

Professional Health Literacy in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland – a pilot study among healthcare professionals

Online Workshop at the 29th International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services | 21-09-2023

Germany:

Prof. Dr. Doris Schaeffer, University of Bielefeld
Dr. Alexander Haarmann, Hertie School, Berlin
Dr. Lennert Griese, University of Bielefeld

Austria:

Mag. Dr. Robert Griebler, Austrian National Public Health Institute
Mag. Christa Straßmayr, Austrian National Public Health Institute
Denise Schütze, Austrian National Public Health Institute

Switzerland:

Dr. Saskia De Gani, Careum Center for Health Literacy
Rebecca Jaks, Careum Center for Health Literacy

Background

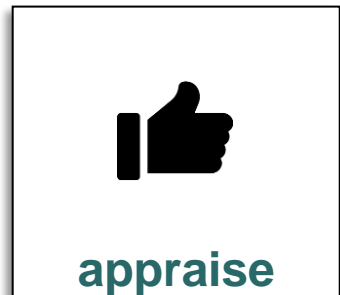
Why is professional Health Literacy (HL) important?

- Empirical studies show that the HL of the population in German-speaking countries is **not very well** developed (De Gani et al., 2021; Griebler et al., 2021; Schaeffer et al., 2021).
- Health Professionals (HP) play an essential role in **strengthening** HL.
- To promote HL, **personal HL is not enough**. It requires **professional** HL.
- **Until now, suitable concepts, measurement instruments and findings on *professional* HL have been lacking.**



Conceptualization of professional Health Literacy

Definition of HL



„Health Literacy (...) entails people’s knowledge, motivation and competences **to access, understand, appraise, and apply health information** in order to make judgments and take decisions in everyday life (...).”

(according to Sørensen et al. 2012)

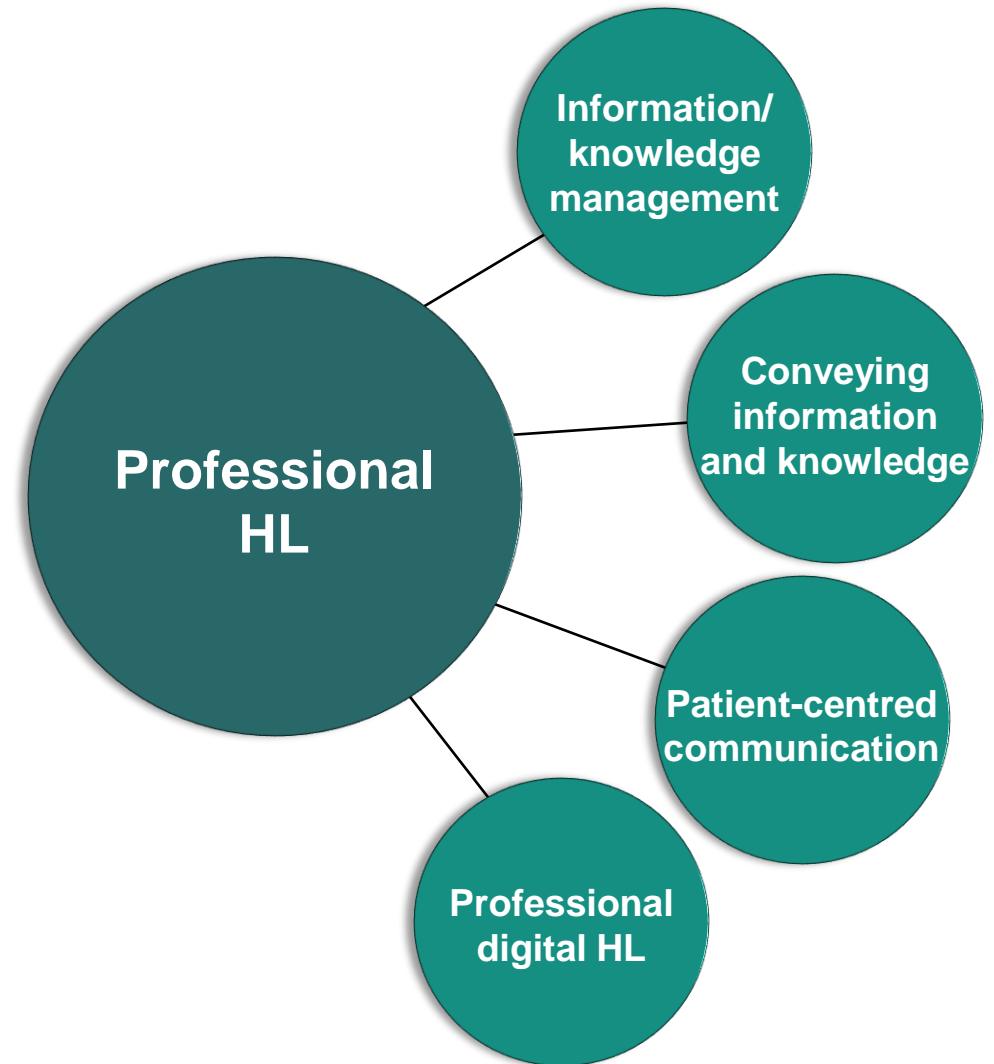


(according to Parker 2009)

