

AAPOR'S TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE: OVERVIEW AND REPORT ON PROGRESS

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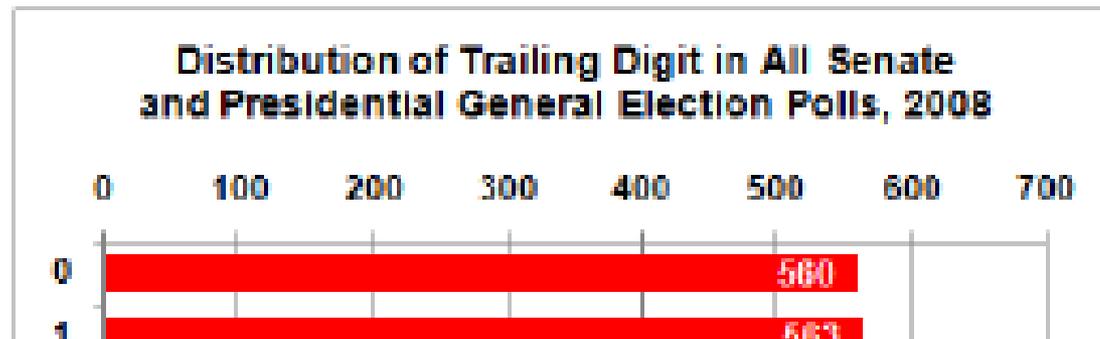
AAPOR Transparency Initiative Coordinating Committee 2014-2015

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Statistical analysis suggests possible fraud in polling data

The polling firm Strategic Vision, LLC conducts regular public opinion polls on elections, public policy and other issues and releases the results to the media. Despite having the results of its public opinion polls published in outlets like the AP, Fox News, and even the [New York Times](#), the firm is unlike most polling organizations in that it refuses to reveal even the most basic details of its methodology (sample size or dates of surveys, for example). For this it has recently been [censured](#) by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Nonetheless, the firm claims that the polling data released is accurate.

Nate Silver of [fivethirtyeight.com](#) has [tackled this claim](#) by looking at the distribution of trailing digits of the rounded percentages in the published polls. (For example, a poll reporting that Barack Obama leads John McCain 48-43 contributes one 8 and one 3 to the data.) While a collection of 3000 political polls from various firms reveals a somewhat uniform distribution of trailing digits:



In addition to the C1/C2 polymorphism in human transferrin, position 589 toggles exclusively between proline and serine across the primate lineage (Fig. 2E and fig. S13), a potential signature of antagonistic pleiotropy at a largely constrained position, as observed for other host-pathogen interfaces (7). Previous work has also implicated the C2 transferrin variant as a risk factor for disorders involving iron metabolism, including Alzheimer's disease; however, these associations remain controversial and appear dependent on the populations tested and interactions with other susceptibility loci (25, 26). Our findings provide a functional basis for human transferrin variation and establish an important role for nutritional immunity in recent human evolution.

Although canonical innate immunity factors have been appreciated as nodes of host-virus evolution, our work demonstrates that nutritional immunity has played a fundamental role in the survival of primate populations challenged by bacterial pathogens. *H. influenzae* and *N. meningitidis* remain a major source of morbidity and mortality in regions where vaccine coverage is poor (27, 28) and drug-resistant *N. gonorrhoeae* is developing into an urgent public health threat (29). By illuminating the battle for iron as a major driving force of host-pathogen evolution, from 40 million years of primate divergence to emerging human epidemics today, our studies reveal new reservoirs of genetic resistance to infectious diseases.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank M. Mulvey and members of the Mulvey laboratory for assistance with bacterial genetics and helpful discussions; V. Chandrasekaran and W. Sundquist for assistance with baculoviral protein purification; J. Kaplan and D. Ward for helpful advice and discussions; J. St. Geme III and E. Porsch for *Haemophilus* strains and helpful discussions; M. So for providing *Neisseria* DNA and strains; S. Wong for providing rhesus macaque liver samples; Z. Kronenberg for assistance with human population genetics; and C. Cornelissen for the gift of the TbpA antibody as well as helpful

