

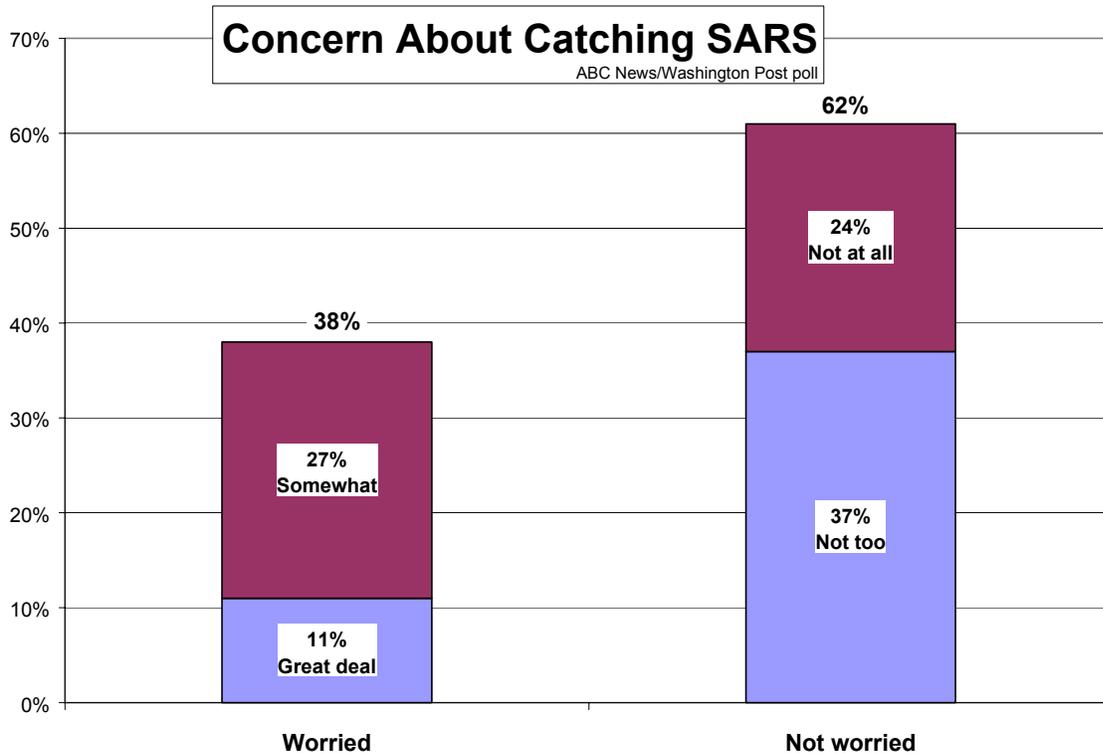
Most are Following News of SARS, But Fear of Catching it is Muted

Three-quarters of Americans are following news of the SARS virus, but with fairly muted concern: Fewer than four in 10 are worried about catching the disease, lower than the levels of recent worry about the West Nile Virus or mad cow disease.

Thirty-eight percent worry that they or an immediate family member will catch Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. By contrast, 53 percent in a Gallup poll last fall worried about exposure to the West Nile virus, and 45 percent in January 2001 worried about Mad Cow disease becoming a problem here.

High-intensity concern, moreover, is lower: Only one in 10 are worried “a great deal” about getting SARS.

The World Health Organization reports 2,353 reported cases and 84 deaths from SARS in 16 countries as of April 4.



ATTENTION – Reports of the disease are drawing broad attention. Seventy-four percent say they’re following news about SARS – 26 percent “very” closely, 48 percent “somewhat” closely.

Level of attention is a big factor in fear of catching the virus. Fifty-eight percent of those following the news “very” closely express concern about being infected; among those who aren’t tuned in, just 24 percent share that level of concern. An open question is whether they’re worried because they’re following the news closely; or following the news closely because they’re worried.

