Enhancing Data Services: Insights from NCHS' 2023 Health Data User Survey

2024 Research and Policy Conference, FCSM
Session I-3: Vital Signs and Data: A Health Dose of Analytics
Thursday October 24, 2024, 10:30am

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Kiana Morris, MBA, CMCP, NCHS/CDC

NCHS Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan | National Center for Health Statistics | CDC

VISION

To be a world-class innovator and provider of health data and statistics

MISSION

NCHS collects, analyzes, and disseminates timely, relevant, and accurate health data and statistics. Our products and services inform the public and guide program and policy decisions to improve our nation's health.

GOALS

NCHS' goals reflect the broad, long-term accomplishments it aspires to achieve:

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3
Expand NCHS' relevance and external engagement	Accelerate NCHS' health data capabilities	Build on NCHS' workforce and operational excellence

[NCHS Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan | National Center for Health Statistics | CDC]

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Expand NCHS' relevance and external engagement

Objective 1.1: Expand understanding of current and potential users

Objective 1.2: Improve user awareness of and access to NCHS data

Objective 1.3: Build and maintain strategic partnerships with public and private entities

GOAL 3

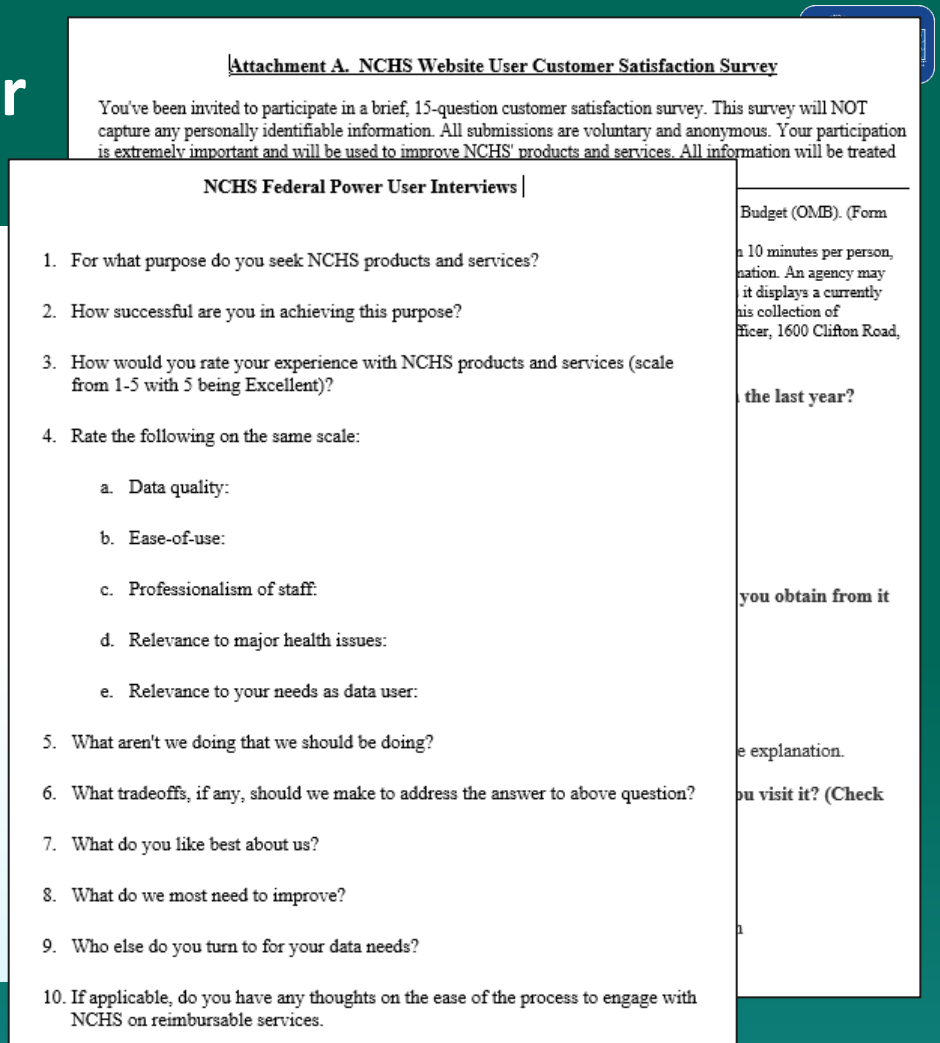
Build on NCHS' workforce and operational excellence

[NCHS Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan | National Center for Health Statistics | CDC]

Understanding the NCHS User

NCHS Website User Survey ….

NCHS Power User Interviews ….



Attachment A. NCHS Website User Customer Satisfaction Survey

You've been invited to participate in a brief, 15-question customer satisfaction survey. This survey will NOT capture any personally identifiable information. All submissions are voluntary and anonymous. Your participation is extremely important and will be used to improve NCHS' products and services. All information will be treated

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NCHS Federal Power User Interviews

1. For what purpose do you seek NCHS products and services?
2. How successful are you in achieving this purpose?
3. How would you rate your experience with NCHS products and services (scale from 1-5 with 5 being Excellent)?
4. Rate the following on the same scale:
   a. Data quality:
   b. Ease-of-use:
   c. Professionalism of staff:
   d. Relevance to major health issues:
   e. Relevance to your needs as data user:
5. What aren't we doing that we should be doing?
6. What tradeoffs, if any, should we make to address the answer to above question?
7. What do you like best about us?
8. What do we most need to improve?
9. Who else do you turn to for your data needs?
10. If applicable, do you have any thoughts on the ease of the process to engage with NCHS on reimbursable services.

NCHS Health Data User Survey

Purpose:

- To explore the experience, needs, and wishes regarding NCHS data and products from a range of NCHS constituents, including federal and non-federal, and users and non-users of NCHS products.

NCHS Health Data User Survey

1	Which of the following health topics are of most interest to you? (Check all that apply)
2	How do you prefer health data to be made available? (Select your top choice)
3	Do you do your own statistical analyses using analytic software?
4	What is your preferred analytical software?
5	Have you ever used any data or publications from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)? If Q5 Yes, continue to Q6 If Q5 No, SKIP to Q14

6	Are you familiar with any of these NCHS publications? (Check all that apply)
7	How often have you used any NCHS data or publications in the past 12 months?
8	Did you access the NCHS data or publications through one of the following? (Check all that apply)
9	For what reasons have you accessed NCHS data or publications in the past? (Check all that apply)
10	For what purposes did you access NCHS data or publications? (Check all that apply)
11	Have you obtained health statistics from publications or reports that included the following data sources in the last 12 months? (Check all that apply)
12	Have you obtained NCHS data files to analyze any of the following data sources in the last 12 months? (Check all that apply)
13	If NCHS could do one thing to improve their health data or publications for you personally, what would that be?

14	Are you familiar with any of these NCHS publications or resources? (Check all that apply)
15	Do you have suggestions on how we can increase your potential use of NCHS health data or publications?

16	Which best describes your occupation?
17	How would you best describe your organization?

OMB Control Number:
0920-0729
Expiration Date: 02/28/2026

Health Data User Survey

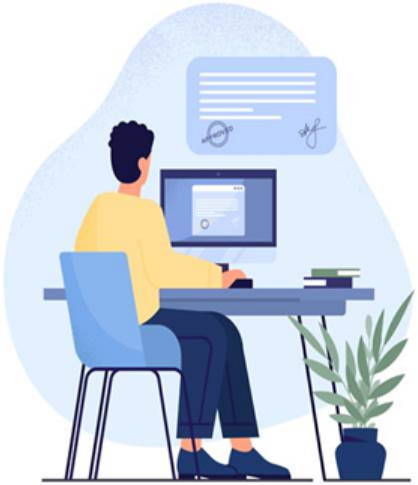
You are invited to participate in a brief, 5-minute health data user survey that will help the National Center of Health Statistics (NCHS) understand your health data needs and better deliver health data products and services. NCHS, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provides health data and statistics to inform the public and guide program and policy decisions to improve our nation's health. Your participation is extremely important to us and the information you provide will be used to improve health statistics products and services.

This survey will NOT capture any personally identifiable information. All submissions are voluntary and anonymous. All information will be treated in a secure manner. Thank you for your assistance.

NOTICE - Public reporting burden of this collection of information is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, and completing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to: CDC/ATSDR Information Collection Review Office; 1600 Clifton Road, MS D-74, Atlanta, GA 30333, ATTN: PRA (0920-0729).

Item #	Question	Response Options	SKIPs/Comments
1	Which of the following health topics are of most interest to you? (check all that apply)	Asthma / Respiratory Health Births / Fertility Diet / Nutrition Exercise / Physical Activity Heart Health / Cardiac Health Care Use / Access	

Re: National Center for Health Statistics Needs Your Help!



The National Center for Health Statistics Needs Your Help!