Definition and key domains of professional HL

“Professional health literacy comprises the motivation, knowledge, and competencies to **access, understand, appraise, and apply** relevant knowledge and information in various forms in order to act professionally according to the state of the art in everyday working life and to **prepare, convey/explain, and communicate** knowledge and information relevant to health and illness in such a way that it can be **understood, (critically) appraised**, and used by patients to **make sound decisions** about health issues”

own translation based on Schaeffer & Griese 2023



Measuring professional HL (PROF-HL-Q)

Steps in the development of the survey instrument

Step 1: Developing conceptual underpinnings

Step 2: Mapping and operationalizing key tasks

Step 3: Item development and questionnaire construction

Step 4: Expert feedback and revision

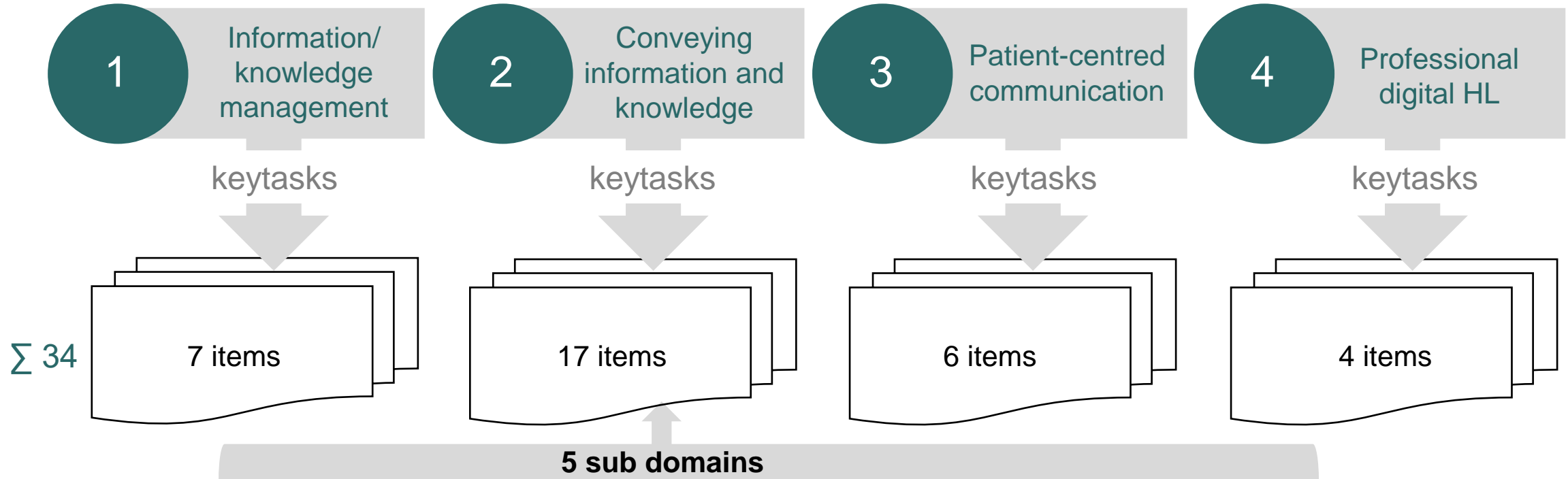
Step 5: Pretest

Step 6: Final revision

Step 7: Testing the psychometric properties

Questionnaire for measuring professional HL

PROF-HL-Q



- assess information and communication requirements
- assess and consider prior knowledge and information needs
- convey and explain information
- dealing with challenges in conveying information
- to evaluate whether the information has been understood

Items and Scores

- Items measure the **self-assessed difficulties** in dealing with predefined tasks in the key domains of professional HL
 - considers the **relational nature of HL**
- Response categories: five-point Likert scale ranging from “very difficult” (1) to “very easy” (5).
- Testing of the **factor structure** using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses

calculation of additive sum scores, scaled from 0 to 100 → the higher the point value, the easier the domain

Example items:

