



ReMO Webinar: First results from the STAIRCASE Survey

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ReMO Survey SIG: Overall Ambitions

“We are going to implement the largest ever benchmark on mental health in (European) academia ...”

“... and we are going to do it by September 15th 2023”



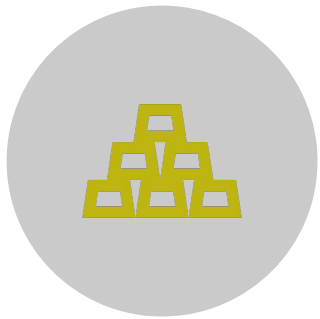
Research objectives



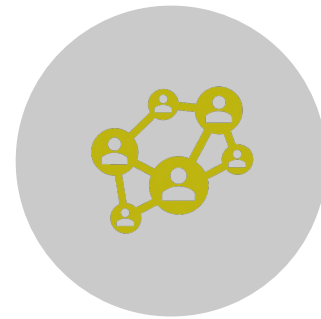
What is the state of researcher mental health across institutions and countries? [bronze]



What are institutions doing regarding mental health? [silver]



(How) is that which institutions are doing related to individual level mental health? [Gold]

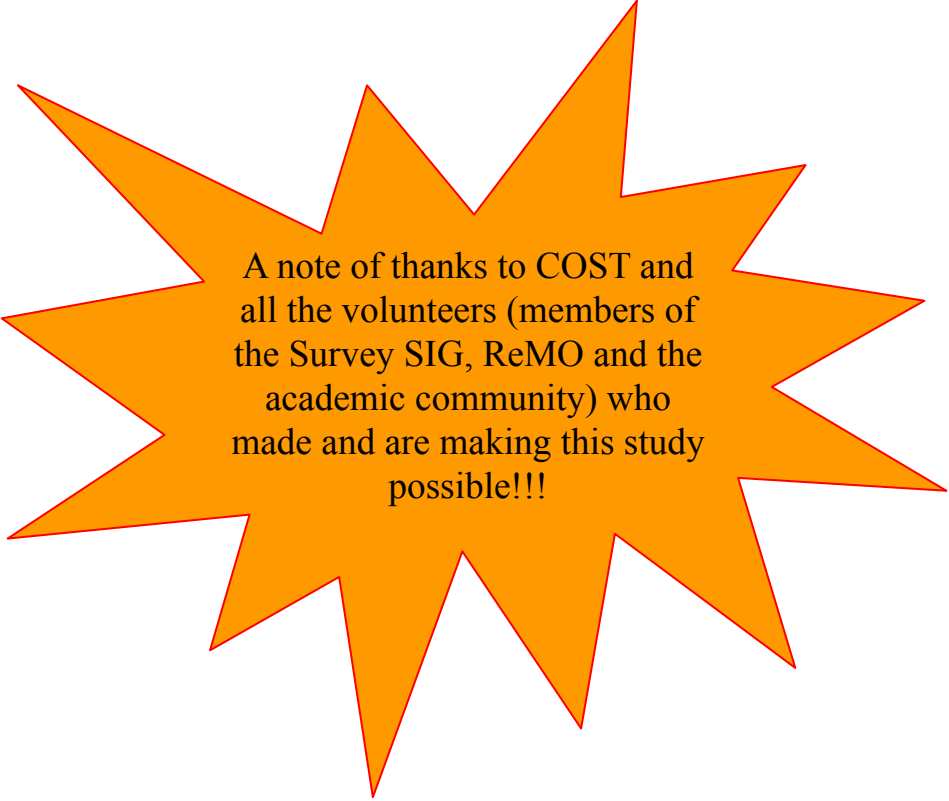


Teasing out causal effects through quasi-experimental design and process approaches to intervention [Diamond]



Where do we stand?

- Hypothesis development & Survey V0.1 ready
- Authorship and data access policy
- Participant information sheet, consent form
- Data collection and storage infrastructure
- Data management plan and ethics approval
- Survey refinement
- Survey translation (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew)
- Survey Dissemination
- Data collection September 2023-August 2024
- Preregistration
- Disseminating the results



A note of thanks to COST and all the volunteers (members of the Survey SIG, ReMO and the academic community) who made and are making this study possible!!!

