



# Students' financial situation and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic in Switzerland

EUROSTUDENT Talks, November 24 2022

Team Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life  
Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO)



# Content

1. Context: Why a study on student's financial situation and mental health during the pandemic?
2. Methodological aspects: How can we capture student living conditions during the pandemic?
3. Results: Financial difficulties and mental health problems
4. Discussion



# 1. Context

The effects of COVID-19 on student life in general

- COVID-19 as a main topic of the EUROSTUDENT final Conference (June 2021)
- Topical module on COVID-19 in the EUROSTUDENT 8 survey





# 1. Context

In Switzerland, the financial situation and mental health of students are major issues

- Parliamentary interventions
- Media coverage

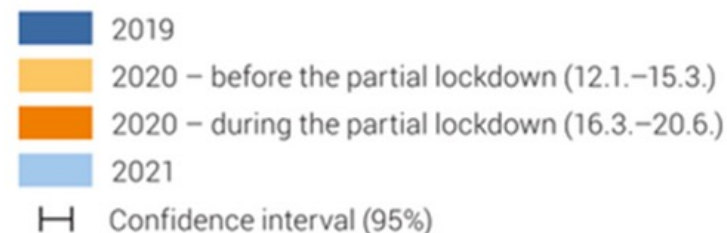
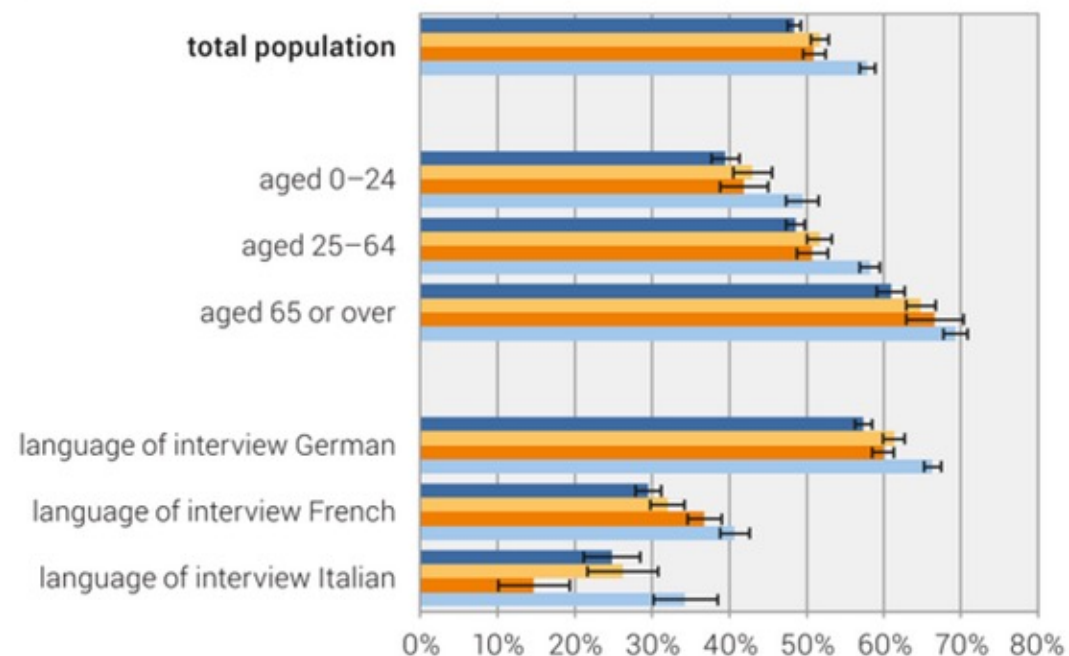




# 1. Context

## Subjective assessment of the household's financial situation

Percentage of people living in a household for which it is easy or very easy to make ends meet



Source: FSO – Statistics on income and living conditions (SILC)  
2019: provisional data from 22.06.2020;  
2020: experimental data from 24.6.2020;  
2021: experimental data from 16.06.2021