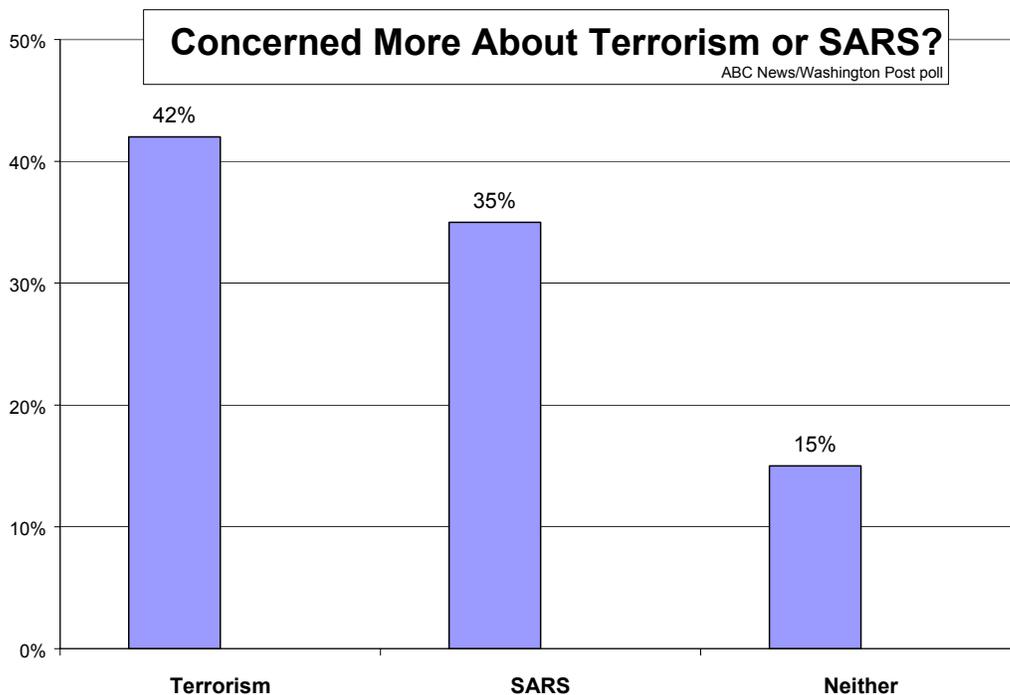
Still, deep concern even among those very closely following the news is low: Twenty percent of these people say they’re worried “a great deal” about getting SARS.

Concerned about catching SARS	
...among those following the news “very” closely	58%
...among those following the news “somewhat” closely	34
...among those not following the news closely	24

Women are more likely to be following the news very closely – 32 percent are, compared to 19 percent of men. Women are also nine points more likely to express concern that they or a family member will get the virus.

SARS vs TERRORISM – Fear of contracting the SARS virus is at about the same level as concern about being the victim of terrorism was in February – 34 percent were worried about being the victim of an attack, 10 percent worried “a great deal.”

When the two are put head-to-head though, fear of terrorism has a slight edge. Forty-two percent are more concerned about being victims of terror than they are about catching SARS. Thirty-five percent fear SARS more. Fifteen percent of Americans say they’re not worried about either.



Women are 12 points more likely to say they're more worried about terrorism; men divide about evenly.

People who are following news about SARS divide about evenly on whether their greater worry is the disease, or terrorism. But those not following the SARS news are 23 points more likely to be concerned about terrorism.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone April 3, 2003, among a random national sample of 511 adults. The results have a 4.5-point error margin. Fieldwork by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

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.

13. On another subject, 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
4/3/03	74	26	48	25	15	10	*

14. 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
4/3/03	38	11	27	62	37	24	3

15. What worries you more - that you or someone in your immediate family might be a victim of a terrorist attack, or that you or someone in your immediate family might catch the SARS virus?

	Terrorist	SARS	Neither	Both	No
	attack		(vol.)	(vol.)	opinion
4/3/03	42	35	15	7	2

END