How easy or difficult is it for you...		very easy	rather easy	neither easy nor difficult	rather difficult	very difficult
Information and knowledge management						
PHL5	to evaluate the scientific basis (evidence base) of specialist information?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Conveying information and knowledge						
PHL21	to deal with patients who are mis- or disinformed?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Patient-centered communication						
PHL30	to give patients enough leeway to ask questions (e.g., follow-up or clarification questions)?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
Professional digital HL						
PHL31	to help patients to find health information online that is relevant to them?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁

Please note: this is a preliminary translation of the items

Further questionnaire contents

- Preparation for professional HL through training
- Organizational framework to promote HL of patients
- Familiarity with the concept of HL and selected methods of information/knowledge explanation
- Job-related characteristics

Example items:

	very good	rather good	neither good nor bad	rather bad	very bad
AUSIV How well did your training prepare you for delivering and explaining information?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁

	(almost) always	frequent	sometimes	rarely	never
R1 Do you have enough time for conversations with patients?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁
R3 Can you have conversations with patients without being disturbed or interrupted (e.g. by colleagues with urgent concerns)?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁

	very familiar	familiar	little familiar	not familiar
GK1 How familiar are you with the concept of health literacy?	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁

Key results of the pilot study in Austria: HLS-PROF-AT

Robert Griebler, Denise Schütze, Thomas Link, Christa Straßmayr

HLS-PROF-AT: Data collection and sample



June 13 - August 8, 2022



N = 3.876



Online survey (CAWI)



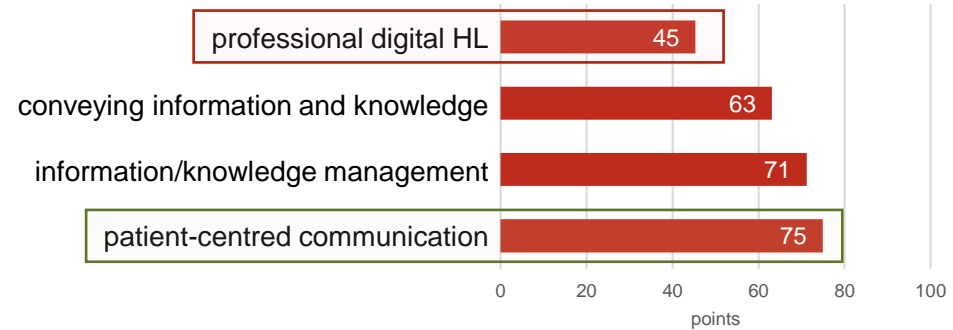
Convenience Sample (ad-hoc sample)

Recruitment via mail by multipliers (e.g., professional chambers, professional associations, networks and societies)

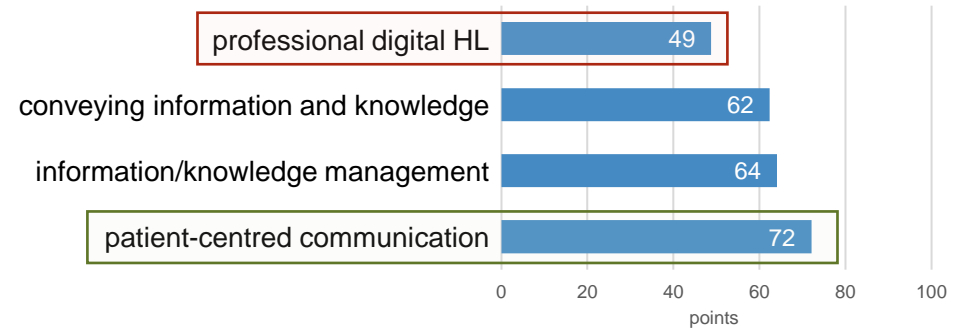
Physicians		808
thereof	General practitioners	159
	Medical specialists	495
	Junior doctors	112
	Dentists	42
Nurses		2.723
thereof	Nurses	2.410
	Nursing assistants	313
Physiotherapists		345