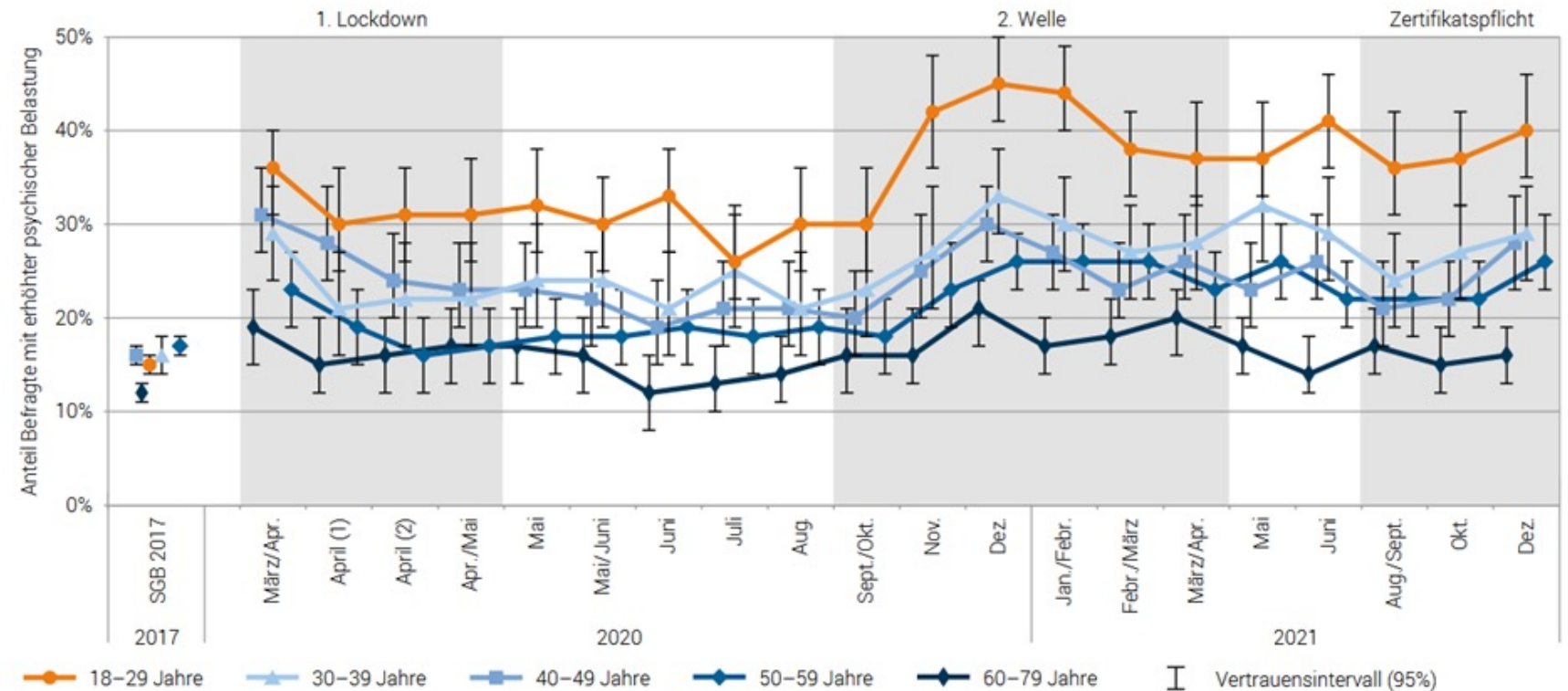
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# 1. Context

## Erhöhte Psychische Belastung, 2017 vs. 2020/2021

G3



Anmerkung: Die SGB bezieht sich auf die letzten 4 Wochen, der Covid-19 Social Monitor bezieht sich auf die letzten 7 Tage.  
2017: n=19 112, 2020: n=1 492-2 798, 2021: n=1 919-2 559



## 2. Methodological aspects

*Ad hoc* survey, usual survey or retrospective study?

