic circumstances are likely to fail to have significant impact.

- Young internet users were more likely to worry about online bullying than older users.
- Public perceptions of risk relating to nuclear power were also influenced by demographic factors, with notable differences tied to country income level.
- In low-income countries and territories, views about genetically modified foods were generally more positive.
- While men and women were about as likely to believe climate change represents a 'very serious' threat to people in their countries in the next 20 years, men were more likely than women to say that climate change is 'not a threat at all.'

In some situations, experience was a strong predictor of risk perceptions — for example, experience of harm from drinking water was associated with perceived risk of harm from drinking unsafe water.

3 Across the world, different groups of people experienced risk in very different ways

While there were differences in the types of risks experienced, people in all countries and territories around the world worried about and experienced some form of risk. Economic and social development change the nature of the risks we face.

- The most dangerous jobs in the world are in agriculture, fishing and construction. In lower-income economies, high proportions of the population may be involved in these occupations, increasing the likelihood of serious harm.
- Generally, experience of actual harm raised levels of worry. For example, people who had experienced serious harm from mental health issues were more likely to be 'very worried' about this risk than those who had not.
- In higher-income economies, violence and harassment were generally a more common concern in the workplace than physical risks and were often experienced first-hand.

4 Few people across the world trusted government and official organisations to keep them safe

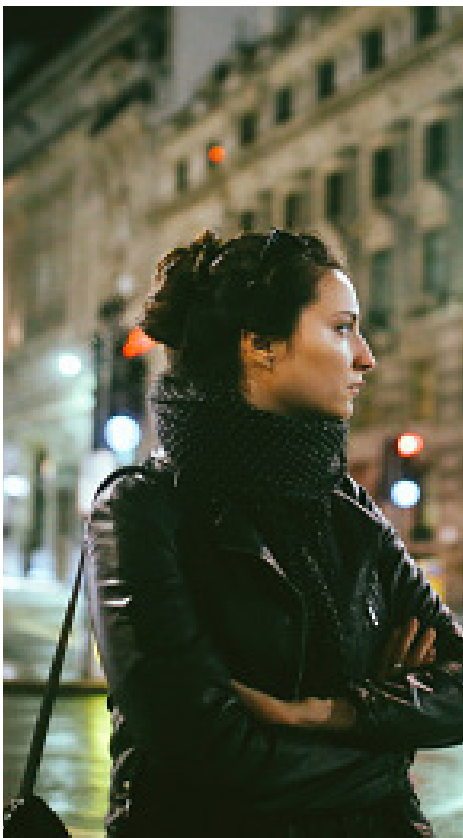
For organisations to be effective, they need to understand more about how their populations receive information and the weight they give to it. The World Risk Poll asked people about their trust in different sources of food safety information.

- Only 15% of people across the world trusted their government's food safety authorities as their number one source of food safety information.
- The most trusted sources of food safety information were family and friends and medical professionals. About half of people in low-income economies sought food safety information from celebrities or religious leaders.
- People in developed economies were more likely to trust their governments for food safety information than people in lower-income economies.

The global COVID-19 pandemic and more localised disasters, such as the Beirut port explosion, have raised pressing questions about the effectiveness of risk communication strategies and the role of different communities and groups in gaining trust.

Highlights

The World Risk Poll explores people's views about risks in a range of areas:



Women and risk

- At the time of the survey, 27% of women across the globe felt less safe than they did five years previously.
- Significant numbers of working women around the world feared violence and harassment in the workplace — over two-thirds of women in Malawi, Swaziland and Nepal expressed worry about this risk.
- Harassment and violence at work were also a significant concern for women in developed countries; 42% of women in Finland worried about this issue, as well as 38% in France, 32% in Sweden and 32% in Australia.
- Worries about harassment and violence at work were also borne out by experience for many women; Zambia ranked first in the world, with 47% of working women reporting this issue.
- Workers in Australia — ranked sixth in the world for experience of violence and harassment in the workplace — reported a significant gender gap, with 39% of women experiencing this issue compared to 24% of men.



