

# Do Doctors Vote?

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## Background

- Voting is a reflection of community engagement and civic participation in a democratic society
- With declining trust in the medical profession and increasing profit driven investor ownership of the healthcare industry, issues of medical professionalism have become topics for debate
- The American Medical Association, American Board of Internal Medicine (and its European Counterpart) have issued statements regarding professional responsibility which purport the physician role as an advocate in social, economic, education and political realms to effect change as it relates to patient and community improvement.

## Hypothesis

- Physician voting rates can be used as an indicator of civic participation and is reflective of medical professionalism

## Study Design

Study type: Cross sectional survey

Setting: Participants in the US Bureau of Census, Current Population Survey (CPS) November Voter Supplement

Time period: 1996-2002

Inclusion Criteria: Participants in US Bureau Census Survey

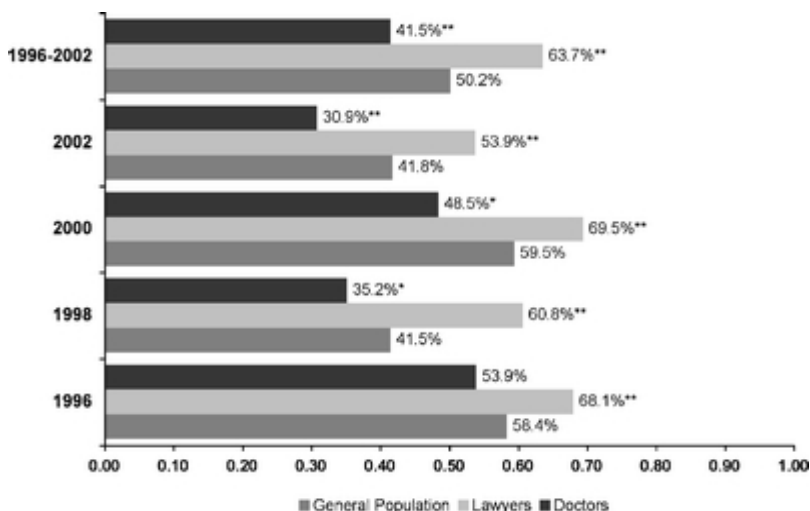
Exclusion Criteria: None

Participant characteristics: N= 350,870 participants in the CPS November Voter Supplement from 1996-2002 including 1274 physicians, 1886 lawyers

## Outcomes:

Considering the pooled data from 1996-2002, physicians were less likely to vote than the general population (odds ratio 0.70, 95% confidence interval 0.61-0.81, P<0.001) and lawyers were more likely to vote than the general population (odds ratio 1.74, 95% confidence interval 1.49-2.02, P<0.001)

## The evidence



## Comments

- Lower voting rates exhibited collectively by physicians may signal civic disengagement and can be extrapolated to by a reflection of the physician being removed in general from the communities who they are charged to serve.
- Have physicians become more focused on professional achievement and greater specialization leading to removal collectively from the community/civic sphere or is devotion to patient care and busy clinical practices a substitution for civic engagement?