- *Ad hoc* surveys: capturing the current state of things during the pandemic
  - Usual survey: comparing two time periods, before and after the pandemic
  - Retrospective study: specific questions on the COVID-19 impact
- The OVE (France) carried on these three strategies



## 2. Methodological aspects

In Switzerland, a specific module was integrated in the Survey of higher education graduates

### ➤ Advantages and shortcomings

- Easy and almost cost-free
- Selection bias: only students who graduated were asked to report financial difficulties and mental health problems







## 2. Methodological aspects

BA\_tot+·MA\_tot¶

**A2\_12·Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, did you experience in 2020 any of the following difficulties?¶**

*! Please tick once per category¶*

☐	☐	No☐	Yes, but same as normal☐	Yes, somewhat more than normal☐	Yes, much more than normal☐
A2_12a¶ SSEE FIN1☐	Insufficient income to cover expenditure☐	☐0☐	☐1☐	☐2☐	☐3☐
A2_12b¶ SSEE FIN2☐	Unpaid bills☐	☐0☐	☐1☐	☐2☐	☐3☐
A2_12c¶ SSEE FIN3☐	Negative account balance☐	☐0☐	☐1☐	☐2☐	☐3☐
A2_12d¶ SSEE FIN4☐	Restrictions on basic necessities (food, medicines, etc.)☐	☐0☐	☐1☐	☐2☐	☐3☐

¶



## 2. Methodological aspects

**A2\_13·Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have you been bothered at some point in 2020 by the following problems?¶**

! Please tick once per category¶

¶	¶	No¶	Yes, but same as normal¶	Yes, somewhat more than normal¶	Yes, much more than normal¶
A2_13a¶ SSEE GES1¶	Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 0¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 1¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 2¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 3¶
A2_13b¶ SSEE GES2¶	Not being able to stop or control worrying¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 0¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 1¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 2¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 3¶
A2_13c¶ SSEE GES3¶	Little interest or pleasure in doing things¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 0¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 1¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 2¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 3¶
A2_13d¶ SSEE GES4¶	Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 0¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 1¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 2¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 3¶
A2_13e¶ SSEE GES5¶	Feeling lonely¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 0¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 1¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 2¶	<input type="checkbox"/> 3¶

¶





## 2. Methodological aspects

Survey of higher education graduates: population and numbers

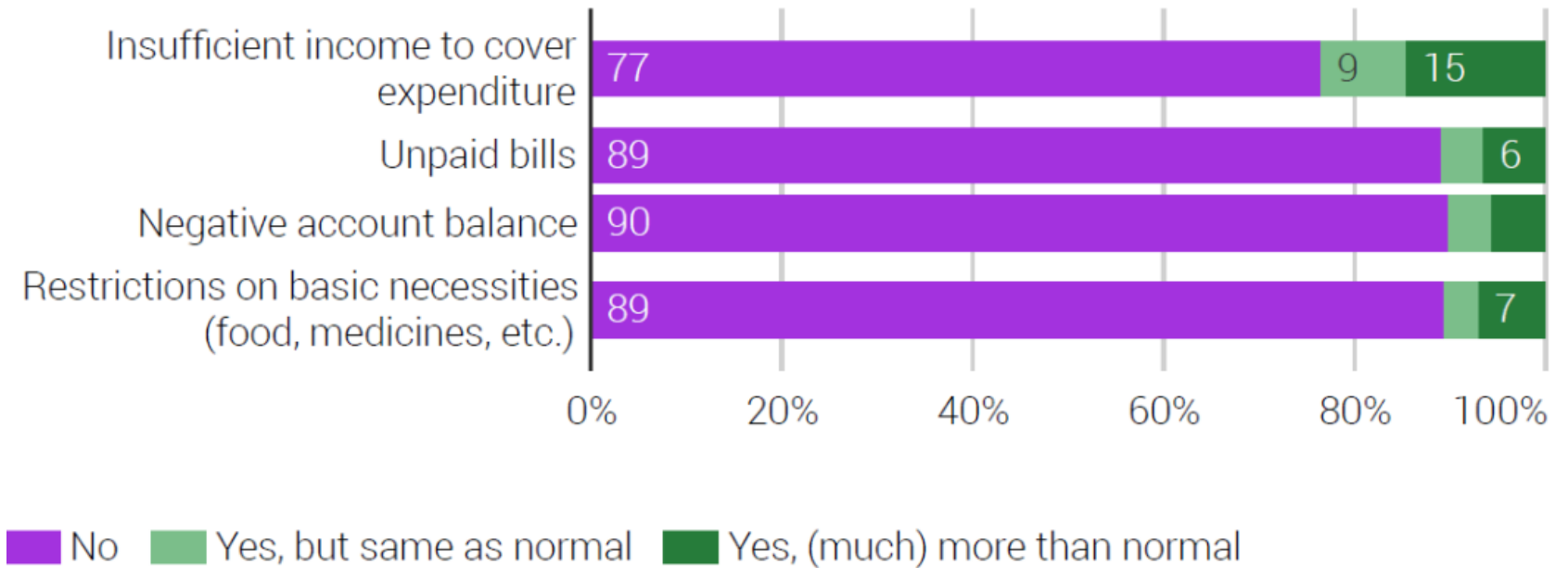
- Surveys 1 year and 5 years after graduation
- Population: 2020 Bachelor's, Master's and PhD graduates
  - Subpopulation of the study: Bachelor's and Master's (June/2020-December/2020)
- Survey method: census, online questionnaire
- Time period: September to December 2021
- 57.599 2020 graduates contacted, 58% net response rate