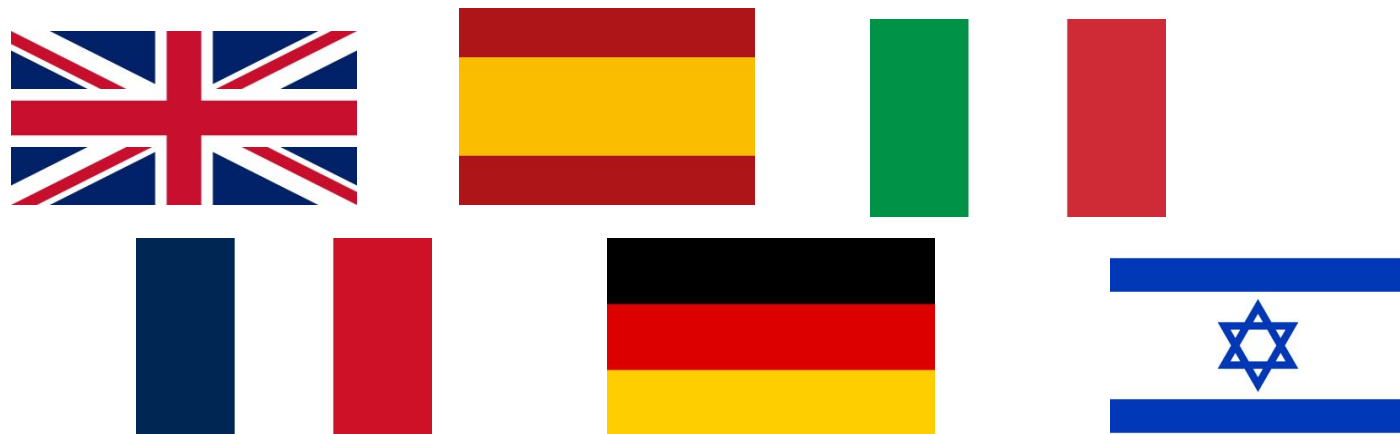


The STAIRCASE survey – facts and figures

Survey components (~110 questions taking ~15 minutes to complete)

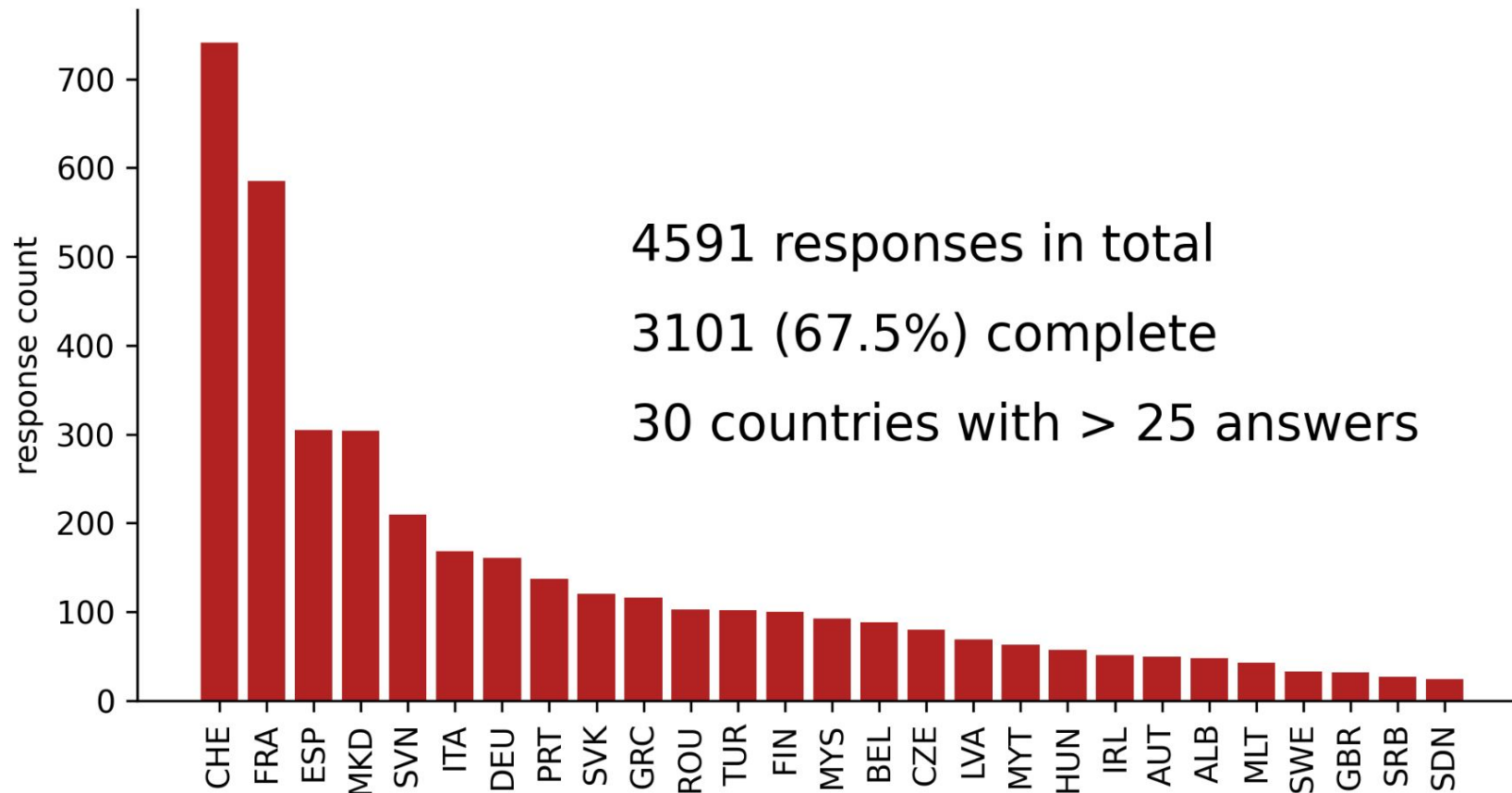
- Mental health outcomes (depression, anxiety, burnout, well-being)
- Work context (Org. climate, harassment, job demands & resources, ...)
- Demographic characteristics & employment situation
- Additional data: social media handles & ORCID

