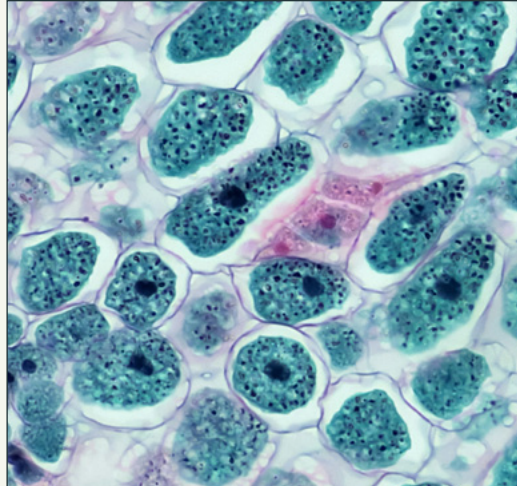




Wellcome Global Monitor

Trust in science under pressure

2026

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Foreword

Trust reveals itself in the choices we make when faced with uncertainty. It influences how we feel about competing claims, which information we believe, whose advice we follow, and where we look for reassurance. The Wellcome Global Monitor gives us the clearest picture of the state of public trust in science, both today and over time, and the dynamics that earn and sustain it.

Some years ago, when I was responsible for the national vaccination programmes in Norway, I participated in televised debates about reported side-effects from HPV vaccines that were being rolled out to prevent cervical cancer. The evidence mattered, but it was not the only thing people were weighing up. They were also asking who they could rely on, whether their concerns were being heard and whether the institutions speaking to them understood their lives.

Fifteen years after HPV vaccination programmes were introduced across Europe, vaccine uptake has generally been high, with significant reductions in HPV infections and declining cervical cancer rates

among vaccinated women. But the questions and considerations raised in the debate, and how they related to trust, have stayed with me.

Science does not earn trust solely by being rooted in evidence; it must also be trustworthy. Trust and trustworthiness depend on institutions, systems and people being credible, open about uncertainty, responsive to concerns and connected to the realities of people's lives.

When trust is strong, science can help people make informed decisions, use science-based solutions and support collective action. When trust is under pressure, even well-established evidence can

struggle to find its footing. That is why understanding public trust in science is critical to the mission of any organisation looking to build a healthier future.

The Wellcome Global Monitor exists to help us track and understand how people think and feel about science, now and over time. It is a tool to understand public trust in science at a global, regional and country level. In today's increasingly complex world, it gives us a clearer picture of the conditions in which trust grows and the conditions in which it falters.



Image credit: Krisztian Bocsi / Wellcome

The Wellcome Global Monitor 2026 draws on responses from over 140,000 people across 140 countries, offering one of the most comprehensive views of public trust in science available anywhere in the world today. Its depth allows us to see not just whether people trust science, but how that trust connects to their confidence in other institutions, their healthcare experiences, and their sense of whether science benefits people like them.

For me, the findings point to something important about the relationship between science and society.

First, trust in science is under pressure. Gains seen during the pandemic have not been sustained, and in several global regions trust has fallen below pre-pandemic levels. Understanding why is critical.

Second, trust in science does not sit apart from society. People who feel systems are working for them, institutions are fair and healthcare is accessible are more likely to trust science. That should caution us against treating low trust simply as limited knowledge or understanding. It is also impacted by societal structures and people's experiences.

Third, trust in science and consensus on specific positions or actions are not the same thing. Views on some of today's most pressing questions, from how to act on climate change to vaccine efficacy and the role of AI, vary greatly across and within countries, even in places where trust in science is high overall. Science therefore needs to remain credible across groups with different values and viewpoints, rather than with any particular constituency. Scientists need to differentiate between what the evidence shows and the actions that need to be taken. The latter would generally involve value judgements and making trade-offs.

That places a responsibility on science too. We cannot assume that because the evidence is strong, trust will follow. Nor should we confuse trust with alignment to specific choices or positions. People can trust science and the evidence and still reach different conclusions that make sense to them in their context. Our job as a science community is not to question those differences, but to make sure science remains credible, open and relevant – and therefore trustworthy.

Our aim through the Wellcome Global Monitor is to build a long-term evidence base that supports deeper listening, engagement, understanding and action. This will help science to respond more effectively to different experiences and viewpoints, strengthening the relationship between science and society for the long term.

So perhaps the question for those of us who work in science is not simply: how do we build greater trust in science? It is: what do we need to do to earn the trust of people across different perspectives and contexts?

That is a harder question. I think it is also the more important one.

John-Arne Røttingen
Chief Executive Officer, Wellcome



Key findings

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Key finding 1:

Trust in science and scientists has fallen since the Covid-19 pandemic

1.1: The gains in trust in science seen in 2020 have been lost.

- In 2025, 72% of people reported 'some' or 'a lot' of trust in science, compared with 80% in 2020 and 77% in 2018.
- 19% of people reported 'not much' trust in science or 'not at all' in 2025, up from 13% in both 2018 and 2020.

1.2: Trust in science has fallen below pre-pandemic levels in five global regions.

- In seven global regions, trust has returned close to 2018 levels, while in five regions trust in science is lower than in 2018. Trust rose in only two regions.

1.3: Since 2020, trust in scientists has fallen more than trust in other groups and institutions.

- The proportion of people reporting 'a lot' of trust in scientists increased from 34% in 2018 to 43% in 2020, before falling to 32% in 2025.

Explore findings that show how trust has changed since 2018 in Chapter 1.

Note: Survey modes changed over time in some countries including China, whose large population can influence global results. It is important to note that the surveying approach in China in 2025 used a non-probability sample of incentivised online panel members. Methodological changes are acknowledged in the analysis and should be considered when interpreting trends over time.

Key finding 2:

Trust in science is associated with stronger, more equal societies

2.1: Trust in science is lowest among those who feel they are struggling to get by.

- Among those finding it difficult to get by on their present income, the share who trust science 'a lot' fell by eight percentage points between 2018 and 2025, compared with a two percentage-point drop among those who said they were living comfortably.

2.2: People who feel systems are working for them are more likely to trust science.

- People who reported less confidence in institutions, lower trust in government and higher perceptions of corruption were less likely to trust science.
- Trust in science is moderately negatively correlated (coefficient $r = -0.34$) with economic inequality. This suggests that countries with greater economic inequality tend to have less trust in science.

2.3: People with positive healthcare experiences have more trust in science.

- Overall, 26% of people reported 'a lot' of trust in science; among those with a lot of confidence in their country's hospitals and health clinics, the figure was 43%.

[Discover more about conditions relating to trust in Chapter 2.](#)



Image credit:
Wellcome



Image credit:
Getty images

Key finding 3: Trust is higher among people who see science as relevant and beneficial

3.1: Most people in the world do not feel that science benefits everyone in society equally.

- The proportion who said that 'most people' in their country benefit from science fell from 42% in 2018 to 37% in 2025.

3.2: People with more trust in science are more positive about its benefits.

- People who had 'a lot' or 'some' trust in science were 23 percentage points more likely to view science as beneficial than those who trusted science 'not much' or 'not at all'.

3.3: In countries where trust in science is widespread, low-trust groups tend to be further apart from others in their attitudes to science.

- In countries where trust in science was generally lower, people tended to have similar attitudes to science, regardless of their level of trust in science.
- In countries where overall trust in science was higher, there was a larger difference between lower- and higher-trust groups in terms of attitudes to science.

[Learn more about how trust relates to the perceived benefits of science in Chapter 3.](#)



Introduction

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Introduction

The Wellcome Global Monitor is the world's largest study of public trust in science, health information and related social issues. It gathers data from over 140,000 adults across 140 countries, providing a uniquely rich and globally comparable dataset. The scale and breadth allow for a thorough understanding of public attitudes towards science and health, including the factors that shape them.

This report covers some of the main themes from the Wellcome Global Monitor 2026 data.

A full dataset is freely available for your own research, as are country and region-level factsheets and a dashboard for exploring the findings.

Find them at:
wellcome.org/globalmonitor

The Wellcome Global Monitor 2026 reports on the survey conducted in 2025 – the third wave following waves in 2018 and 2020. It was delivered through a partnership between Gallup, Ipsos, and Wellcome. Gallup implemented the survey and fieldwork and Wellcome commissioned Ipsos to lead the quantitative analysis, interpretation and reporting.

Core questions from previous waves were repeated to enable comparison over time. New questions were introduced in relation to artificial intelligence (AI), which is an increasingly important way in which science and technology are shaping people's lives and wider society. As such, the dataset provides an

opportunity to examine not only overall levels of trust in science, but also how trust relates to wider social concerns, institutional confidence, and attitudes towards new technologies and global challenges.

Policy makers, practitioners, researchers and communicators can use Wellcome Global Monitor insights to inform policy, target interventions, strengthen engagement and shape research agendas. Ultimately, Wellcome's aim is for this evidence base to empower locally grounded action so that more people can see and experience the value of science in their lives.



Image credit:
Ciril Jazbec / Wellcome Photography Prize 2025

Methodology

Fieldwork was conducted in 2025 as part of the Gallup World Poll. The survey covered 140 countries using nationally representative samples and a combination of data collection methods, including face-to-face, telephone and online interviews.

The analysis involved creating harmonised variables and comparable cross-national groupings. We developed standardised socio-demographic measures, including education, income and employment status. External indicators, including Gallup's wellbeing indexes and the World Bank's Gini coefficient, were integrated in the analysis to explore the relationship between trust in science and wider social, economic and institutional conditions.

With 140 countries now participating in the Wellcome Global Monitor, the analysis uses 14 regional groupings from the United Nations Statistics Division (M49)¹ adapted for continuity with our 2018 report. For consistency and comparability, we used the UNSD sub-regional names but acknowledge that the term 'sub-Saharan Africa' reinforces a negative connotation. We also recognise that grouping larger numbers of countries under the UNSD regions, 'sub-Saharan Africa' and 'Latin America and the Caribbean' flattens the differences between countries in those regions. This report includes country-level analyses to highlight such differences.

To ensure comparability over time, trend analyses only used data from the 108 countries that were included in all three waves of fieldwork (2018, 2020 and 2025). We reviewed changes in survey mode across countries to identify any potential for these changes to influence comparability over time. These limitations are acknowledged in the interpretation of trend findings.

The quantitative analysis includes univariate and bivariate analyses to examine global, regional and demographic patterns in trust in science, as well as changes over time. More advanced analytical techniques, including multi-level modelling, were used to examine how public attitudes towards science varied across different social, political and economic contexts.

Descriptive global estimates are population-weighted. The multilevel model is unweighted and therefore estimates an average relationship across countries rather than an average relationship across the global population.

Analytical and methodological limitations acknowledged in this report are detailed further in the accompanying Technical Report, available at wellcome.org/globalmonitor.

How to interpret this report

Important points to bear in mind when reading this report:

- **Percentages in text and charts:** Percentages do not always add to 100% because we report percentages rounded to the nearest whole number, plus some charts exclude 'don't know' responses for clarity.
- **Weighting:** Findings have been weighted by country population size to ensure that global estimates accurately reflect the relative populations of countries in the survey.
- **Regional and country findings:** We grouped the data by 14 UN Statistics Division¹ regions. The number of countries from each region included in the survey varies considerably, from two in the Australia and New Zealand region to more than 20 in the sub-Saharan Africa region. As such, while regional findings provide a useful overview of broad patterns, they can mask substantial variation between countries in the same region.
- **Trends over time:** Trend analyses were limited to the 108 countries that participated in all three waves. As a result, percentages reported in the trend analyses may differ slightly from those presented for 2025 alone, which are based on the full sample of 140 countries.
- **Changes in survey mode:** Survey modes changed over time in some countries including China, whose large population can influence global results. In China, data was collected face-to-face in 2018, by telephone in 2020, and through a paid online panel in 2025. The 2018 and 2020 surveys used random sampling whereas the 2025 survey in China used a non-probability sample of incentivised online panel members. These methodological changes are acknowledged in the analysis and should be considered when interpreting trends over time.
- **Science in everyday life:** The Wellcome Global Monitor 2026 asked questions about climate change, vaccines and, for the first time, the benefits of AI. These examples illustrate how attitudes interact with real-world issues.

1

How has trust changed since 2018?

Image credit: Getty



1. How has trust changed since 2018?

This chapter looks at how trust in science has changed over the three waves of the Wellcome Global Monitor.

Key finding 1.1: Gains in trust in science seen in 2020 have been lost.

- In 2025, 72% of people reported 'some' or 'a lot' of trust in science, compared with 80% in 2020 and 77% in 2018.
- The proportion of people who trust science 'a lot' fell in all 14 global regions between 2020 and 2025.
- 19% of people reported 'not much' trust in science or 'not at all' in 2025, up from 13% in both 2018 and 2020.

Key finding 1.2: Trust in science has fallen below pre- pandemic levels in five global regions.

- Trust in science dropped below 2018 levels in five regions: sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, Western Asia, Eastern Asia, and Australia and New Zealand.
- It rose in just two regions: Western Europe and Southern Europe.
- It is close to 2018 levels in the remaining seven regions: Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America, Northern Africa, Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Asia and South-Eastern Asia.

Key finding 1.3: Since 2020, trust in scientists has fallen more than trust in other groups and institutions.

- The proportion of people reporting 'a lot' of trust in scientists increased from 34% in 2018 to 43% in 2020, before falling to 32% in 2025.
- Trust in scientists rose between 2018 and 2020, then fell more than trust in any other group between 2020 and 2025.

Note: The figures supporting these key findings are based on data from 108 countries included in all three waves of the Wellcome Global Monitor – figures for the 140 countries surveyed in 2025 may differ.

1.1 Gains in trust in science seen in 2020 have been lost

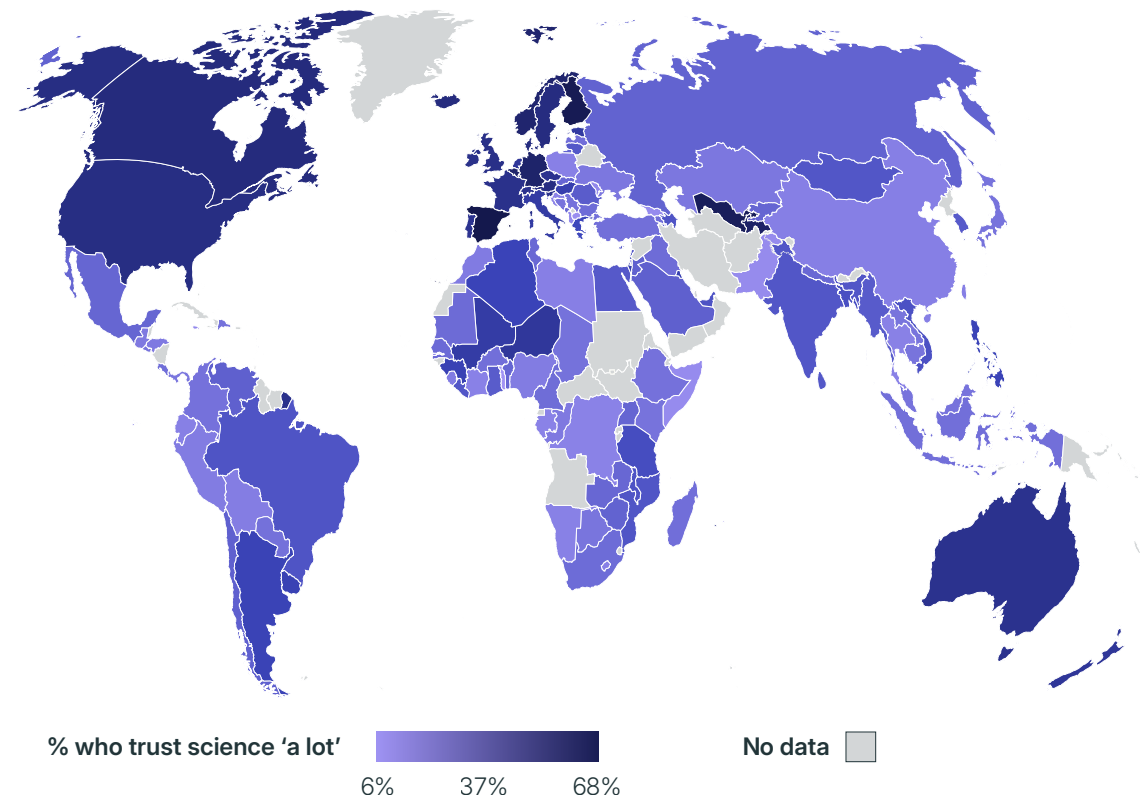
Across all 140 countries surveyed in 2025, 70% of people reported having either 'a lot' of trust in science (26%) or 'some' trust in science (44%). Around one in five said they trusted science either 'not much' (15%) or 'not at all' (6%).

Figure 1.1 shows a heat map of trust in science by country in 2025. Those in darker shades of blue were the most likely to say they trusted science 'a lot'. In 16 countries, half or more of the population had 'a lot' of trust in science: Spain, Finland, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Canada, Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, United States of America, United Kingdom, Ireland and France.

In other parts of the world, less than one in 10 people reported having 'a lot' of trust, including in Togo, North Macedonia, Somalia, Georgia and Pakistan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 22% of people reported having no trust in science at all.