discussions. J. Iwasa created the molecular animation of transferrin and TbpA evolution. We are grateful to N. Barber, H. Malik, S. Sawyer, N. Phadnis, and members of the Elde laboratory for comments on the manuscript. GenBank accession numbers of transferrin and TbpA variants are KM972645 to KM972665. Also see the supplementary materials. This work is supported by awards from the Pew Charitable Trusts and NIH to N.C.E. (GM090042) and M.F.B. (1F32GM108288). N.C.E. is a Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences and Mario R. Capecchi Endowed Chair in Genetics.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

www.sciencemag.org/content/346/6215/1362/suppl/DC1
Materials and Methods
Figs. S1 to S13
Tables S1 to S18
Movie S1
References (30–36)

29 July 2014; accepted 14 November 2014
10.1126/science.1259329

POLITICAL SCIENCE

When contact changes minds: An experiment on transmission of support for gay equality

Michael J. LaCour¹ and Donald P. Green²

Can a single conversation change minds on divisive social issues, such as same-sex marriage? A randomized placebo-controlled trial assessed whether gay ($n = 22$) or straight ($n = 19$) messengers were effective at encouraging voters ($n = 972$) to support same-sex marriage and whether attitude change persisted and spread to others in voters' social networks. The results, measured by an unrelated panel survey, show that both gay and

The Upshot

PULSE OF THE PEOPLE

Polling's Secrecy Problem

MAY 26, 2018



Nate Cohn

The [debunking](#) of a recent academic paper on changing views about [same-sex marriage](#) has raised concerns about whether other political science research is being properly vetted and verified. But the scandal may actually point to vulnerabilities in a different field: public polls.

After all, the graduate student who wrote the paper on [same-sex marriage](#), Michael LaCour, was called to account. Basic academic standards for

Why we are doing this: There is not enough transparency in the Social, Behavioral & Marketing Sciences.

- **Premise 1:** Too often, there is inadequate transparency of research and statistical methods when the results of social and behavioral science research are disseminated.
- **Premise 2:** This is a serious detriment to progress in these scientific domains.
- **Premise 3:** Lack of transparency contributes to public disillusionment.

Openness is fundamental to scientific inquiry.

- AAPOR's Transparency Initiative (TI) is envisioned to encourage openness in survey research so the field can advance.
- Openness is fundamental to credibility
 - TI is envisioned to enhance the credibility of our profession by encouraging disclosure of methodological information and educating the public on how to use it.

Transparency Initiative Goals

- **Main:**
 - to advance the science and reputation of survey research.
- **Secondary:**
 - Provide professional education on survey documentation and disclosure practice
 - Educate survey sponsors & public on value of transparency

History of the Transparency Initiative

- 2010 AAPOR Conference: AAPOR President Peter Miller announces TI.
- 2010-11: Steering Committees worked to organize and conceptualize TI.
- 2012-13: Multi-year TI Coordinating Committee appointed and charged with conducting second Pilot Test.
- 2013: Second Pilot Test conducted.
- 2014: TI officially launched; AAPOR journals adopt TI standards
- 2015: 45 members admitted as of June 1, 2015



Joining the Transparency Initiative

1. Organization completes TI Certification Agreement
 - Including promise that all relevant employees have completed AAPOR's online educational modules
2. Organization appoints representative to coordinate compliance with AAPOR
3. Organization provides TI compliant documentation from two recent surveys for review
4. Organization pays application fee to AAPOR
 - **Waived during first 12 months**
5. TICC reviews and approves applications
6. Once approved, organization becomes TI certified
 - Receives letter from AAPOR President
 - Receives TI logo to display on website
 - Organization's name added to AAPOR web site list of TI members

Transparency Initiative Monitoring & Enforcement Methods

- Focus will be on continuous education
- TI members asked to reconfirm commitment on annual basis by re-signing the Certification Agreement.
 - There will be an annual maintenance fee
- Agree to cooperate in an evaluation of the transparency of a sample of studies once every two years
 - Reports will be shared with organization and otherwise kept confidential
- Complaints from public about disclosure will be reviewed by TICC within 30 days
 - Where complaint found to have merit, organizations will be given the opportunity to address the problem

