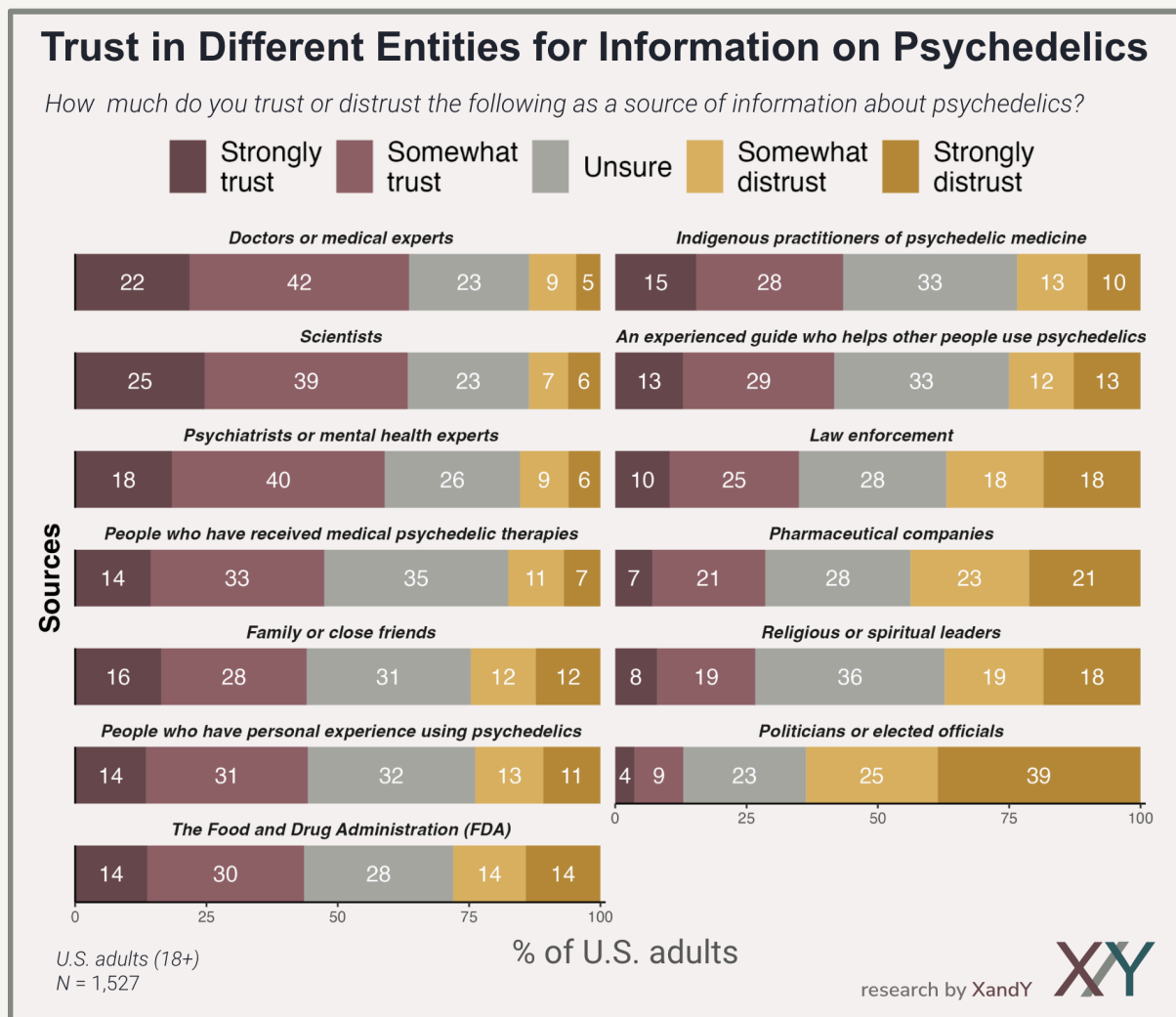


Who is Trusted (And Who is Not) as a Source of Information About Psychedelics

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In any issue regarding regulations and legislation, public support is critical. But in the case of psychedelics, the importance of public opinion is accentuated and timely because of opportunities for the general public to vote directly on a policy, as in Oregon and Colorado.