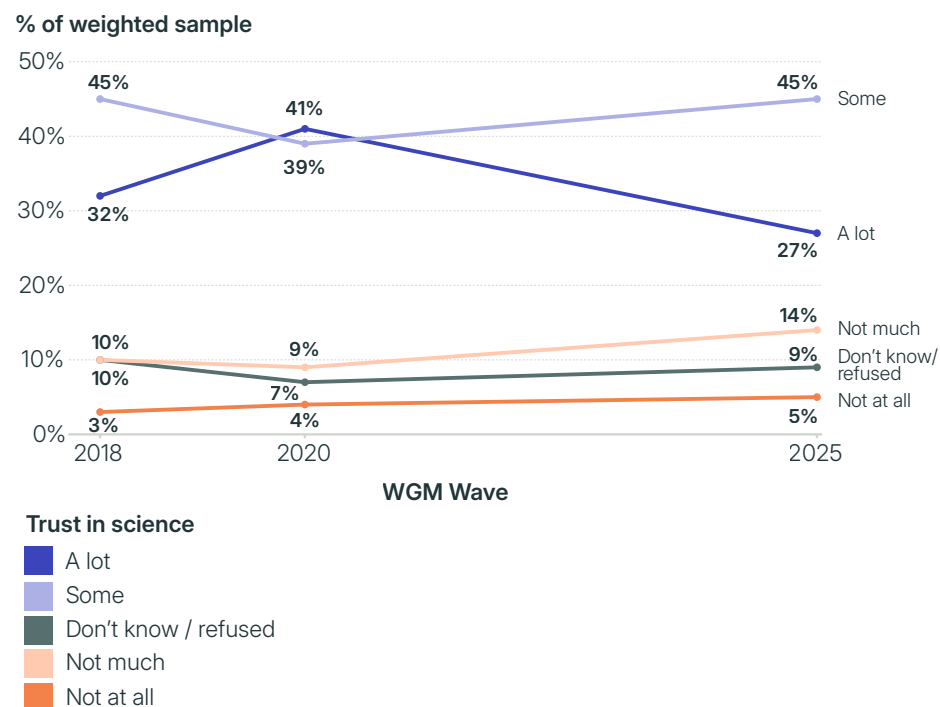
As in previous years, levels of trust were highest in Northern America, Western Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, and Australia and New Zealand. For example, 54% of people in Western Europe reported 'a lot' of trust in science, compared with 15% in Eastern Asia and 21% in sub-Saharan Africa.

Figure 1.1:
A map showing how many people trusted science 'a lot' in each country



Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Figure 1.2:
The proportion of people with little or no trust in science has grown since 2018

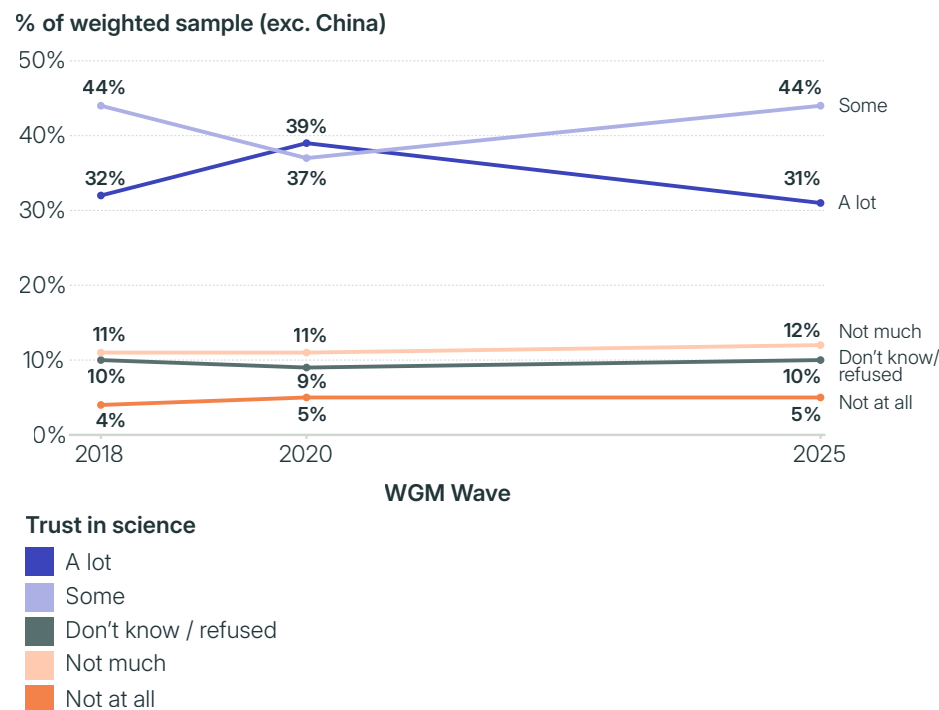


Sample size: 2018 = 113,934, 2020 = 114,053 and 2025 = 112,553
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Figure 1.2² shows changes over time across the 108 countries that were included in all three waves of the Wellcome Global Monitor. The proportion saying they trust science 'a lot' has fallen from 2018, and the proportion saying 'not at all' or 'not much' has grown.

This suggests that 2020 was an unusual year, when countries were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and science may have been more visible in everyday life.

Figure 1.3:
Leaving out data from China, levels of trust in science are more consistent between 2018 and 2025



Sample size: 2018 = 110,285, 2020 = 110,551 and 2025 = 109,527
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

The increased trust in science seen in 2020 has not held and has fallen below 2018 levels globally. However, the global results are affected by trends in China, where the survey mode changed in each wave. As Figure 1.3 shows, excluding China's data from the global trend analysis shows a picture that is more consistent between 2018 and 2025.

Whether or not China is included, however, there has been a decline in those who trust science 'a lot' between 2020 and 2025, and an increase in the proportion who selected 'some'. This mirrors other survey research from the UK³ and the USA⁴. It is a warning sign that trust in science should not be assumed to be stable.

1.2 Trust in science has fallen below pre-pandemic levels in five global regions

Comparing data from previous waves of the Wellcome Global Monitor helps to understand how regional patterns contributed to changes in global trust in science over time. As illustrated in Figure 1.4, three broad regional trajectories emerged: decliners, returners and retainers.

'Decliners'

Five regions have shown a decline in trust in science since 2018. Within this group, there are two different trajectories.

- In Eastern Asia and Australia and New Zealand, there was an increase in trust in 2020, followed by a fall to below 2018 levels. But these similar declines reflect different underlying shifts in attitudes:
 - In Eastern Asia, declining trust was accompanied by increases in the proportion of people who trusted science 'not much' or 'not at all'. This trend was driven by China; other countries in this region – including Japan, Mongolia,

South Korea and Taiwan – saw a return or increase in trust from 2018 to 2025.

- By contrast, in Australia and New Zealand, the decline was primarily driven by an increase in the proportion of people who answered 'don't know', while levels of no trust remained relatively stable.
- Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and Western Asia followed a different trajectory. Rather than a temporary increase in trust during the pandemic followed by a decline, these regions show a gradual fall in trust across the three waves.
 - In Central Asia, this largely reflects a softening of views, with more people moving from 'a lot' of trust to 'some' trust.
 - In contrast, views have hardened in sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia, with growing proportions saying they trust science 'not much' or 'not at all'.

'Returners'

The remaining nine regions had levels of trust in science in 2025 that were no lower than in 2018. Of these, seven regions were 'returners', in

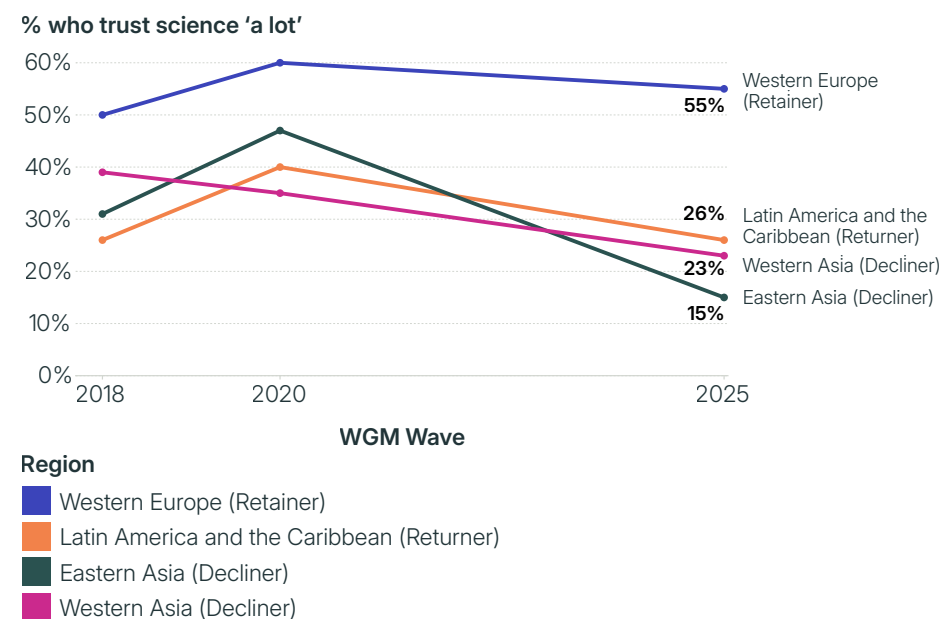
which the proportion of people reporting 'a lot' of trust in science in 2025 was similar to pre-pandemic levels after increasing in 2020.

Levels of low or no trust generally remained stable, although two regions – Northern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean – saw an increase in the proportion of people saying they 'don't know' how much they trust science.

'Retainers'

Two regions – Western Europe and Southern Europe – reported levels of trust in 2025 that were higher than in 2018. We classify these as 'retainers' because they held onto at least part of the increase in trust from the Covid-19 pandemic period. In these regions, higher levels of strong trust were driven by people shifting from 'some' to 'a lot' of trust, while levels of low or no trust remained broadly unchanged.

Figure 1.4:
Trust in science has changed, with peaks during the pandemic



Sample size: 2018 = 36,750, 2020 = 36,692 and 2025 = 36,248
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Country spotlight

Trust holds in Brazil while declining in Chile

While most of Latin America and the Caribbean saw Covid-19 pandemic-era trust settle back to pre-pandemic levels, Brazil retained some of the pandemic-era rise. In 2025, 74% of Brazilians reported at least some trust in science – slightly above the global average and well above the 64% in 2018. Indeed, it had dropped only slightly from a peak of 76% in 2020.

The shift wasn't uniform. Between 2018 and 2025, Brazilian men's trust increased by 11 percentage points, compared with an increase of 8 points among women's. And the poorest and richest quintiles increased by 18 and 16 percentage points respectively, while the middle income quintiles moved by 6 points or less.

By contrast, trust in science in Chile fell below its 2018 level following a pandemic-era rise. In 2025, 63% of Chileans reported at least some trust in science, which is down from both 2020 (81%) and 2018 (75%). The change since 2018 was associated

with a larger proportion of the population saying they trusted science 'not much' or 'not at all', or answering 'don't know'.

Although the shift was uneven in both countries, the story in Chile is different. While there were declines across all demographic groups between 2018 and 2025, the greatest declines were among younger and older age groups, which dropped by 15 and 23 percentage points respectively, compared with falls of no more than 11 percentage points for other age groups. All income groups dropped by between 11 and 23 percentage points, except for the richest quintile, which fell by only 2 percentage points.



Image credit:
Unsplash

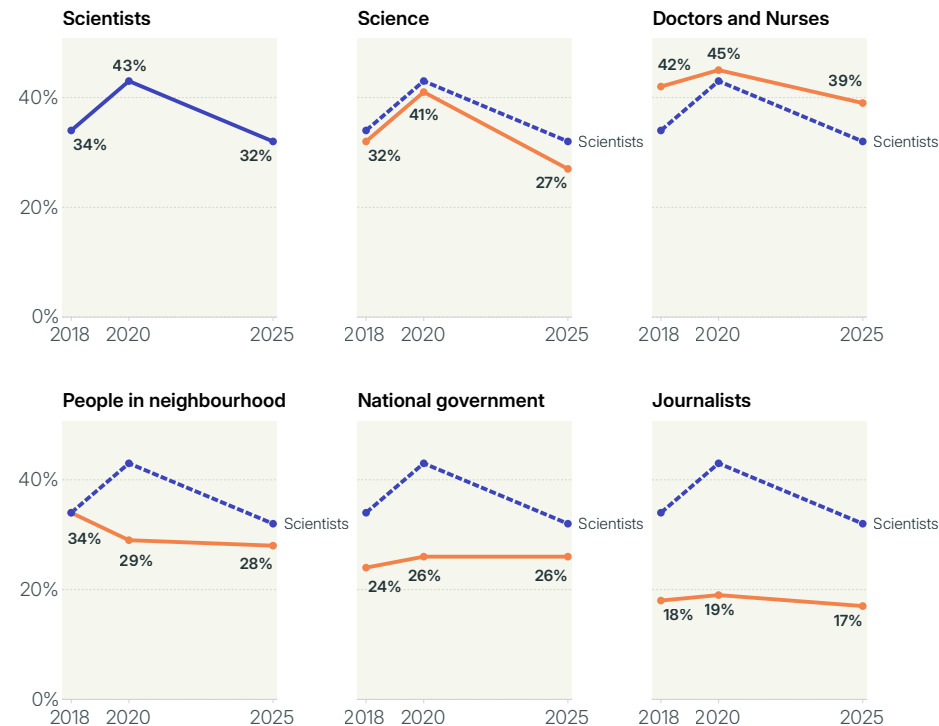
1.3 Since 2020, trust in scientists has fallen more than trust in other groups and institutions

To understand how trust in science fits within broader patterns of trust in society, the Wellcome Global Monitor asked respondents about their trust in a set of groups and institutions, including scientists. As Figure 1.5 shows, 32% of people trusted scientists 'a lot' in 2025, just behind healthcare professionals (39%) but ahead of neighbours (28%), the national government (26%) and journalists (17%).

Scientists experienced the largest increase in trust in 2020 and the largest subsequent decline in 2025, returning to levels just below 2018. Healthcare professionals followed a similar though slightly less pronounced pattern. By contrast, trust in government, journalists and neighbours remained comparatively stable. The magnitude of changes in trust in scientists suggests that, despite being more trusted than many other groups, their position is less stable.

Figure 1.5:
Scientists remain one of the most trusted groups, but one of the least stable

% with 'a lot' of trust in group / institution



Sample size: Science, Scientists, Doctors and Nurses, and People in Neighbourhood - 113,934 in 2018, 114,053 in 2020, 112,553 in 2025; National government - 103,251 in 2018, 106,536 in 2020, 102,493 in 2025; Journalists - 113,934 in 2018, 113,040 in 2020, 110,526 in 2025

Q: How much do you trust the people in your neighbourhood/journalists/doctors and nurses/the government/scientists in this country?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Conclusion 1: Trust in science and scientists has fallen since the Covid-19 pandemic

The findings in this chapter show that globally, trust in science was lower in 2025 than in both 2018 and 2020. This is based on analyses that include China, whose decline in trust between 2020 and 2025 has a substantial influence on the global average because of its population size, amplifying any effects from the changes in survey mode in China over the years.

Regional analysis shows that overall levels of trust in science declined in sub-Saharan Africa and most regions in Asia. This was generally accompanied by an increase in no trust, whereas the decline in Australia and New Zealand was accompanied by an increase in those answering 'don't know'.

Scientists have one of the highest levels of trust among the groups measured in the Wellcome Global Monitor. Additionally, they followed a similar trajectory to science and doctors and nurses across the three waves.

However, their position may not be stable, given that trust in scientists saw the largest declines between 2020 and 2025.

These findings show that overall trust in science has declined from pre-pandemic levels, and this decline is especially concentrated in certain regions. The next chapter explores some of these differences further, and how they relate to the wider systems in which trust can be earned or lost.



Image credit:
Getty

2

What conditions are related to trust?

Image credit: Pierre Bureau / Wellcome Photography Prize 2020



2. What conditions are related to trust?

This chapter is about the wider environment around trust in science and the conditions associated with higher or lower levels of trust.

Key finding 2.1: Trust in science is lowest among those who feel they are struggling to get by.

- Among those finding it difficult to get by on their present income, the share who trust science 'a lot' fell by 8 percentage points between 2018 and 2025.
- People who feel comfortable on their current income showed similar levels of trust in science in 2018 and 2025.
- The largest declines in trust in science were among people with the highest and lowest levels of education.

Key finding 2.2: People who feel systems are working for them are more likely to trust science.

- People who reported less confidence in institutions, lower trust in government and higher perceptions of corruption were less likely to trust science.
- Trust in science was moderately negatively correlated (coefficient $r = -0.34$) with economic inequality. This suggests that countries with greater economic inequality tend to have less trust in science.

Key finding 2.3: People with positive healthcare experiences have more trust in science.

- Overall, 26% of people reported 'a lot' of trust in science; among those with a lot of confidence in their country's hospitals and health clinics, the figure was 43%.

Trust in science reflects not only people's views of science itself, but also the characteristics of the societies they live in, the institutions and people they interact with and the extent to which everyone in society benefits equally from scientific knowledge and applications.

We looked at a broad range of indicators, including external indicators from the World Bank, Gallup's World Poll and other sources. The following sections highlight data that had the most significant association with trust in science.

2.1 Trust in science is lowest among those who feel they are struggling to get by

Existing research shows that trust in science tends to be lower among more socio economically disadvantaged groups.^{5,6,7} The Wellcome Global Monitor provides an opportunity to examine whether this pattern holds across a much broader range of countries, and how it has changed over time.