Scores on professional HL

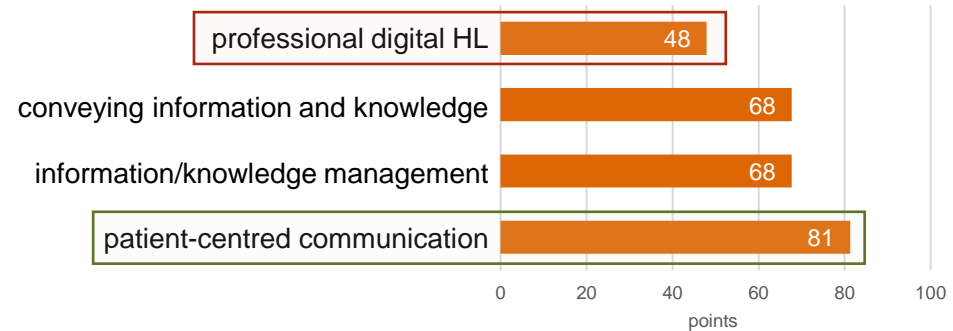
Physicians



Nurses



Physiotherapists

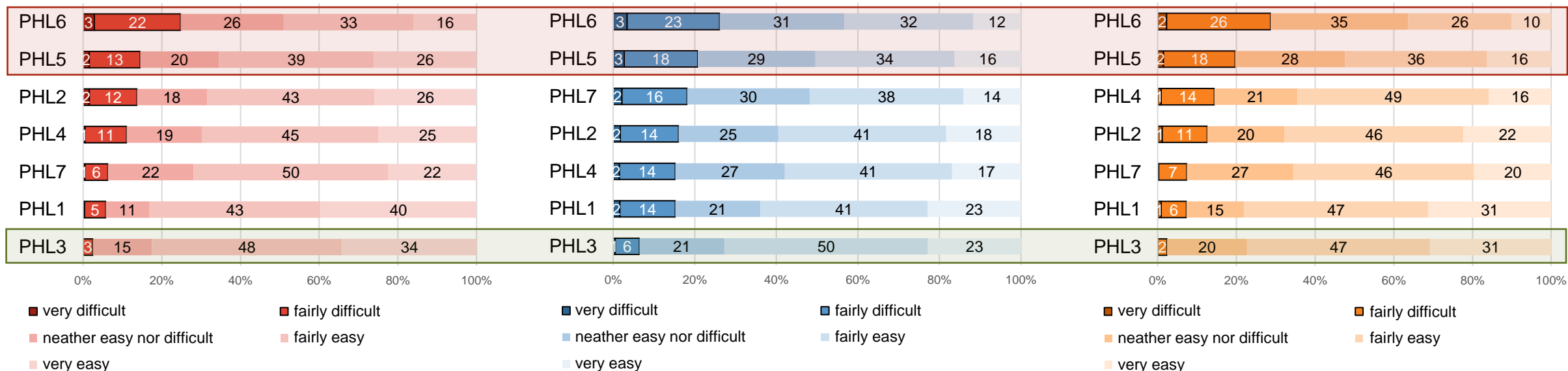


Information/knowledge management tasks

Physicians

Nurses

Physiotherapists



How easy or difficult is it for you to ...

PHL1 find new specialist information that is important for doing your job?

PHL2 identify the most important information for your everyday practice from the plethora of information available?

PHL3 understand new specialist information?

PHL4 determine the trustworthiness of specialist information?

PHL5 evaluate the scientific basis (evidence base) of specialist information?

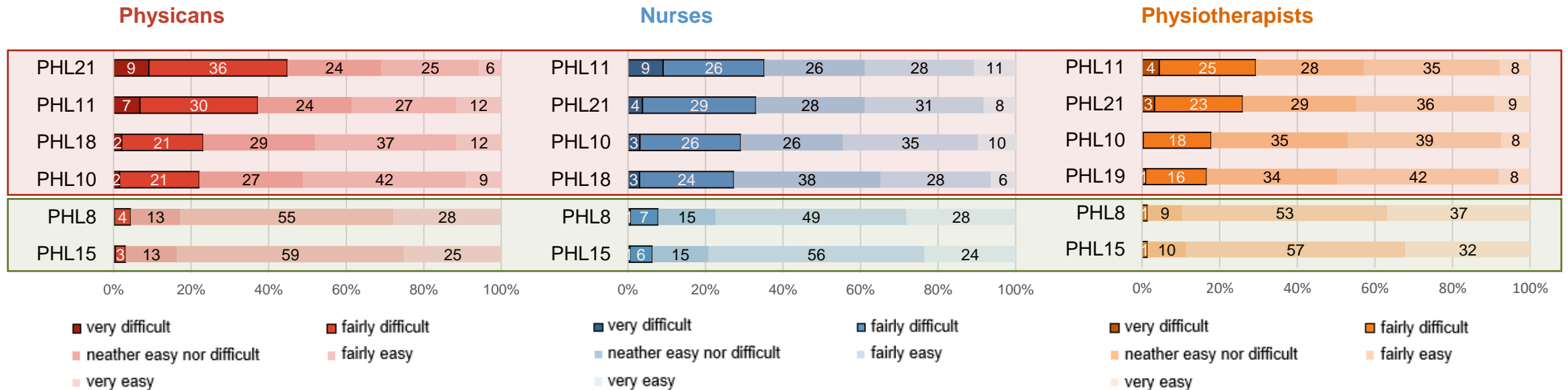
PHL6 classify statistical results correctly?