## 3. Results

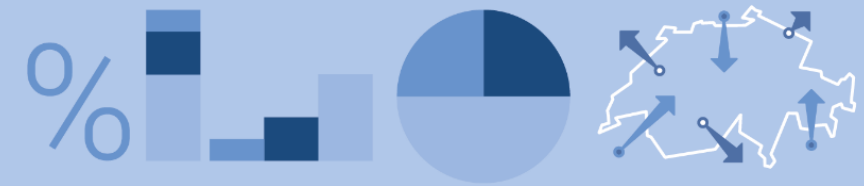
### Financial difficulties of students during the Covid-19 pandemic, in %

G1.1



Source: FSO – First survey 2021 of higher education graduates (EHA)

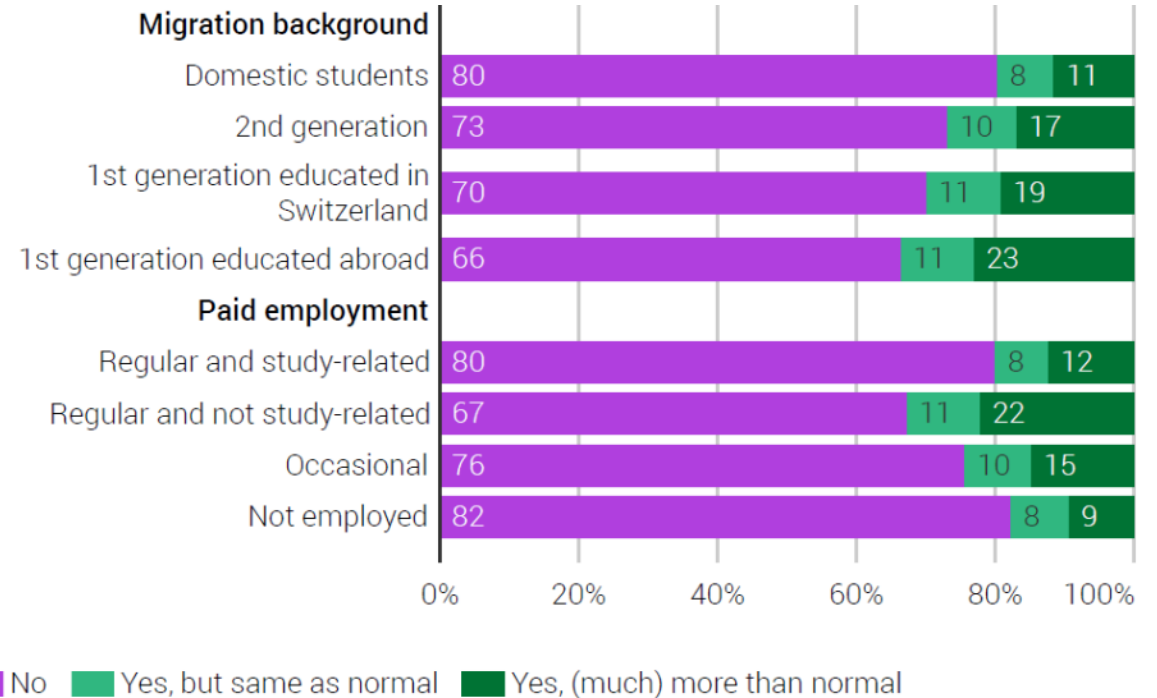
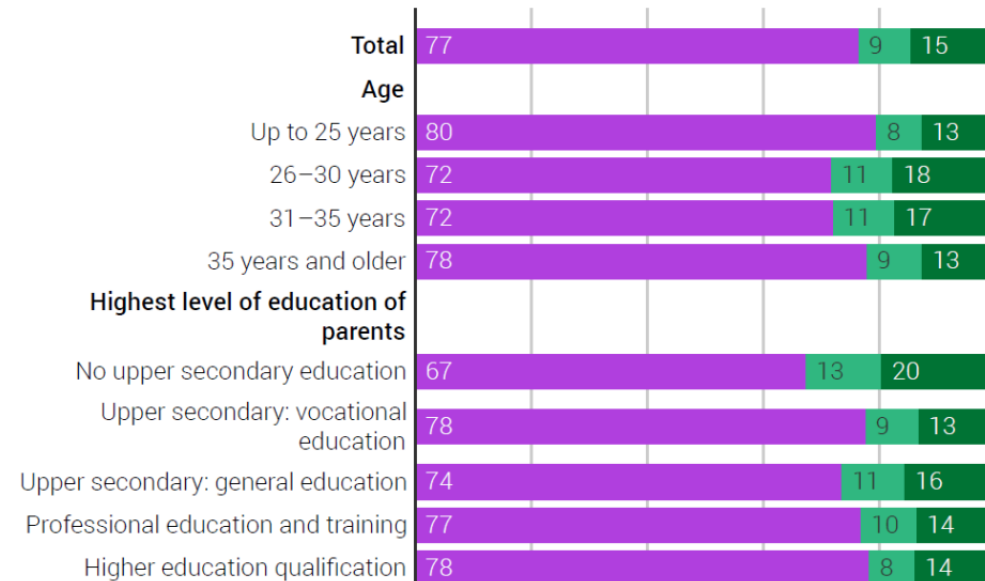
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## 3. Results