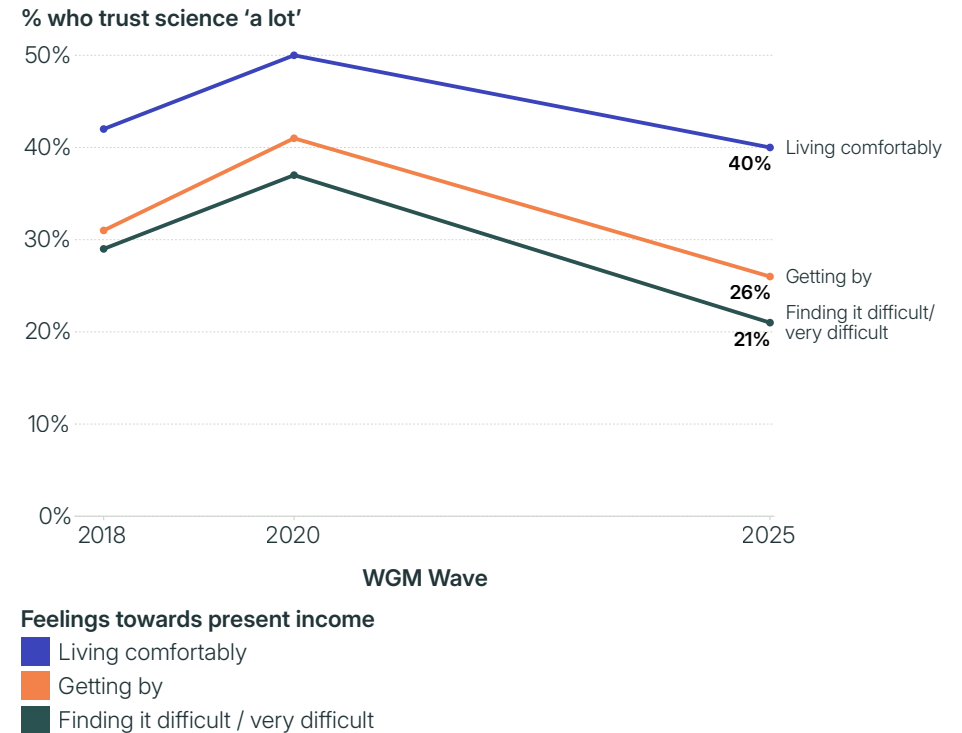
A consistent pattern emerges: people who say they are finding life difficult on their present income⁸ tend to have lower levels of trust in science. In 2025, across all 140 countries, those who felt comfortable on their present income were around twice as likely to trust science 'a lot' (39%) as those finding it difficult (20%).

Moreover, although trust in 2025 had declined across all groups from 2018 and 2020, the decline was not evenly distributed. The largest falls were also among people finding it difficult on their present income, suggesting that inequalities in trust existing before the Covid-19 pandemic have since widened.

Figure 2.1 uses data from the 108 countries in all three waves of the Wellcome Global Monitor. It shows that between 2018 and 2020, those who reported living comfortably and those finding it difficult on their present income experienced a similar boost in trust (an 8 percentage-point increase for both). However, from 2020 to 2025, those who felt comfortable had a 10 percentage-point drop whereas those finding it difficult had a 16 percentage-point drop.

Compared with 2018, trust in science among those who reported living comfortably on their present income was back at a similar level in 2025. By contrast, people who reported 'getting by' or 'finding it difficult or very difficult' on their present income experienced a much greater drop by 2025. This widened the gap among people who trust science 'a lot': the gap between those living comfortably and those finding it difficult or very difficult increased from 13 percentage points in 2018 to 19 points in 2025.

Figure 2.1:
People finding it difficult on their present income reported trusting science less than those living comfortably



Sample size: 2018 = 112,131, 2020 = 112,105 and 2025 = 111,293
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

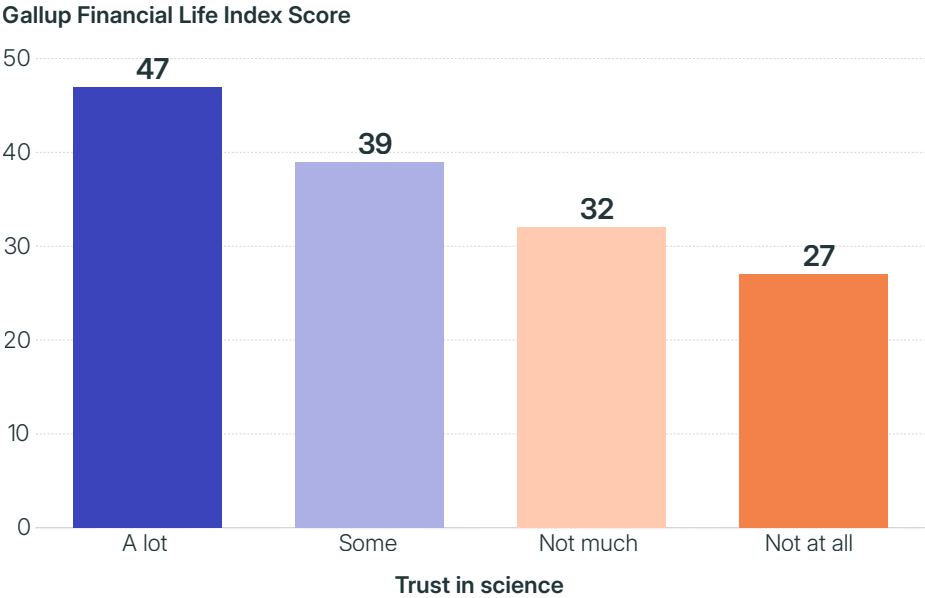
The relationship between trust in science and financial wellbeing extends beyond people's feelings about their income. People who reported higher trust in science also scored more highly on Gallup's measures of financial security, food and shelter security, and personal health. For example, Gallup's

Financial Life Index measures whether individuals feel secure and effectively manage their economic lives to reduce stress. As shown in Figure 2.2, respondents who trusted science 'a lot' scored 47 out of 100 compared with 27 out of 100 among those who reported no trust in science at all.



Image credit:
Wellcome

Figure 2.2:
Those who trust science more score higher on Gallup's Financial Life Index



Sample size: 126,431
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Country spotlight

A widening financial divide in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, 19% of the population said they trusted science 'a lot', well below the global average of 26%. Ethiopia has also seen a decline in trust in science, and it was lower in 2025 than in both 2018 and 2020. But this overall decline masks different experiences depending on how people feel about their household income.

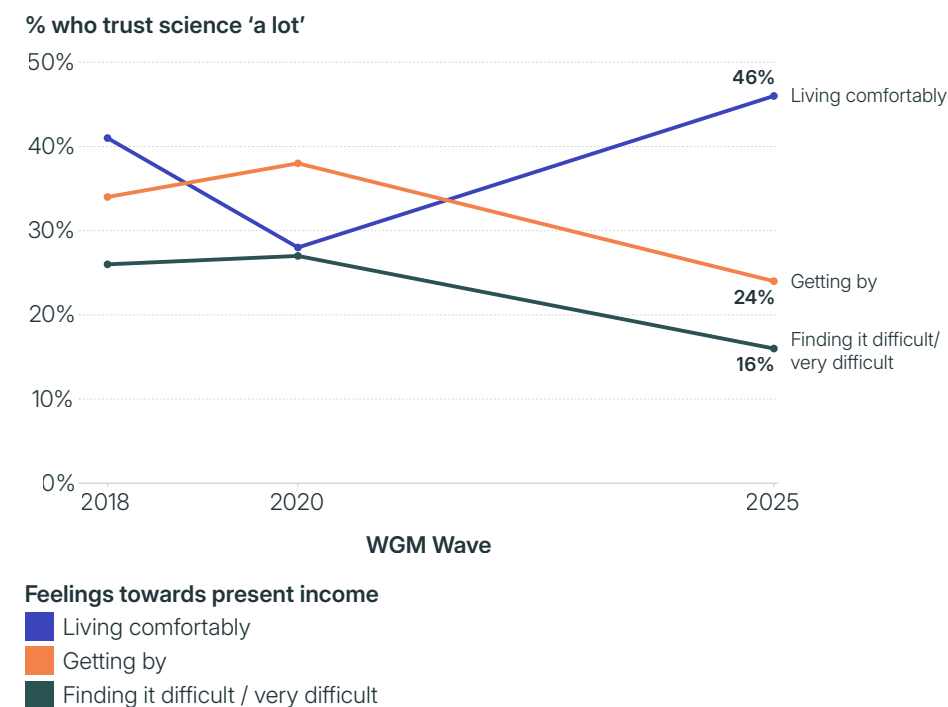
In 2018, as Figure 2.3 shows, strong trust in science was highest among people who reported living comfortably on their present income: 41% trusted science 'a lot', compared with 34% of those getting by, and 26% of those finding it difficult or very difficult.

These differences narrowed temporarily in 2020. The gap between those who reported living comfortably and those finding it difficult was 11 percentage points, down from 15 percentage points in 2018.

By 2025, however, a much sharper divide had emerged. Almost half of those who reported living comfortably trusted science 'a lot' (46%), compared with 24% of those getting by, and just 16% of those finding it difficult or very difficult. The gap between those living comfortably and those finding it difficult had doubled to 30 percentage points – much wider than in 2018 and 2020.

Ethiopia shows how an overall decline in trust can conceal deeper fractures beneath the national picture – with trust gaps widening most sharply along lines of perceived inequality.

Figure 2.3:
In Ethiopia, the gap between those who report living comfortably and those finding it difficult widened between 2018 and 2025



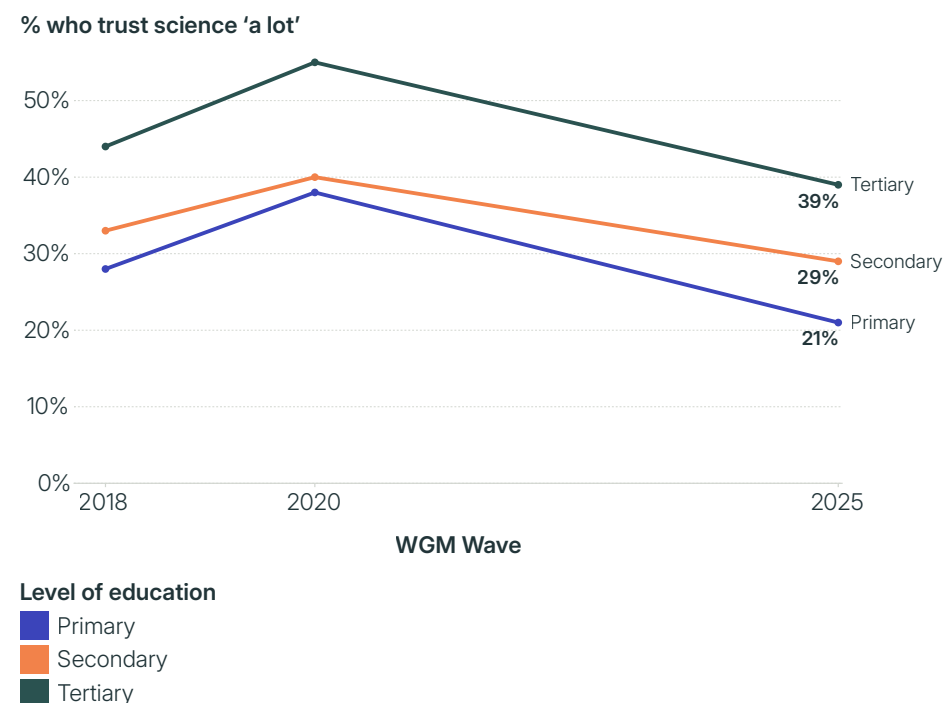
Sample size: 2018 = 1,000, 2020 = 995 and 2025 = 1,000
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Respondents with a tertiary-level education continued to report substantially higher levels of trust overall than those with a primary-level education. They were nearly twice as likely to report trusting science 'a lot' (39% compared with 20%), while respondents with primary education were far more likely to report no trust in science at all (9% compared with 4% for secondary and 1% for tertiary).

But Figure 2.4 shows that the steepest declines in trust between 2020 and 2025 were among respondents with both the highest (tertiary) and lowest (primary) levels of education: 18 and 16 percentage points, respectively. Respondents with secondary education showed a smaller decline of 10 percentage points.

Compared with 2018, trust in science had fallen across all education groups in 2025, but the greatest declines were among those with a primary education, followed by tertiary then secondary.

Figure 2.4:
People with more years in education show more trust in science



Sample size: 2018 = 113,418, 2020 = 113,336 and 2025 = 112,553
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

How we categorised education levels:

- 'Primary' approximates to 8 years or less of basic education.
- 'Secondary' is around 9 to 15 years of basic education.
- 'Tertiary' means at least 4 years of education beyond high school, or equivalent to completing a bachelor's degree.

Country spotlight

Educational divides in trust in France re-emerge post-pandemic

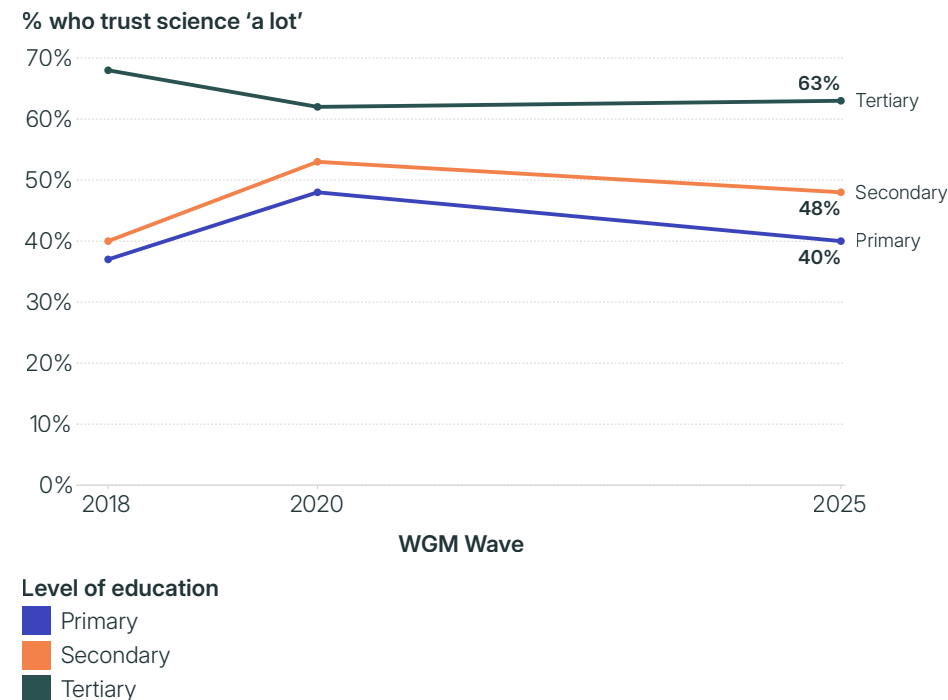
While trust in science in France has declined from its 2020 peak, levels remain higher in 2025 than they were in 2018.

Beneath that overall resilience, education remains an important dividing line. Respondents with tertiary education consistently reported the highest levels of strong trust in science, followed by those with secondary and primary education.

As shown in Figure 2.5, the gap between these groups – particularly tertiary-educated respondents – was wide in 2018. In 2020, this gap narrowed substantially as strong trust increased among respondents with primary and secondary education while declining among those with tertiary education.

By 2025, however, educational differences had widened again, though they remained smaller than in 2018. This shows that the Covid-19 pandemic-era narrowing of educational differences in trust has only partly endured in France.

Figure 2.5:
In France, the 'trust gap' between those with primary and tertiary education grew between 2020 and 2025



Sample size: 2018 = 998, 2020 = 1,000 and 2025 = 1,003
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

2.2 People who feel systems are working for them are more likely to trust science

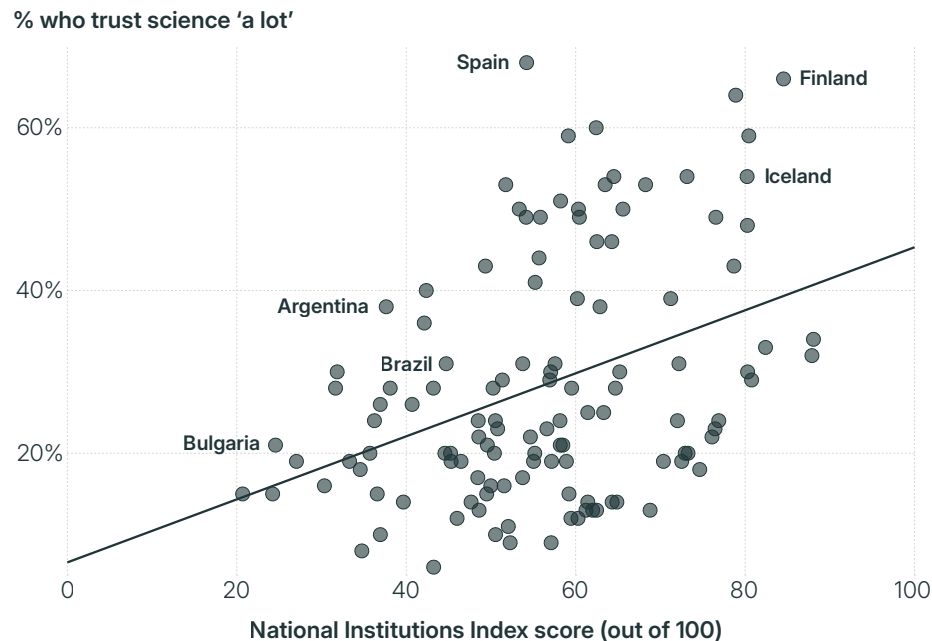
Previous research suggests that characteristics of societies, including economic inequality and perceptions of institutions, can influence the extent to which people generally trust science.⁹ The Wellcome Global Monitor enables us to explore these findings within a wider country sample and over time.

The level of economic inequality within a country can be measured using the Gini coefficient. We calculated the strength and direction of correlation between economic inequality and trust in science. Using a common measure of recent country-level inequality, the negative association between inequality and trust in science is evident in the 2018, 2020 and 2025 survey data (coefficient $r = -0.27$ in 2018 and -0.24 in 2020).¹⁰ The correlation in 2025 was moderate (-0.34), slightly stronger but still consistent with previous waves, which suggests that countries with greater economic inequality tend to have less trust in science.



