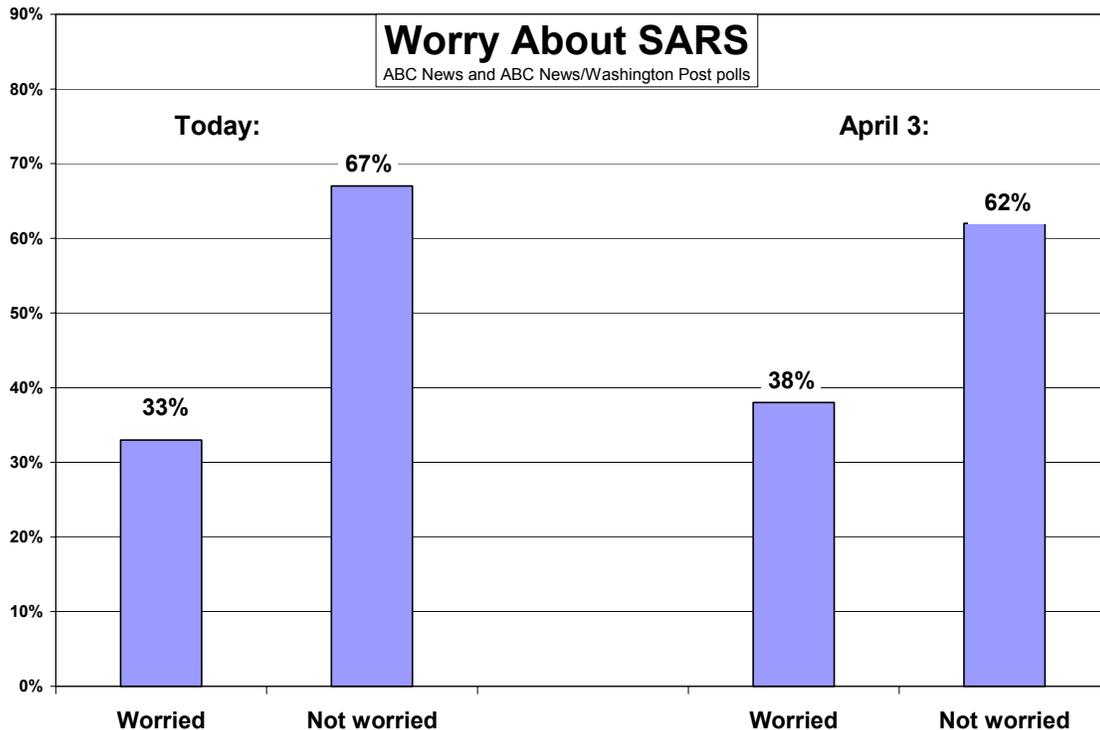


## Public Stays Cool on SARS

Public concerns about SARS remain muted in the United States: Just a third of Americans are worried about catching the virus, essentially unchanged since early this month. And fewer – about one in 10 – express a “great deal” of worry about it.

Because experience tends to have the strongest influence on public attitudes, this response likely reflects the relatively slow spread of the disease here – as of Friday, 39 “probable” cases and no deaths. Worry about SARS has been higher in some affected locales, including 75 percent in a Gallup poll in Singapore early this month.

In this ABC News poll, 33 percent of Americans worry that they or an immediate family member might catch SARS. It was 38 percent April 3, a difference that’s barely within sampling tolerances. By contrast, 53 percent expressed worry about West Nile Virus last fall.



Attention to the outbreak remains broad: Sixty-nine percent are following news of the SARS virus, compared to 74 percent early this month.

People who are worried about catching SARS are more apt to be following the story, and vice versa. Among those who are following the news “very closely,” 50 percent express worry about getting SARS; but it was 58 percent in this group early in April.

Concerned about catching SARS	4/27	4/3
...among those following the news “very” closely	50%	58
...among those following the news “somewhat” closely	34	34
...among those not following the news closely	18	24

**GROUPS** – This poll doesn’t bear out suggestions of heightened concern on the West Coast: Worry about catching SARS is no higher there than elsewhere. Among other groups, women are 11 points more apt than men to express worry that they or someone in their immediate family might catch SARS, 38 percent to 27 percent. Worry’s also somewhat higher among lower-income and nonwhite Americans.

This poll asks about worry that “you or someone in your immediate family” might “catch” the SARS virus. Gallup polling has found fairly similar results – 32 to 43 percent worried in three polls since April 6 – in a question that doesn’t specify “immediate” family, and asks about being “exposed” to SARS rather than catching it.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone April 23-27, 2003, among a random national sample of 1,018 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:  
<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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Results follow. \* = less than 0.5 percent.

1. How closely are you following news about the illness known as SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome - very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not closely at all?

	-----Closely-----			-----Not closely-----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
4/27/03	69	24	45	31	17	14	*
4/3/03	74	26	48	25	15	10	*

2. How concerned are you that you or someone in your immediate family might catch the SARS virus - is that something that worries you a great deal, somewhat, not too much or not at all?

	-----Worried-----			-----Not worried-----			No
	NET	Great deal	Somewhat	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
4/27/03	33	11	22	67	34	33	1
4/3/03	38	11	27	62	37	24	3

\*\*\*END\*\*\*