Insufficient income to cover expenditure during the Covid-19 pandemic by different sociodemographic characteristics, in %

G1.2



Source: FSO – First survey 2021 of higher education graduates (EHA)

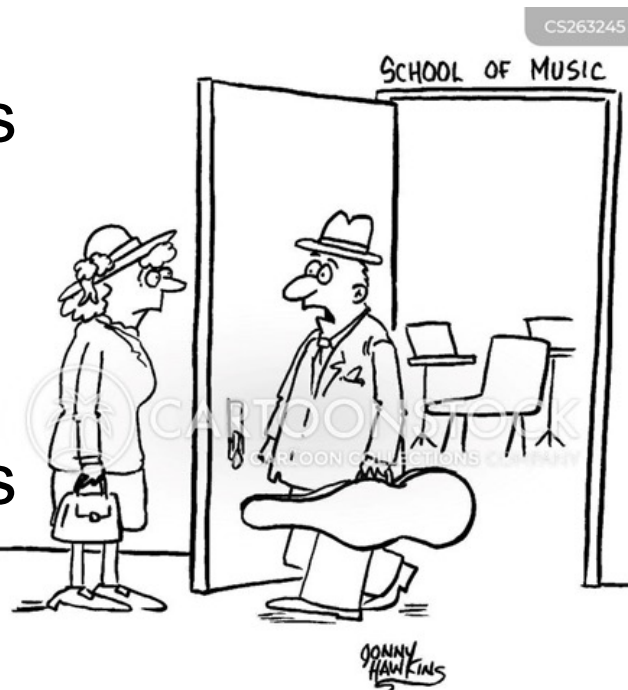
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### 3. Results

#### Field of study

- **one in two** arts students indicated having insufficient income to cover their expenditure
- **one in five** arts students reported restrictions on basic necessities



"They suggested that I switch from a violin to a CD player."





### 3. Results

Emergency financial or material support due to the pandemic in year 2020

- 4.9% from the family and/or the partner
- 2.5% from the university
- 0.8% from the state as grant or loan
- 1.3% from friends, neighbors or fellow students
- 0.5% from non-profit organizations