Image credit:
Wellcome

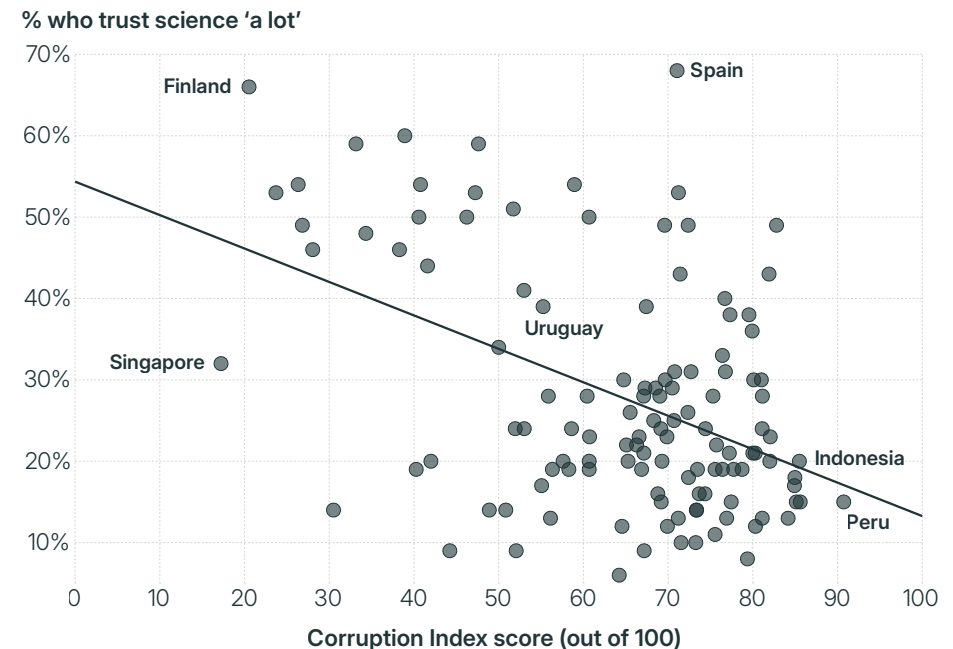
Figure 2.6:
Countries with lower levels of trust in science report less confidence in institutions



Pearson's r , 2025 sample: 123 countries. Countries without an available Gallup National Institutions Index score were excluded.
Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

The quality of a country's institutions may also shape public trust in science by influencing whether institutions are perceived as competent, fair and acting in the public interest. To explore this, we used two indicators from Gallup's World Poll: 1) the National Institutions Index, a composite measure of confidence in key public institutions including the military, the judicial system, the national government and the honesty of elections; and 2) Gallup's Corruption Index, which captures perceptions of corruption within the public sector. Figures 2.6 and 2.7 show that trust in science is associated with both:

Figure 2.7:
Countries with lower levels of trust in science have higher levels of perceived corruption



Pearson's r , 2025 sample: 124 countries. Countries without an available Gallup Perceived Corruption Index score were excluded.
Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)
Q: In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

- **Institutional confidence:** Countries which score lower on Gallup's National Institutions Index have lower levels of trust in science.
- **Perceived corruption:** Countries which score higher on Gallup's Corruption Index are likely to have lower levels of trust in science.

Together, these findings suggest that trust in science is shaped not only by people's interactions with science itself, but also to some extent by how equal society is and whether people feel institutions are fair and working for them.

Country spotlight

Trust in science in South Africa is not explained by social conditions alone

In South Africa, trust in science rose in 2020 but returned close to 2018 levels by 2025. It has high levels of socioeconomic inequality, with one of the highest Gini coefficients in the world (54 out of 100 in 2022). It scores below average on Gallup's National Institutions Index, at 55 out of 100 compared to 63 globally, and shows higher perceived corruption than the global average, at 75 out of 100 compared with 70 for the world as a whole.

Consistent with the trends outlined in this section, South Africa also scores below the global average on overall trust in science – 51% trust science 'a lot' or 'some', and 39% trust science 'not much' or 'not at all'. This is in the lower-middle part of the trust spectrum, however – South Africa is not among the countries with the lowest levels of trust in science.

High inequality, weaker confidence in institutions and greater perceived corruption may influence trust in science, but they do not wholly determine it.



Image credit:
Unsplash

Section 1.3 compared trust in scientists with trust in other groups and institutions. Building on these trends, we can explore whether people who trust certain institutions also tend to trust science. Table 2.1 shows how trust in science correlates with trust in scientists, doctors and nurses, journalists, neighbours and government.

The strength of the relationship between trust in science and trust in scientists declined slightly between 2020 and 2025. The relationship between trust in science and trust

in doctors and nurses increased marginally between 2018 and 2020, as it did for journalists, while the relationship between trust in science and other groups and institutions stayed relatively consistent across all three waves.

These findings suggest that trust in science remains a distinct form of institutional trust. People who trust government are only weakly more likely to trust science. Trust in science is much more closely aligned with trust in scientists, followed by doctors and nurses and journalists.

Table 2.1:
Correlations between trust in science and other actors¹¹

	2018	2020	2025
Scientists	0.501	0.503	0.457
Doctors and nurses	0.289	0.336	0.324
Journalists	0.248	0.292	0.251
Neighbours	0.230	0.262	0.235
Government	0.190	0.214	0.179

Pearson's r



Image credit: Rebekah Williams / Wellcome Photography Prize 2021

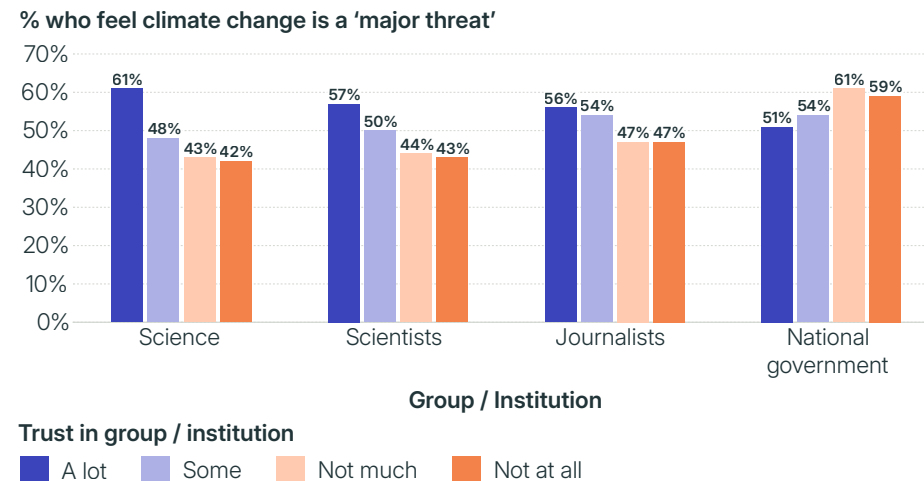
Science in everyday life

Views on climate change

People's level of trust in science affects how they interpret evidence about significant challenges. In 2025, 50% of people globally considered climate change to be a major threat to people in their country, while a further 28% viewed it as a minor threat. Around one in six (16%) either believed climate change was not a threat or that it was not happening at all. Among those who reported 'a lot' of trust in science, however, nearly two-thirds (61%) viewed climate change as a major threat.

This relationship is reversed among those who trust their government. Figure 2.8 shows that, at a global level, people who trust their national government 'a lot' are less likely to perceive the risk from climate change than those who don't trust their government 'at all'.

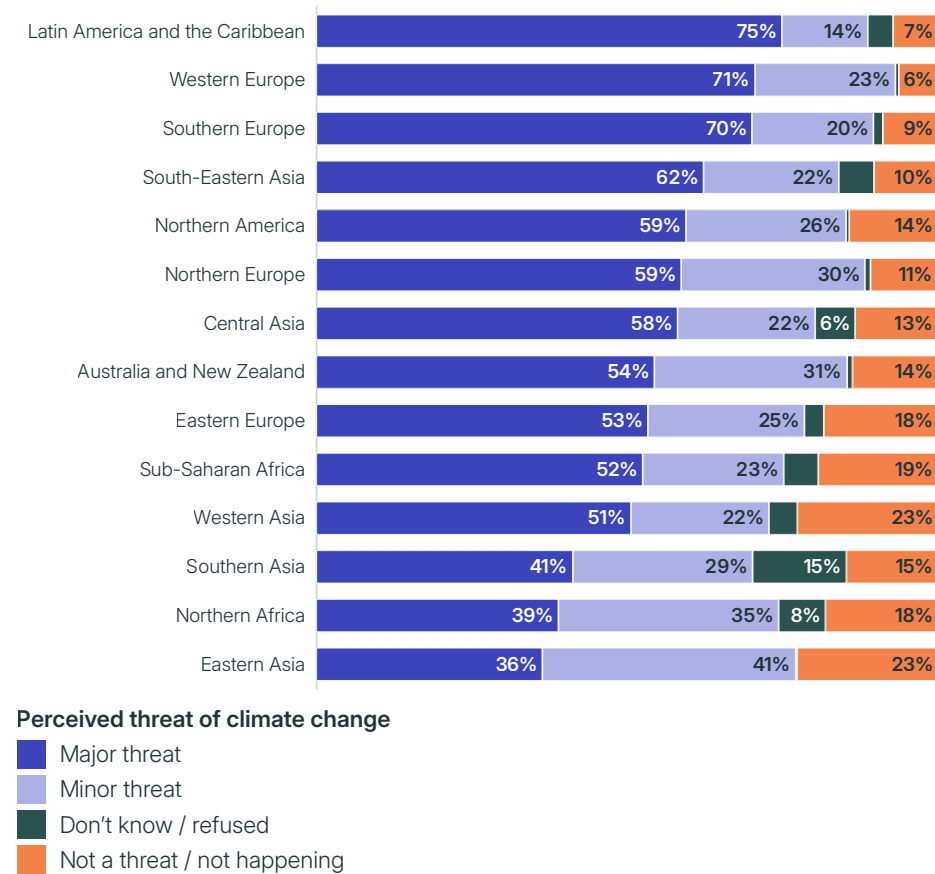
Figure 2.8:
Trust in science is high among those who see climate change as a major threat



Sample size: Science and scientists (143,620), journalists (141,593) and national government (131,538)

Q: Do you think climate change or global warming is a major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat to people in this country right now?; How much do you trust journalists/the government/scientists in this country?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Figure 2.9:
In every region, climate change is more likely to be perceived as a major threat than as no threat



Sample size: 143,620

Q: Do you think climate change or global warming is a major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat to people in this country right now?

Perceptions of climate change varied substantially across regions as well (Figure 2.9). Levels of perceived threat were highest in Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Europe and Southern Europe. By contrast, people in Eastern Asia, Northern Africa and Southern Asia were most likely to say that climate change is a minor threat or not happening.

Within Western Asia and Eastern Asia, Saudi Arabia and China were the countries where people were least likely to view climate change as a threat. In Saudi Arabia, levels of climate change scepticism were notably higher than in other oil-producing countries in the survey, including Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. People in China were less likely than the global average to have 'a lot' of trust in science, whereas those in Saudi Arabia were in line with the global average.

These contrasting patterns suggest that trust in science alone cannot explain attitudes towards climate change. National political, economic and social contexts appear to shape how scientific evidence is interpreted, even among populations with similar levels of trust in science. Further research could help to better understand this interplay of factors.

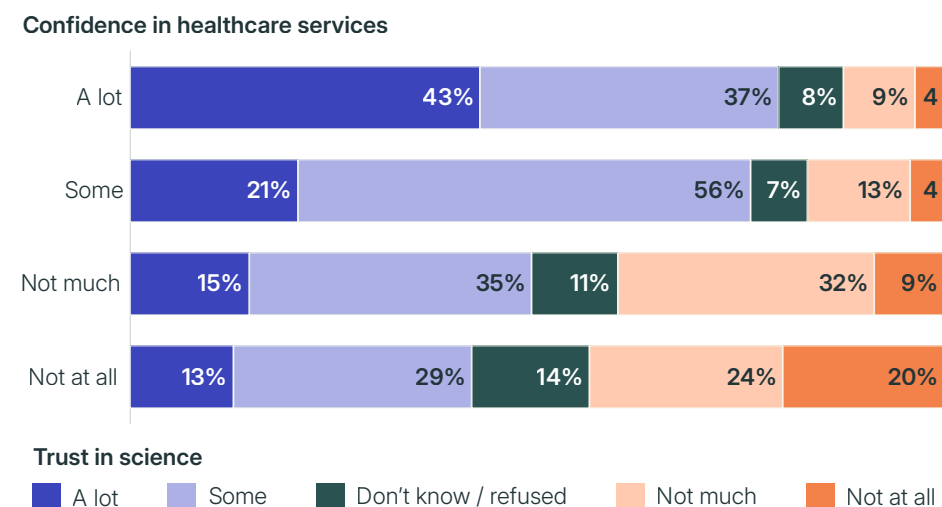
2.3 People with positive healthcare experiences have more trust in science

Hospitals and health clinics are where scientific knowledge is translated into practical services and treatments, making confidence in healthcare an important lens through which to understand trust in science.

Most people worldwide have 'a lot' of or 'some' confidence in hospitals and health clinics in their country (76%). Similarly, most people are 'very' or 'somewhat' confident they can access the healthcare services they need (75%). People with higher confidence in healthcare also tend to have higher levels of trust in science.¹²

Globally, 26% of people report 'a lot' of trust in science. As Figure 2.10 shows, this rises to 43% among those who have 'a lot' of confidence in their local hospitals and health services. The results are similar for those who are confident accessing hospitals and health clinics: people who were more confident that they could access healthcare services when needed tended to have above-average levels of trust in science (42%).

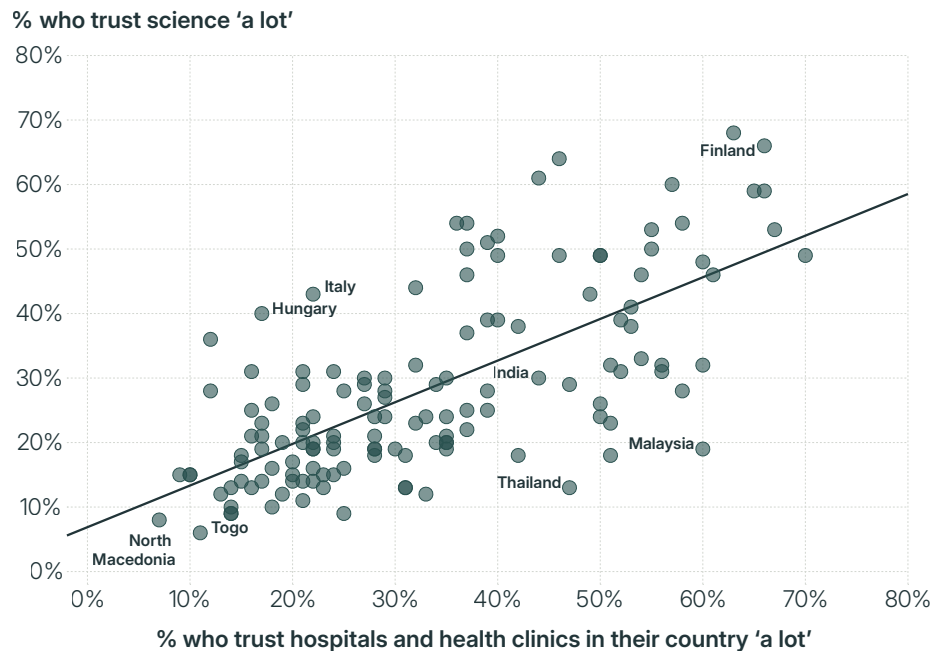
Figure 2.10:
Those who have 'a lot' of trust in science tend to also have 'a lot' of confidence in healthcare services



Sample size: 143,620

Q: How much confidence do you have in the hospitals and health clinics?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

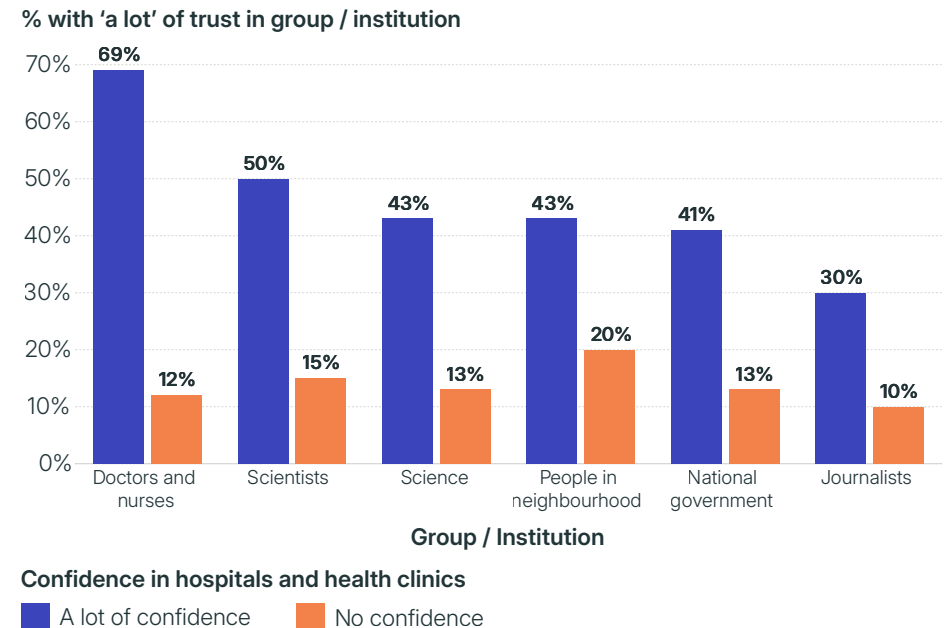
Figure 2.11:
Countries with higher levels of trust in science tend to have more confidence in hospitals and health clinics



Pearson's r
Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)
Q: How much confidence do you have in the hospitals and health clinics?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

While higher confidence in hospitals and health clinics is generally associated with higher trust in science, Figure 2.11 shows that some countries are outliers. For example, in Malaysia there are relatively high levels of confidence in healthcare but comparatively lower levels of trust in science, while the opposite is true in Italy.