Survey languages:



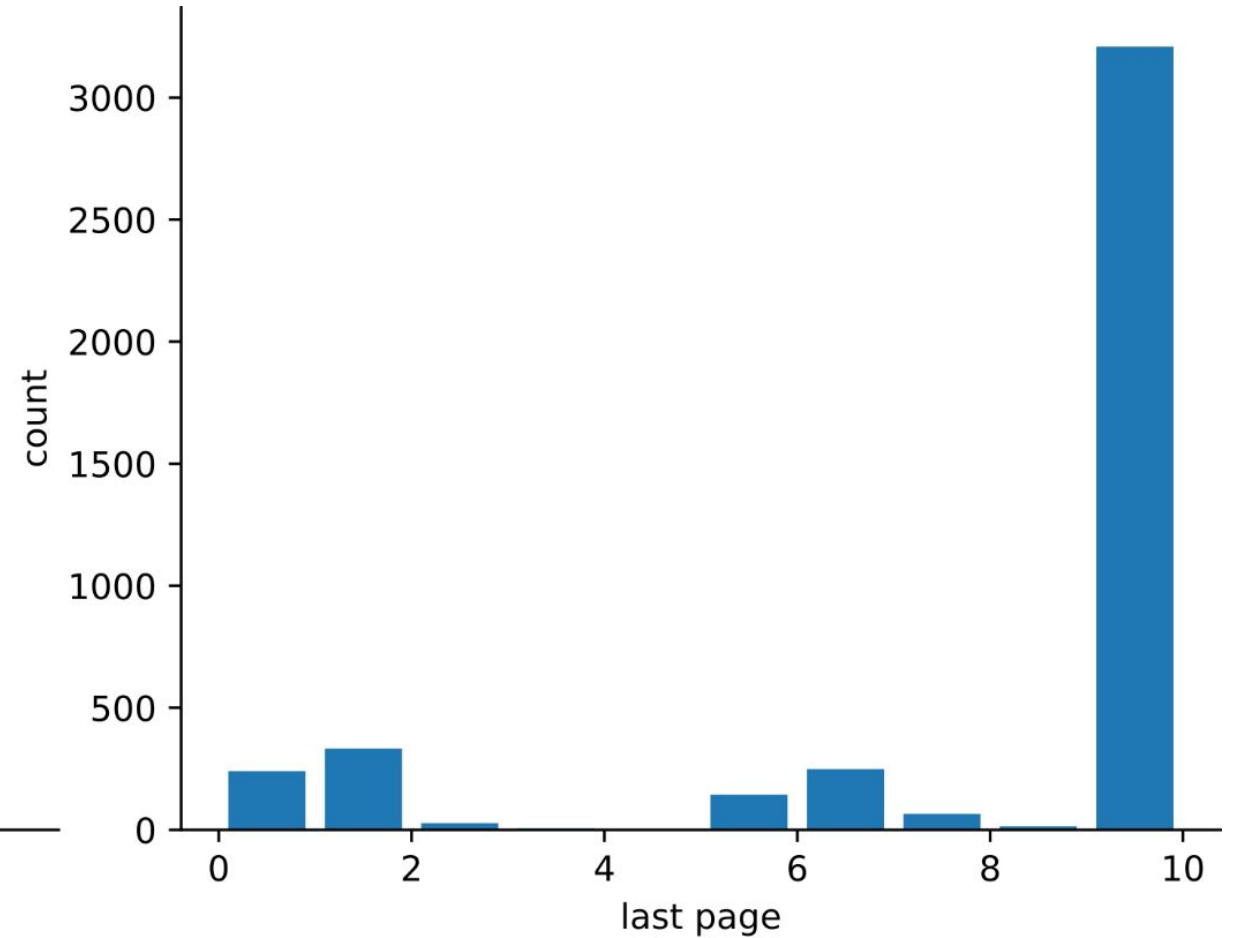
