

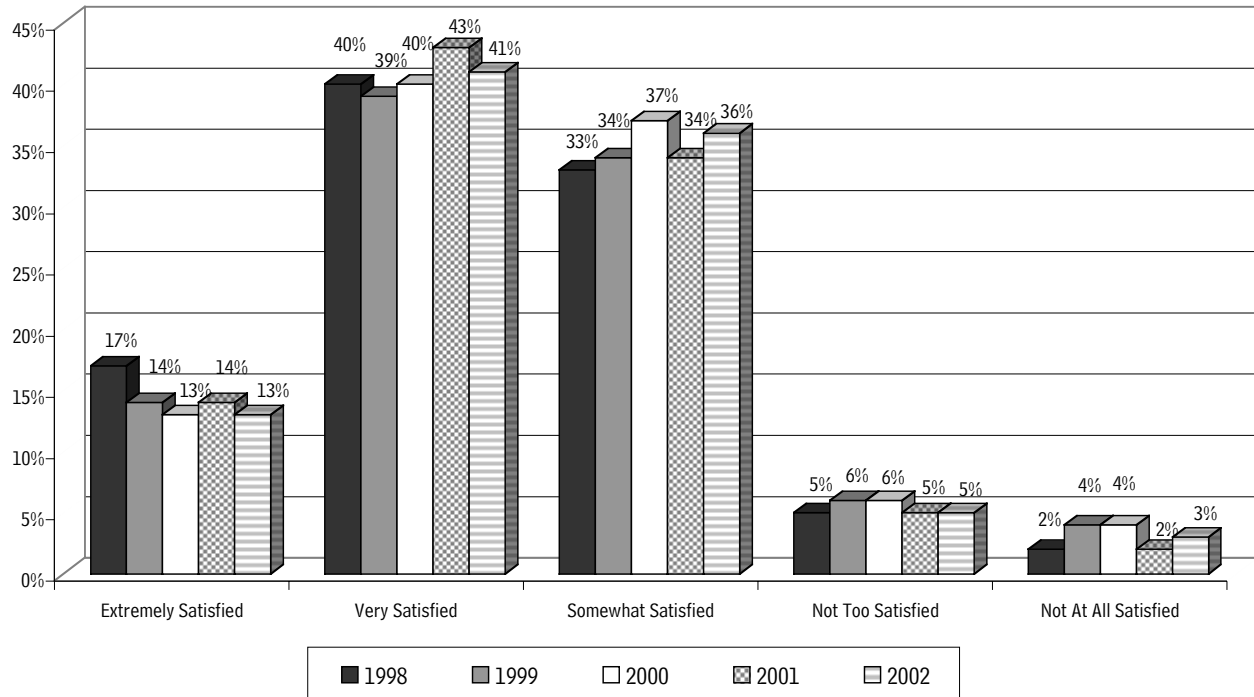
Quality in Health Care

Americans' Satisfaction With Quality of Medical Care Consistent Over Time

The 2002 Health Confidence Survey (HCS) finds the vast majority of Americans to be at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of medical care they are receiving, as the survey has found in previous years (Figure 1).

- Among those who have received care in the past two years, more than half continue to be *extremely* or *very* satisfied with the quality of the medical care they receive (57 percent in 1998, 55 in 2002).
- Only 8 percent are *not too* or *not at all* satisfied with the quality of medical care they have received in the past two years.

Figure 1
**SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE RECEIVED,
AMONG THOSE RECEIVING CARE IN PAST TWO YEARS**



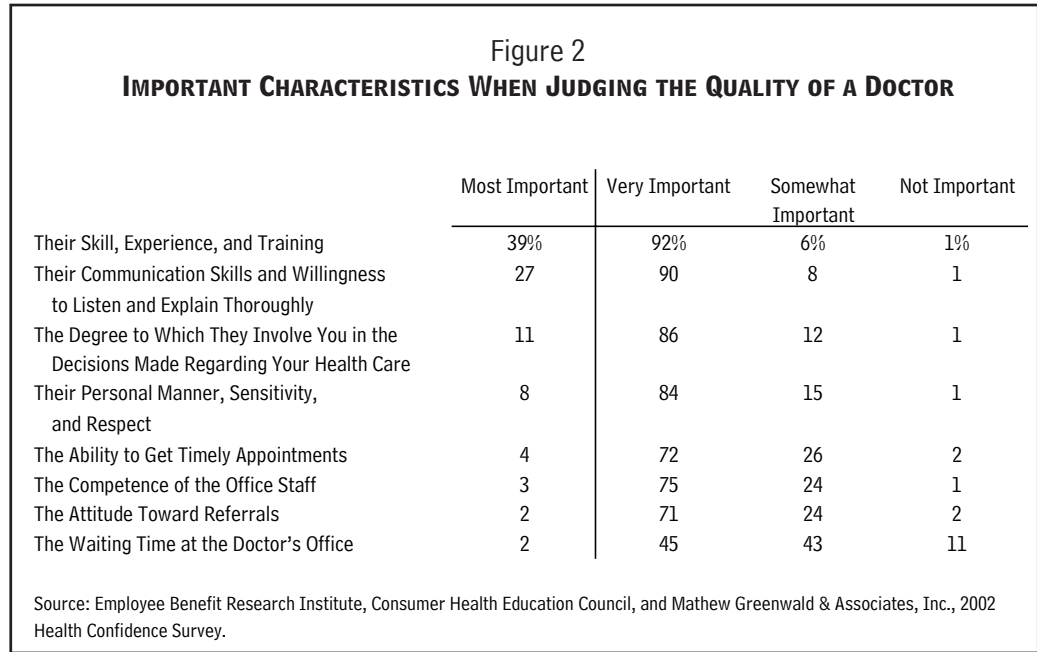
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute, Consumer Health Education Council, and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 1998–2002 Health Confidence Surveys.