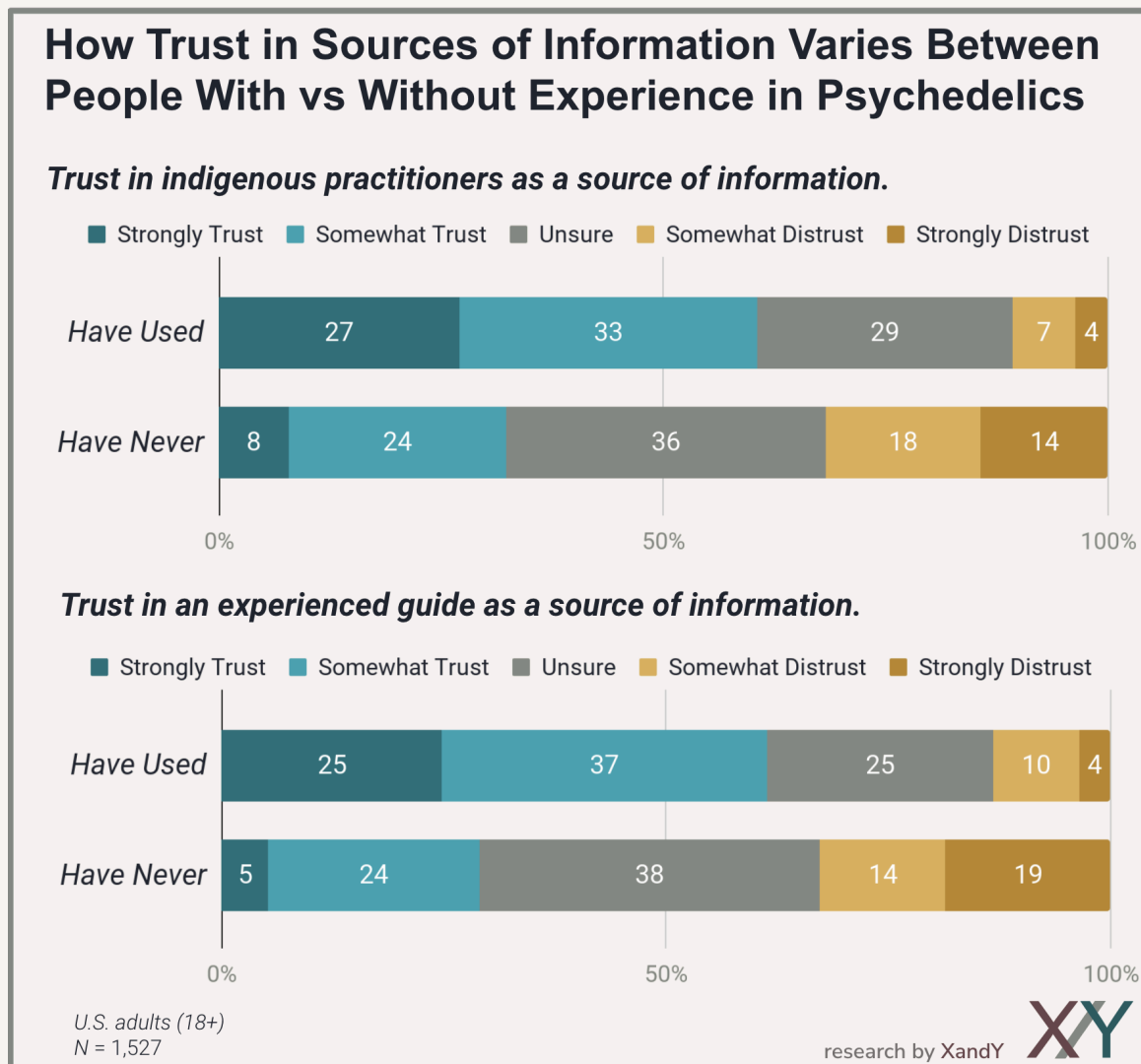
Because [many Americans are still undecided](#) about the medical use of psychedelics, the information and popular narratives that circulate in the coming months will be crucial in determining the direction that public opinion tips. An important factor in all of this is *who the sources of information are*. Sources that are seen as credible will have the greatest influence.



In the latest XandY Poll, we asked a nationally representative sample of Americans how much they trust or distrust potential information sources on psychedelics. The findings, shown in the figure above, demonstrate that **doctors and medical experts, scientists, and mental health professionals are the most trusted entities.**

Conversely, politicians and elected officials emerge as the least trusted sources. The degree of this distrust is striking. Among the other sources of information we asked about, the proportion of Americans reporting they “somewhat” versus “strongly” distrust that source was very similar. For **politicians and elected officials, on the other hand, there were clearly more people reporting strong distrust (39%).**

It’s important to note that these results represent just a snapshot of the complex landscape of trust surrounding psychedelics, and more research is needed to understand how trust in these entities varies across different population groups. For example, **although certain sources like religious or spiritual leaders rank low on trust overall, they may still hold significant sway within specific communities, such as within their congregations or spiritual groups.**



Our data do show clear evidence of significant variability in trust. For example, trust in spiritual leaders and expert guides is lackluster when averaged across the entire sample. But when we analyze it specifically among people who have experience with psychedelics, we see much higher levels of trust (see figure above). This shows the importance of understanding your specific audience when choosing sources or spokespeople for a communication campaign.

The same can be said for every source in this list—there is likely wide variability in the level of trust people have in others within that broad source group. This is likely to include the most trusted sources as well. For example, a local doctor with deep personal relationships within a community will have high credibility in that local area, relative to a distant and impersonal medical authority. The same is true for people within personal networks. Advice or experiences heard from a trusted friend or family member likely carry more weight than medical professionals in some circumstances.

So What

As we navigate this new era for psychedelics, public perception and support are simple and direct effects of the information that people receive and believe. As such, trusted information sources, particularly those in the medical and scientific communities, will end up playing a critical role in shaping public opinion and policy decisions. This underscores the need for accurate, reliable, and accessible information to guide public understanding of psychedelics. As advocates, researchers, and policymakers work towards a future where the potential benefits of psychedelics can be realized, fostering trust through credible sources will be key to achieving broad public support and successful policy implementation.

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About XandY

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About The XandY Poll

The design, data collection, analysis, and reporting of this national survey were performed by [XandY](https://xandyanalytics.com), an independent research and strategy firm. Exhaustive details of the scientific

methodology of The XandY Poll can be found [here](#). The following briefly summarizes key points of interest.

The survey responses were fielded from November 18 – November 21, 2023 using online recruitment methods to sample adult residents of the United States ($N = 1,527$). This survey used a nested quota sampling strategy to match U.S. Census proportions of age, income, race and ethnicity, gender, and political party affiliation. To further ensure the insights reported from these data closely resemble the U.S. population, the sample was weighted to match U.S. Census benchmarks.

Proportion statistics regarding the full national sample have an average margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error in subgroups is determined by the subgroup size.