PHL7 use new specialist information in your everyday practice?



Conveying information and knowledge tasks

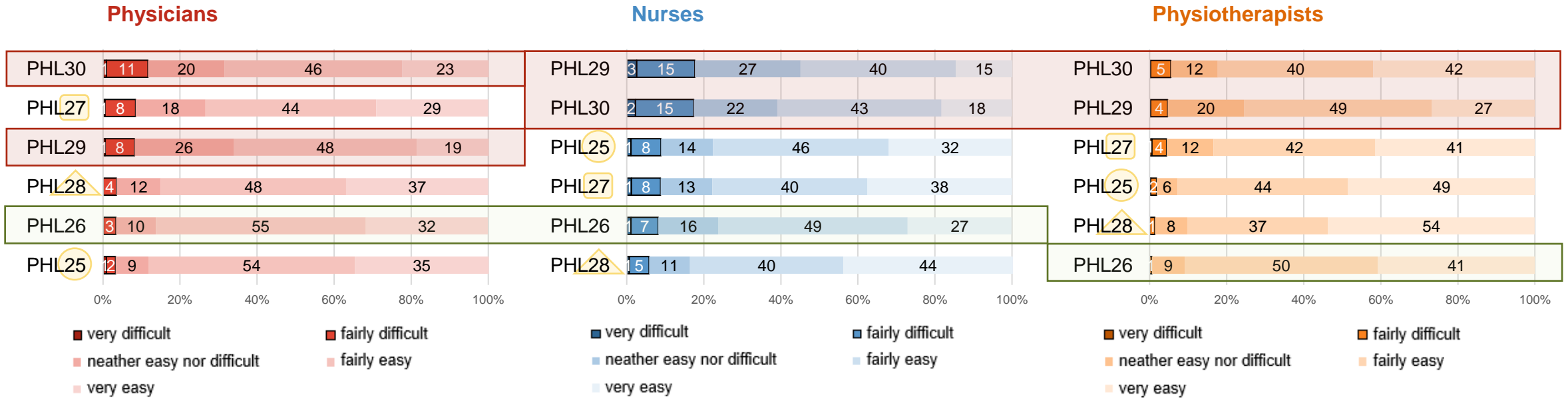
(across all five sub-areas; the four most difficult and two easiest tasks)



How easy or difficult is it for you to (determine) ...

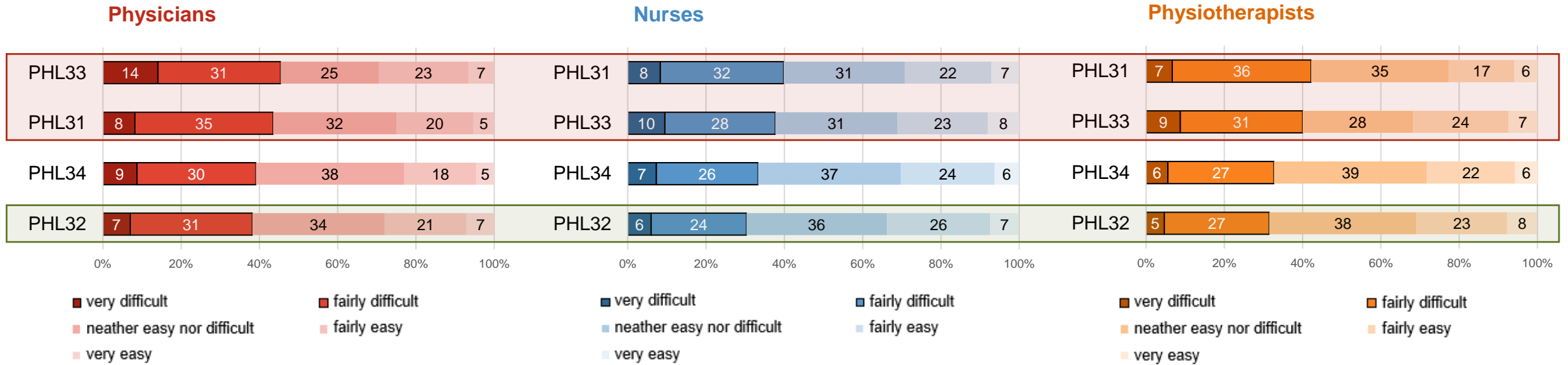
PHL8	whether or not patients can follow the conversation?
PHL15	explain relevant information so that patients can understand it well?
PHL10	the extent to which patients are able to process information to do with health and ill health?
PHL11	the extent to which cultural differences hinder mutual understanding?
PHL18	deal with the issue of unclear evidence (uncertain scientific grounds) when delivering information?
PHL19	handle difficult conversations appropriately with patients who may, for example, have a different opinion, be unhappy, disappointed or upset?
PHL21	deal with patients who are mis- or disinformed?