Figure 2.12:
People with 'a lot' of confidence in hospitals and clinics are more likely to trust other groups and institutions

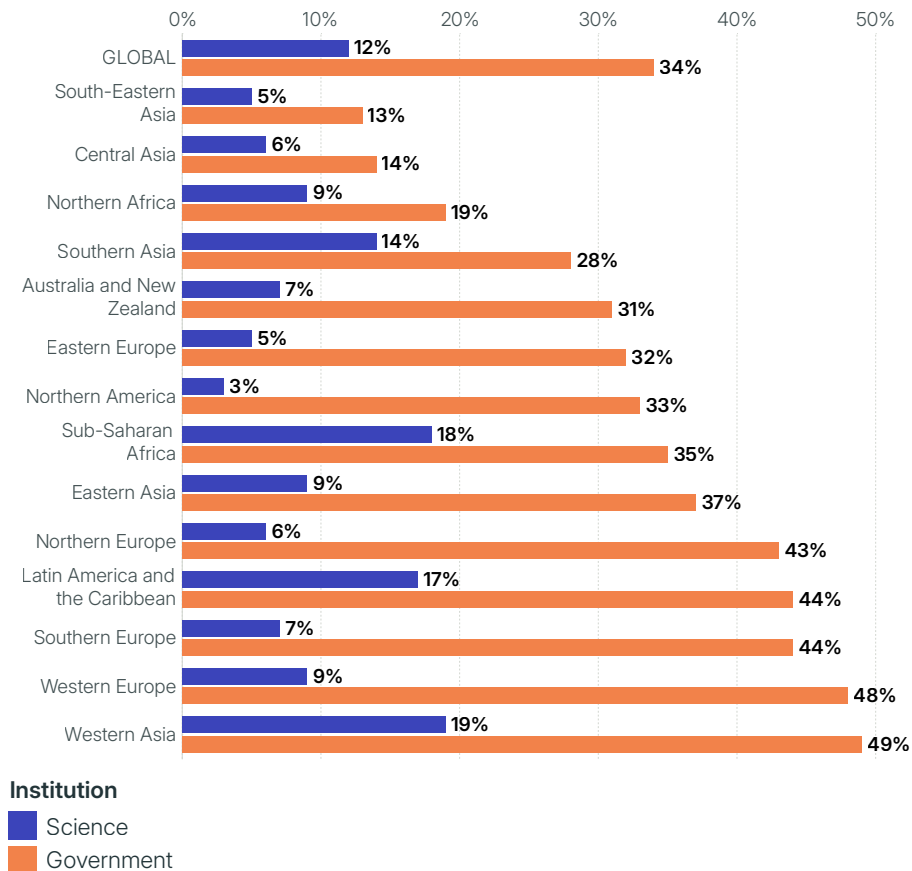


Sample size: Science, scientists, doctors and nurses, neighbours (143,620); Journalists (141,593); National government (131,538)
Q: How much do you trust the people in your neighbourhood/journalists/doctors and nurses/the government/scientists in this country?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?; How much confidence do you have in the hospitals and health clinics?

Globally, as shown in Figure 2.12, lack of confidence in a country's hospitals and health clinics is associated with lower levels of trust in science in that country. Those who had 'a lot' of confidence in hospitals and health clinics were more likely to trust not just science, but all the groups and institutions asked about in the Wellcome Global Monitor.

Figure 2.13:
Confidence in healthcare is associated with trust in government more than with trust in science

% with 'none at all' trust in institution amongst those with 'not much' or 'none at all' confidence in hospitals and health clinics



Sample size: Southern Europe (2,887), Northern Europe (920), Australia and New Zealand (266), Western Europe (432), Eastern Asia (1,277), Northern America (236), Central Asia (608), Western Asia (3,627), Eastern Europe (2,166), Northern Africa (1,524), Sub-Saharan Africa (10,831), South-Eastern Asia (703), Latin America and the Caribbean (5,237), Southern Asia (970)

Q: How much confidence do you have in the hospitals and health clinics?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?; How much do you trust the government in this country?

We explored how the lowest levels of confidence in healthcare systems related to other forms of institutional trust. Globally (Figure 2.13), among those who had not much or no confidence in healthcare systems, 34% had no trust in their national government, and 12% had no trust in science.

This suggests that, in every global region, low confidence in healthcare is more strongly associated with low trust in government than with low trust in science. Nevertheless, as Figure 2.13 shows, the association with low trust in science is relatively strong in Western Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.



Image credit:
Getty

Science in everyday life

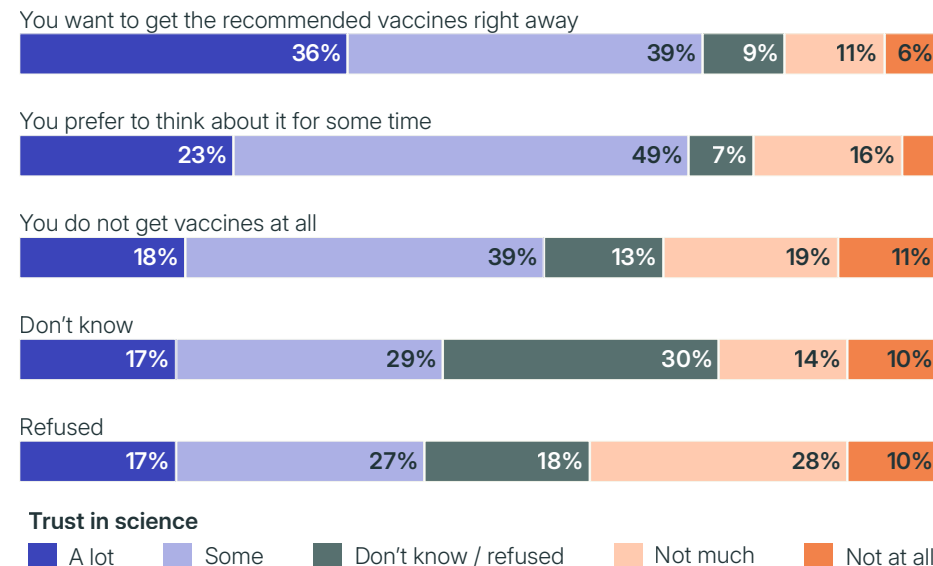
Attitudes to vaccination

Attitudes to vaccination offer another way to understand how trust in science plays out in everyday life. When a doctor or nurse recommends a vaccine, almost half of people worldwide (48%) said they preferred to think it over before getting it. A third (34%) said they wanted the vaccine right away, while 15% said they did not get vaccines at all.

Figure 2.14 shows a pattern in line with expectations, but only up to a point. People who wanted the vaccine immediately were most likely to report 'a lot' of trust in science (36%), compared with those who preferred to wait (23%) or who did not vaccinate at all (18%). Yet all three groups were most likely to report 'some' trust in science: 39% of those who vaccinated immediately, 39% of those who did not vaccinate, and almost half (49%) of those who preferred to wait.

This suggests that attitudes towards vaccination are more nuanced¹³ than a simple distinction between people who trust science and those who do not. While greater trust in science may shape how quickly people act, many of those who delay or decline vaccinations nevertheless continue to express at least some trust in science.

Figure 2.14:
The relationship between trust in science and vaccine decisions is not straightforward



Sample size: 143,620

Q: Which of the following best describes your views on vaccines that are recommended by doctors or nurses?
In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Conclusion 2:

Trust in science is associated with stronger, more equal societies

The findings in this chapter show that trust in science interacts with people's financial wellbeing and education. People with lower levels of perceived financial security reported less trust in science, and declines in trust since 2018 and 2020 were pronounced among participants who reported finding life difficult on their present income. And despite very different starting points, declines in trust in science were greatest among people with both the lowest and highest levels of education.

Trust in science also interacts with the wider environment in complex ways. This environment varies by region, and there are differences in how trust in science is associated with different country conditions, confidence in institutions and people's everyday experiences of science.

Yet there are some clear associations.

Trust in science is linked to whether people feel systems are working for them. Countries with lower economic inequality, greater confidence in public institutions and lower perceived corruption tended to report higher levels of trust in science. However, these associations were moderate, suggesting that broader social conditions influence but do not fully explain public trust in science.

Positive healthcare experiences are associated with higher levels of trust in science. Where confidence in healthcare is low, however, this is more associated with having no trust in the national government rather than having no trust in science. And while trust in science is associated with vaccine decisiveness, people who delayed or did not get vaccinated still reported some trust in science, suggesting the reasons behind these decisions are nuanced.

Overall, these findings suggest that trust in science should be understood as part of a wider environment of social relationships and institutions. There is no single solution to earning trust in science, and it depends on broader societal conditions, confidence in public institutions and positive experiences of services linked to science, such as healthcare.

Essentially, earning trust relies partly on whether everyone in society can see the benefits of science, which is the topic of exploration for the final chapter.

3

How does trust relate to the perceived benefits of science?

Image credit: Getty



3. How does trust relate to the perceived benefits of science?

This chapter is about the relationship between attitudes and trust. It explores whether people see science as benefiting them and others in their country, and how this has changed since 2018.

Key finding 3.1: Most people in the world do not feel that science benefits everyone in society equally.

- The proportion who said that 'most people' in their country benefit from science fell from 42% in 2018 to 37% in 2025.
- More positive views were associated with living in the Global North, more years of education, greater financial security and more confidence in the healthcare system and other institutions.
- Against the trend, people in Northern America and Northern Africa became more positive about the benefits of science between 2018 and 2025.

Key finding 3.2: People with more trust in science are more positive about its benefits.

- Those who had greater trust in science were more positive about its benefits in all 140 countries.
- People who had 'a lot' or 'some' trust in science were 23 percentage points more likely to view science as beneficial than those who trusted science 'not much' or 'not at all', even after controlling for differences by age, gender, education and financial wellbeing.
- In three global regions, Central Asia, Southern Asia and Northern Africa, positive attitudes have held their ground despite declines in trust in science between 2020 and 2025.

Key finding 3.3: In countries where trust in science is widespread, low-trust groups tend to be further apart from others in their attitudes to science.

- Globally, 89% of the variation in views on the benefits of science is linked to differences between individuals within countries, while 11% is linked to differences between countries.
- In countries where trust in science was generally lower, people tended to have similar attitudes to science, regardless of their level of trust in science.
- In countries where overall trust in science was higher, there was a bigger difference between lower- and higher-trust groups in terms of attitudes to science.

3.1 Most people in the world do not feel that science benefits everyone in society equally

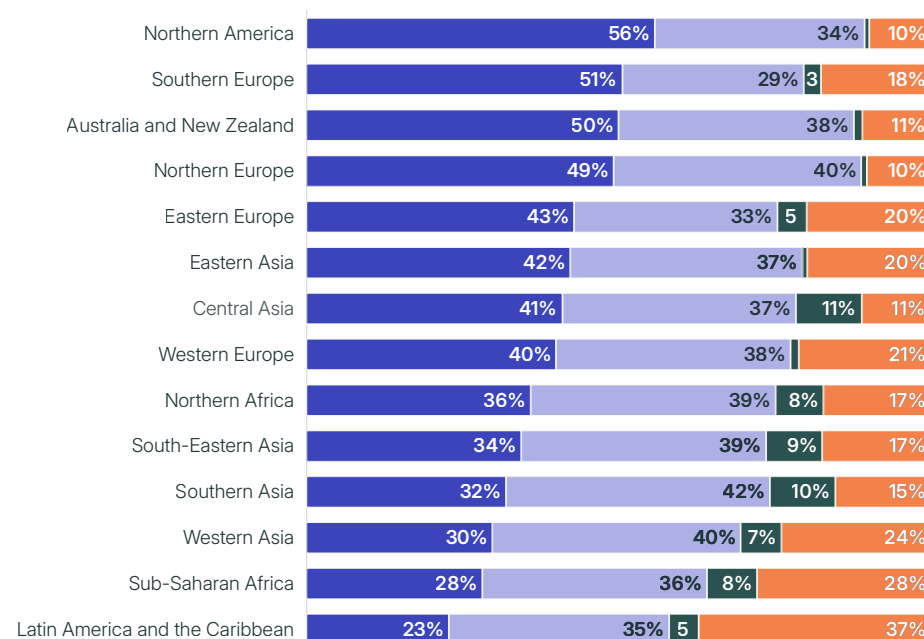
Across 140 countries in 2025, science was widely seen to benefit individuals and communities. Eight in ten (81%) felt that the work of scientists benefited people like themselves, fairly evenly split between those who felt it benefited them 'a lot' (38%) and those who said 'a little' (43%).

However, while people's sense of personally benefiting from science was strong, the results reveal concern about how widely those benefits are shared across society. Just over a third felt that the work of scientists benefited 'most' people in their country (36%). Slightly more felt it benefited 'some' people (38%). A substantial minority thought it benefited 'very few' people (20%).

People living in the Global North – especially in the regions of Northern America, Australia and New Zealand, Northern Europe and Southern Europe – were more positive about the benefits of science to themselves and others. People in Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia were the least likely to have positive attitudes about the benefits of science.

Figure 3.1 focuses on perceived benefits to people generally, but the regional breakdown is similar when looking at how much science is seen to benefit 'people like you' as well.

Figure 3.1:
The proportions of people who said that 'some' or 'most' people in their country benefit from science varied widely



Perceived benefit of science

- Most people benefit
- Some people benefit
- Don't know / refused
- Very few people benefit

Sample size: Northern America = 2,014, Southern Europe = 13,073, Australia and New Zealand = 2,000, Northern Europe = 9,562, Eastern Europe = 9,023, Eastern Asia = 8,060, Central Asia = 4,000, Western Europe = 7,137, Northern Africa = 5,024, South-eastern Asia = 9,058, Southern Asia = 7,060, Western Asia = 15,080, Sub-Saharan Africa = 35,020, Latin America and the Caribbean = 17,509

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?

People were less positive about the benefits of science than in 2018

The question on who benefits from science has been asked consistently in each Wellcome Global Monitor wave. Looking at the 108 countries included in all three waves (Figure 3.2), the global proportion saying that science benefited 'most' people in their country increased between 2018 and 2020, but so did the proportion

saying it benefited 'very few'. In other words, there were increases in both positive and negative views about the benefits of science.

However, the small increase in positivity has subsequently been lost. In 2025, fewer people than in 2018 worldwide said that 'most' people in their country benefited from science.

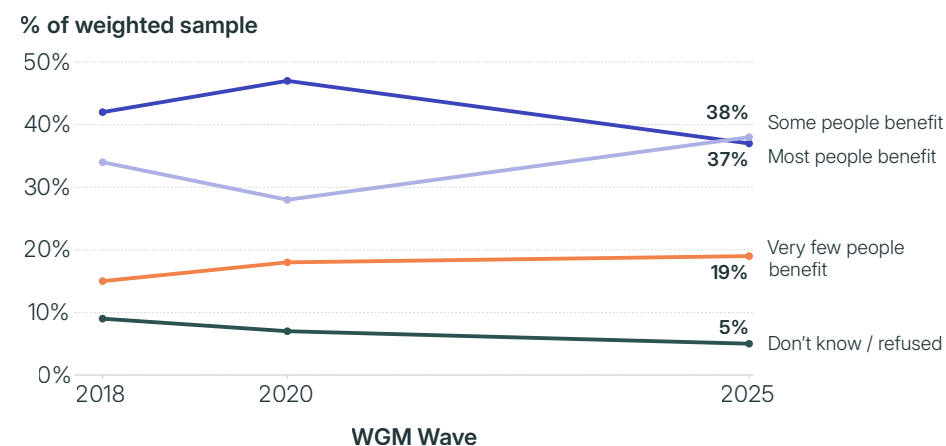
This global trend is highly influenced by the data from China. As the surveying modes in this country changed across waves, it is important to understand the trend beyond China.

When excluding data from China (Figure 3.3), the global picture shows no notable change in positive attitudes from 2018 to 2025. The perception that science benefits

'very few' people increased from 2018 to 2020, then returned closer to the 2018 level by 2025.

At a regional level (see below), positive attitudes to science have declined in several global regions since 2018 and 2020, supporting the conclusion that there has been a genuine global shift in attitudes, albeit a more moderate one than suggested by Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2:
Fewer people in 2025 believed that science benefited most people in their country



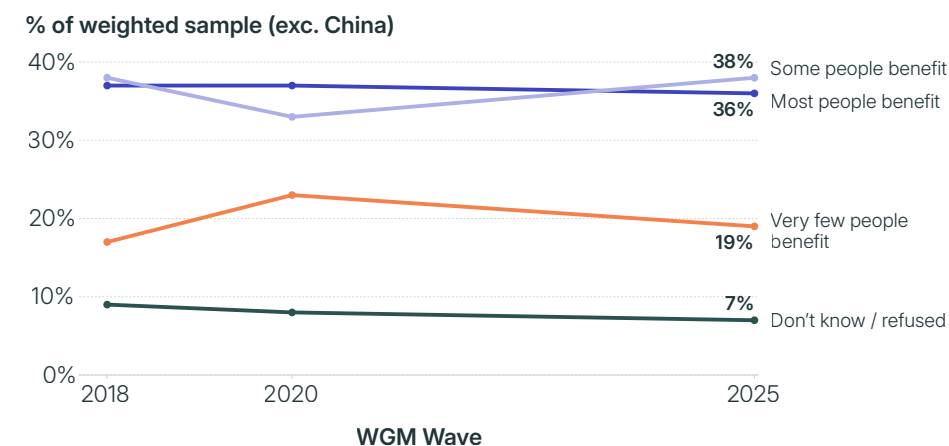
Perceived benefit of science

- Most people benefit
- Some people benefit
- Very few people benefit
- Don't know / refused

Sample size: 2018 = 113,934, 2020 = 114,053 and 2025 = 112,553

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?

