

CARP Radical Life Extension Poll Report September 6, 2013

Introduction

Pew Research interviewed over 2000 US adults in Spring, 2013 about extended life spans. CARP surveyed more than 2000 members in August 2013 on some of the same questions. This report compares findings from the two polls, as well as presenting other data gathered by CARP.

It has to be pointed out that Pew poll was taken among a general population sample, weighted to reflect current US census data, and therefore containing all ages. The CARP sample is made up of members, whose average age is about 70. This will lead to significant differences in attitudes to health care and longevity between the two samples.

In addition, acute health care is, of course, free in Canada, and costly in the US. This fact will also lead to different attitudes on both longevity and health care.

Key Findings

- CARP members are aware that there are radical life extension possibilities but are unlikely to embrace it for themselves. They are much less supportive than their American counterparts – even allowing for age differences in the sample – and cite resource pressures, think it is fundamentally unnatural and would not lead to a more productive economy.**
- When asked in detail, most CARP members think radical life extension is a bad thing, because it will lead to resource depletion and seniors will run out of savings.**
- CARP members are half as interested in taking part in these life extension techniques as Americans, and much less convinced than Americans that others would like to take part.**
- If they did take part in these treatments, CARP members are most concerned that their extra years would be healthy, not necessarily well-provided for.**
- CARP members expect to live as long as Americans wish to live, but they wish to live even longer, which may be reflection of greater confidence in our health care system.**

- **In a similar vein, CARP members are more confident humans will routinely live to be 120 years old by the year 2050 than Americans are.**
- **In a curious and counter-intuitive finding, CARP members are less likely than Americans to say these treatments would be available to everyone, and are more likely to say they will be reserved for the wealthy when they are available.**
- **CARP members are more likely than Americans to agree these techniques would strain natural resources, are equally likely to find them fundamentally unnatural and are much less likely to think they will lead to a more productive economy.**
- **Most CARP members say they would not change what they are doing if they had an additional 20 years, while others say they will travel or volunteer.**

Conclusion

CARP members are more aware of, and more sceptical of the benefits of radical life extension than are Americans. They are more likely than Americans to see the obstacles and pitfalls to radical life extension, and less likely to think it will be embraced by many. It may be that Canadians, with expectations of adequate health care for all rather than glamorous health care for the wealthy, do not see these treatments being paid for by the government.

Detailed Findings

CARP members are more apt to know “a little” about radical life extension (48%) than are Americans (38%) and are less likely to know “nothing at all” (47% vs 54%). This is a reflection of the fact the Pew sample contained respondents of all ages, while the average age of the CARP sample is 70.

There is evidence that medical treatments in the near future will allow people to live to be 120 years old. Have you heard or read anything about this?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
A lot	7%	4%
A little	38%	48%
Nothing at all	54%	47%
DON'T KNOW	*	1%

The majority of members see radical life extension as a bad thing (55%), mostly because they will face competition for resources (24%) and people will outlive their savings (23%).

Would the ability to slow the aging process and extend human life by decades to at least 120 be a good thing or a bad thing for society?

	CARP Poll™
GOOD THING	18%
Boost economic contribution of seniors	8%
Everyone wants to live longer	5%
Solve skilled labour shortage	2%
OTHER	3%
Neither a good thing nor a bad thing	19%
BAD THING	55%
Lead to competition for resources/overcrowding	24%
People will outlive savings	23%
Not enough work now	1%
OTHER	7%
DON'T KNOW	8%

While equally likely to say they would not take advantage of radical life extension treatments (56% in both samples), CARP members are half as likely as Americans to say they would take advantage of these treatments (19% vs 38%) and much more likely to say they don't know (25% vs 6%).

Would you yourself want to take advantage of these treatments and live to 120?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Yes	38%	19%
No	56%	56%
DON'T KNOW	6%	25%

Canadians are no more likely to think others would take advantage of these treatments (21%) than they themselves are (19%), but Americans are twice as likely to think others would want to live radically longer (69%) than they themselves would (38%). Once again, CARP members are much more likely to be unsure on this measure (30%) than are Americans (4%).

Do you think most people would want to take advantage of these treatments and live to 120?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Yes	69%	21%
No	27%	49%
DON'T KNOW	4%	30%

The single most common concern about living to 120 is that these extra years are healthy years (52%), followed distantly by concern about retirement savings (11%).

If you chose to take advantage of these treatments and live to 120, what assurances would you want?

	CARP Poll™
Extra years would be healthy years	52%
Have ample retirement savings	11%
Health care system specialized in geriatrics	9%
Assisted suicide freely available	8%
Society must accept super seniors	4%
Spouse would have to live that long too	4%
Change law to allow senior pensions/health benefits	3%
Ample low cost housing for seniors	1%
Innovative job scheduling/flex work	1%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	6%

Americans would prefer to live, on average, to 89, while CARP members would prefer, on average, to live to 94. CARP members do not expect, however, to live longer than Americans;' desired life span (average 88 years). This may be a factor of longer average life spans among Canadians.

