

Media release of 3 May 2023

## **Data sharing: call for guidelines and benefits for the general public** Results of the 2023 “Data society and solidarity” survey

**Since 2018, the “Data society and solidarity” survey has annually recorded the expectations and fears of the Swiss population with regard to digital transformation. The 2023 edition focuses on digitalisation in the healthcare sector and sharing health data for research purposes. The survey shows that people want clear guidelines and benefits for all before they are ready to share their data. Respondents also see potential for health apps. A solidarity-based healthcare system with access for all is important, but further premium increases are clearly rejected. Survey participants also acknowledge that they themselves are among the main contributors to rising health costs.**

### **Respondents want clear guidelines for digitalisation in healthcare**

In a digitised health system, we can access our own health data at any time and share it with professionals as and when necessary. Three out of four respondents want health data to be stored and managed more digitally in the future. However, they also want clear rules to be put in place for a digitised healthcare system. The infrastructure should be operated and managed by the government or medical healthcare providers. There is less appetite to have health insurers and private sector companies that do not provide healthcare take on this role. People want to be able to decide at all times whom they share their health data with. Stakeholders in the health industry should not be able to collect or buy this data.

### **Research: willingness to share data increases if there is a benefit for the general public**

The majority of respondents are in favour of companies in the medical industry using health data to develop better products and services. However, only a minority would like them to be able to buy such data freely. However, this doesn't mean that the medical industry shouldn't have access to data. In fact, this study series shows that people are increasingly willing to make their digitally recorded health data available for the purpose of medical research (2018: 42%, 2023: 60%). Benefits for the general public is becoming increasingly important as a factor for motivating people to share their data (2019: 44%, 2023: 59%), with two-thirds of respondents stating that the development of new methods of treatment would motivate them to share their data for research. For just as many, the potential early diagnosis of any health issues of their own would also be a motivating factor. Only a minority would be willing to share their health data for medical research in return for a financial incentive. In fact, financial compensation may even be counterproductive, with an experiment in the survey indicating that the prospect of a small amount of money for sharing their health data may make people less willing to share than when no financial incentive is offered at all.

### **Health apps are popular, mental health apps less so**

Medically certified apps could be one way of reducing the pressure on the health system, easing staff bottlenecks and reducing costs. Patients could use these apps on their own or to accompany medical treatment. Six out of ten respondents said they could imagine using such an app if they had a medical problem. Willingness among the overall population is much lower when it comes to using mental health apps (43%). However, younger respondents were more open to trying out mental health apps (54%). As mental health services are currently in short supply, particularly for young people, these mental health apps could help ease this bottleneck and provide help while they wait for treatment.

### **People don't want to pay higher premiums, but do see themselves as one of the main contributors to rising health costs**

In connection with the healthcare system, the term “solidarity” is primarily associated with paying for good medical care for all people. However, only a minority of respondents also link the term to the regular payment of health insurance premiums. People are worried about the rising healthcare costs, but very few are willing to pay even higher health insurance costs in the future (5%). If costs are to be

kept down, savings are needed, and this means first identifying the cost drivers. Most respondents believe that we as individuals are responsible for the increasing costs (62%). However, six out of ten respondents also named the pharmaceutical industry as one of the main cost drivers. Although people do recognise the benefits that this industry brings to society through its research, there is also widespread scepticism about the commercialisation of health.

### **About the study**

Sotomo conducted the study online in January 2023. 2,050 people provided information on their behaviour and attitudes toward the digitalisation of society. The results are representative of the language-integrated Swiss population aged 18 and older (sampling error: +/-2.2%). The survey took place for the sixth time in 2023 on behalf of the Sanitas health insurance foundation.

### **Download study**

The complete report on the 2023 “Data society and solidarity” survey is available here: [www.sanitas.com/foundation-survey](http://www.sanitas.com/foundation-survey)

#### **Social commitment of the Sanitas health insurance foundation**

The [Sanitas health insurance foundation](http://www.sanitas.com/foundation-survey) was established in 1958. It is the sole shareholder of the [Sanitas Group](http://www.sanitas.com). It also supports projects and focuses on social aspects with regard to digitalisation, health and insurance. The foundation also publishes [articles on the data society and solidarity](#) in cooperation with experts.

#### **For information about the foundation’s social engagement and the survey**

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