Figure 3.3:
When China is excluded, perceptions of who benefits from science are steadier over time



Perceived benefit of science

- Most people benefit
- Some people benefit
- Very few people benefit
- Don't know / refused

Sample size: 2018 = 110,285, 2020 = 110,551 and 2025 = 109,527

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?

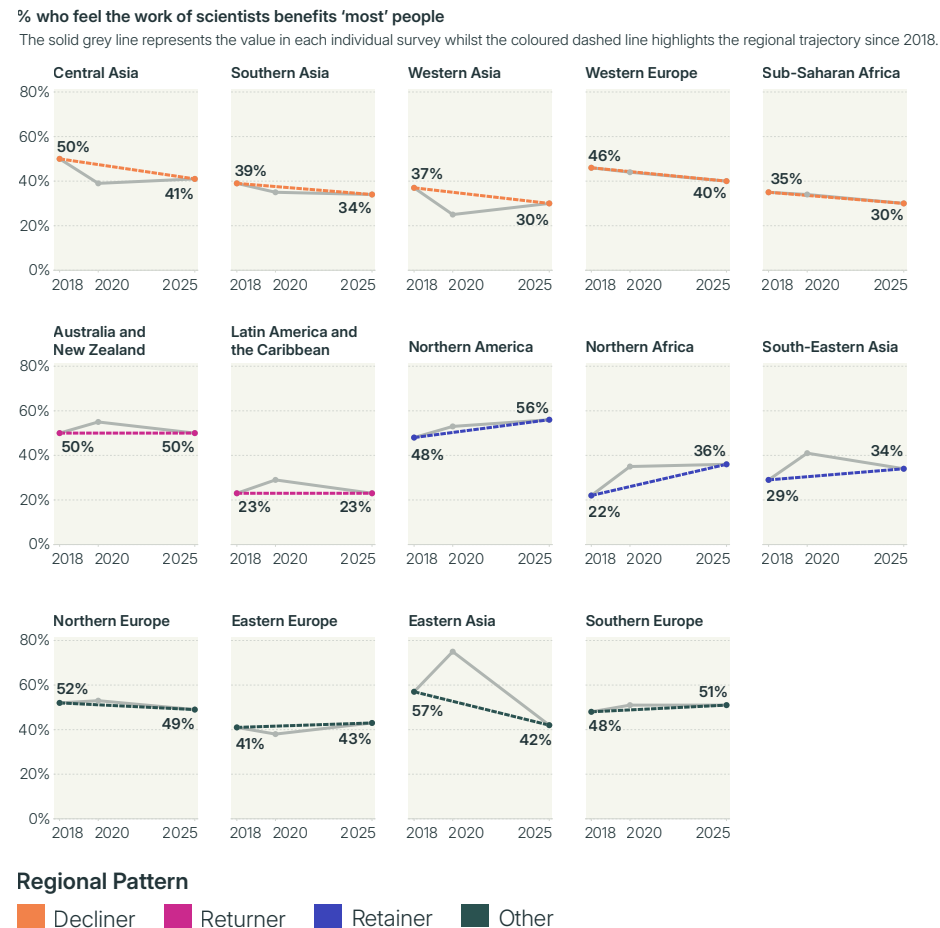
Global regions have moved in different directions over time

The global trend masks a range of movement across regions (Figure 3.4). We can group the regional trajectories in three broad patterns, similar to those identified in Chapter 1.

- **Decliners:** This is the largest set of regions, where attitudes were less positive in 2025 than in 2018, in line with the global trend. It includes Central Asia, Southern Asia, Western Asia, Western Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Returners:** Two regions – Australia and New Zealand, and Latin America and the Caribbean – experienced a bounce in positive attitudes between 2018 and 2020, possibly related to the Covid-19 pandemic. By 2025, however, both regions had returned to 2018 levels.
- **Retainers:** Three regions bucked the global trend. In Northern America and Northern Africa, the increase in positive attitudes to science between 2018 and 2020 was maintained or increased further in 2025. In South-Eastern Asia, positivity did decline from 2020 to 2025, but attitudes in 2025 remained more positive than in 2018.

Eastern Asia might also be labelled as a ‘decliner’, since views on the benefits of science were less positive in 2025 than in 2018. However, this effect is dominated by China, where the surveying modes changed over time. Other countries in the Eastern Asia region – Republic of Korea, Japan and Taiwan – saw more positive attitudes in 2025 than in 2018.

Figure 3.4:
Views that science benefits ‘most’ people have declined in several regions since 2018, but others have bucked this trend



Sample size: Northern America = 2,014, Southern Europe = 12,067, Australia and New Zealand = 2,000, Northern Europe = 9,062, Eastern Europe = 9,023, Eastern Asia = 7,055, Central Asia = 4,000, Western Europe = 6,131, Northern Africa = 4,016, South-Eastern Asia = 8,055, Southern Asia = 6,060, Sub-Saharan Africa = 20,008, Western Asia = 9,057, Latin America and the Caribbean = 14,005

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?

Country spotlight

The United States of America diverges from global patterns on trust

The USA combines a striking break from the global trend with sharp internal divides by place, gender and politics.

While positive attitudes to science have declined globally since 2018, the United States of America has moved in the opposite direction. The proportion of Americans who said that science benefits most people in their country has steadily increased from 48% in 2018 to 53% in 2020 and 57% in 2025.

This increase was seen across all sections of society. Positive attitudes rose across all income groups, in contrast to the global picture where attitudes became less positive across the income spectrum. The biggest gains were among Americans aged 35 and over, narrowing a generational divide that was much more pronounced in 2018.

Yet the benefits of science do not resonate in the same way for all Americans. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, men have become considerably more positive about the benefits of science, while women's views have changed relatively little. In 2025, there was also a pronounced urban-rural divide, with people living in cities and towns more

likely than those in rural areas to see science as beneficial.

These differences show the importance of individual characteristics and place in framing attitudes to science.

The United States of America also stands out in relation to links between science and politics.

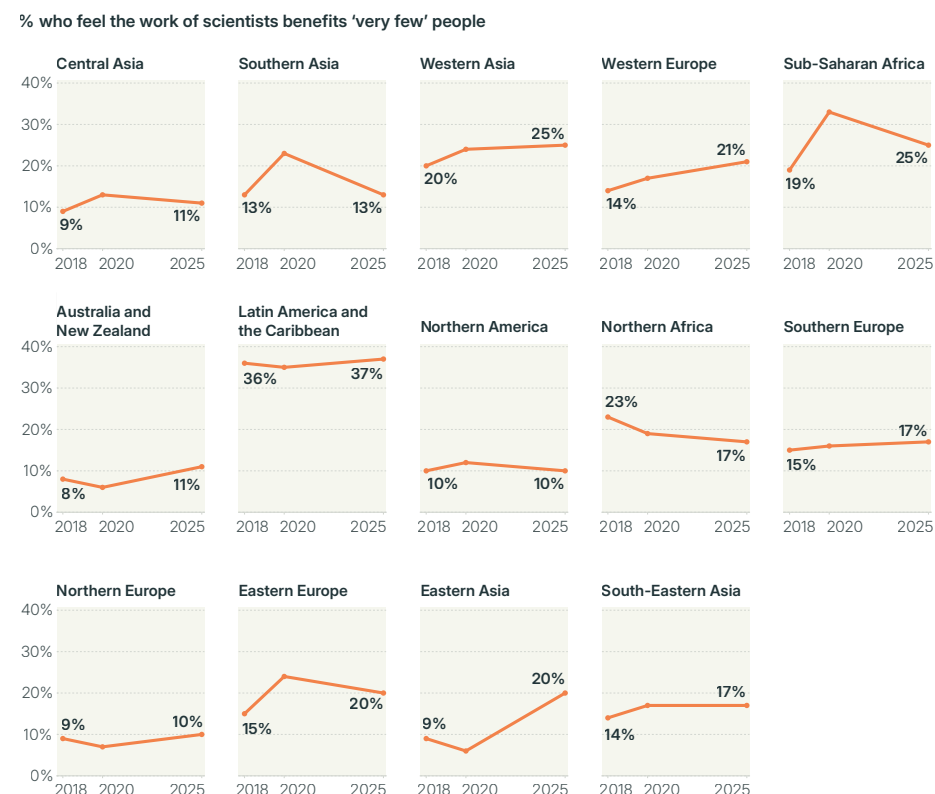
Globally, people who approve of their country's leader tended to be more positive about science. In the United States of America, the reverse was true. Among Americans who disapproved of their leader, 74% said science benefited people like them 'a lot', compared with 44% among those who approved.

The survey was conducted shortly after the 2024 presidential election, when President Biden was still in office but after President Trump had won the election, highlighting how closely attitudes towards science can become intertwined with a country's wider political landscape. The United States of America therefore illustrates how views about science can be shaped not only by people's personal circumstances, but also by their relationship with institutions, identity and politics.

Over the same time period, there have also been shifts in negative attitudes – those saying that ‘very few’ people benefit from science (Figure 3.5). In several regions, attitudes became more negative from 2018 to 2025, matching the global trend.

Northern Africa again bucks that trend. It has not only seen increasing positivity about the benefits of science, but also a decline in the proportion saying ‘very few’ benefit. It nevertheless remains one of the lower-ranking regions in terms of people viewing science as beneficial.

Figure 3.5:
The proportion saying that ‘very few’ people benefit from science has increased in most regions since 2018



Sample size: Northern America = 2,014, Southern Europe = 12,067, Australia and New Zealand = 2,000, Northern Europe = 9,062, Eastern Europe = 9,023, Eastern Asia = 7,055, Central Asia = 4,000, Western Europe = 6,131, Northern Africa = 4,016, South-Eastern Asia = 8,055, Southern Asia = 6,060, Sub-Saharan Africa = 20,008, Western Asia = 9,057, Latin America and the Caribbean = 14,005

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?

Most people have a mixed view of science's benefits for individuals and society

The interplay between perceived benefits from science for 'people like you' and for 'people in your country' highlights that a large majority of people have mixed opinions about who benefits from science:

- 25% of the global population thought both that they benefited a lot personally and that most people in their country benefited, too – we refer to this group as 'enthusiasts'. Enthusiasts tended to be more financially comfortable and highly educated. They felt more knowledgeable about science. They were more confident in their country's healthcare system. And they were more trusting of their government and less worried about corruption. This group was more prevalent in the Global North.
- 7% of the global population felt both that they didn't benefit at all personally and that very few people in their country benefited from science – we refer to this group as 'sceptics'. Sceptics tended to have lower levels of income and education, reported more limited knowledge of science and were less confident in institutions and government. They were more likely to report a health problem than enthusiasts, but much less confident in being able to access the healthcare services they needed. They were more likely to say that religion was important to them. This group had a greater share of women than average, and was more prevalent in the Global South.

- The other 68% were neither enthusiasts nor sceptics and showed a mixed sense of the benefits of science and the unequal distribution of those benefits. Specifically, 11% felt that science benefits most people in their country but they personally did not benefit a lot. A further 47% felt that they personally benefited at least a little from science but that most people in their country did not.¹⁴ Therefore, most people with this mixed sense of the benefits of science were thinking more of others than themselves. Unlike sceptics, more than half of this middle majority have been educated beyond primary school. They were more evenly distributed by income – neither disproportionately rich nor poor, and they were the most likely group to have 'some' trust in government and 'some' confidence in the healthcare system.

The benefits of science are most strongly perceived by those more highly educated and financially secure

In 2025, the perception of science's benefits was strongly linked to people's economic and educational standing within their country – just as in previous waves of the Wellcome Global Monitor.

Taking the 'enthusiast' grouping from above:

- The richest fifth within each country (28%) were more likely than the poorest fifth (22%) to be enthusiastic about the personal and social benefits of science.

- Those who reported living comfortably on their present incomes (38%) were more than twice as likely as those finding it very difficult on their present incomes (15%) to be enthusiastic about the benefits.
- People with a primary education (18%) were less likely than others (25% overall) to be enthusiastic about the benefits.

Since the 2018 and 2020 waves, feelings of inequity about the benefits of science have increased at the global level. This shift has been largely among those who feel more financially precarious and have had fewer years of education.

- Those finding it 'very difficult' to get by on their present incomes have become less enthusiastic about the benefits of science since 2018.
- Enthusiasm about the benefits of science has declined among those with primary or secondary educations, but not among those with a tertiary education.

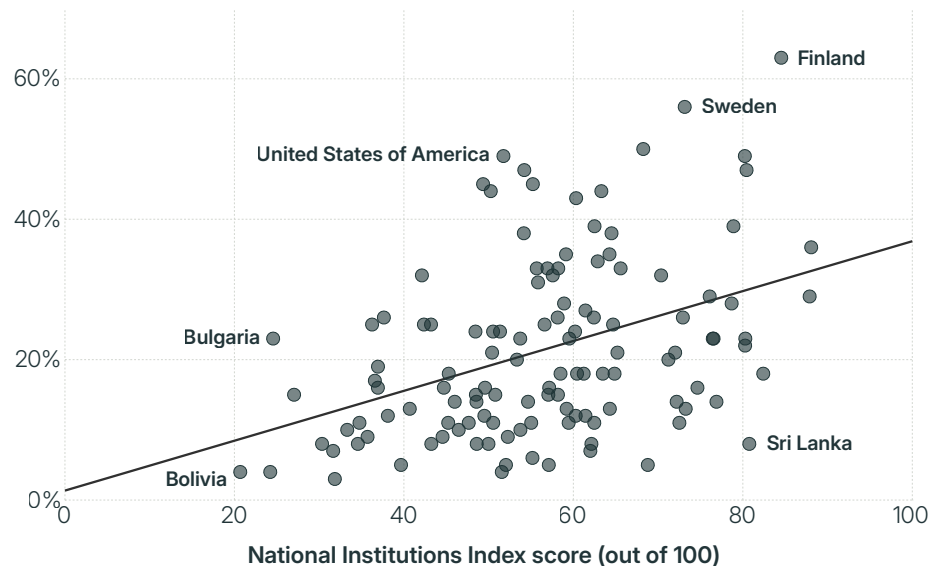
People with greater confidence in institutions are more likely to see science as beneficial

Attitudes are shaped not just by personal circumstances but also by systems. At the individual level, people who were more confident in their national institutions and healthcare system were more likely to perceive the benefits of science, for themselves and others.

The same pattern is visible at the country level. As the following figures show, countries where the population had higher confidence in institutions and healthcare systems, and where there was less perceived corruption, tended to have more people who perceived personal and social benefits of science.

Figure 3.6:
Populations with higher confidence in national institutions tended to have more enthusiasm for the benefits of science

% who are 'enthusiasts'



Pearson's r , 2025 sample: 123 countries. Countries without an available Gallup National Institutions Index score were excluded.

Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)

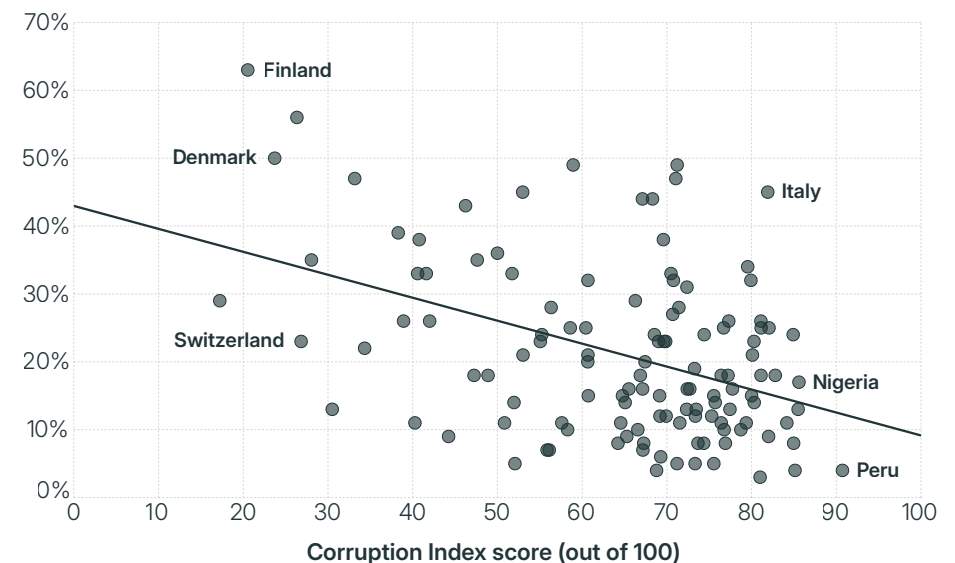
Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?; In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits people like you in this country a lot, a little, or not at all?

Figure 3.6 plots the positive relationship between Gallup's National Institutions Index and the proportion of 'enthusiasts' at the country level (in countries where this data was available). A higher score on this index signifies greater public confidence in a range of institutions, such as a country's government, judiciary, military and elections process.

On Gallup's Corruption Index, a higher score indicates greater public perceptions of corruption in either government or business. Figure 3.7 shows the negative correlation between views on science's benefits and perceived corruption in countries where this data was available. Where fairness is seen to be lacking, people tend to be less convinced about the benefits of science.

