



Media release

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Switzerland's population is satisfied with the health system

Switzerland's health system is highly rated by the general population: the vast majority of residents aged over 18 are satisfied with the quality of healthcare received. This was shown by the latest survey conducted in eleven countries by the Commonwealth Fund Foundation. In Switzerland, 91 per cent of respondents rated their health as good, very good or excellent. However, almost half (49 per cent) suffer from at least one chronic condition, while a third reported financial worries.

Every three years, the Commonwealth Fund Foundation conducts a survey of the general population in a number of countries to investigate experiences of the health system. Of the 2,284 people surveyed in Switzerland, around 88 per cent rate the overall performance of Switzerland's health system as good or very good. Switzerland thus ranks in first place, ahead of Norway and Germany. Within Switzerland, the proportion rating performance as good or very good is considerably higher among persons aged 65 and older (95 per cent) than in younger age groups. Assessments also vary widely between language regions: the proportion of respondents from Italian-speaking Switzerland rating health system performance as good or very good is only 67 per cent, compared with 91 per cent in German-speaking and 86 per cent in French-speaking Switzerland.

Of the respondents, 93 per cent are registered with a primary care physician or health centre (2016: 90 per cent). A majority (67 per cent, versus 64 per cent in 2016) are very satisfied with the care received and rate their primary care physicians or health centres as very good or excellent. The proportion giving this rating to primary care was considerably higher among those over 65 than in the group aged 18–34 (78 versus 57 per cent).

49 per cent reported that it was somewhat or very difficult to access medical care in the evening, at the weekend or on public holidays; this figure is lower than in 2016 (59 per cent). 29 per cent of respondents had visited a hospital emergency department at least once in the past two years. Of these, 36 per cent reported that their symptoms could also have been treated by a primary care physician, if one had been available; this was more frequently reported by women (46 per cent) than by men (27 per cent).

Half suffer from at least one chronic condition

Nine out of ten respondents (91 per cent; 2016: 89 per cent) describe their health as good, very good or excellent; with this result, Switzerland again ranks in first place, alongside New Zealand and Australia. At the same time, over 49 per cent suffer from at least one chronic condition (compared to 48 per cent in 2016 and 44 per cent in 2010); this is the case for three quarters (73 per cent) of respondents aged over 65, but for less than a third (30 per cent) of those aged 18–34. Among the chronic conditions most frequently reported in Switzerland were hypertension, mental health problems (e.g. depression or anxiety) and lung disease.

In addition, just under 15 per cent of respondents reported that they had wished to see a health professional about their mental health in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of these, less than half (44 per cent) had actually received advice or treatment. Thus, a large proportion (56 per cent) of the people with mental health issues in Switzerland have – for whatever reason – not received or attended any counselling or treatment.

Same as in 2016, 23 per cent reported in 2020 unmet health care needs such as consultations, treatments or medication due to costs. Apart from unmet needs due to costs, numerous respondents reported that they had preferred to wait and see whether their symptoms subsided on by themselves, or that they had not considered a medical treatment necessary. Unmet health care needs due to costs have risen sharply in the last 10 years, particularly among persons with tertiary educational qualifications, while remaining stable at the level reported in 2016 among those with lower qualifications. Among other things, one can assume that in recent years there has been a sensitization regarding cost-benefit considerations.

A third have financial worries

A person's health can be adversely affected by worries, particularly if they are persistent and relate to fundamental needs. In Switzerland, during the 12 months prior to the survey, around 35 per cent of respondents had been sometimes, usually or always concerned about being unable to pay their rent or mortgage, or worried about their livelihood. Only in the US did a larger proportion of respondents report financial worries.

The Commonwealth Fund – a US-based non-profit private foundation – regularly conducts surveys of the population in eleven countries, including Switzerland. Switzerland has been participating in the Commonwealth Fund's International Health Policy Survey since 2010. The mission of the Commonwealth Fund is to promote high-performing healthcare systems that achieve better access, improved quality and greater efficiency.

As well as Switzerland, the other countries participating in the 2020 International Health Policy Survey were Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the US. In Switzerland, the survey – conducted on behalf of the Federal Office of Public Health – involved 2,284 persons aged over 18 in the country's three main language regions.

Further information:

CWF Reports:

www.bag.admin.ch/cwf-reports

International Health Policy (IHP) Surveys Residential population aged over 18 (not available in English)

<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/das-bag/publikationen/forschungsberichte/forschungsberichte-international-health-policy-survey-ihp-des-commonwealth-fund-laendervergleiche/ihp-befragungen-wohnbevoelkerung-ab-18-jahren.html>

Obsan Report 12/2020

<https://www.obsan.admin.ch/de/publikationen/erfahrungen-der-wohnbevoelkerung-ab-18-jahren-mit-dem-gesundheitssystem-situation-der>

The Commonwealth Fund:

<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/surveys>

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