

Carbon capture and storage struggling to be heard amidst growing public debate over fracking, new study finds

September 8 2014, by Louise Ogden

Awareness of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology remains "persistently low" amongst the British public whereas knowledge of fracking is high and growing, according to a recent survey conducted by Cambridge University on behalf of the UK CCS Research Centre.

These low levels of awareness about CCS could potentially undermine the UK's efforts to utilise the technology as a means of tackling [carbon emissions](#) from [power plants](#) and other facilities that burn [fossil fuels](#), says one of the [academics](#) involved in the research.

The representative survey of over 2,000 people, conducted by the polling firm YouGov in late June, suggests that over 40% of the British public have never heard of CCS, with only 20% claiming to have read something about it in the past year. In stark contrast, awareness of [fracking](#) continues to grow dramatically, with those claiming to have never heard about it declining from 22% to just 5% within the past year, and views on the subject are becoming increasingly polarised.

Dr David Reiner of the Energy Policy Research Group at Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, who led the study, said: "As we seek to meet challenging longer-term carbon targets and build a low-carbon energy system, the public will be demanding value for money given the large sums involved. The UK Government has ring-fenced £1 billion of public funds for capital construction of CCS demonstration projects and

will be committing many millions more within the next year to support operating costs. Yet, despite CCS featuring regularly in the media, awareness of its role or progress remains very low amongst the public and, unsurprisingly, support for CCS remains tepid and has actually declined over the past year."

Dr Reiner will be speaking about the results of the survey as part of the event, The Carbon Conundrum, at the British Science Festival on Sunday 7 September.

As awareness of fracking grows by leaps and bounds, the survey found that opposition has increased relative to last year (from 26% to 34%), but so too has support increased (from 24% to 31%) as more people take sides in the shale gas debate. By contrast, support for using CCS with coal-fired electricity generation dropped from 41% in 2013 to 28% this year. Less than 2% of the British public could name any aspect of the CCS demo projects.

This is the first public survey in the UK that compares attitudes on fracking and CCS. It is also the first to assess evolving attitudes to CCS in general, and to the two UK demonstration projects in particular. Results from the survey are currently being analysed and will be published as an EPRG working paper within the next 2 months.

Dr Reiner will be speaking about the results of the [survey](#) as part of the event, The Carbon Conundrum, at the British Science Festival on Sunday 7 September.

More information: The survey data is available online: data.parliament.uk/writtenevid ... age/written/1644.pdf

Provided by British Science Association

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