Figure 3.7:
Populations who perceived more corruption in their country tended to have less enthusiasm for the benefits of science

% who are 'enthusiasts'

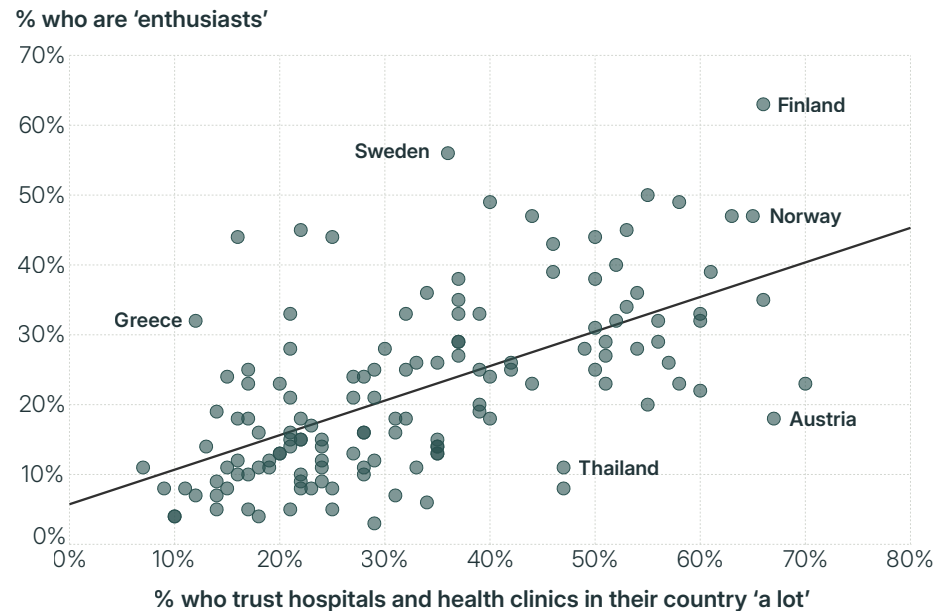


Pearson's r , 2025 sample: 124 countries. Countries without an available Gallup Perceived Corruption Index score were excluded.

Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?; In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits people like you in this country a lot, a little, or not at all?

Figure 3.8:
Confidence in a country's healthcare system relates to positive attitudes to science



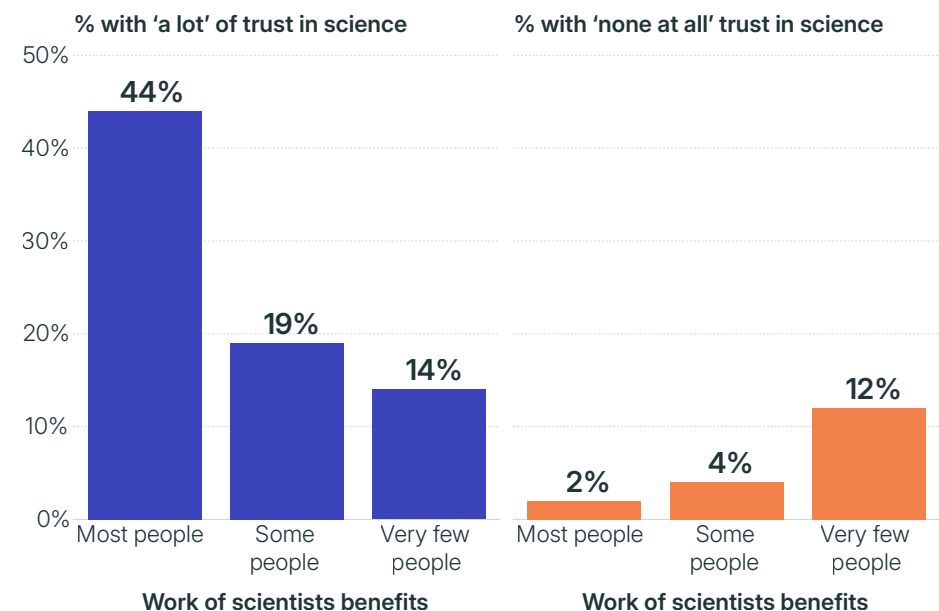
Pearson's r
Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)
Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?;
In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits people like you in this country a lot, a little, or not at all?; How much confidence do you have in the hospitals and health clinics?

Finally, Figure 3.8 shows a positive relationship between confidence in a country's healthcare system and positive attitudes to science. This is consistent with results from 2020 (this data was not available for 2018) and suggests that people judge science based on their lived experiences and interactions with the systems that make science tangible in their lives.

3.2 People with more trust in science are more positive about its benefits

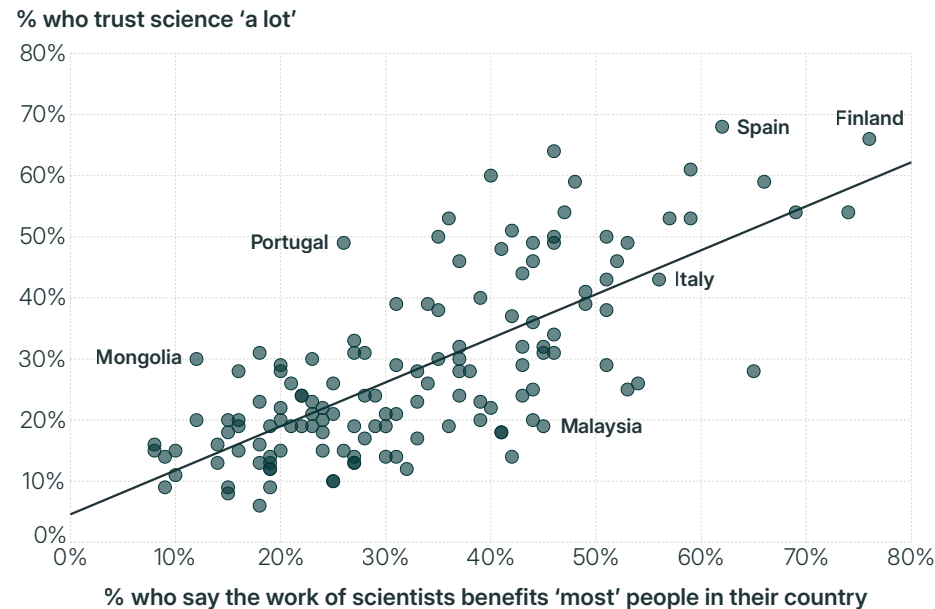
The Wellcome Global Monitor 2026 reaffirms that individuals who view science as beneficial for themselves and for society also tend to trust it more. At a global level, the differences are stark – those who said that 'most' people benefit were more than twice as likely as others to have 'a lot' of trust in science (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9:
Those who said that 'most' people benefit from science were substantially more likely to have 'a lot' of trust in science



Sample size: Most (48,005); Some (51,491); Very few (34,310)
Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?;
In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Figure 3.10:
Countries where more people saw science as beneficial to society tended to have a population with a high level of trust in science



Pearson's r
 Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)
 Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?;
 In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

At a country level, we see the same kind of correlation. In countries where there is more positivity towards the benefits of science, populations tend to be more trusting of science (Figure 3.10).

However, the correlation is not perfect. One counter example is Portugal, where 49% of people trusted science a lot in 2025 (above the global average of 26%), but only 26% said science benefits most people in their country (below the global average of 36%). This points to a wider conclusion: trust matters, but so does the country context.

This relationship can operate in both directions. If people see the benefits of science for themselves and others, they may be more trusting of science and scientists. Equally, if individuals and communities trust science more, this could drive more positive attitudes to science.



Image credit:
Getty

Science in everyday life

How trust in science links to views of artificial intelligence

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in people's work and everyday lives has grown rapidly since the 2020 Wellcome Global Monitor. It is one of the most visible and rapidly evolving applications of scientific and technological development, even though access remains uneven across countries.

For the first time in 2025, the Wellcome Global Monitor asked people whether AI would benefit them and others in their country, offering a new lens on how trust in science relates to attitudes towards a major emerging technology.

A quarter of the global population felt that AI would benefit people in their country 'a lot' (25%) and a further 38% said 'a little'. Around one in five said it wouldn't benefit people at all (18%), highlighting the uncertainty that continues to surround AI.

Attitudes towards AI tended to be more positive in regions in Europe as well as in Australia and New Zealand, Eastern Asia and Northern America (Figure 3.11). Three regions where

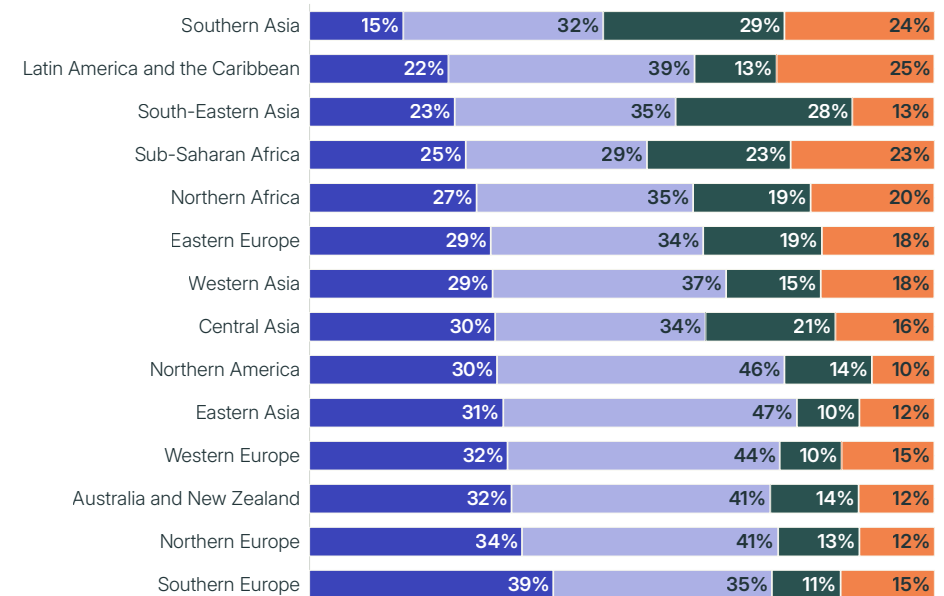
people were much more sceptical about the benefits of AI were sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Southern Asia. Uncertainty was high in Southern Asia and South-Eastern Asia.

At the country level, some of the strongest optimism for AI was seen in Israel, Taiwan, Republic of Korea, Norway and Japan, where around half or more of the population believed AI would benefit people 'a lot'. The most negative perceptions were found in United Republic of Tanzania, Iraq, Guatemala, Pakistan and Chad.

Trust in science and attitudes to AI were strongly linked. Those who trusted science 'a lot' were more likely to say AI would benefit people in their country 'a lot' (38% compared with 25% globally). Even within this high-trust group, however, 13% said they 'didn't know'.

People who were more doubtful of the benefits of AI were less trusting of science – among those who said it wouldn't benefit people at all, 32% trusted science 'not much' or 'not at all' (compared with 19% globally).

Figure 3.11:
There was more doubt and uncertainty about the benefits of AI in the Global South than in the Global North



Perceived benefit of AI

■ A lot of benefit ■ Some benefit ■ Don't know / refused ■ No benefit at all

Sample size: Southern Europe (13,073); Northern Europe (9,562); Australia and New Zealand (2,000); Western Europe (7,137); Eastern Asia (8,060); Northern America (2,014); Central Asia (4,000); Western Asia (15,080); Eastern Europe (9,023); Northern Africa (5,024); Sub-Saharan Africa (35,020); South-Eastern Asia (9,058); Latin America and the Caribbean (17,509); Southern Asia (7,060)

Q: Do you think the use of Artificial Intelligence will benefit people in this country a lot, a little or not at all?



Image credit:
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In three global regions, trust in science and attitudes to science have diverged over time

Globally, trust in science fell between 2020 and 2025, as did positive attitudes to the benefits of science. Yet the regions of Central Asia, Southern Asia and Northern Africa had a different trajectory. While trust in science did fall in these regions from 2020 to 2025, it did not coincide with reduced positivity. Indeed, in Northern Africa, the proportion saying that ‘very few’ benefit from science declined between 2020 and 2025.

In this sense, Central Asia, Southern Asia and Northern Africa have gone against the grain. Positive attitudes have held their ground despite declining trust. Further work in these regions is needed to understand the factors beyond trust that are shaping attitudes.

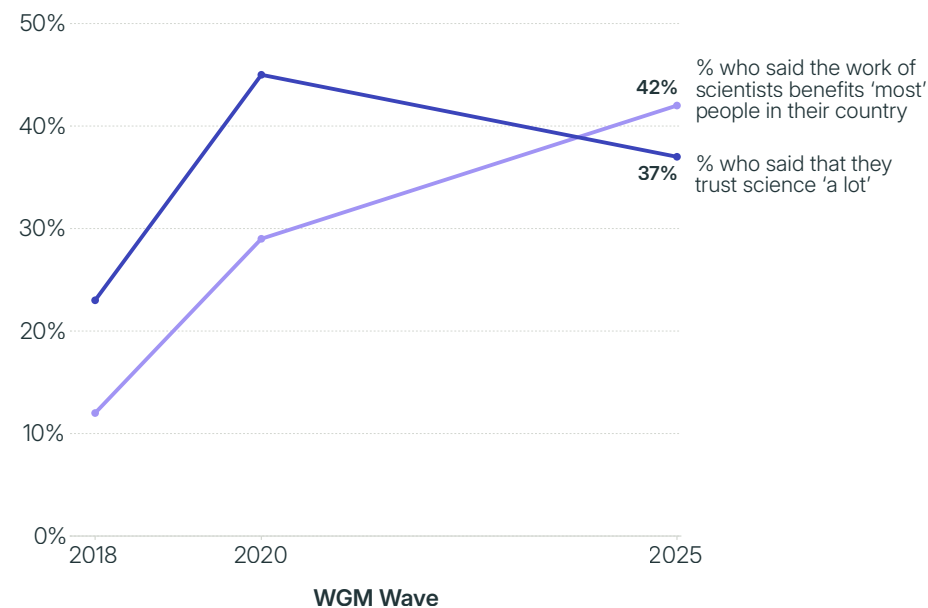
Country spotlight

Resilience to falling trust in Algeria, Tajikistan and India

The trajectories of Central Asia, Southern Asia and Northern Africa are clearly illustrated by three countries from these respective regions. On trust in science, people in Tajikistan, India and Algeria followed the global pattern, with trust rising and then falling back from its peak in 2020. In Tajikistan, trust fell to a lower level than it had been in 2018. However, attitudes have taken their own course in these countries, and the nature of the divergence differs.

Algeria (Figure 3.12) saw trust rise sharply from 2018 to 2020, then fall in 2025. Despite that pullback, the share of Algerians saying most people benefit from science has kept rising and is now above the global average. Survey methodology in Algeria changed across waves, but the rise in positivity holds steady across every education level, age group and gender, which suggests a real shift in Algerians' outlook.

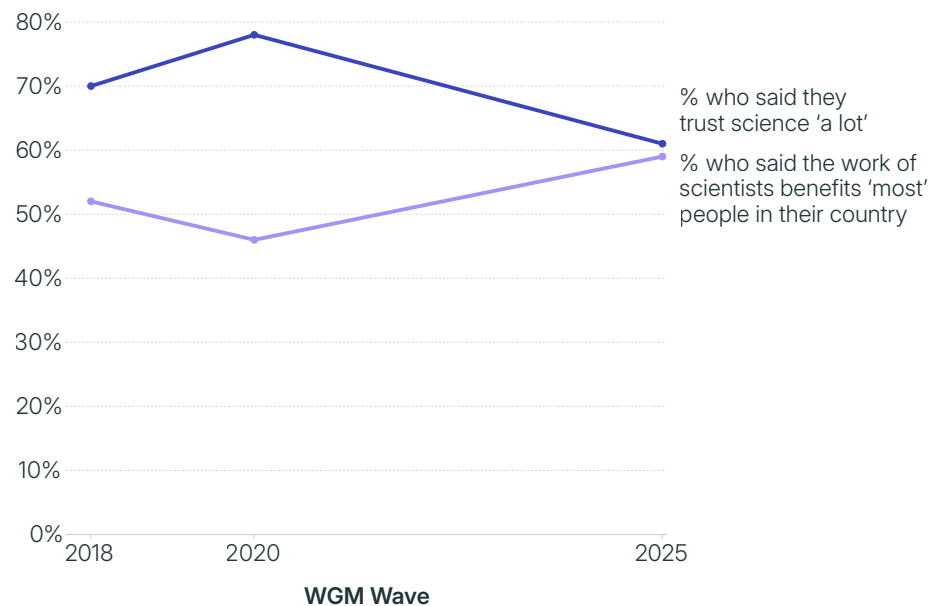
Figure 3.12:
The proportion of Algerians who believe that science benefits 'most' people in their country has grown



Sample size: 2018 = 1,000, 2020 = 1,020 and 2025 = 1,009

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?;
In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Figure 3.13:
In Tajikistan, national trends hide diverging attitudes towards science

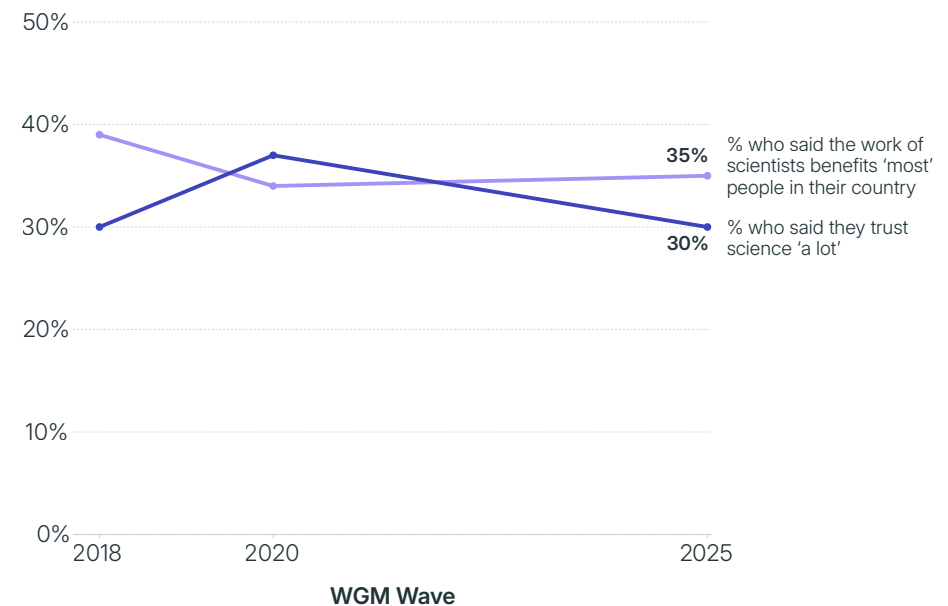


Sample size: 2018 = 1,000, 2020 = 1,000 and 2025 = 1,000
Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Tajikistan (Figure 3.13) followed a similar trust arc but experienced an even greater post-pandemic fall in trust. Yet this did not transfer to attitudes towards the benefits of science. Whilst positive attitudes declined in 2020, they became more positive in 2025, exceeding 2018 levels.

