

Spain the dunces in international science test

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Lab workers are seen in a scientific research center. Spaniards came bottom of the class in an 11-nation science test and nearly half of them could not name a single important scientist in history, a survey showed Tuesday.

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The survey of 1,500 people in each of 11 nations -- the United States and 10 European nations -- subjected participants to a science test as well as checking their [familiarity](#) with science in general.

In the science quiz, Spain trailed in last with an average mark of 11.2 out of 20 compared to top-of-the-class Denmark, which scored 15.6 out of 20, said the survey conducted for the BBVA Foundation.

Some of the more embarrassing misses:

- Only 34.4 percent of Spaniards questioned realized that [nuclear energy](#) does not cause global warming;
- Only 32.9 percent recognised that lasers do not work with [sound waves](#);
- And a rock bottom 24.3 percent knew that antibiotics do not actually kill viruses.

The average score was 13.4 out of 20 across the 10 European nations and 14.3 for the United States.

The full ranking was: Denmark 15.6 out of 20; Netherlands 15.3; Germany 14.8; Czech Republic 14.6; United States 14.3; Austria 14.2; Britain 14.1; France 13.8; Poland 12.4; Italy 12.0; and Spain 11.2.

The survey also tried to measure respondents' familiarity with science in general.

One key question: Can you name three scientists who in your opinion were the most important in history?

A total 45.9 percent of Spaniards could not or would not name a single important scientist.

That compared to 27.4 percent in the United States who could not come up with a single name and just 14.7 percent left clueless in Denmark.

Of those scientists who were identified, [Albert Einstein](#) was by far the most mentioned, racking up an average 42 percent of the total in European nations and 50 percent in the United States.

Trailing far behind were [Isaac Newton](#), Marie Curie, Louis Pasteur and [Galileo Galilei](#).

The study said there was a big gap in scientific knowledge between Spain's young and old, however, with the young rapidly catching up with their European partners.

Only 13 percent of Spaniards aged 18-24 were identified as having a low level of [scientific knowledge](#) compared to 57 percent of adults aged over 65, the report said.

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