Patient-centred communication tasks



- how easy or difficult is it for you to ...**
- PHL25 establish an atmosphere of trust and respect in the conversation?
 - PHL26 get patients to feel comfortable voicing their concerns and personal expectations?
 - PHL27 listen to patients actively, without interrupting them?
 - PHL28 explain patients' treatment to them (e.g. why you do certain things or ask certain questions during an examination, procedure or act of care)?
 - PHL29 set goals and decide on next steps with a patient?
 - PHL30 give patients enough leeway to ask questions (e.g. follow-up or clarification questions)?

Professional digital Health Literacy tasks



How easy or difficult is it for you to help patients and, if necessary, their families ...

PHL31 find health information online that is relevant to them?

PHL33 determine the trustworthiness of digital health information they find online (e.g. whether it's reliable, inaccurate, misleading)?

PHL32 understand the health information they find online?

PHL34 use the health information they find online to improve their health issue or general health?

Key results of the pilot study in Switzerland: HLS-PROF-CH

Saskia De Gani, Rebecca Jaks

HLS-PROF-CH: Data collection and sample



June 2 – July 31, 2022

N= 1'613



- 309 Physicians
- 692 Nursing staff
- 318 Physiotherapists
- 294 Pharmacists



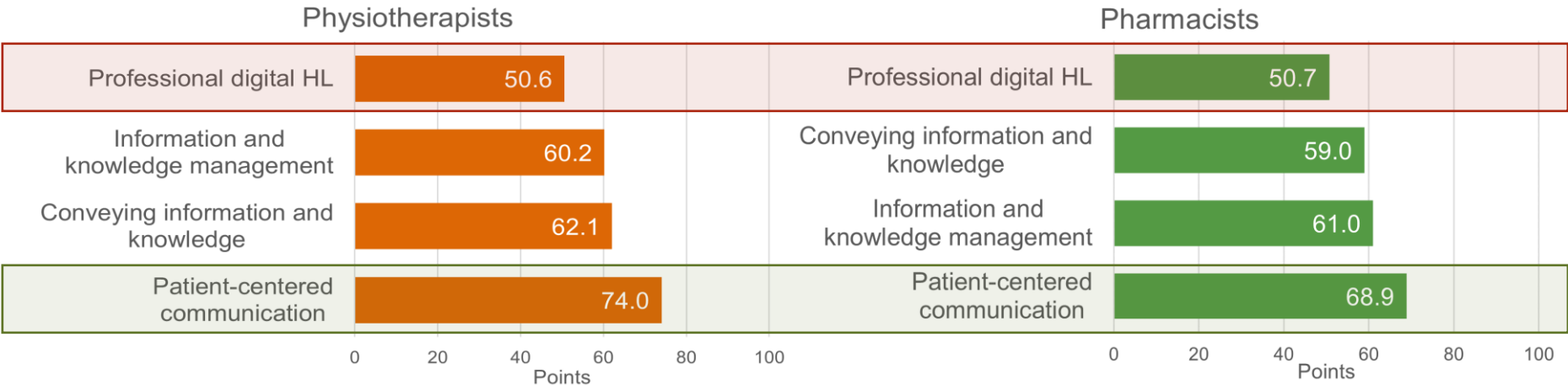
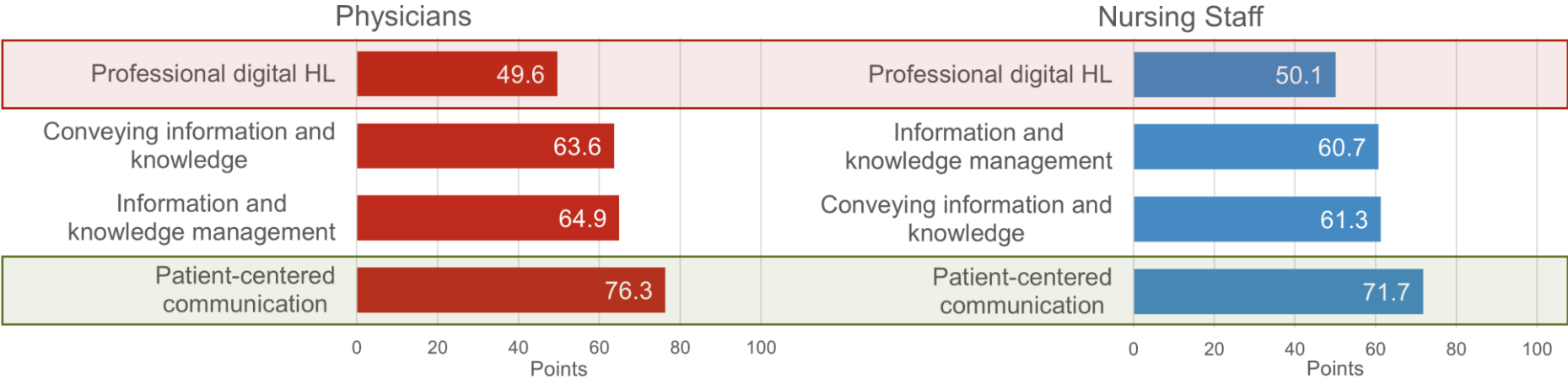
Online survey (CAWI)