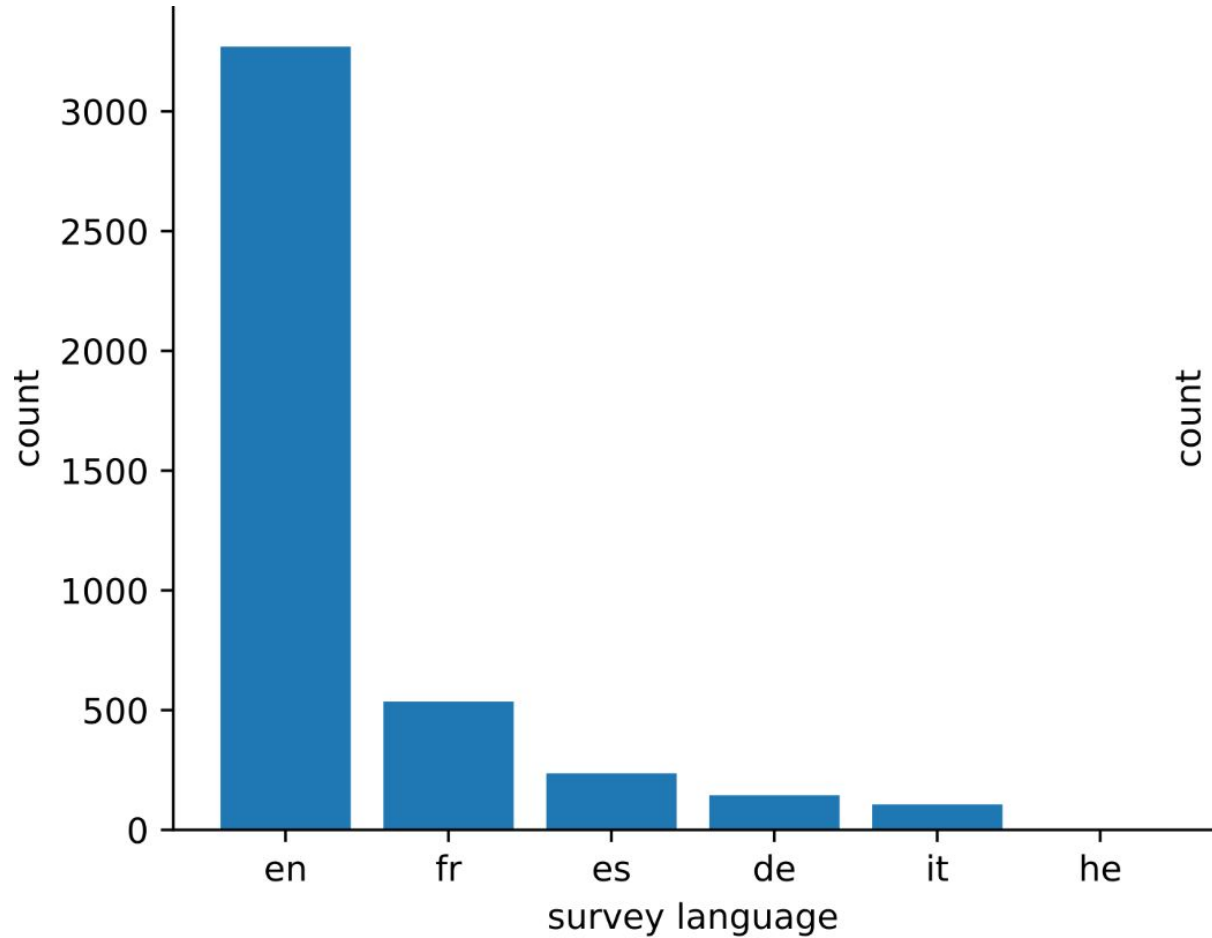


