

Press release of 31 May 2021

Half of Swiss people practise less sports activities

Martigny, 31 May 2021. A new representative survey by Groupe Mutuel has highlighted some of the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic: 45% of Swiss people practise less sports activities. Mental health is suffering too, with 40% of young adults feeling unwell.

In Europe, Switzerland is the third country that practises the most sports, behind Finland and Sweden. This position on the podium has been challenged by the coronavirus, as a representative survey by Groupe Mutuel has shown: 45% of Swiss people have been less active over the past year. On a scale of 1 to 6, the level of physical condition fell from 4.1 to 3.6. The 30 to 44 age group is particularly affected by the lack of exercise due to the coronavirus – the German-speaking Swiss slightly more so than the French-speaking Swiss.

Switzerland, a country that offers many sports facilities

Some 68% of respondents mentioned the closure of sports facilities and fitness centres as a reason for the lack of exercise. "In Switzerland, we are very spoiled in terms of sports facilities. If they are taken away from us, we feel a bit lost," said Kariem Hussein, the European 400m hurdles champion and ambassador for the Swiss insurance company. Lack of motivation was also an issue for 34% of the population, while for 32% of people, lack of interaction with friends and teammates was another reason for their reduced desire to practise sport activities.

In a few cases, more sports were practised: 15% of the population have been more active since the outbreak of the pandemic than before. Of these, a disproportionate number were French-speaking Swiss and young people. These people were mainly motivated by the need for fresh air and nature, by the impact of sports on their health and by having more time available thanks to working from home. The most popular sports are hiking, practised by 43% of respondents, fitness and jogging, with 32 and 26% respectively, as well as skiing, snowboarding, yoga and cycling.

Mental health is also suffering

Furthermore, the lack of exercise, less social interaction as well as financial anxiety have led to deteriorating mental health. According to the survey, young people and women are particularly affected by this: 40% of 18-25 year olds and 38% of women surveyed said their mental health had deteriorated since the beginning of the pandemic. Badly hit by the coronavirus, the canton of Ticino and French-speaking Switzerland have coped less well.

Lack of exercise threatens health

The lack of physical exercise on a national scale can have serious consequences. It can lead to various diseases such as heart attacks, strokes and diabetes, which can be fatal in the long term. American-Canadian researchers have already attributed almost 8% of deaths worldwide to the lack of exercise. In Switzerland, 2% of deaths were already linked to physical inactivity in 2017. A person is considered physically inactive if they exercise less than 150 minutes per week at moderate intensity or less than 75 minutes intensively.

Media contact person

Lisa Flückiger, spokesperson for German-speaking Switzerland

Tel. 058 758 90 04, Mobile 079 534 77 26, lflueckiger@groupemutuel.ch

About Groupe Mutuel

With over 2,700 employees throughout Switzerland, Groupe Mutuel is at the service of 1.3 million private customers and 25,500 companies.

As the only comprehensive insurer in Switzerland, Groupe Mutuel is the reference partner in the field of health and retirement benefits for private and corporate customers. Its turnover exceeds CHF 5.3 billion. Thanks to tailored solutions, whether in basic insurance (LAMa/KVG) or supplemental insurance (LCA/VVG), it is the 3rd largest health insurer in Switzerland. Groupe Mutuel also offers an extensive range of products in individual retirement benefits and patrimony insurance. Based in Martigny, the insurer provides companies of all sizes solutions with loss of earnings in the event of illness, accident insurance (LAA/UVG) and occupational pension plans (LPP/BVG). In the field of health insurance for companies, Groupe Mutuel is ranked 5th nationwide.

Information on the survey

Period of implementation: 24 to 30 March 2021

Number of interviews: 1,225

Target group: residents of the three language regions of Switzerland, aged 18 to 79, with Internet access

Method: Internet questionnaire

Survey conducted by: Link Institut