NCHS is seeking to understand health data users better so we can improve the products and services we offer. Whether you are a regular user of NCHS statistics and products or you have yet to explore our health data, we want your input on how we can make our data, products, and services more useful to you. This very brief survey **should only take a few minutes** to complete and will **help NCHS better meet your public health data needs**! Take the survey today by clicking on the link or scanning the QR code with your mobile device. We want to hear from you! **Take the survey by June 23, 2023!**

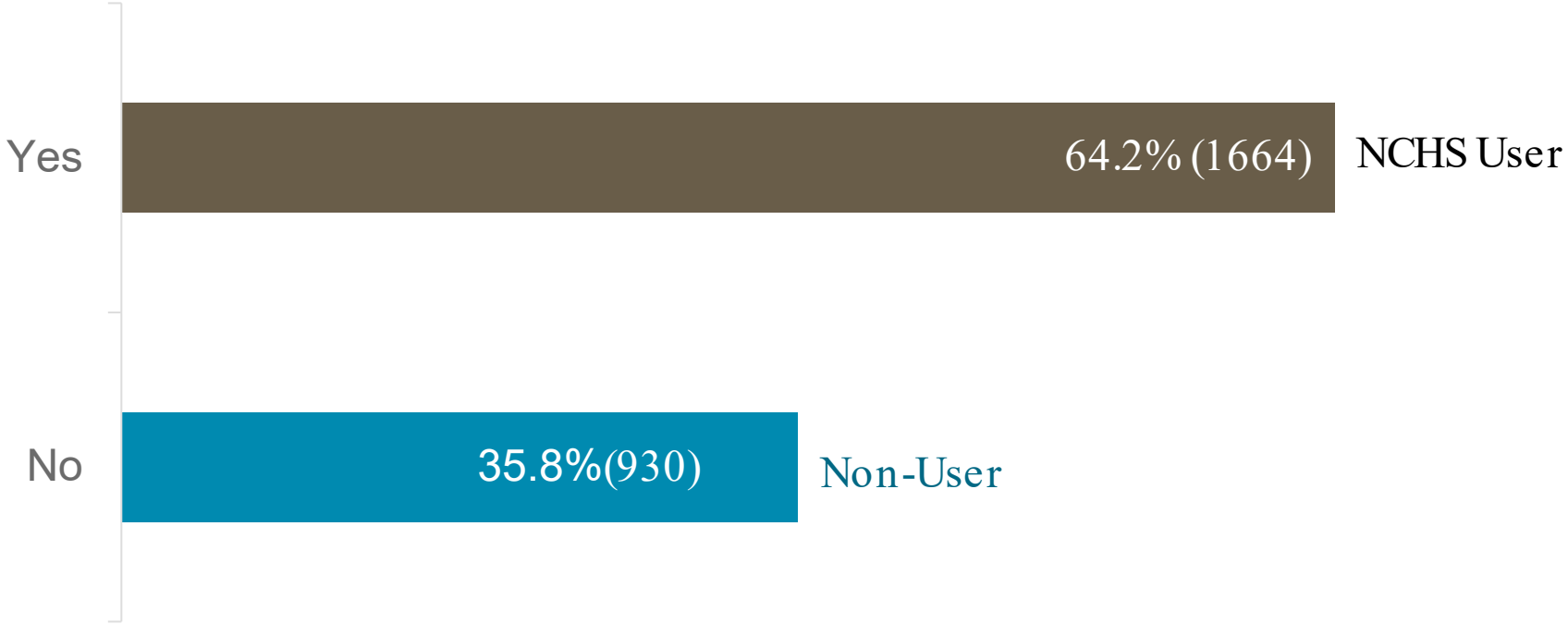
Survey Link: **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HDUS**

Or open survey using your mobile camera to scan this QR code

RESULTS

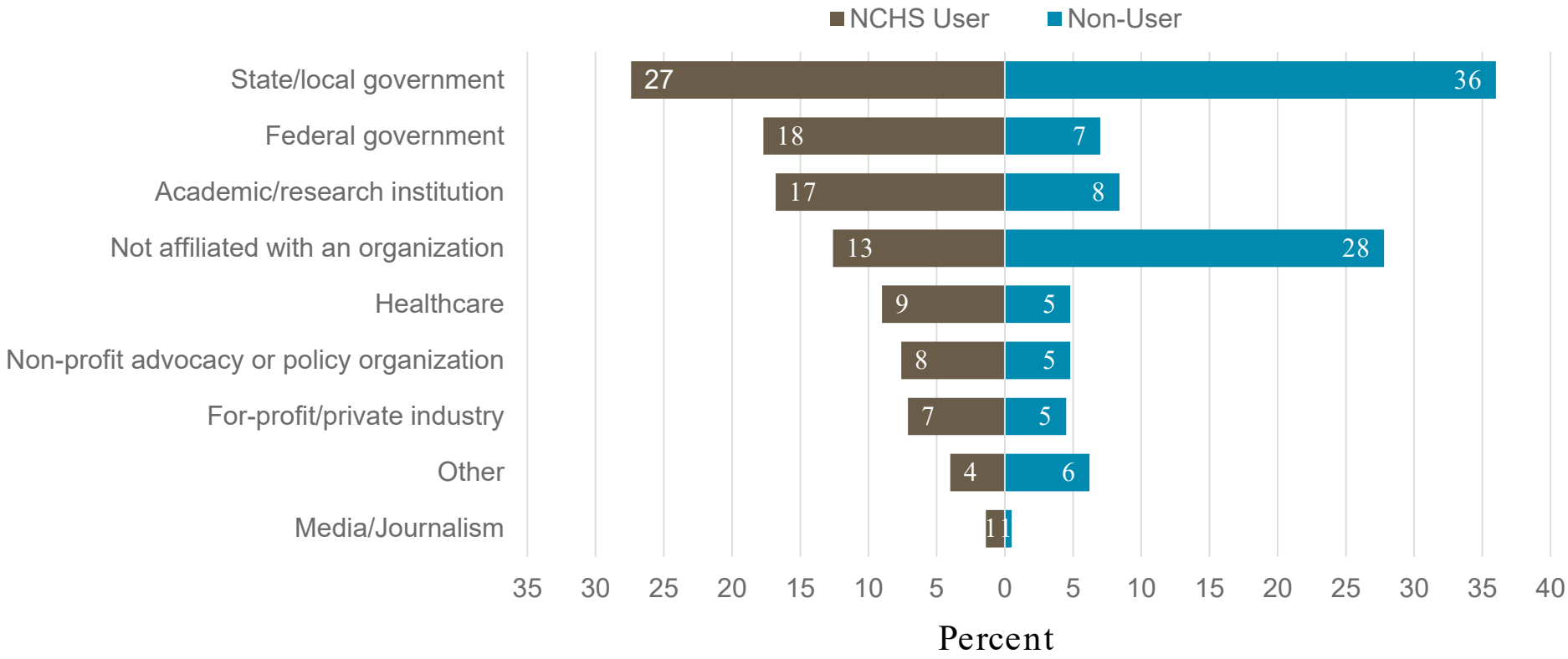
NCHS Health Data User Survey

Engagement with NCHS



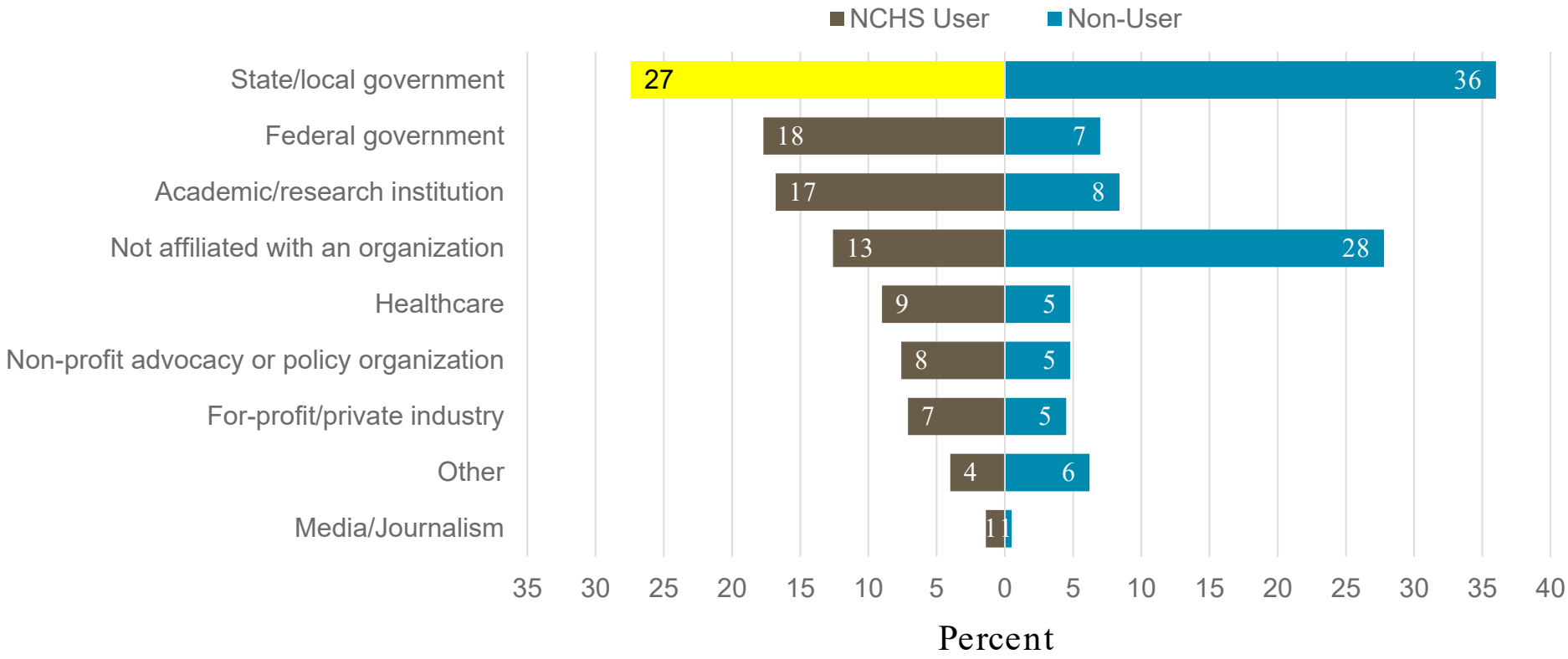
Question - Have you ever used any data or publications from NCHS?

Respondents' Organizational Affiliation by User Type



Question: How would you best describe your organization?