Various Characteristics Important When Judging Health Care Quality

Americans rate a number of characteristics as very important when judging the quality of doctors and hospitals, but they focus on the skill, experience, and training of their medical care providers when naming the most important characteristic of quality.

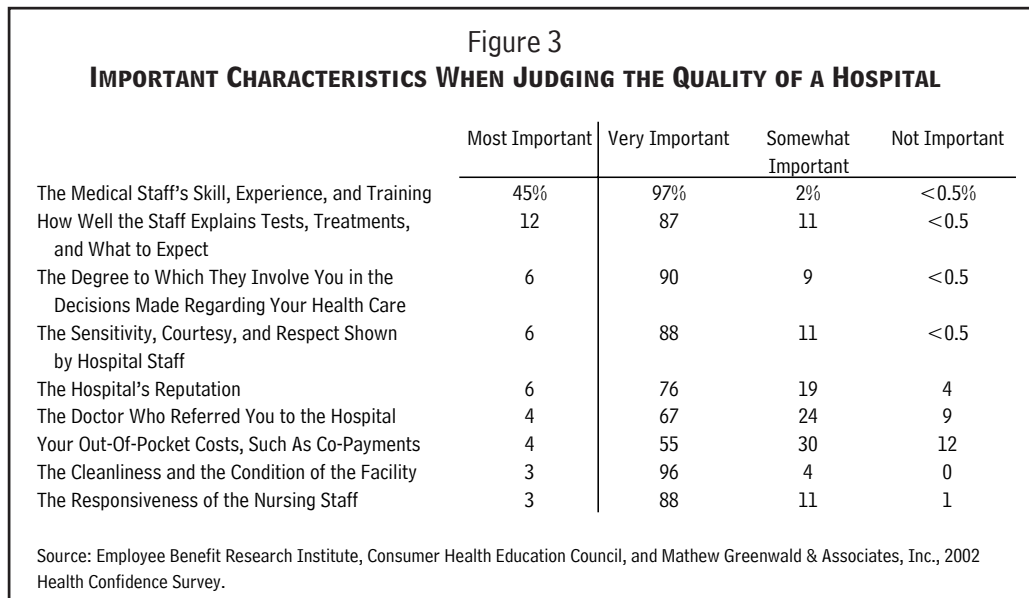
Doctors

- Thirty-nine percent of Americans name skill, experience, and training as the most important characteristic when judging the quality of a doctor (Figure 2).
- Many Americans cite personal and communication factors as most important: 27 percent say communication skills and willingness to listen and explain thoroughly are most important; 11 percent cite the degree to which the doctor involves them in the decisions made regarding their care; and 8 percent say the doctor’s personal manner, sensitivity, and respect are most important.



Hospitals

- Forty-five percent of Americans consider the skills, experience, and training of the medical staff to be the most important characteristic when judging the quality of a hospital (Figure 3).
- Considerably fewer respondents cite other characteristics as the most important.



Despite interest in quality, fewer than 4 in 10 HCS respondents with health insurance coverage report their employer or health plan provides them with information on the quality of doctors or hospitals (37 percent). Seventy-one percent of those who say their employer or health plan does not provide them with this type of information say they would like to have access to information on the quality of doctors or hospitals.

Health Plans

When considering the quality of a health plan, Americans under age 65 find characteristics related to access to care to be the most important.

- Twenty-seven percent of Americans under age 65 say that the ability to get the care their doctor recommends is the most important characteristic in judging the quality of a health plan (Figure 4).

Figure 4
IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS WHEN JUDGING THE QUALITY OF A HEALTH PLAN, AMONG THOSE UNDER AGE 65

	Most Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
The Ability to Get the Care Your Doctor Recommends	27%	92%	8%	0%
Access to Emergency Care	17	90	9	<0.5
The Range of Services Covered by The Plan	15	85	14	1
The Doctors Available Through the Plan	14	85	14	1
The Costs You Personally Have to Pay For	9	67	30	2
The Ease of Getting Routine Care	5	82	15	3
The Ease of Getting Referrals	3	72	21	5
Simplicity of Paperwork	2	57	33	10
Customer Service	1	74	24	2

Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute, Consumer Health Education Council, and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2002 Health Confidence Survey.

- Another 17 percent say access to emergency care is most important, and 15 percent cite the range of services covered by the plan as the most important characteristic when judging the quality of a health plan.

Source: 1998–2002 Health Confidence Surveys.