Safety at work

- Nineteen percent of workers worldwide said they have been seriously injured at some point while working.
- Overall, men — and especially young men — were at a greater risk of injury at work than women.
- The industries in which most people experienced harm while working were also work environments which typically have weak health and safety regulations.
- More than 50% of workers across seven countries in Central/Western and Eastern Africa and Southern Asia — where agriculture is the largest industry — said they have been seriously injured at some point while working.
- Experience of a serious injury while working was associated with experience of mental health issues; workers who had experienced physical violence and harassment at work were the most likely to say they had experienced mental health issues.



Safety of food and drink

- Seventeen percent of people — equivalent to 1 billion people worldwide — said they or someone they personally know suffered serious harm in the past two years from the food they eat, and 14% (roughly 823 million people) reported having experienced serious harm from the water they drink.
- Countries and territories that had experienced the most harm from food were those in the developing world; the top three countries were Liberia (52%), Zambia (51%) and Mozambique (45%).
- In some regions, including Eastern and Northern Africa and the Middle East, more people had experienced harm from unsafe food than were worried about it.
- Forty-eight percent of people across the world viewed genetically modified food as more likely to harm than help in the future.



Cyber risk

- Seventy-one percent of people who use the internet recognised at least one of the three main internet-related risks — the biggest concern was 'fake news,' ahead of fraud and cyberbullying.
- Fifty-seven percent of internet users across the globe said they worried about receiving false information online.
- Forty-five percent of internet users worried about online fraud. Regionally, Western Europeans were particularly likely to worry about fraud, including at least two-thirds of internet users in Portugal (78%), France (74%), Spain (71%), the U.K. (69%) and Italy (67%).
- Concerns about online bullying were highest in low-income economies, driven by younger populations in these countries and territories.



Climate change risk

- Almost 70% of people worldwide recognised the threat from climate change in their country in the next 20 years — demonstrating progress in raising awareness of risk.
- Men generally viewed climate change less seriously than women. While men and women were about as likely to believe climate change represents a ‘very serious’ threat to people in their countries in the next 20 years, men (particularly older men) were more likely than women to say that climate change is ‘not a threat at all.’
- People who have experienced serious harm from severe weather conditions and poor quality of air and water were more likely to worry about the effects of climate change.
- People in China — the world’s largest producer of carbon — were less concerned about climate change; just 23% saw it as a ‘very serious’ threat. The U.S., which is the second-biggest carbon emitter in the world, had the highest percentage of climate change sceptics among high-income countries; 21% of people in the U.S. viewed climate change as ‘not a threat at all.’



Worry and Experience Indices

The World Risk Poll distils levels of worry and experience of risk into two indices that rank the 142 countries and territories surveyed by concern about and experience of harm from seven everyday risks. The real value of these indices becomes more evident when the findings are compared side by side — illustrating that the way people feel about risks can be different from the statistical likelihood of a risk causing harm.

- Globally, the Worry Index scores were higher than the Experience of Harm Index scores. In some cases, this gap was greater than others; these countries and territories may be considered as ‘over-worriers’ when it comes to those specific risks. These countries included Mongolia, Myanmar, Cyprus, Chile and South Korea.
- Conversely, some countries showed only a small gap between worry and experience; Sweden had the smallest gap.
- People in Mozambique expressed the highest level of worry, followed by Guinea, Malawi, Gabon and Lesotho.
- The highest level of everyday risk was experienced in Liberia, followed by Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi. The high risk of harm in these countries was driven by severe weather and unsafe water.



World trust

- People in 25% of the countries and territories polled did not trust their governments to provide critical basic infrastructure (water, food, power).
- Globally, the four governments trusted least to provide critical basic infrastructure were Yemen, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Iraq.
- Governments with the best perceived record of provision of critical basic infrastructure included Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.
- Countries in Eastern Europe had particularly low levels of trust in their governments to keep their food and water safe.



Get in touch

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