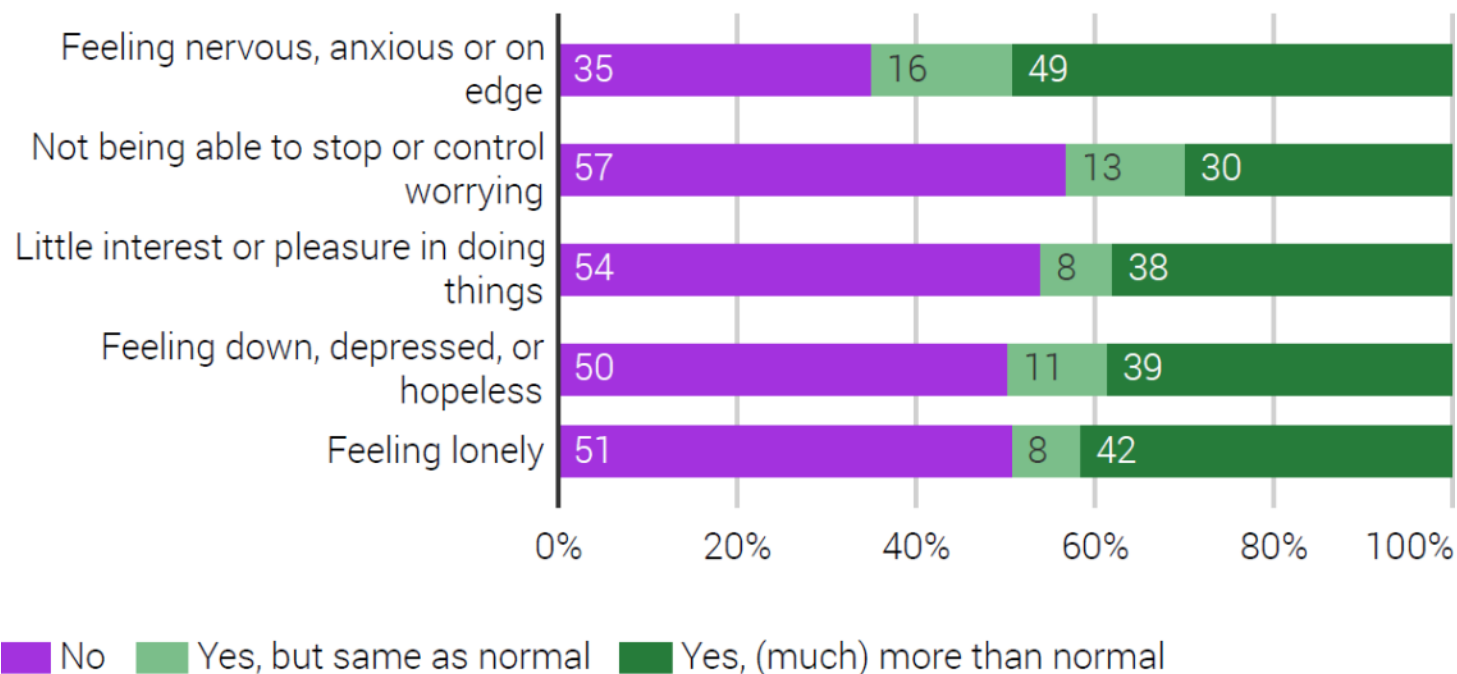




## 3. Results

### Student mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic, in %

G2.1



Source: FSO – First survey 2021 of higher education graduates (EHA)