Respondents' Organizational Affiliation by User Type



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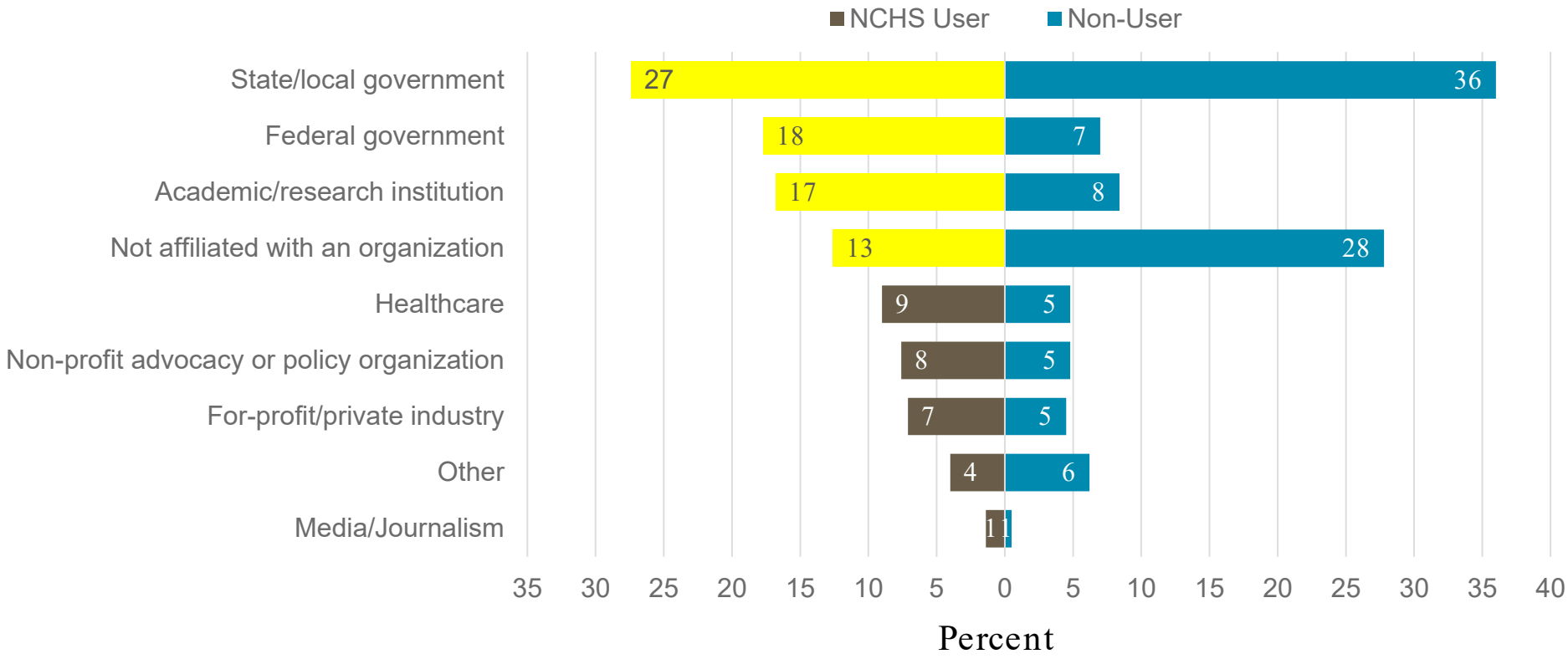

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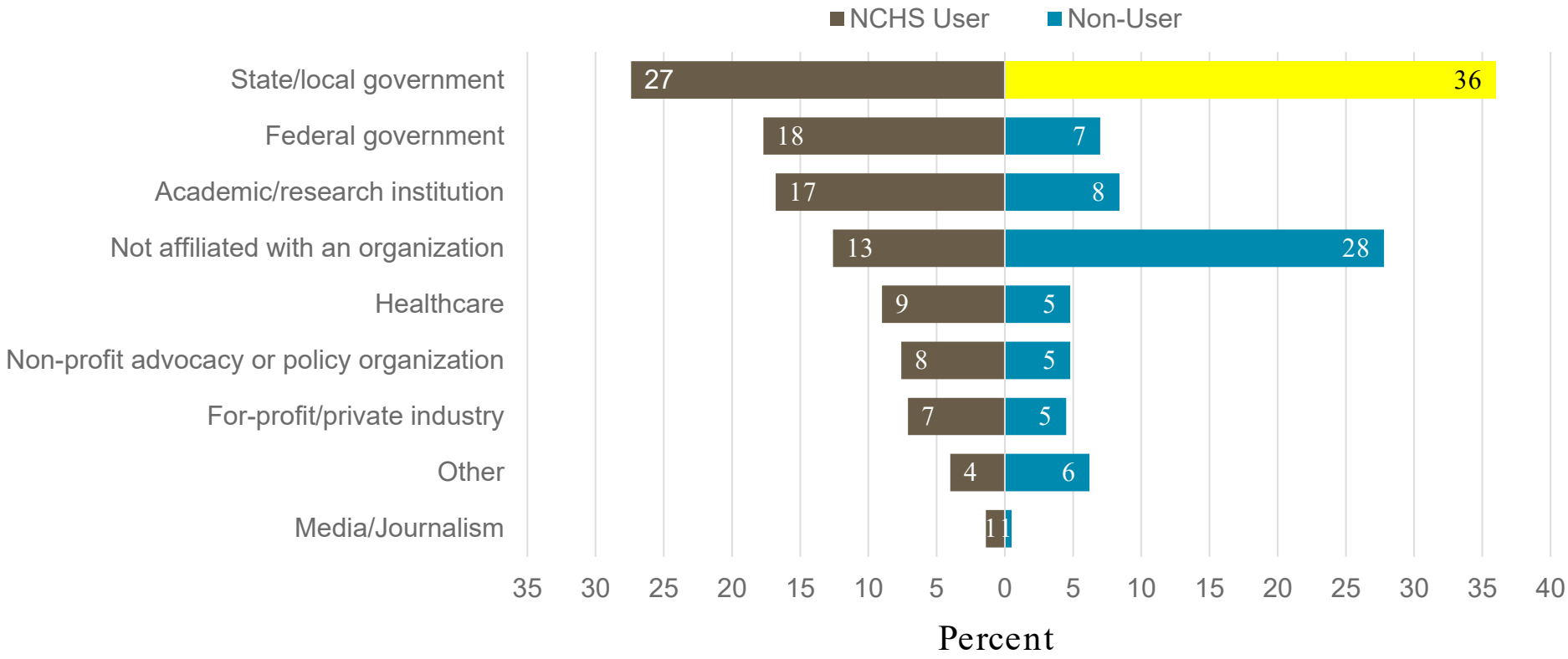

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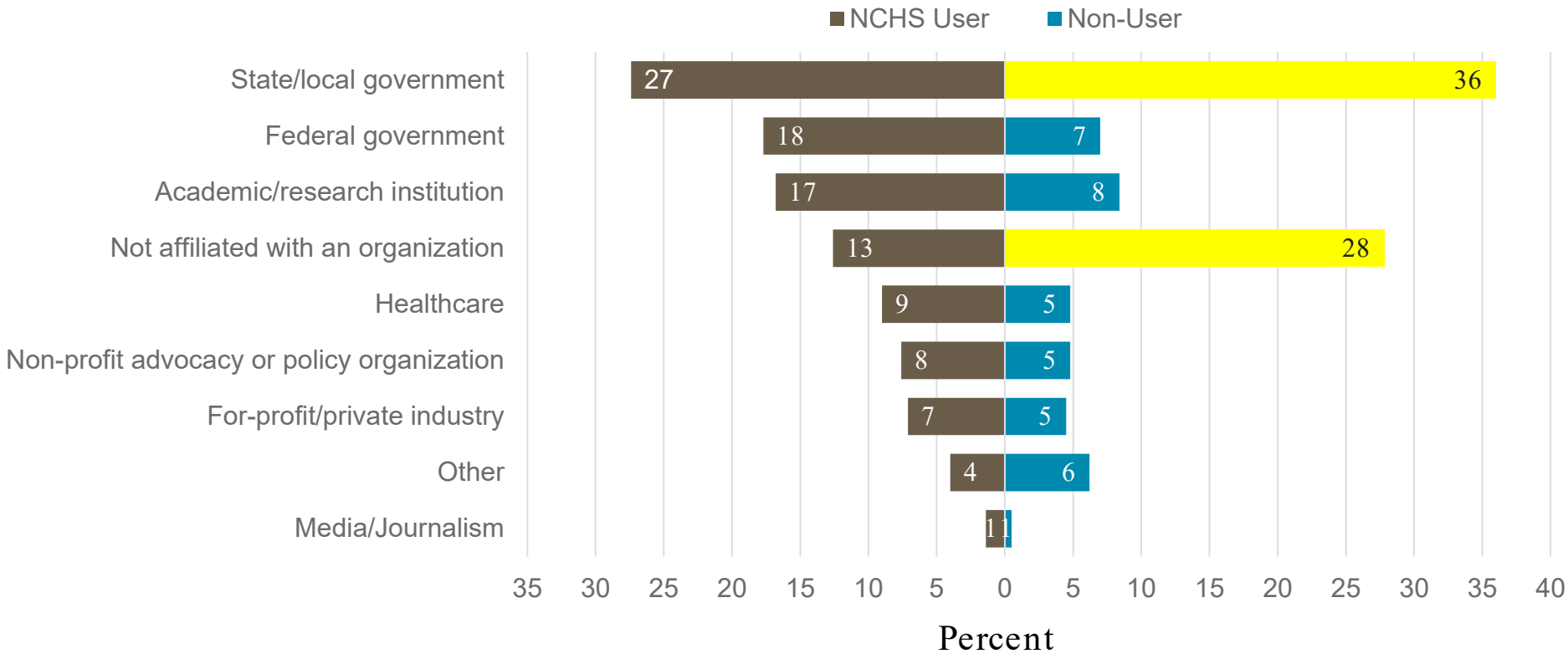