Participation by country





Survey language & completion statistics





6 institutions with > 50 responses
→ institution specific reports

Participation by institution

University of Padua
127 responses



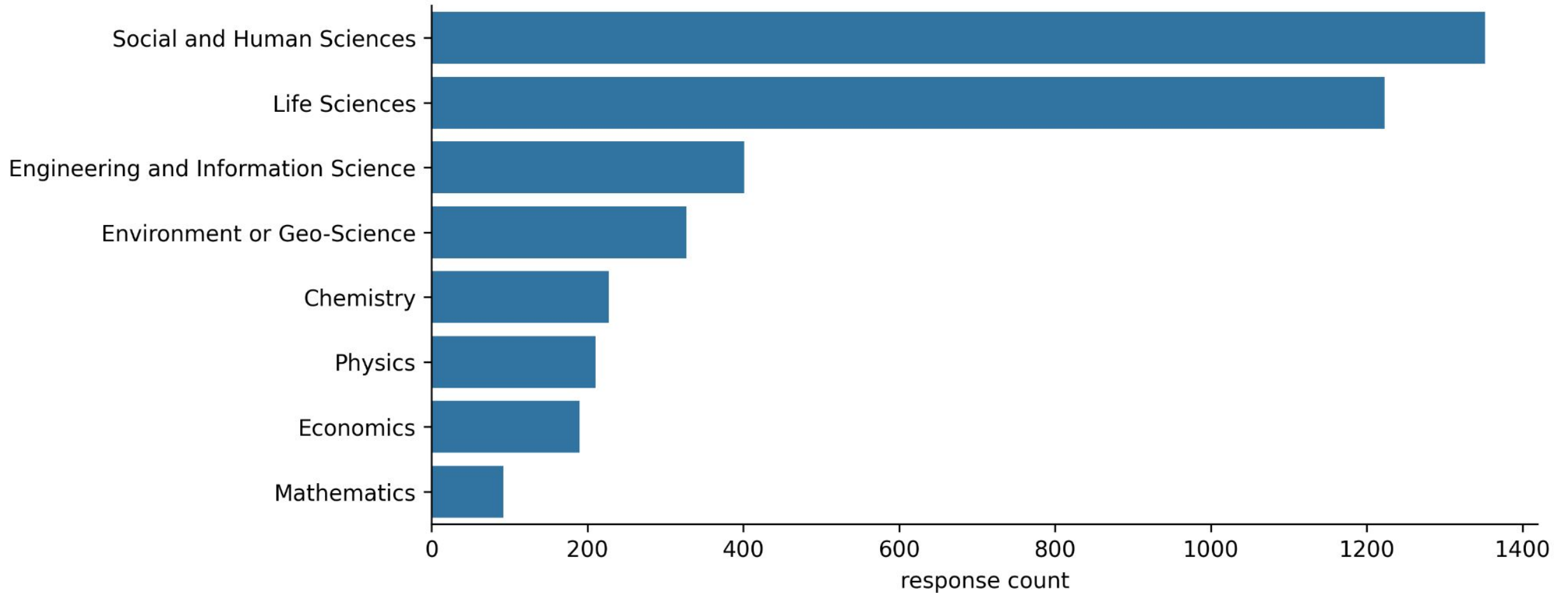
University of Zürich
145 responses



University of Lausanne
117 responses

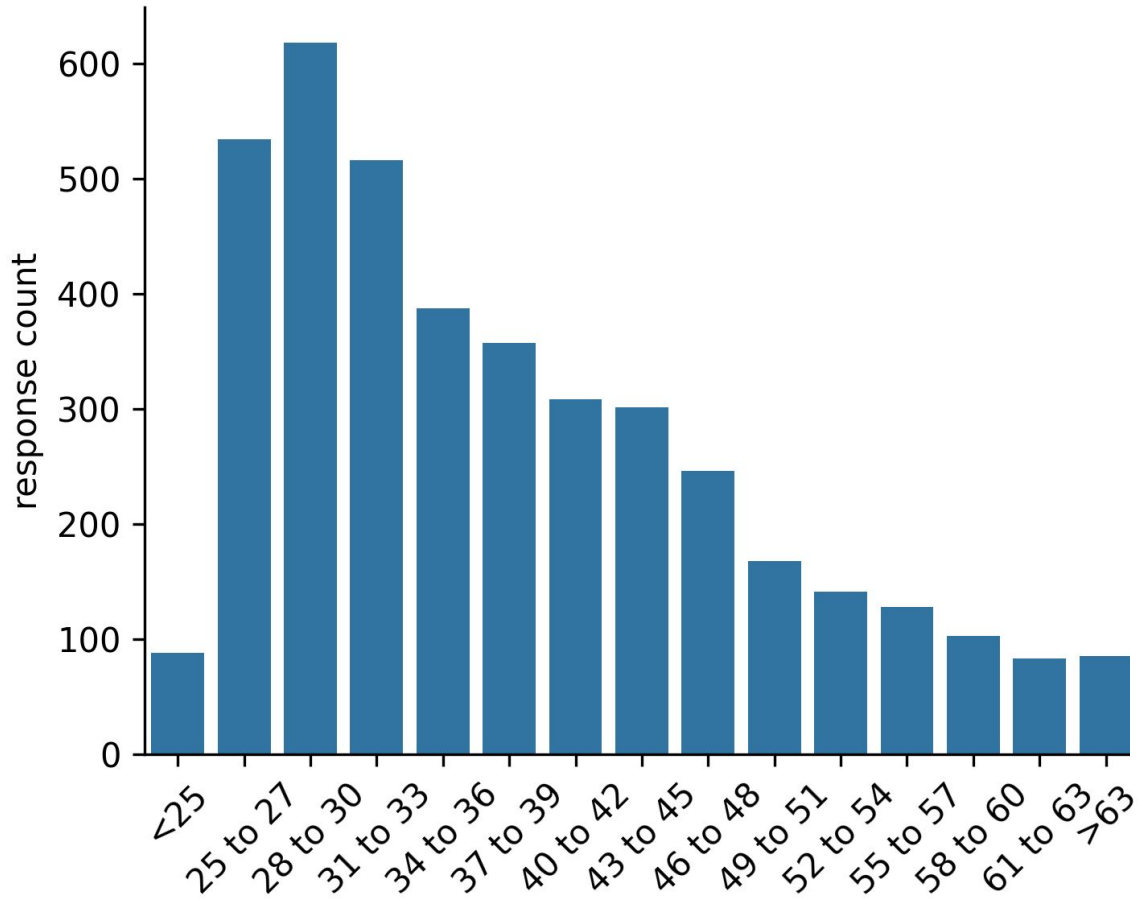


Responses by research field

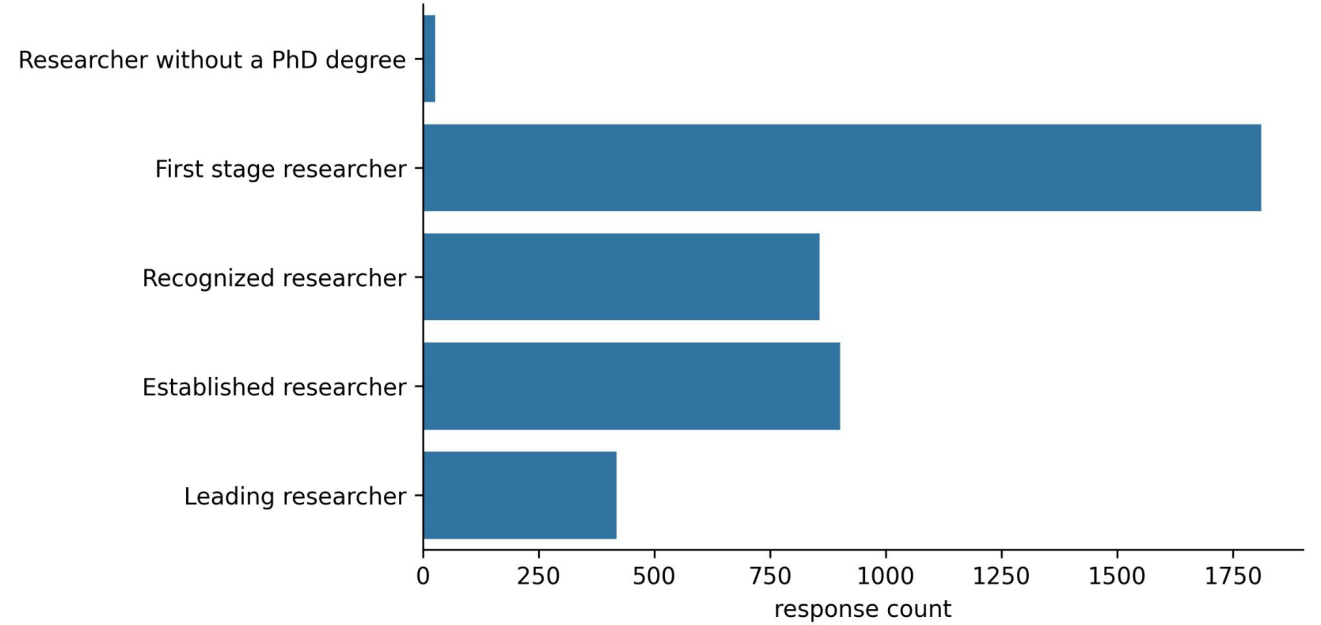




Demographics

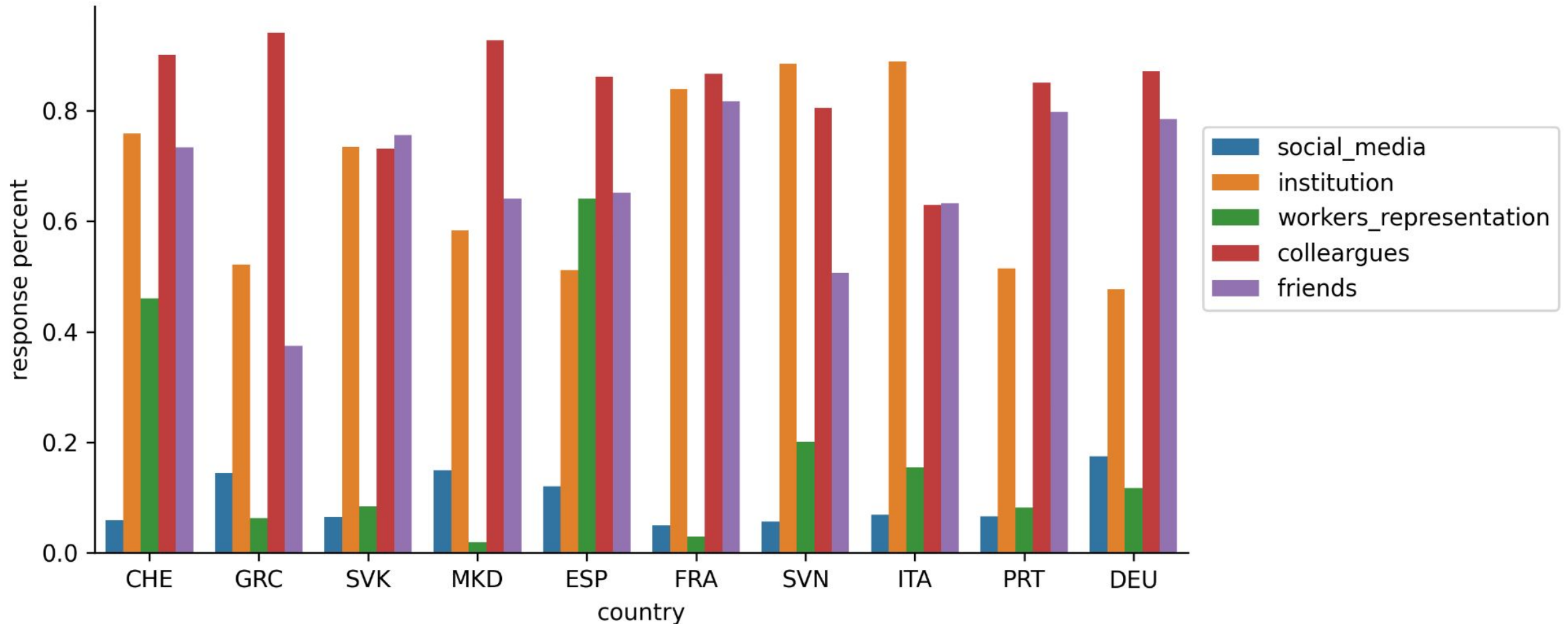


63.7% female





How people got to know about the survey





Survey feedback

- 75 people mentioned that the survey was too long.
- about 10 people wanted additional questions or topics covered.
- 120 people said “thank you”.
- Turkish and Czech were explicitly requested as survey languages.
- The survey needs “I don’t know and “Does not apply” answer options.



When asked about the one thing that must be improved...

What percentage of people would:

- Say “nothing I am happy”?

Complain about:

- The scientific enterprise?
- Mental health?
- Workload?
- Job security?
- Management?

