



Press release

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Most people aged 65 or over rate their health as good to excellent

In Switzerland, the majority of people aged 65 or over rate their health as good, very good or excellent. This was shown by a survey conducted under the aegis of the Commonwealth Fund in ten countries, including Switzerland. The survey, carried out in spring 2024, also shows that 97 per cent of older adults in this country have a GP, who in most cases helps to coordinate their medical care.

Every three years, the Commonwealth Fund (a US-based foundation) conducts a survey of older adults in a number of countries, including Switzerland. The results show that the majority of the over-65 population in this country rate their health as good to excellent. Almost 45 per cent of respondents describe their own health as good, 24 per cent as very good and almost 5 per cent as excellent. Switzerland thus maintains its position in the upper mid-range of the countries studied.

At the same time, more than three quarters of the respondents stated that they live with at least one chronic condition. Most frequently reported was high blood pressure, followed by joint pain and heart disease. There has been no change in disease management indicators over the last four years. For example, goals and care priorities were discussed with 65 per cent of those with a chronic condition, while 61 per cent received clear instructions about symptoms to watch for and when to seek further care or treatment. The vast majority (91 per cent) were very confident or confident in their ability to control and manage their health problem.

More than one health professional consulted

Each year, seven out of ten older adults consult more than one health professional. This proportion has increased since 2021 and is the third highest among the countries studied. Only in Germany (80%) and the US (81%) do a greater proportion of older adults consult more than one health professional. However, older adults in Switzerland are also most frequently assisted by their GP: in 70 per cent of cases (a lower proportion than in 2017), the GP always or often helps to coordinate or arrange the care they receive from other service providers.

However, in spite of the positive overall picture for older adults in Switzerland, around 15 per cent of respondents in this country reported feeling isolated often or some of the time, and the same proportion experienced emotional distress such as anxiety or great sadness. Women (18 per cent) are more frequently affected by social isolation than men (10 per cent) and also more frequently experience emotional distress (20 per cent versus 9 per cent).

End-of-life care

The proportion of respondents who have a written document describing their end-of-life care wishes, and who have authorised someone to make treatment decisions, increased in Switzerland up until 2021 and has since levelled off: 48 per cent have a written document specifying the treatments they do or do not wish to receive in the event of being unable to decide for themselves due to illness or injury, while 65 per cent have discussed their end-of-life care wishes with family, friends or a health professional. Only in Germany and the US are the percentages higher than in Switzerland.

Majority with GP insurance model

More than half of the respondents are insured under the GP model. Here, the option most frequently selected (in 60 per cent of cases) is the minimum deductible of CHF 300, followed by the CHF 500 deductible (15 per cent).

Respondents in Switzerland continue to report the highest out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure: in addition to health insurance premiums, about 60 per cent reported spending around CHF 900 out of pocket for medical treatments for themselves and their families over the last 12 months.

Since 2010, Switzerland has participated in the International Health Policy Surveys of the Commonwealth Fund. The mission of this private, non-profit foundation is to promote a high-performing, equitable health care system that achieves better access, improved quality and greater efficiency.

As previously in 2014, 2017 and 2021, the 2024 survey concerned the resident population aged 65 or over and their experience with the health system. The other countries participating, as well as Switzerland, were Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the UK and the US. In Switzerland, the survey – conducted on behalf of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) – involved 2,634 people aged 65 or over in the country's three main language regions.

Further information:

Federal Office of Public Health: [IHP Surveys: older resident population \(admin.ch\)](https://www.fop.ch/de/publikationen/2024-erfahrungen-der-wohnbevölkerung-ab-65-jahren-mit-dem-gesundheitssystem)

Swiss Health Observatory:

<https://www.obsan.admin.ch/de/publikationen/2024-erfahrungen-der-wohnbevölkerung-ab-65-jahren-mit-dem-gesundheitssystem>

FR: <https://www.obsan.admin.ch/fr/publications/2024-erfahrungen-der-wohnbevölkerung-ab-65-jahren-mit-dem-gesundheitssystem-situation>

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