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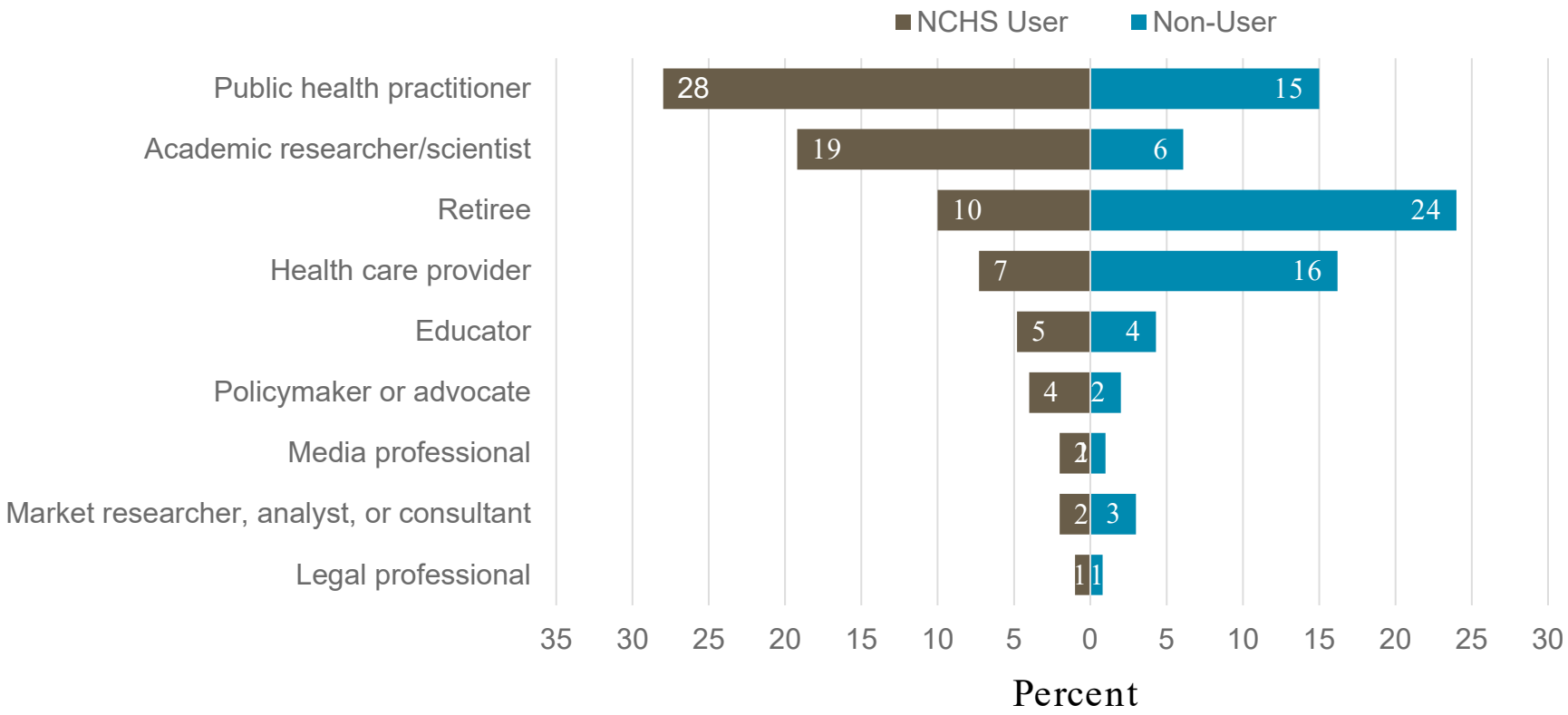
Occupation by Data User Type



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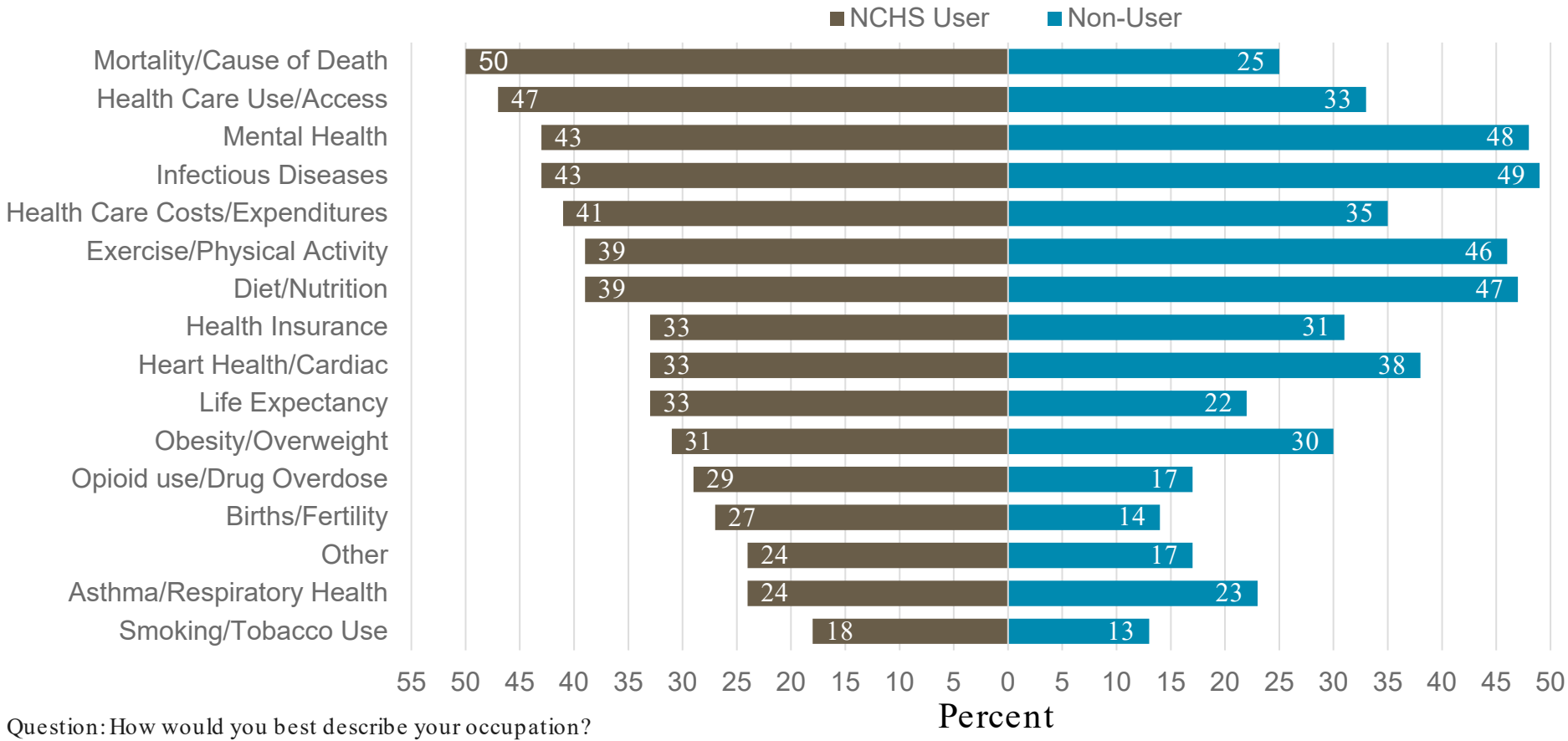
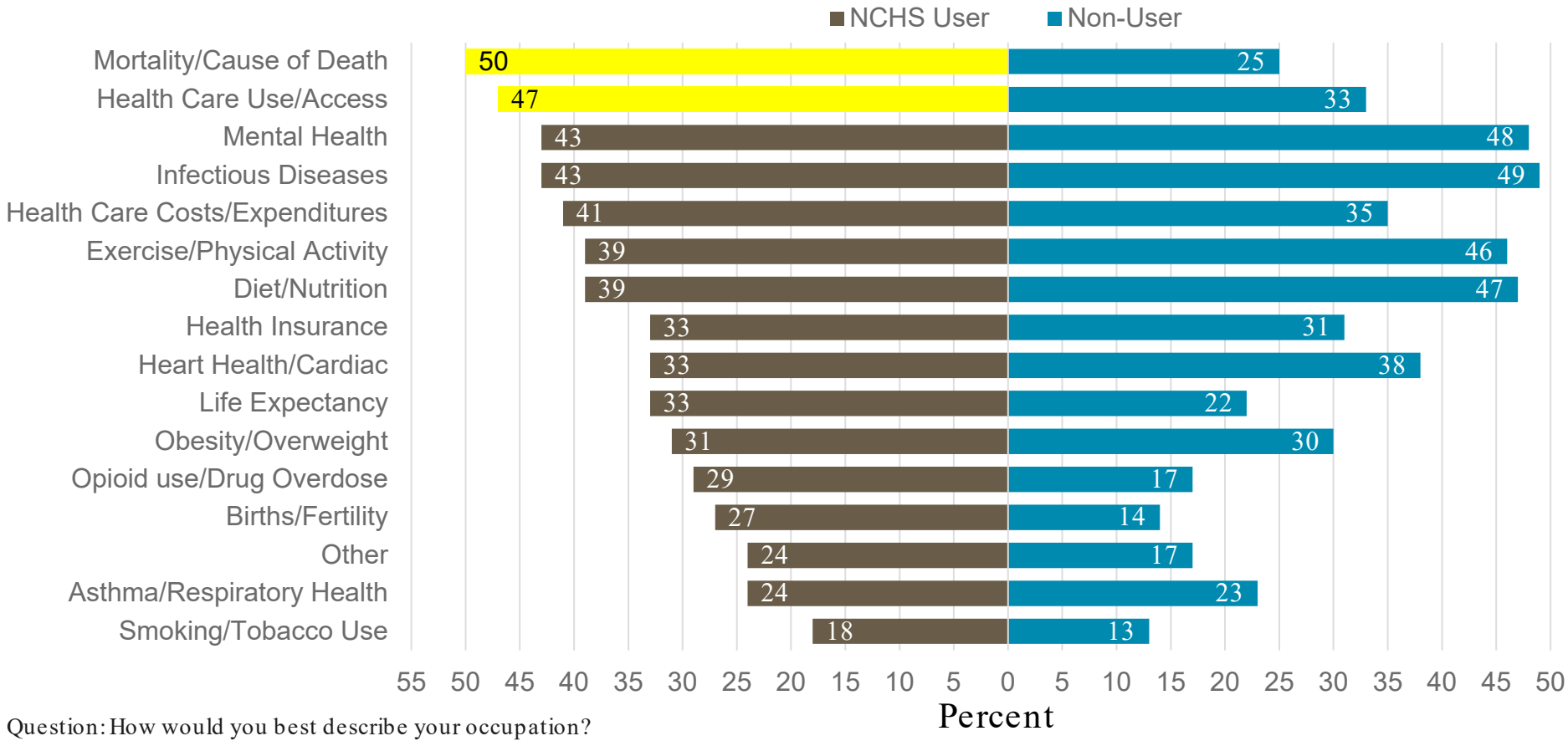
Health Topics of Most Interest by User Type



Question: How would you best describe your occupation?