Revised AAPOR Code Disclosure Items for Surveys

Report Immediately

- Who sponsored & conducted
- Exact question wording
- Definition of population & geographic location
- Dates of data collection
- Sample frame description & any non-coverage
- Name of sample supplier
- [if panel]: recruitment methods
- Detailed sample design
- Method(s)/mode(s)/language(s)
- [if probability]: sample size & error & any design effects adjustments
- [if non-prob]: sample size & precision ONLY if detailed description of underlying model
- Weighting & sources of parameters

Within 30 Days of request

- Panel management procedures
- Interviewer training, supervision & monitoring
- Screening procedures
- Relevant stimuli (show cards)
- Strategies used to gain cooperation
- Data quality procedures
- Sample dispositions
- [if reported]: AAPOR response and cooperation rates
- Unweighted sample sizes for subgroup estimates
- Specifications for replication of indices or statistical models

Revised AAPOR Code Disclosure Items for Qualitative Research*

Include in any report or make available upon report release

- Who sponsored & conducted research
- Definition of population & geographic location
- Instrumentation used & languages
- Description of relevant stimuli (eg visual/sensory exhibits/show cards)
- Dates of data collection & physical location
- Subject eligibility
- Number of research subjects, by data collection strategy
- Methods of interviewer/coder training, supervision and monitoring
- Duration of research participation
- Any compensation or incentives provided to research subjects
- Whether or not data collection included audio or video recordings used

*includes “focus groups, in-depth interviews, case studies, narrative research, and ethnography”

Revised AAPOR Code Disclosure Items for Content Analyses*

Include in any report or make available upon report release

- Who sponsored & conducted research
- How content was collected or obtained
 - Dates analyzed, languages, inclusion decision rules
- Discussion of threats to validity/quality & steps to address
- How analysis was conducted
 - Coding process & coding schemes used
- Inter-coder reliability & number of coders
- Unit of analysis
- [if relevant]: weight calculations & variables used
- Other relevant information if surveys or qualitative data used

*Defined as the “systematic analysis of text, images or other content”

Revised AAPOR Code

Section III.E

Reflecting the fundamental goals of transparency and replicability, AAPOR members share the expectation that access to datasets and related documentation will be provided to allow for independent review and verification of research claims upon request. Datasets may be held without release for a period of up to one year after findings are publicly released to allow full opportunity for primary analysis. In order to protect the privacy of individual respondents, such datasets must be de-identified to remove variables that can reasonably be expected to identify a respondent. Those who commission publicly disseminated research have an obligation to disclose the rationale for why eventual public release or access to the datasets is not possible, if that is the case.

Transparency Initiative Members

(as of June 1, 2015)

- Goucher College
- Kaiser Family Foundation
- Gary Langer Associates
- SSRS
- ICF International
- Public Religion Research Initiative
- Washington Post
- Abt-SRBI
- Sienna College
- Quinnipiac University
- National Research Center, Inc.
- RTI International
- Gallup Organization
- Monmouth University
- Marist College
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Public Policy Institute of California
- University of Northern Iowa
- Indiana University
- Muhlenberg College
- University Michigan/Ctr for Political Studies
- California Health Interview Survey
- Elon University
- Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- Emerson College
- High Point University
- Temple University
- Pew Research Center
- D3 Systems
- Winthrop University
- American Legacy Foundation
- Center for Effective Philanthropy
- University of Illinois at Springfield
- AARP
- iMediaEthics
- University of Virginia
- Rutgers University
- University of Pittsburgh
- Vanderbilt University
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- NORC at the University of Chicago
- Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Cornell University
- Huffington Post
- Urban Institute

TI Members by Sector

(as of June 1, 2015)

	N	%
Academic	24	53.3
Not-for-profit	11	24.4
For-profit	8	17.8
Media	2	4.4
Government	0	0.0

Future Plans

- Continue to review and accept new members
- Update all TI materials to conform to revised AAPOR Code
- Continue outreach to non-members
- Continue outreach to professional associations
- Conduct evaluation of TI's first year of operation
- Develop new educational programs centering on transparency
- Identify new strategies to encourage “spirit” of transparency

QUESTIONS WELCOME.

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