Convenience sample (Ad-hoc sample)

Recruitment via mail distribution by multipliers (e.g. professional associations, networks and societies)

Scores on professional HL



Most difficult tasks

[proportion of answers with “very/rather difficult”]

Information and knowledge management:

- PHL6 ...to classify statistical results correctly? *[between 29% and 39% of surveyed HP]*
- PHL5 ...to evaluate the scientific basis (evidence base) of professional information? *[between 21% and 30% of surveyed HP]*

Conveying information and knowledge:

- PHL11 ...to determine the extent to which cultural differences hinder mutual understanding? *[between 34% and 43% of surveyed HP]*
- PHL21 ...to deal with patients who are mis- and disinformed? *[between 33% and 39% of surveyed HP]*

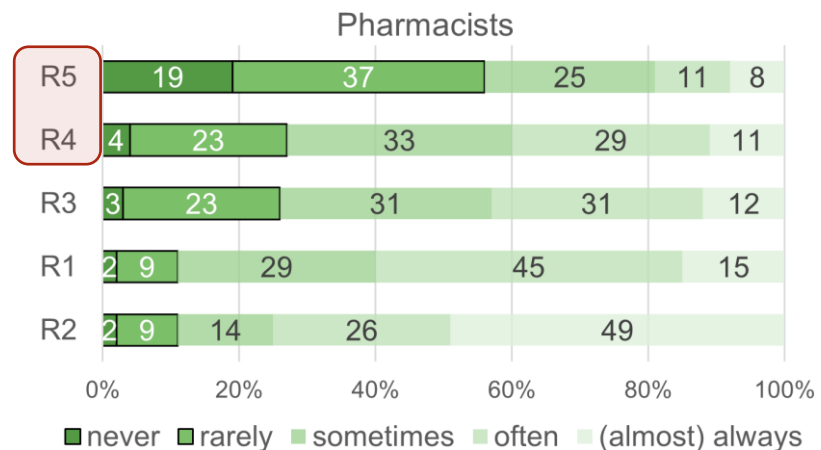
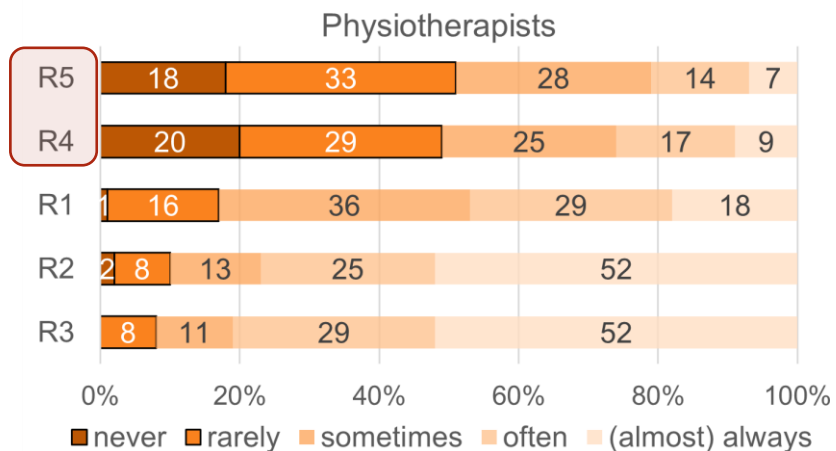
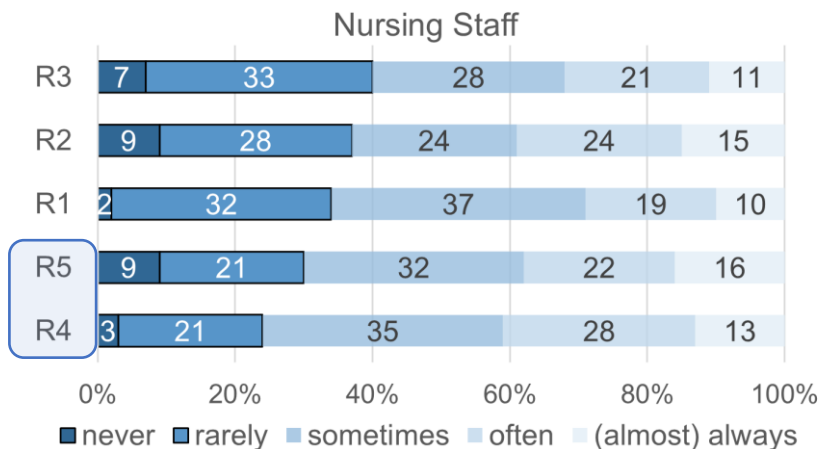
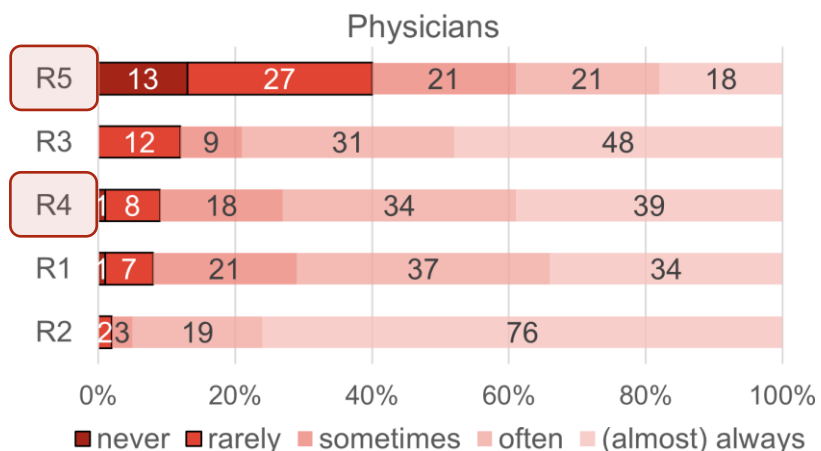
Patient-centered communication:

