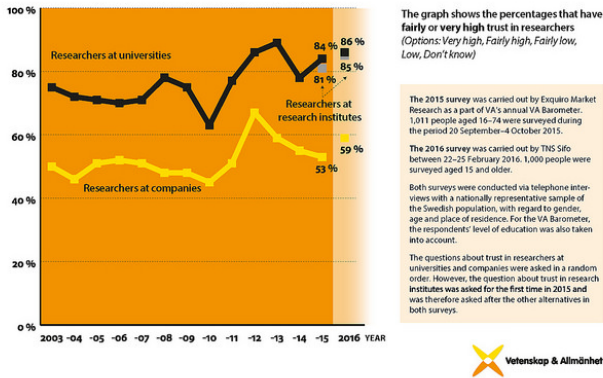


Swedes' trust in researchers remains high, despite Macchiarini affair

6 April 2016



In the new survey, 86 percent of respondents said that they had very or fairly high trust in researchers at universities. However, there was a slight decrease in the proportion that had "very high" trust and a slight increase in the proportion that had "fairly high" trust, compared with the previous survey.

One in four respondents said that they had a more negative attitude towards researchers and research as a result of something they had seen or heard in the media over the previous month. When the question was asked in autumn 2014 (it was not asked in 2015), only seven percent gave the same answer. Both then and now, a large number had either seen news that had positively influenced them, or news that had influenced them in both ways.

Despite the Swedish public being aware of the extensive media coverage about the researcher Paolo Macchiarini, trust in researchers remains high, according to a new survey conducted by the Swedish non-profit association Vetenskap & Allmänhet, VA (Public & Science).

VA (Public & Science) has been studying the Swedish public's attitudes to research and researchers every year since 2002. The surveys show a high level of [trust](#) in research that is undertaken as well as for researchers as a profession. In the latest annual survey, conducted by the company Exquiro Market Research over two weeks during September/October 2015, 84 percent of Swedes had very or fairly high trust in researchers at universities.

In order to investigate whether this trust has been affected by the publicity surrounding the researcher and surgeon suspected of scientific misconduct, Paolo Macchiarini, the market research company TNS Sifo was asked to undertake an additional poll in the last week of February.

Altogether, barely half of the respondents felt that they had been influenced by the media's reporting. These people were subsequently asked what aspect of the reporting had influenced them. Out of 373 responses, 271 can be directly linked to the events surrounding Macchiarini.

"Paradoxically, the reason that the overall level of trust in [researchers](#) has not fallen more is the extensive media coverage itself," said Cissi Billgren Askwall, Secretary General of VA.

"The fact that scientific wrongdoers get discovered and that misconduct results in consequences, gives important signals that the system as a whole works. The mass media has a crucial role to play, as conveyors of information, investigators and as a forum for debate," said Cissi Billgren Askwall.

Provided by Vetenskap & Allmaenhet

APA citation: Swedes' trust in researchers remains high, despite Macchiarini affair (2016, April 6)
retrieved 21 September 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-04-swedes-high-macchiarini-affair.html>

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