When asked about the one thing that must be improved...

	Percentage of comments (n=200)
Management and supervision	14.5%
Job Security	11.5%
Workload	10.5%
Interpersonal Relations	9.5%
Compensation & Benefits	9.0%
Multiple	8.5%
Office resources	7%
Administration	6%
Funding	5.5%
Mental health	3%
Etc.	11%



Management and supervision related comments

Less talk, more concrete actions

more concrete feedback and goalsetting together with **group leader**

more efficient bureaucracy. I lose time and money because of the awful bureaucracy. I am capable of deciding how to get to a conference, and I use my own grant money, I will choose the cheapest option, I don't understand, why the secretary has to give this task to a travel agency, which will make it expensive and difficult.

structured information flow.

to have a real supervision for my PhD work from my **supervisor**

[INSTITUTION] prides itself on avoiding rigid structures to allow for absolute freedom for its employees. Though I can understand the joy that the people accustomed to this system take in this freedom, a system with no structure is impossible for many people to navigate, especially those who are new to it or outsiders. I think that it is necessary to build some structures which can be relied on for both the staff and students to have stability, routine, safety, and certainty in their place of education and work.

2) Actually create real regulations and rules on **how supervisors manage their students** so that it is actually done properly and done well (provide good training on how to supervise / Provide more support for students in difficulty / Think about how to strengthen a minimum of **effective supervision** to ensure feedback and meetings on the work done)

2) Department structures instead of King alike professorships

2. to have information about whether and how the faculty and department feels about me over the next 5 years and to communicate openly and fairly on an ongoing basis if some things (especially in connection with me) do not go according to their plans

A better boss. My head of department has no interest in my development or skills or research interests. I am a moveable, interchangeable piece in a spreadsheet.