Health Topics of Most Interest by Data User Type



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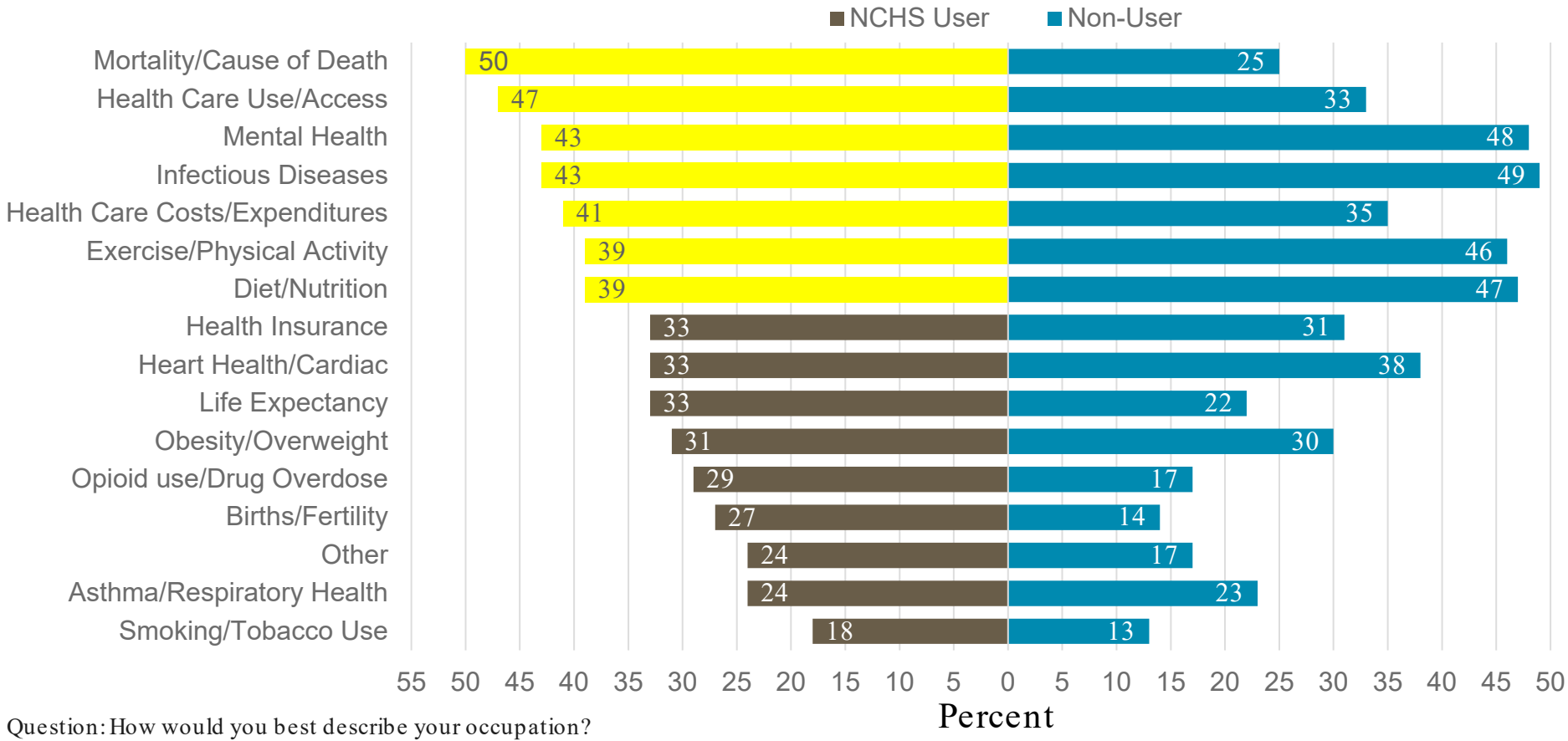

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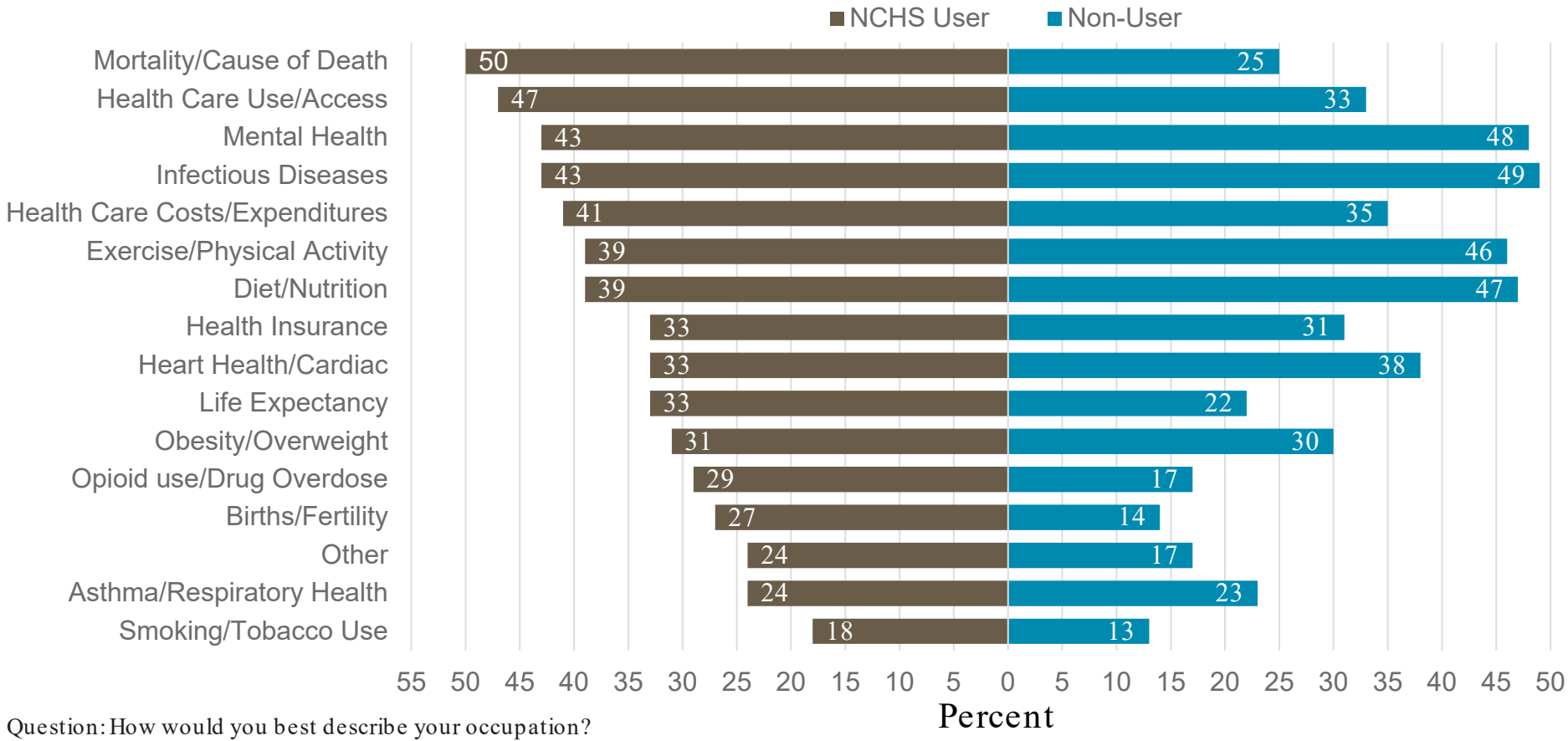

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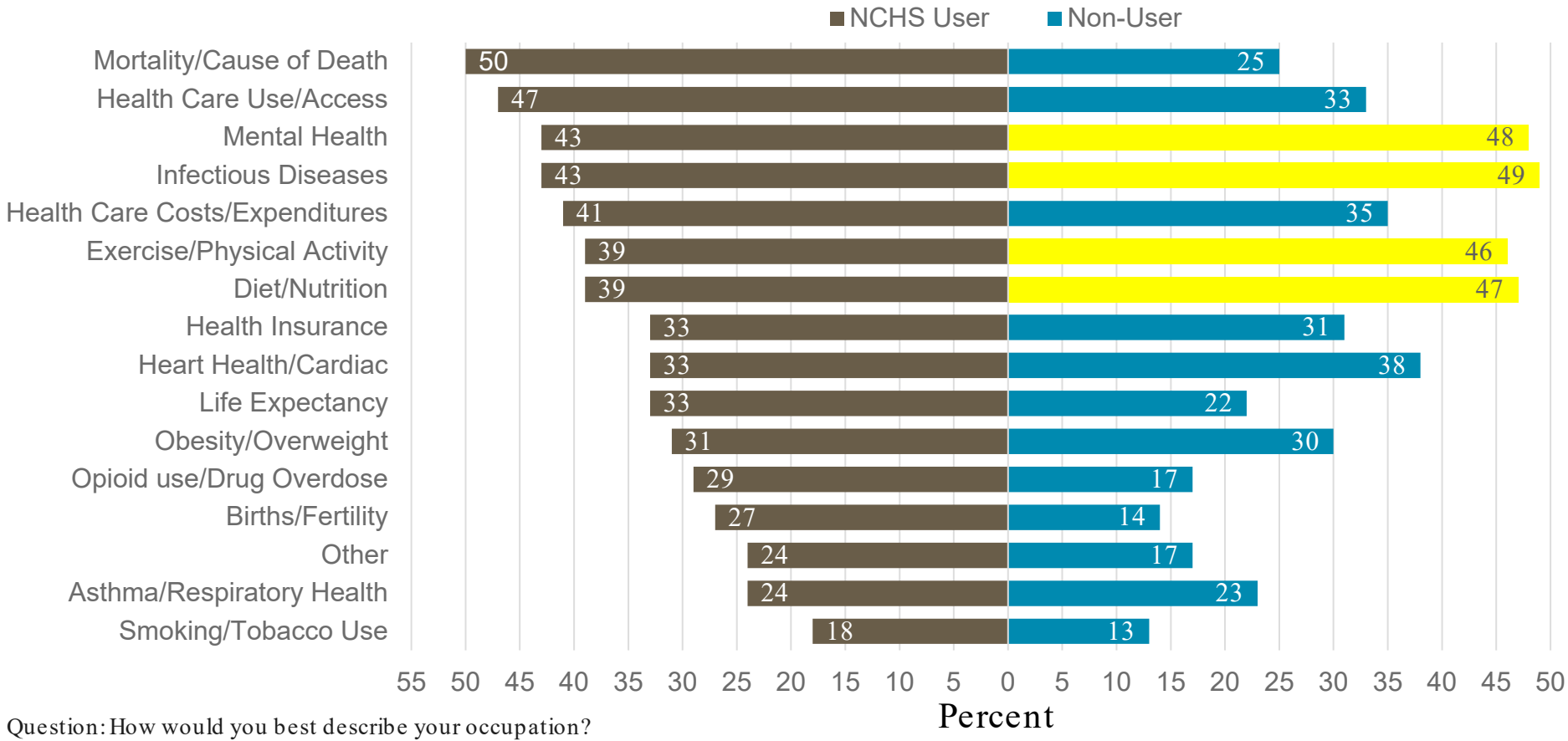