- PHL29 ...set goals and decide on next steps with a patient? *[between 2% and 19% of surveyed HP]*
- PHL30 ...to give patients enough leeway to ask questions? *[between 7% and 12% of surveyed HP]*

Professional digital HL:

- PHL33...to help patients to determine the trustworthiness of digital health information they find online? *[between 37% and 41% of surveyed HP]*
- PHL31...to help patients to find relevant health information online? *[between 34% and 37% of surveyed HP]*

Organisational conditions



We'd also like to know a little about the environment in which you interact with patients.

R1 - Do you have enough time for conversations with patients?

R2 - Are the settings where you have conversation with patients both suitable and available?

R3 - Can you have conversations with patients without being disturbed or interrupted?

R4 - When required, do you have access to interpreter services or online translation facilities (e.g. interpretation apps)?

R5 - If required, can you offer follow-up consultations to clarify further questions?*

→ The organisational conditions make a difference: better conditions are related to higher professional HL

Conclusion

Comparison of countries

Comparable difficulty levels and similar response patterns among the HP in the three countries, namely:

- Patient-centred communication is easiest for all HP in all three countries, professional digital health literacy the most difficult
- Information and knowledge management: statistical and scientific literacy tasks (assessing evidence, understanding statistics) are the most difficult for all HP in all three countries
- Conveying information and knowledge: dealing with challenges in conveying information is the biggest challenge for all HP in all three countries
- Patient-centred communication: giving patients enough space to ask questions and to participate in decision-making is the most difficult for all HP in all three countries
- Professional digital Health Literacy: supporting patients in finding and assessing digital health information is the most challenging task for all HP in all three countries
- Organizational conditions to promote Health Literacy of patients make a difference in professional Health Literacy in all three countries

Thank you for your attention!



careum
Hertie School
UNIVERSITÄT BIELEFELD
STIFTUNG GESUNDHEITS WISSEN
Robert Bosch Stiftung
Gesundheit Österreich GmbH
Agenda Gesundheitsförderung

Professionelle Gesundheitskompetenz ausgewählter Gesundheitsprofessionen/-berufe:
Ergebnisse einer Pilotstudie in der Schweiz, Deutschland und Österreich (HLS-PROF)

HLS-PROF Konsortium:
Saskia Maria De Gani, Robert Griebler, Lennert Griese, Alexander Haarmann, Rebecca Jaks, Doris Schaeffer, Denise Schütze und Christa Straßmayr

Health-
wähler
ssionen

GER

Doris Schaeffer, Alexander Haarmann, Lennert Griese
Berlin, Bielefeld 2023

Click here to access the study:

<https://oepgk.at/schwerpunkte/messung-der-gesundheitskompetenz/gesundheitskompetenz-von-gesundheitsprofessionen-berufen/>