To what age would you prefer to live/To what age do you expect you will live?

	Pew (prefer)	CARP (prefer)	CARP (expect)
AVERAGE AGE	89 years	94 years	88 years

CARP members think it more likely humans will live to 120 by the year 2050 (34%) than do Americans (25%).).

How likely is it that humans will routinely live to 120 years old by 2050?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Likely	25%	34%
Not likely	73%	56%
DON'T KNOW	2%	10%

More Americans believe these treatments should be available to everybody (79%) than say this among CARP members (60%). This is probably a factor of our single payer health care system

Who do you think should have access to these kinds of medical treatments?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Everyone	79%	60%

CARP members are more likely than Americans to think these treatments will be reserved for the wealthy (85% to 66%).

Who do you think WILL have access to these treatments?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Only those who can afford it	66%	85%

Two thirds of the Pew sample agreed scientists would offer these treatments before they had been fully tested for health implications, while just one quarter of CARP members said this *should* happen (66% vs 22%).

Do you agree or disagree research scientists would (Pew)/should (CARP) offer these treatments before they fully understood the health effects?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Agree	66%	22%
Disagree	32%	71%
DON'T KNOW	2%	7%

CARP members are more likely than Americans to agree life extension would strain natural resources (76% to 66%).

Do you agree or disagree longer life spans would strain natural resources?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Agree	66%	76%
Disagree	31%	16%
DON'T KNOW	3%	7%

Both groups are equally likely to think these treatments are fundamentally unnatural (Pew - 58%, CARP - 54%), but CARP members are less likely to disagree and more likely to not have an opinion.

Do you agree or disagree such treatments would be fundamentally unnatural?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Agree	58%	54%
Disagree	37%	29%
DON'T KNOW	5%	18%

Americans are twice as likely to believe life extension would lead to a more productive economy (44%) as are CARP members (20%), while CARP members are much more likely to be unsure about this (22%) than are Americans (3%).

Do you think these treatments would lead to a more productive economy?

	Pew Poll	CARP Poll™
Agree	44%	20%
Disagree	53%	58%
DON'T KNOW	3%	22%

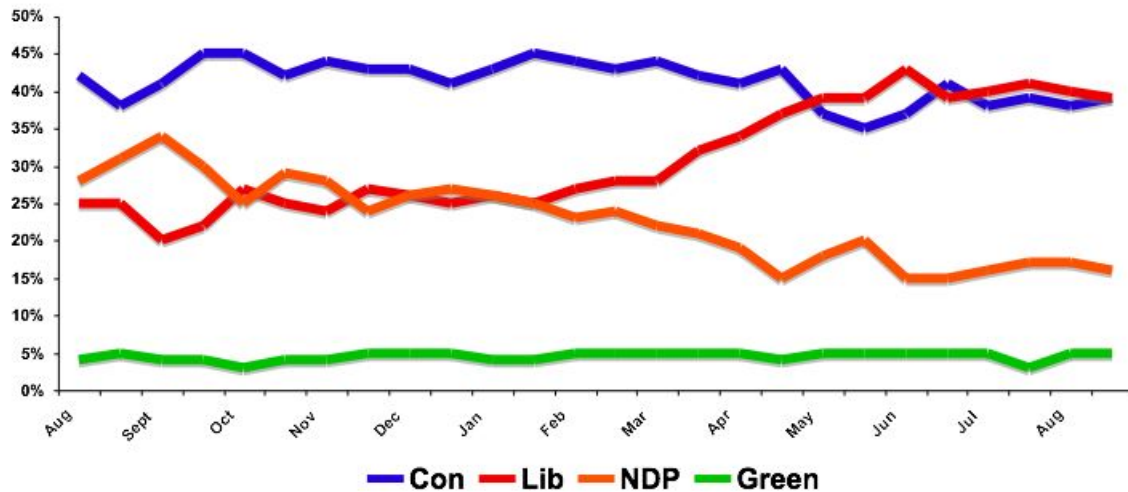
Most members would spend their extra time doing what they do now (38%), followed by travel (24%), volunteering (13%) and spending time with kids (12%).

If you could live an extra 20 years in good health and with adequate finances, what would you do in that extra lifetime?

	CARP Poll™
Continue as I am now	38%
Travel	24%
Volunteer	13%
Spend more time with children/grandchildren	12%
Start a new career	4%
Environmental causes	3%
Move to another country	1%
Political campaigns	1%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	5%

Electoral Preference

The Liberals surpassed the NDP as second place party in CARP members' electoral preference in February, and passed the Conservatives as first place party in May, only to have the Conservatives catch up again. The Liberals and the Conservatives are now matched at 39%, the NDP at 16%, and the Greens at 5%.



More than 2100 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between August 23 and 26, 2013. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20