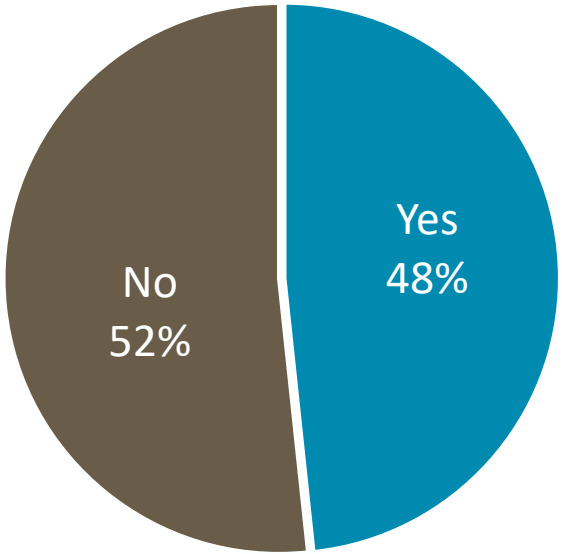
Question: How would you best describe your occupation?

Preference for Data Access

Answer Choices	NCHS User % (N=1664)	Non-User % (N=930)
Data files for analysis: I like to do my own statistical analyses.	30%	12%
Interactive data tools: I like to customize the way I view data.	24%	19%
In-depth report: I like to read more about the context and meaning of the statistics.	21%	31%
Simple graphics: I like to visualize data with pre-prepared graphics.	14%	24%
Simple summary tables: I like to look up statistics without additional text or interpretation.	9%	12%
Other (please specify)	3%	2%

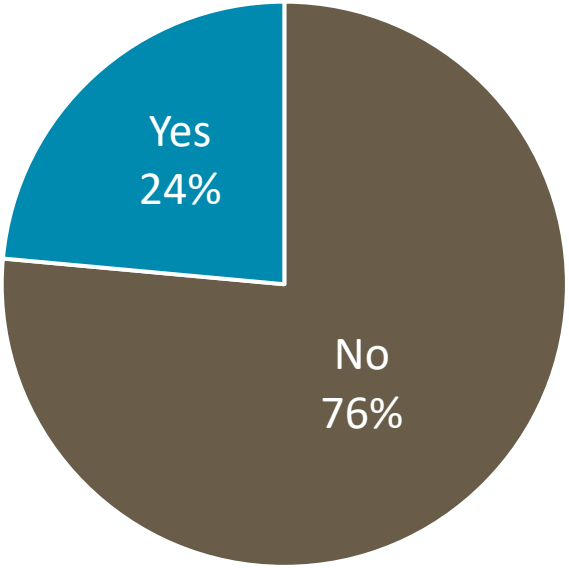
Question: How do you prefer health data to be made available? (Select your top choice)

Statistical Analysis



NCHS Users

N=1,664



Non-User

N=930

Question: Do you do your own statistical analyses using analytic software?

Additional insight into NCHS Users*

* Respondents reported “Yes” to the question, “Have you ever used data or publications from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)”

Frequency of NCHS Usage

40%

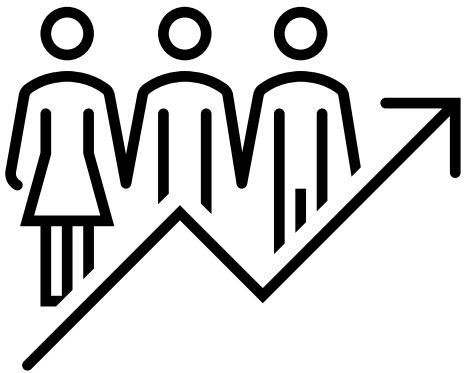
1–2 times in last 12 months

32%

3–6 times in last 12 months

28%

7+ times in last 12 months

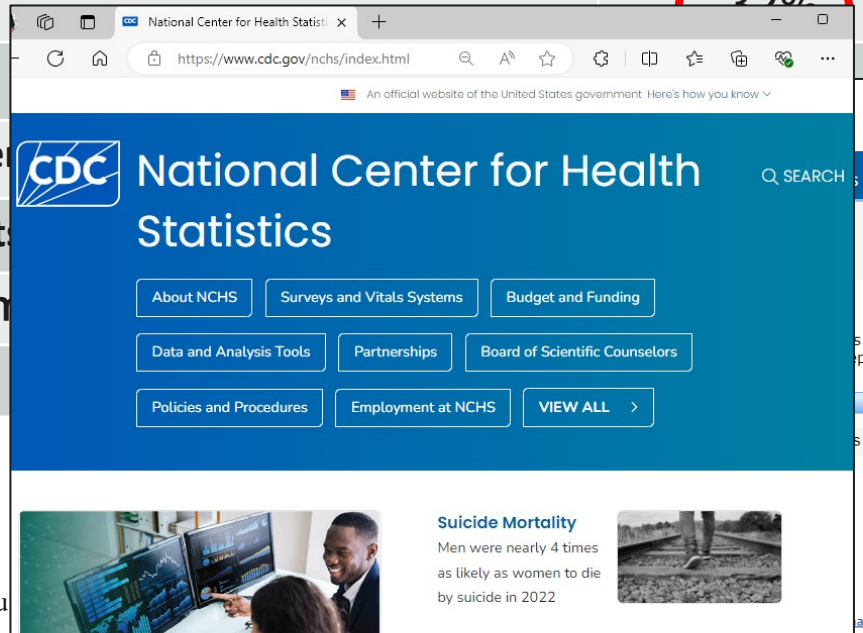


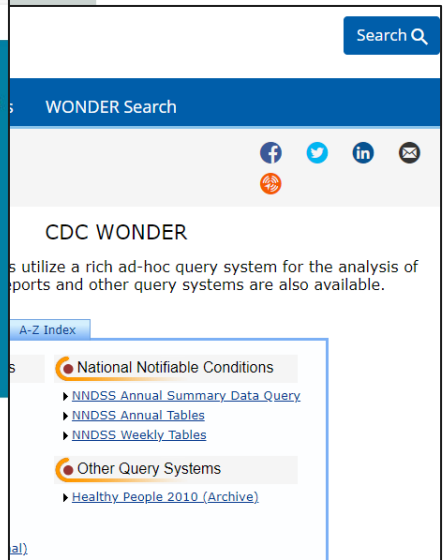
Question: How often have you used any NCHS data or publications in the past 12 months?

Access Channels

Answer Choices	NCHS Users % (N=1491)
NCHS Website - www.cdc.gov/nchs	84%
CDC WONDER	32%
CDC WISQARS	
Research Data Center	
Data Use Agreements	
Interagency Agreem	
Other	

*Check all that apply





Question: How did you access the NCHS data or pu

Analytical Software Preference

Answer Choices	NCHS Users who do statistical analyses % (N=1,083)
SAS	47%
Excel	36%
R or R Studio	30%
Stata	16%
SPSS	17%
Other (SUDAAN, JMP, Python, PowerBI, ArcGIS)	10%
N/A	1%

* Check all that apply

Question: What is your preferred analytical software?

Reasons for Accessing NCHS Data/Publication

Answer Choices	NCHS Users %
To obtain statistics on a health topic	84%
To obtain a specific report, publication, or data table	56%
To obtain public use micro-data files or obtain information about these files	22%
To identify survey methods or data collection forms to apply to your own research	10%
Other	5%

*Check all that apply

Question: For what reasons have you accessed NCHS data or publications in the past?

For what purposes did you access NCHS data or publications?

Answer Choices	% (N=1491)
Work project	43%
Health program planning, administration	39%
Academic research	34%
Personal interest	33%
To inform/develop policy or legislation	22%
Other	7%
School project	6%
Media/journalism	4%
Market research/product development	4%

NCHS User Suggestions for NCHS Improvements

- Access to data, data that was user friendly and a great resource
- Streamline accessibility between municipalities (federal, state, local) and comparison analyses
- Publish a guide to what's available to disseminate; less variation of data sources
- Availability of health equity data and pub-med
- Clarity on health data sources and their connections
- Email alerts, especially when new data line NHANES was available; publicize what is available early; make registry so email comes regularly
- Easy guidelines on finding data and reports
- Easy tutorials that can be shared
- Simplifying technical instructions (using charts summarizing data)
- Timely reporting of data including mortality data, Long COVID, nutrition, obesity, and gun violence
- Timely release of newsletters, data (like NHANES)
- Training on how to access data; statistical software and training
- More social determinants of health information
- Public health surveillance systems and population data, easy access to raw data
- More statistics on disability; more longitudinal studies
- Dental and oral health information
- Make sure to include SOGI
- Modernize websites, including the CDC WONDER interface
- Update website and search functions, update data definitions

Question: If NCHS could do one thing to improve their products and services for you personally, what would that be?

