

Health literacy in Switzerland

Health Literacy Survey Switzerland 2019-21 (HLS₁₉₋₂₁-CH)

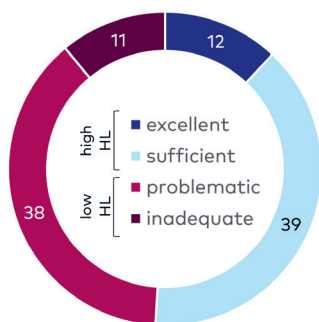
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Health literacy (HL) is the degree to which individuals have the motivation, knowledge and ability to find, understand and judge health information and to use it to make decisions that have a positive impact on their health.

49 % of the Swiss population report frequent difficulties in dealing with health information. Just under half of the population in Switzerland therefore has low health literacy.



Difficulty dealing with health information has tended to slightly increase over the last five years (2015: 42%).

What causes the greatest difficulties for people in Switzerland?

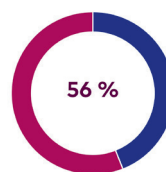


Judging information is rated as the most difficult.

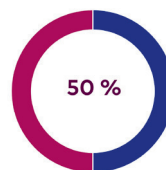


The greatest difficulties are seen in the **area of disease prevention**.

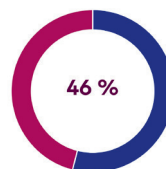
Specifically, the following percentages of the surveyed Swiss residents find it (very) difficult...



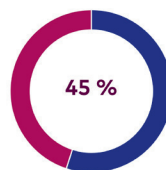
...to judge if the information on health risks in the mass media is reliable.



...to judge if they may need to get a second opinion from another doctor.



...to judge the advantages and disadvantages of different treatment options.



...to decide how they can protect themselves from illness using information from the mass media.



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Which population groups are more likely to have difficulties?

Low health literacy particularly affects people...



...living in financial deprivation.



...with little social support.



...with a lower level of education.



...who have difficulties with the local language.

People with high health literacy...

...adopt healthier behaviours.

...report a better self-perceived health.

...use the health system less often.

The HLS₁₉₋₂₁-CH study



5 March – 29 April 2020



2502 participants aged 18 or over and resident in Switzerland



Computer-assisted interviews online and by phone

Source:

De Gani, S. M., Jaks, R., Bieri, U., Kocher, J. Ph. (2021). Health Literacy Survey Schweiz 2019-21. Schlussbericht im Auftrag des Bundesamtes für Gesundheit BAG. Zürich, Careum Stiftung. (*Final report commissioned by the Federal Office of Public Health FOPH. In German with an English summary*).

The HLS₁₉₋₂₁-CH study is part of the international Health Literacy Survey (HLS₁₉), a project of the WHO Action Network on Measuring Population and Organizational Health Literacy (M-POHL).

More information (in German):

www.careum.ch/studie-gesundheitskompetenz



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