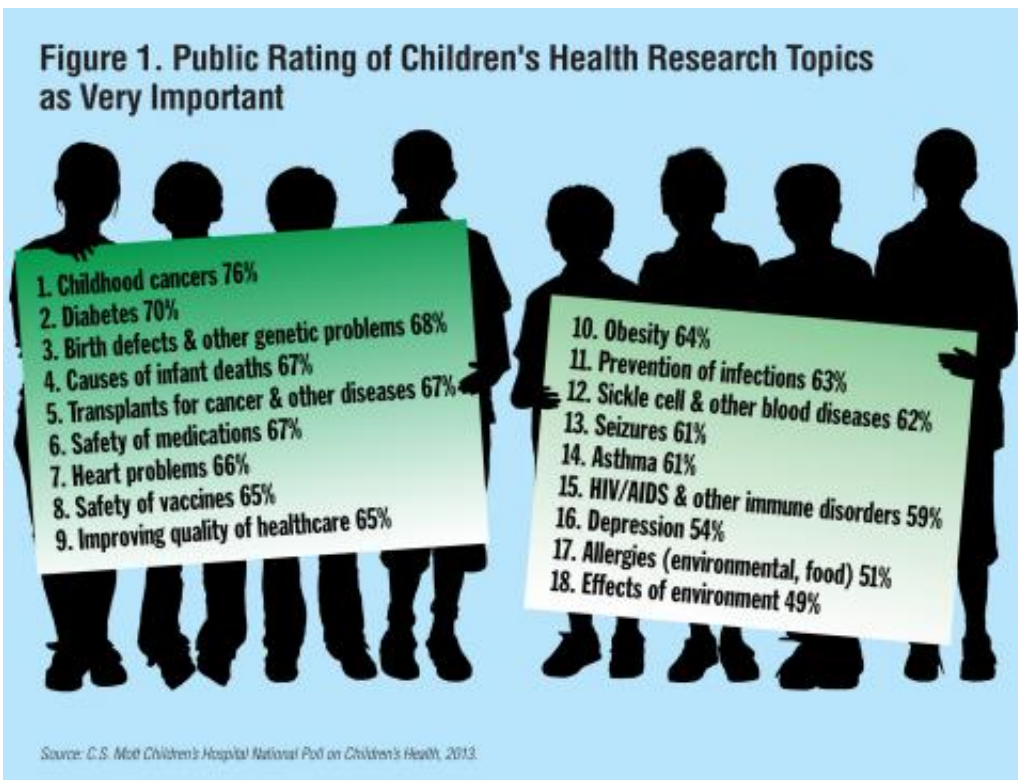


# Public says childhood cancer should be top children's health research priority

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Adults across the U.S. rate childhood cancer as their top priority for research into improving children's health, according to a new University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.

September is National Childhood Cancer Awareness month, and in this latest poll, 76 percent of adults rated research into childhood cancers as "very important." That was followed by diabetes, with 70 percent rating it "very important" and birth defects or other genetic problems with 68 percent.

"So many people know a child or family touched by [childhood cancer](#)," says Matthew M. Davis, M.D., M.A.P.P., director of the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health. "It remains a leading killer of children under 18 in the United States. The public clearly ranks research into cures and treatments for these often deadly cancers as a top priority."

Over the last several decades, research has made strong advances toward improving cure rates for children's cancers. Overall cure rates have increased from less than 40 to nearly 70 percent. But each year, more than 13,000 parents learn their child has cancer, and one of out of five children diagnosed does not survive.

"The results of this poll seem to indicate our research community is in tune with what the public sees as a top priority. But in a national research funding climate that is under pressure, this measurement of the public's priorities can help government agencies and others set strategies for the best use of research funding," says Davis, who also is professor of pediatrics and [internal medicine](#) at the U-M Medical School and professor of public policy at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

The remaining top 10 rankings, following the top three categories of childhood cancers, diabetes and birth defects/other genetic problems were:

4. Causes of [infant deaths](#)
5. Transplants for cancers and other diseases

6. Safety of medications
7. Heart problems
8. Safety of vaccines
9. Improving quality of [health](#) care
10. Obesity

(See graphic for remaining rankings)

Poll data also showed that those parents with at least one child in the house under 18 years old rated childhood cancers first, but they ranked safety of vaccines and safety of medications higher than the overall group.

Results also varied for adults from different racial/ethnic backgrounds. African-Americans rated diabetes the highest child health research priority, with 87 percent rating it "very important." They also rated sickle cell and blood diseases higher than the overall group. Hispanics rated childhood cancer first, but causes of infant death came in second, ahead of diabetes.

"This poll provides guidance for the research road ahead and the path to healthier lives for children and adults," Davis says. "This information can be an important tool in determining research strategies, because the investments made today in the lab will make the difference in the lives of children tomorrow."

**More information:** C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health: [mottnpch.org/reports-surveys/t...-priorities-children%E2%80%99s-health-research-cancer-diabetes-birth-defects](http://mottnpch.org/reports-surveys/t...-priorities-children%E2%80%99s-health-research-cancer-diabetes-birth-defects)

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