Additional insight into Non-users*

* Respondents reported “No” to the question, “Have you ever used data or publications from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)”

Non-User Familiarity with NCHS Publications or Resources

*Check all that apply

Answer Choices	%
I am not familiar with any of these	50%
Healthy People	25%
National Vital Statistics Reports	17%
NCHS Website	14%
National Health Statistics Reports	13%
Data Briefs	12%
CDC WONDER	10%
Vital and Health Statistics Series	8%
Research Data Center (RDC)	5%
Health, United States	5%
Health E-Stats	5%
CDC WISQARS	4%
Vital Statistics Rapid Release	2%
Visual Abstracts	2%
Other	1%

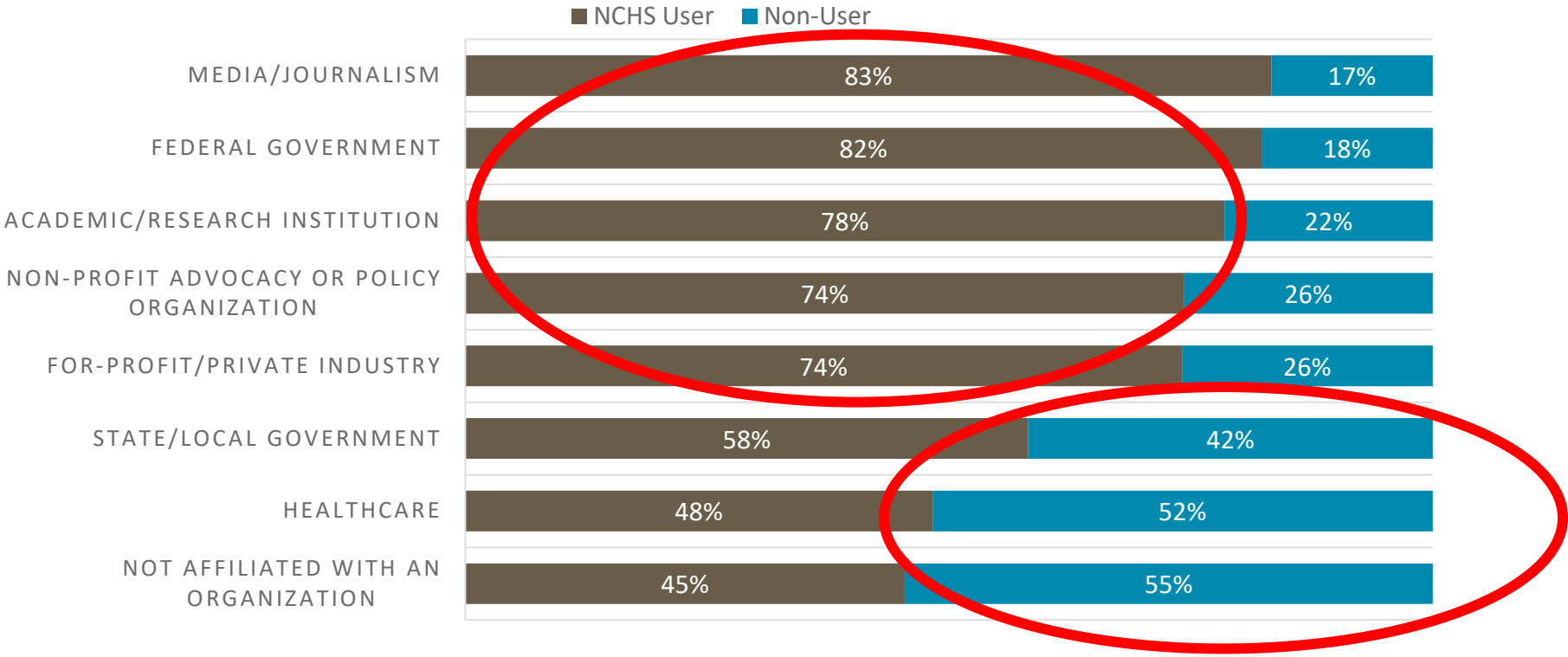
Question: Are you familiar with any of these NCHS publications or resources?

Non-User Feedback

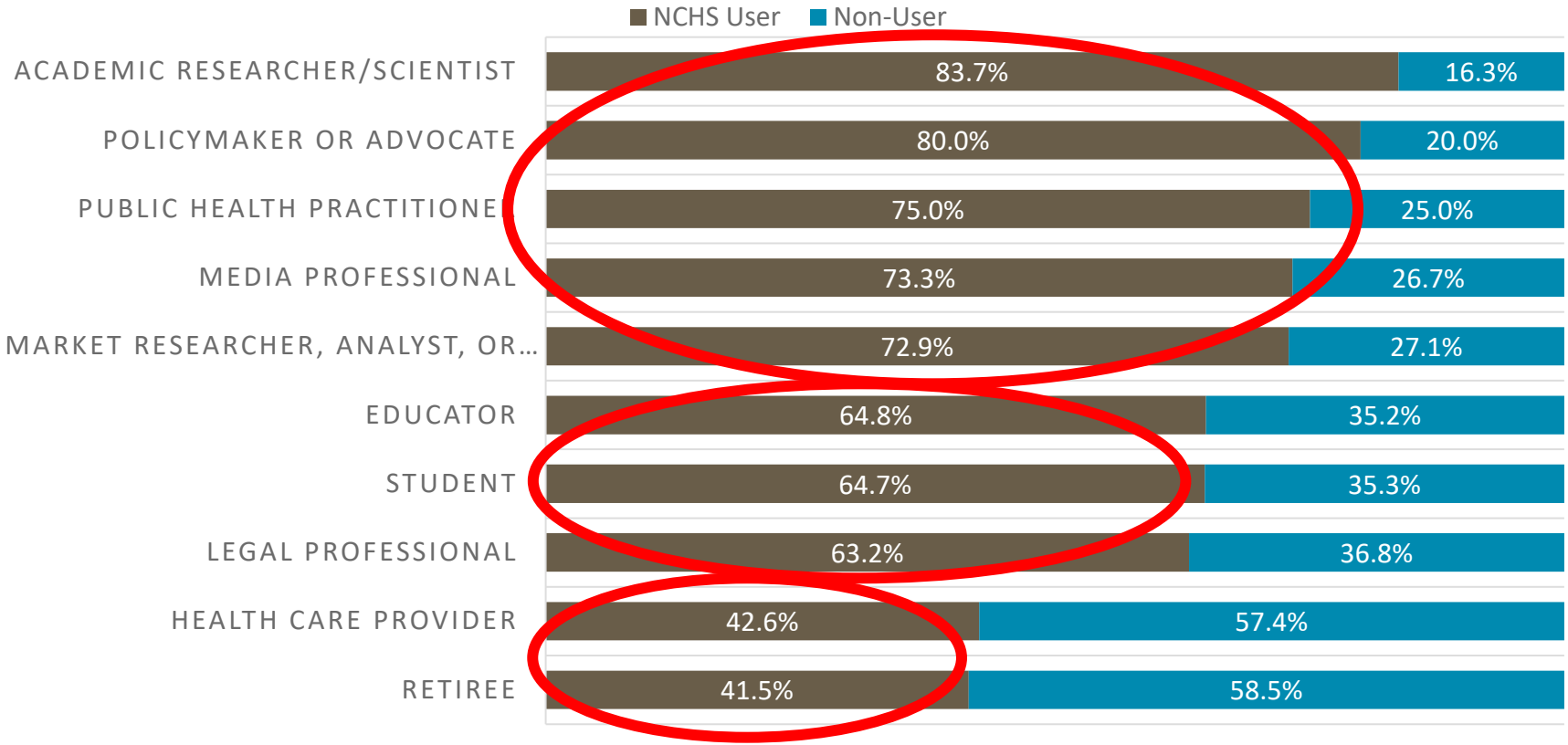
Topics Identified in the Open Response
Promotion: Increase availability, SDOH promotion, advertising, updating, webinars, and training for health data/publications
Simplifying materials: Participants discussing simplifying data/materials. This includes familiarization and making it easier to access and use the data.
Resolving data challenges: Participants discussing all data issues, troubleshooting, complexity, including increasing availability of publications and data
Increasing access via emails: Participants wanting access to data through emails, links through emails, publications through emails
Linking data info across platforms: Participants discussing links, websites, summaries, and other materials to connect services/access to information

Question: Do you have suggestions on how we can increase your potential use of NCHS health data or publications?

Organizational Affiliation and NCHS Engagement



Occupation and NCHS Engagement



Summary of Findings

- Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents had used NCHS data or publications.
- Users and Non-Users had diverse organizational affiliations and occupations.
- Top health topics of interest for both groups included mortality, health care use/access, mental health, infectious diseases, health care costs, exercise/PA, and diet/nutrition.
- Preferences for accessing health data varied, with 30% of Users preferring data files for statistical analyses while non-users preferred in-depth reports (31%) and simple graphics (24%).
- Over one-half of Users do their own statistical analysis compared to only about one quarter of Non-Users.
- Users predominantly accessed NCHS resources via the NCHS website (84%) and CDC WONDER (32%), and mainly to obtain statistics on a health topic (84%) or for a specific report or publication (56%).
- One-half of Non-Users were unfamiliar with any specific NCHS publication or resource.

Conclusions

- The survey results provide insights into health data user preferences and needs, including their utilization of specific resources and preferred formats for accessing data.
- Routinely engaging stakeholders and conducting surveys like the Health Data User Survey are important for statistical agencies like NCHS to ensure relevance of products and services.
- The results offer valuable guidance not only for NCHS but also for other data and statistical agencies seeking to better understand and serve their user base effectively.

NCHS Initiatives that Reflect or Align with Study Findings

- Reimagined NCHS website and web delivery of information to users
- The Data Query System, a tool to more easily access data on various health topics
- More easily digestible products that respond to ways users' access/ways non-users want to access
- Specific products, services, trainings and education that best target specific audiences
- Obtaining continued feedback from users