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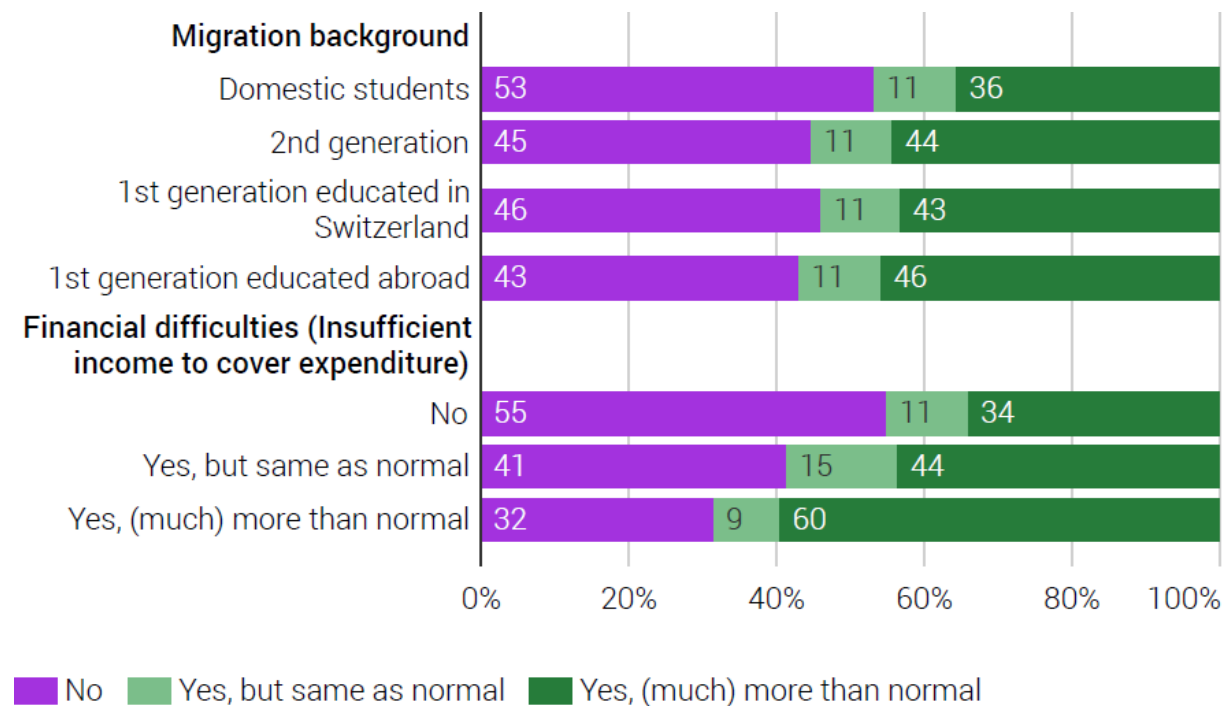
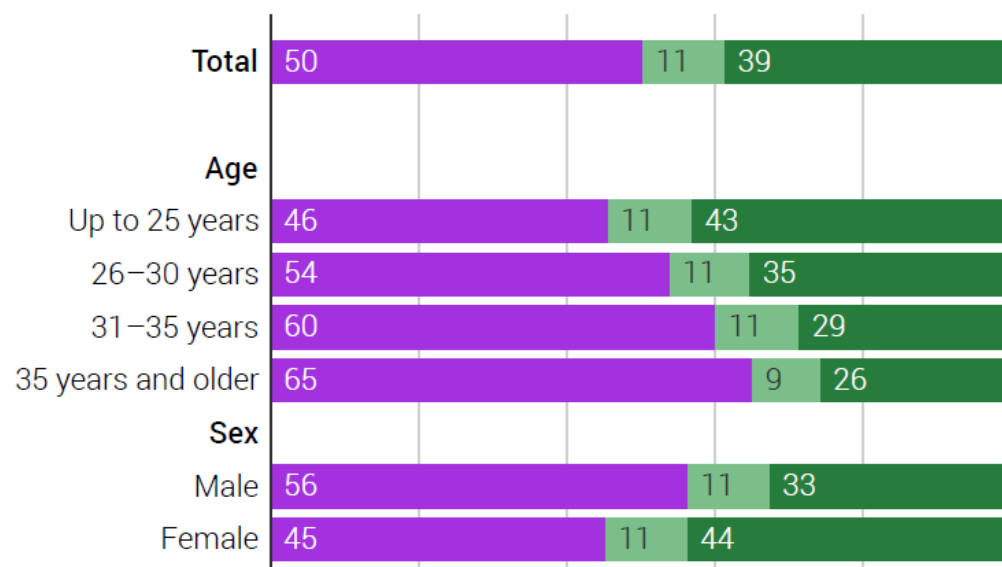




### 3. Results

Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless during the Covid-19 pandemic by different sociodemographic characteristics, in %

G2.2





## 3. Results

### Educational background

- 40% of students with a higher education background report having felt down, depressed or hopeless due to Covid-19 (total: 39%)



## 3. Results

### Regional variations

- 45% of students of the Lake Geneva region indicated having felt down, depressed or hopeless compared to 39% for the total





### 3. Results

#### Emergency and ordinary psychological support in year 2020

- 2.9% of students report having received emergency psychological support due to the pandemic
- 9% indicate that they received a psychological support not related to the pandemic





## 4. Discussion

Questions? Comments?

[www.students-stat.admin.ch](http://www.students-stat.admin.ch)