The national pattern conceals real differences between citizens, suggesting changing demographics could help to explain the country trend. The shift in attitudes was largely driven by people aged under 49; people aged 65 and over moved in the opposite direction. Gender tells its own story: Tajik men and women held similarly positive views in 2018, but the country's female population had become notably less positive than men by 2025.

Figure 3.14:
Changes in attitudes towards science in India were more uniform across society



Sample size: 2018 = 3,000, 2020 = 3,045 and 2025 = 3,058
Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

India (Figure 3.14) saw trust rise from 2018 to 2020, then fall back to the previous level by 2025. Yet positive attitudes towards the benefits of science held steady from 2020 to 2025. Unlike Tajikistan, India's trend was not led by any particular age group, gender or education level – these groups largely moved together in their attitudes.

These three countries illustrate the same point, each in their own way: trust in science and perceptions of its benefits are strongly related, but they are not the same. They do not always rise or fall together. Who or what drives that divergence differs by country, rather than following a common global trend.

3.3 In countries where trust in science is widespread, low-trust groups tend to be further apart from others in their attitudes to science

Attitudes to science are shaped not only by an individual's trust in science, but also by whether they live in a society where trust in science is common. We used multilevel modelling to analyse this relationship at a societal level. With large samples in 140 countries, the Wellcome Global Monitor is uniquely placed for this analysis.

Multilevel modelling separates the influence of the individual from the country by asking two questions:

1. Within countries, do the people who trust science tend to be more positive about its benefits, even after accounting for differences in personal characteristics and circumstances (including age, gender, education and financial wellbeing)?
2. Is this trust-related difference bigger or smaller in countries where trust in science is high or low?

We found that, in each of the 140 countries in the Wellcome Global

Monitor 2026, high trust in science was linked to positive views on the benefits of science, even when adjusting for individual factors like age, gender, education and financial wellbeing. But the strength of this relationship differed across countries.

Generally, in countries where trust was more widespread, the link between trust and positive attitudes was stronger.

Country context should not be overstated. The analysis suggests that 89% of the variation in views on the benefits of science was linked to differences between individuals within countries, while 11% was linked to differences between countries. Therefore, people's own trust in science, level of education, sense of financial wellbeing and lived experiences remained central to whether they saw science as beneficial for themselves and others.

But in some parts of the world, this country-level relationship between trust and attitudes was much stronger. Figure 3.15 shows two results for each country, after adjusting for personal characteristics as part of the modelling. The orange dot shows how many of those with little or no trust in science saw it as beneficial for 'most' people. The blue

dot shows how many of those with at least some trust saw science as beneficial for 'most' people.

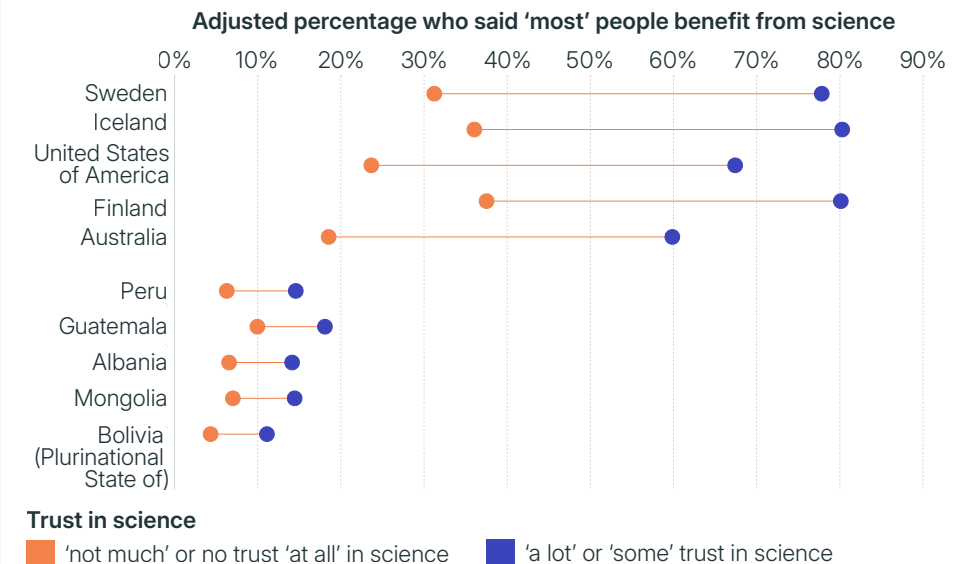
We refer to the gap between these two groups as the trust-attitudes gap. The average trust-attitudes gap globally was 23 percentage points.

In countries at the bottom of the chart – including Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Mongolia and Albania – there was a 7 percentage-point gap. People in these countries who had at least

some trust in science were only moderately different in their views on the benefits of science from people who had low or no trust.

In countries at the top of the chart – Sweden, Iceland, the United States of America, Finland and Australia – the gap was more than 40 percentage points. Here, people who trusted science and people with little or no trust were much further apart in their attitudes to the benefits of science.

Figure 3.15:
In some countries, views on the benefits of science were more sharply divided between those who did and did not trust science



Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?; In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

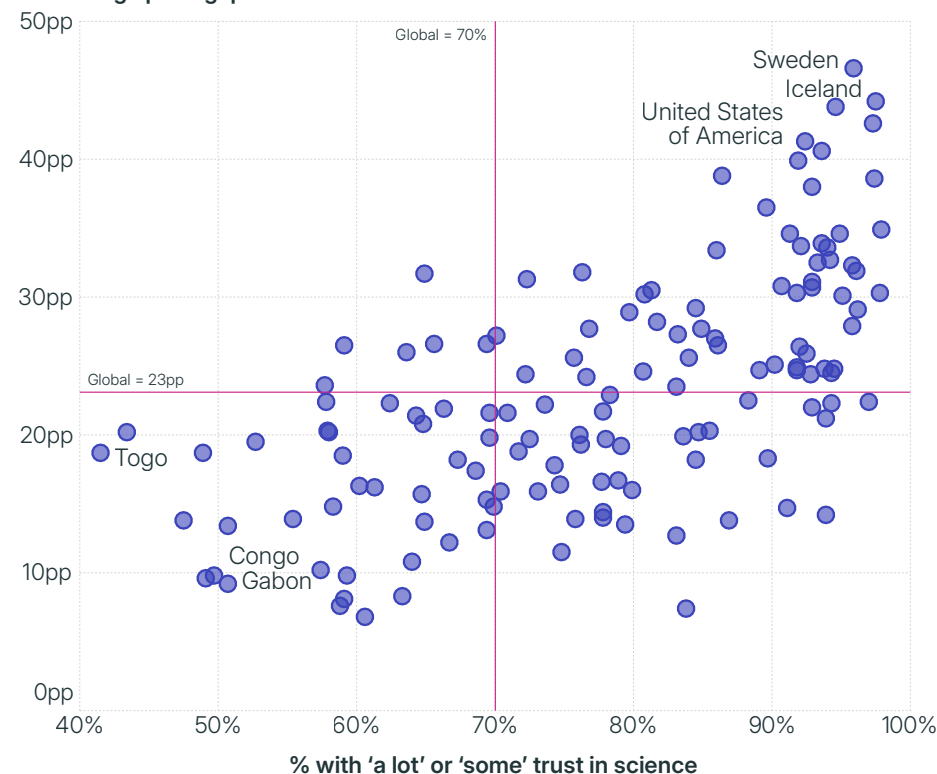
The analysis revealed another important country-level finding. The trust-attitudes gap tended to get bigger in societies where trust in science was generally higher.

Figure 3.16 shows how each country compares to the global average on trust in science, and to the average trust-attitudes gap. In societies where trust in science is generally lower, the people who trust science and those who don't were only moderately different in their attitudes to science. Examples are Togo, Gabon and Congo.

But in societies where trust in science is generally higher, people with little or no trust in science were much more distinct in their attitudes to its benefits compared with those who had at least some trust. Examples of this include Sweden, Iceland and the United States of America.

Figure 3.16:
The gap in attitudes between those who trust science and those who don't tends to be bigger in societies where trust is widespread

Percentage point gap in attitudes between those who trust science and those who don't



Sample size: ~1,000 for all countries apart from China & India (~3,000) and Iceland & Jamaica (500)

Q: In general, do you think the work that scientists do benefits most, some, or very few people in this country?;
In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?

Conclusion 3:

Trust is higher among people who see science as relevant and beneficial

People who recognise the benefits of science are very often the same people who trust science. However, we have seen that trust and attitudes do not always move together.

Globally, trust in science and positive views of its benefits both fell after the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Northern Africa, Central Asia and Southern Asia followed a different path – here, people's belief in what science could deliver for them and others in their country has held steady, but trust in science has nevertheless declined.

These divergent paths hint at the wider factors shaping trust in science and perceptions of its benefits. People's personal characteristics and circumstances – especially their sense of financial wellbeing and their education – influence both trust and attitudes substantially. And when people feel that their country's institutions and systems are working for them, they are more likely to trust science and to see it as positively impacting their lives and the lives of others.

Further work should focus on understanding the crucial interplay between trust, attitudes, people's lived experiences and the socioeconomic circumstances they face in the countries where they live.

Trust is also a feature of societies, not just individuals. In societies where trust in science is already high, low-trust groups are more distinct in how they view science's benefits. Here, the task is to understand – through deep listening, targeted diagnosis and engagement – what makes science feel less credible, relevant or responsive to them.

In countries where trust is less strong, those who trust science and those who don't are closer in their attitudes, pointing to a broader challenge: making science feel visible, useful, fair and connected to people's priorities across society as a whole.

There is no single route to earning trust. Governments, scientists, funders and scientific institutions need to do more than show that science delivers benefits. They need to earn trust in ways that reflect the societies they serve, to build a stronger, more resilient relationship between science and society.

Annex: Terminology Chart

Terms used in this report	Definition / how it is measured	Categories or construction	Notes on interpretation
Trust in science	Respondents were asked: <i>"In general, would you say that you trust science a lot, some, not much, or not at all?"</i>	A lot; Some; Not much; Not at all; Don't know; Refused	The principal measure of trust used throughout the report. Where the report refers to strong trust or high trust , this is solely referring to 'a lot'. Where it refers to at least some trust or trust is widespread , this combines 'a lot' and 'some'. Where it refers to low or no trust , this combines 'not much' and 'not at all'.
Trust in scientists	Respondents were asked how much they trusted <i>"scientists in this country"</i> .	A lot; Some; Not much; Not at all; Don't know; Refused	A separate measure from trust in science . The same response scale was used for doctors and nurses, the national government, journalists and people in the neighbourhood.
Trust in other groups and institutions	Trust in five groups or institutions: people in the neighbourhood; national government; scientists; journalists; doctors and nurses.	A lot; Some; Not much; Not at all; Don't know; Refused	Used to assess how trust in science relates to wider institutional and interpersonal trust.
Feelings about household income	Respondents' subjective assessment of how they are managing on their present household income.	Living comfortably on present income; Getting by on present income; Finding it difficult on present income; Finding it very difficult on present income	For trend analysis, 'finding it difficult' and 'finding it very difficult' were combined to maintain comparability across waves. This is a subjective measure of financial circumstances , not a measure of actual income.
Income quintile	Respondents' relative household income position within their country. Gallup collected household income and derived per-capita income quintiles.	Five groups, from the poorest fifth to the richest fifth within a country	This is distinct from feelings about household income. It is based on reported household income rather than respondents' subjective assessment of their financial circumstances.

Terms used in this report	Definition / how it is measured	Categories or construction	Notes on interpretation
Financial Life Index	Gallup index measuring respondents' personal and community economic situations.	Index score; higher scores represent a stronger reported economic situation	A subjective index that complements measures such as income and macroeconomic indicators. It should not be described simply as an income measure.
Education level	Educational attainment was harmonised across countries to enable comparison.	Primary: approximately eight years of education or less; Secondary: typically nine to fifteen years, without completing the equivalent of a bachelor's degree; Tertiary: approximately sixteen or more years / equivalent of completing a bachelor's degree	These are functional equivalents and exact definitions vary by country.
Global region	Countries were grouped using 14 regions corresponding broadly to UN Statistics Division sub-regions.	14 regional groupings used throughout the report	Used to provide consistent cross-national comparisons and trend analysis. The full country composition of each region is provided in the Technical Report.
National Institutions Index	Gallup index reflecting confidence in institutions prominent in national leadership.	Composite measure covering the military, judicial system, national government and honesty of elections	Higher scores indicate greater confidence in national institutions.
Corruption Index	Gallup index measuring perceptions of corruption in business and government.	Composite index	Higher scores indicate that a greater proportion of residents perceive corruption as widespread.
Gini coefficient	World Bank measure used to assess income inequality within countries.	Country-level external indicator	Used to examine the association between economic inequality and trust in science. This is an external, structural measure and should be distinguished from respondents' subjective financial circumstances.
Confidence in hospitals and health clinics	Respondents were asked how much confidence they had in hospitals and health clinics in their country.	A lot; Some; Not much; None at all; Don't know; Refused	Measures confidence in the healthcare system . It is distinct from respondents' confidence that they can personally access healthcare.

Terms used in this report	Definition / how it is measured	Categories or construction	Notes on interpretation
Confidence in access to healthcare	Respondents were asked how confident they were that they could access the healthcare services they needed.	Very confident; Somewhat confident; Not very confident; Not confident at all; Don't know; Refused	Measures perceived access to needed services , rather than general confidence in hospitals and health clinics.
Trust-attitudes gap	The difference between two modelled proportions. Firstly, the proportion who felt that most people benefit from science, among those who trusted science. Secondly, the proportion who felt that most people benefit from science, among those who lacked trust in science.	Based on the multilevel modelling which compares those with 'a lot' or 'some' trust to those with 'not much' or no trust 'at all'	This is the gap in perceptions after adjusting for personal characteristics such as age, gender, education and financial status.
Perceived personal benefits of science	Respondents were asked whether the work scientists do had benefited <i>"people like you"</i> .	A lot; A little; Not at all; Don't know; Refused	Used in the report to describe how much people feel they personally benefit from science.
Perceived social benefits of science	Respondents were asked whether the work scientists do benefits people in their country.	Most; Some; Very few; Don't know; Refused	Measures perceptions of how widely science's benefits are distributed across society.
Enthusiasts	Respondents with strongly positive views of both the personal and societal benefits of science.	Said science benefits most people in their country and benefits people like them a lot	A derived variable created from the two questions on science's benefits.
Sceptics	Respondents with strongly negative views of both the personal and societal benefits of science.	Said science benefits very few people in their country and benefits people like them not at all	A derived variable created from the two questions on science's benefits.

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Portland

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The Wellcome Trust (2026) *Wellcome Global Monitor – Trust in science under pressure*.
<https://doi.org/10.21955/wellcomeopenres.1115455.1>



Endnotes

1. Standard country or area codes for statistical use (M49), <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>
2. To note, some percentages in Figure 1.2 differ from those at the start of this section because we have only included the 108 countries that took part in all three waves in the time series analysis.
3. Ipsos/UK Research and Innovation (2026) Public Attitudes to Science 2025. <https://pas.ipsos.com/>
4. Pew Research (14 November 2024) Public Trust in Scientists and Views on Their Role in Policymaking. <https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2024/11/14/public-trust-in-scientists-and-views-on-their-role-in-policymaking/>
5. Cologna, V., Mede, N.G., Berger, S., Besley, J., Brick, C., Joubert, M., ... Zwaan, R.A. (2025) 'Perceptions of science, science communication, and climate change attitudes in 68 countries: the TISP dataset', Scientific Data, 12:114. doi: 10.1038/s41597-024-04100-7.
6. Mede, N. et al. (2025) Trust in Science and Science-Related Populism (TISP) Survey Report.
7. Ipsos (2025). Public Attitudes to Science.
8. A subjective, self-reported measure of financial circumstances.
9. Cologna, V., Mede, N.G., Berger, S., Besley, J., Brick, C., Joubert, M., ... Zwaan, R.A. (2025) 'Perceptions of science, science communication, and climate change attitudes in 68 countries: the TISP dataset', Scientific Data, 12:114. doi: 10.1038/s41597-024-04100-7.
10. Pearson's correlation coefficient, r : a coefficient of +1 means perfect positive correlation, -1 is perfect negative correlation, and 0 means no correlation at all.
11. Green denotes higher correlations, while yellow denotes lower correlations.
12. Fage-Butler, A., Ledderer, L. & Nielsen, K.H. (eds.) (2025) Science Communication and Trust. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1007/978-981-96-1289-5.
13. Liu, B., Zhang, X., Lai, Y. et al. Global vaccine confidence trends among adults above and below age 65. npj Vaccines 10, 160 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41541-025-01217-7>
14. A further 10% of people had a combination of 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' responses to both questions about whether science benefited them personally and whether most people in their country benefited from science.

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