NCHS Initiatives that Reflect or Align with Study Findings

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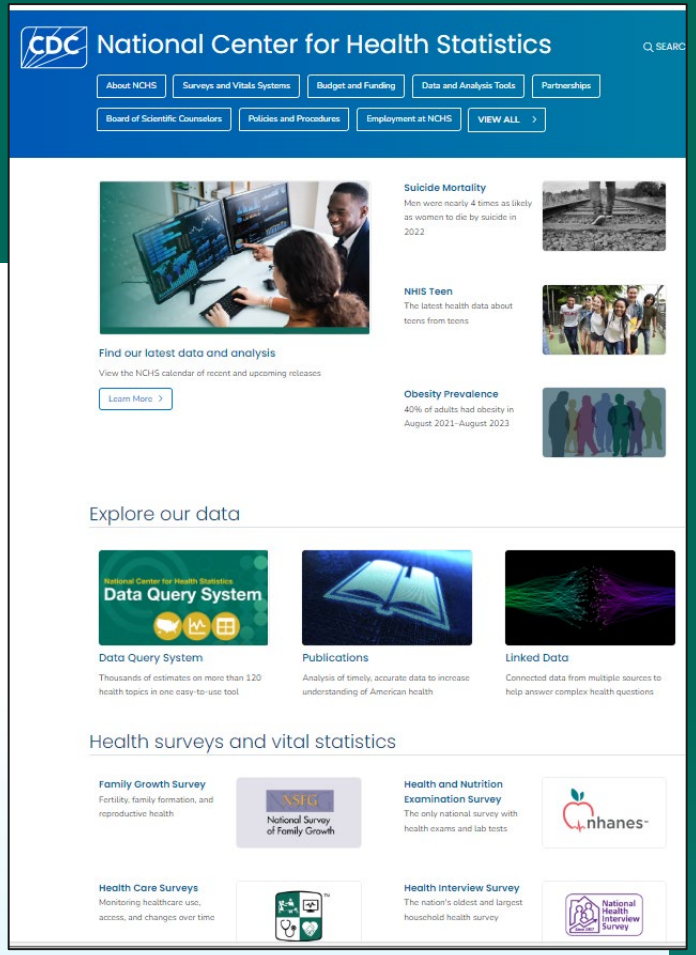
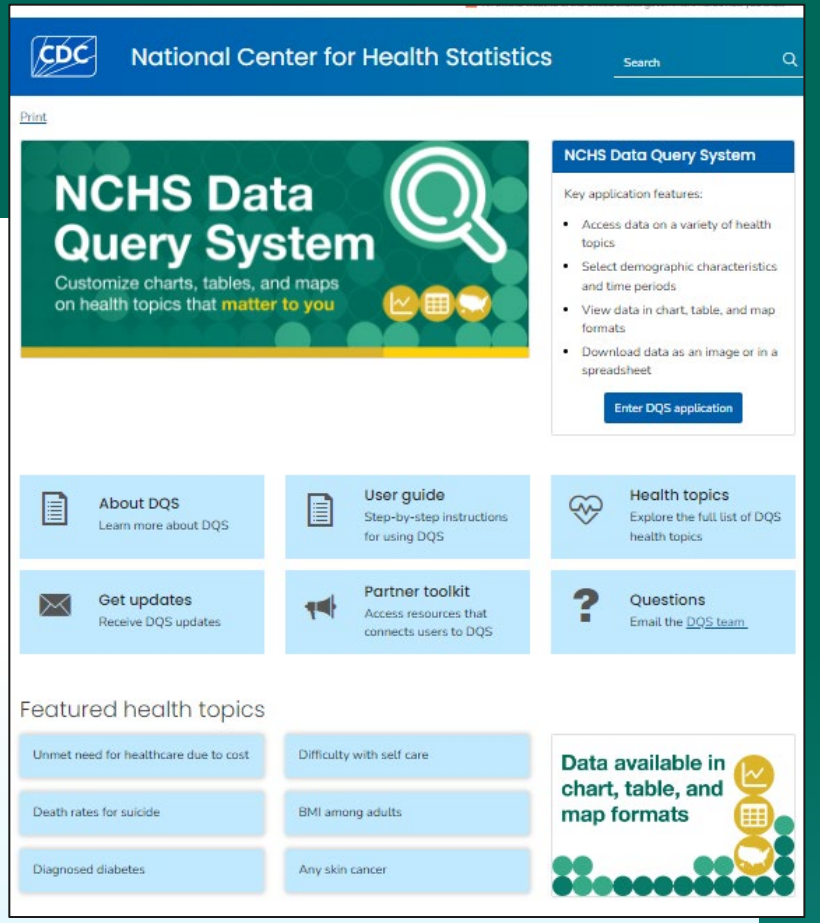


National Center for Health Statistics | National Center for Health Statistics | CDC

NCHS Initiatives that Reflect or Align with Study Findings

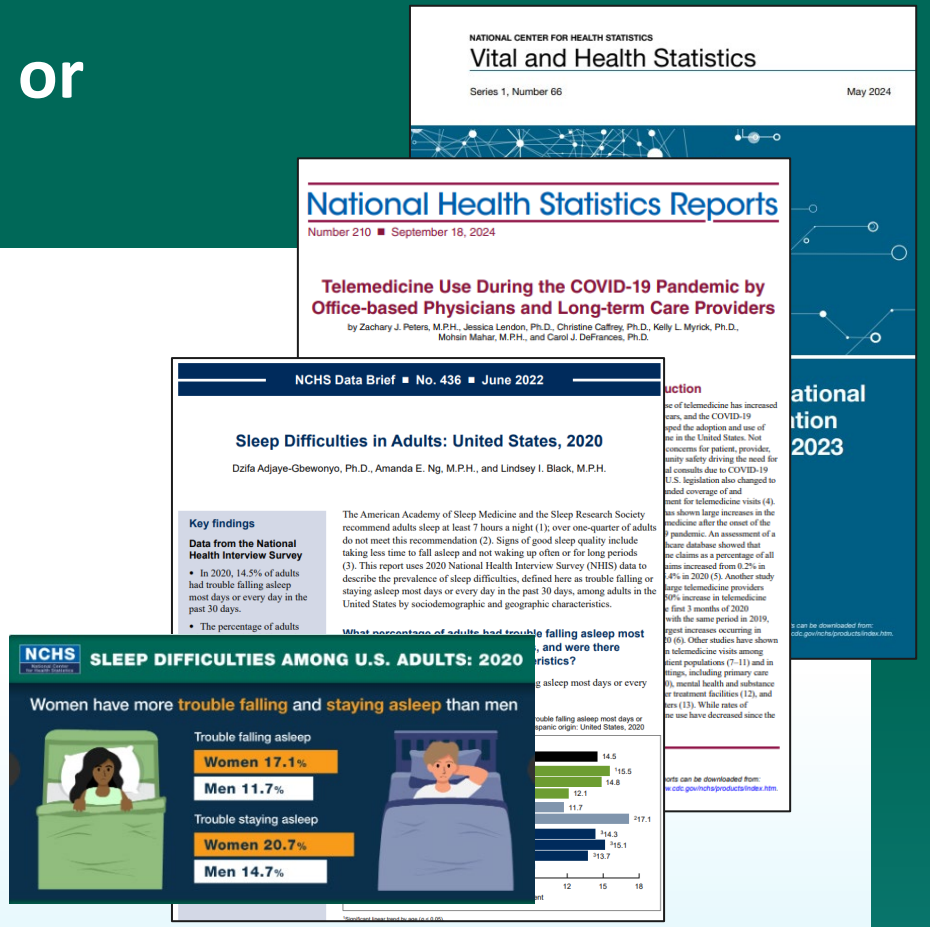
- Reimagined our website and web delivery of information to users
- The Data Query System, a tool to more easily access data on various health topics



Data Query System (cdc.gov)

NCHS Initiatives that Reflect or Align with Study Findings

- Reimagined our website and web delivery of information to users
- Delivered the Data Query System, a tool to more easily access data on various health topics.
- More easily digestible products that respond to ways users' access/ways non-users want to access



Products - Publications and Information Products from the National Center for Health Statistics (cdc.gov)

NCHS Initiatives that Reflect or Align with Study Findings

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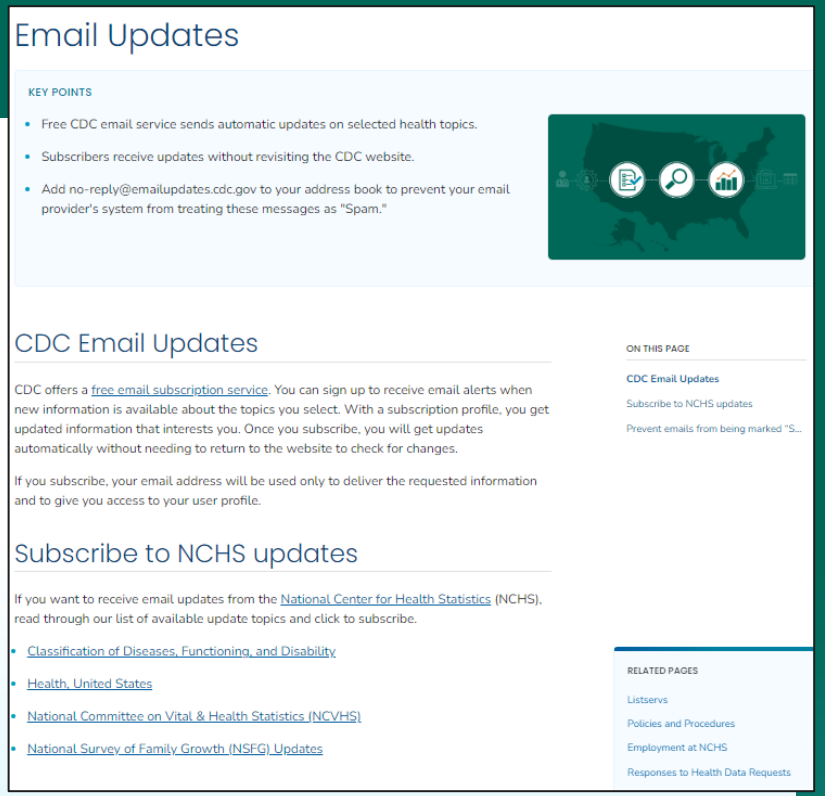
- Delivering products to be more easily digestible to respond to ways users access/ways non-users want to access
- Specific products, services, trainings and education that best target specific audiences.

NCHS Initiatives that Reflect or Align with Study Findings

- Reimagined our website and web delivery of information to users
- Delivered the Data Query System, a tool to more easily access data on various health topics.
- Delivering products to be more easily digestible to respond to ways users' access/ways non-users want to access
- Considering how best to target specific audiences with specific products, services, trainings and education.
- Obtaining continued feedback from users



Email Updates

KEY POINTS

- Free CDC email service sends automatic updates on selected health topics.
- Subscribers receive updates without revisiting the CDC website.
- Add no-reply@emailupdates.cdc.gov to your address book to prevent your email provider's system from treating these messages as "Spam."

CDC Email Updates

CDC offers a free email subscription service. You can sign up to receive email alerts when new information is available about the topics you select. With a subscription profile, you get updated information that interests you. Once you subscribe, you will get updates automatically without needing to return to the website to check for changes.

If you subscribe, your email address will be used only to deliver the requested information and to give you access to your user profile.

Subscribe to NCHS updates

If you want to receive email updates from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), read through our list of available update topics and click to subscribe.

- Classification of Diseases, Functioning, and Disability
- Health, United States
- National Committee on Vital & Health Statistics (NCVHS)
- National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) Updates

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