A better supervisor who is more knowledgeable about my work; more mental health support builtin into the interactions with **supervisors** & colleagues



Job security related comments

- Have a secured position
- Long term or permanent job (our contracts last less than 6 months)
- More permanent scientific positions
- Longer working contracts
- A normal contract
- 4 year contracts for all doctoral researchers
- A better perspective for the future.
- A clearer path post phd
- A decent permanent contract
- A full time lectureship position that includes research time and recognises the admin and research I do alongside teaching. Opportunities to advance, my career is very stagnant
- A long term position.



Workload related comments

- Fewer teaching hours;
- Less expectations that research happens at night/on weekends/during vacation days while we spend our actual working hours on power struggles, teaching and admin
- Less multitasking and more awareness of worklife balance
- Less teaching and administrative activities, more research activities, and time for learning new skills
- PhD students are employed at 60% but expected to work 100%
- % of working hours in the contract, we are paid 70% when we work more than 100%
- Decrease the amount of working hours (not percentage of employment, but hours within the work week in general).
- Stop supporting selection criteria based on index performance and quantitative output, it destroys quality of research (see replication crisis, for instance); 2) short and sparse deadlines, there should occur more often, give more time, plus crucial job contracts should allow a good amount of time to prepare applications and submissions
- Less time pressure
- Limits on the number of subjects provided by one teacher and guaranteed predictable orientation to 23 subjects during the entire academic career
- 4 day working week to have more time to spend with my family.



Interpersonal relations

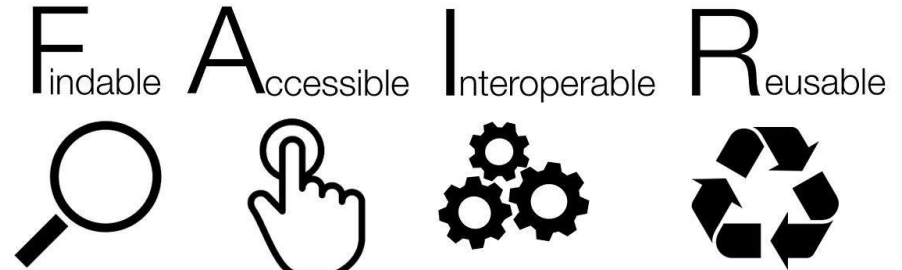
- Encouragement of social life outside academia (teambuilding, cultural events and sports, etc.);
- More teambuilding activities to get to know group members better and have time to exchange about individual challenges, expectations, etc.
- To improve the communication within my team
- Communication! about administrative and organizational work, but also personal struggles and problems. Communication skills (excluding scientific communication) are really poor at my institute on all levels.
- More interaction with other people and mutual learning
- Introduce departmental seminars and meeting that would encourage collaboration and sharing within the institution.
- More motivation and joy in the people around me
- More frequent relationships with other colleagues and students
- A better atmosphere with better links with the colleagues.
- A better work division among colleagues
- A little more collaboration with colleagues and joint dedicated research on different issues. Minimizing envy among some of them, which actually hinders them in cooperation.



Compensation and Benefits

- And maybe a better salary. Currently, I am making the same amount of money as a high school dropout who inspects freshly painted car hoods for defects.
- Better pay
- Care for teaching staff's (possible) children;
- Financial support e.g. for teaching needs to be inflation adjusted
- Improve salary (at least X3 times of the average house rent)
- More possibilities for earning extra money (e.g., if working overtime, which is hard to measure in this kind of position)
- Pay enough so I not need a second job
- Pay for teaching and duties that are not appreciated when somebody judge my performance
- Greater salary
- A better position on the research scale.
- A just salary based on my years of experience (post PhD) and work done.

What will happen with the data?



- ... we will create and publish an **anonymised**
 - reduced demographic characteristics to prevent re-anonymisation,
 - open access for non-commercial and non-military purposes.

Expected publication time: December 2024

- ... we will set up remote access to a **secure analysis environment** with
 - full access to demographic variables,
 - output controls to prevent leakage of personally identifiable information,
 - data embargo for 1 year: only ReMO members. Afterwards: all researchers.

Expected availability of remote access: end of October 2024



Next steps

- For remote data access:
 - Access will be handled on an institution-by-institution level. Institutions need to sign a data protection agreement with the data provider (DZHW).
 - If you are part of ReMO and want data access: contact jana.lasser@uni-graz.at to facilitate the process.
- Publication of*
 - A high-level analysis article. All Survey SIG members will be authors.
 - A data publication. All Survey SIG members will be authors.
- Want to publish an article using the data?
 - Coordinate with other authors using the [ReMO publications list](#)
 - Get in touch with Stefan & Jana to coordinate within the Survey SIG

* See also our [Authorship and Data Access policy](#)



Questions / Do you want to get involved?
Please contact us: staircase-survey@tib.eu!

