

Strengthening digital health literacy to address health misinformation

Dr. Robert Griebler | Austrian National Public Health Institute

Plenary 4: Digital Innovation, Ethical Use of Technology and their Significance for
Health Promotion

31st International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services

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Background



HEALTH PROMOTION



DIGITALISATION

HEALTH
LITERACY



SELF-CARE

Health literacy (HL)

Digital health literacy (DHL)

HL refers to the **extent to which people are able to**

 access, understand, appraise, and apply information in all its forms,
online health information (available via websites, apps, social media, chatbots)

 communicate about health concerns,
communicating online (in online forums, social media, or video calls)

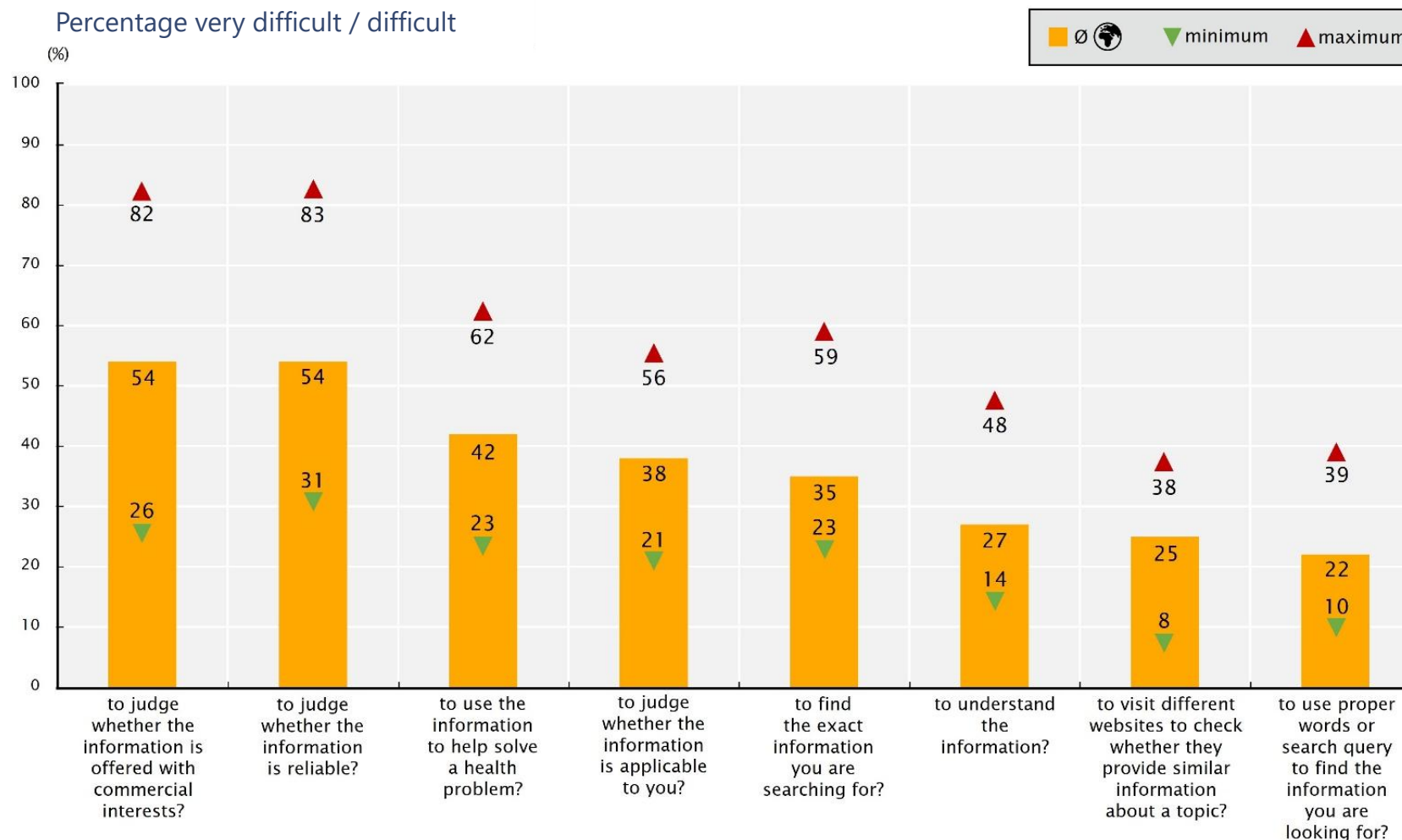
 and make appropriate use of services
health-related digital services (online appointment scheduling, medical online
devices/apps, health apps)

to improve their health and well-being, prevent and manage illness, and support others
in these matters or make decisions on their behalf.

HLS₁₉: Challenges dealing with online health information

Health Literacy Survey 2019
a project of M-POHL

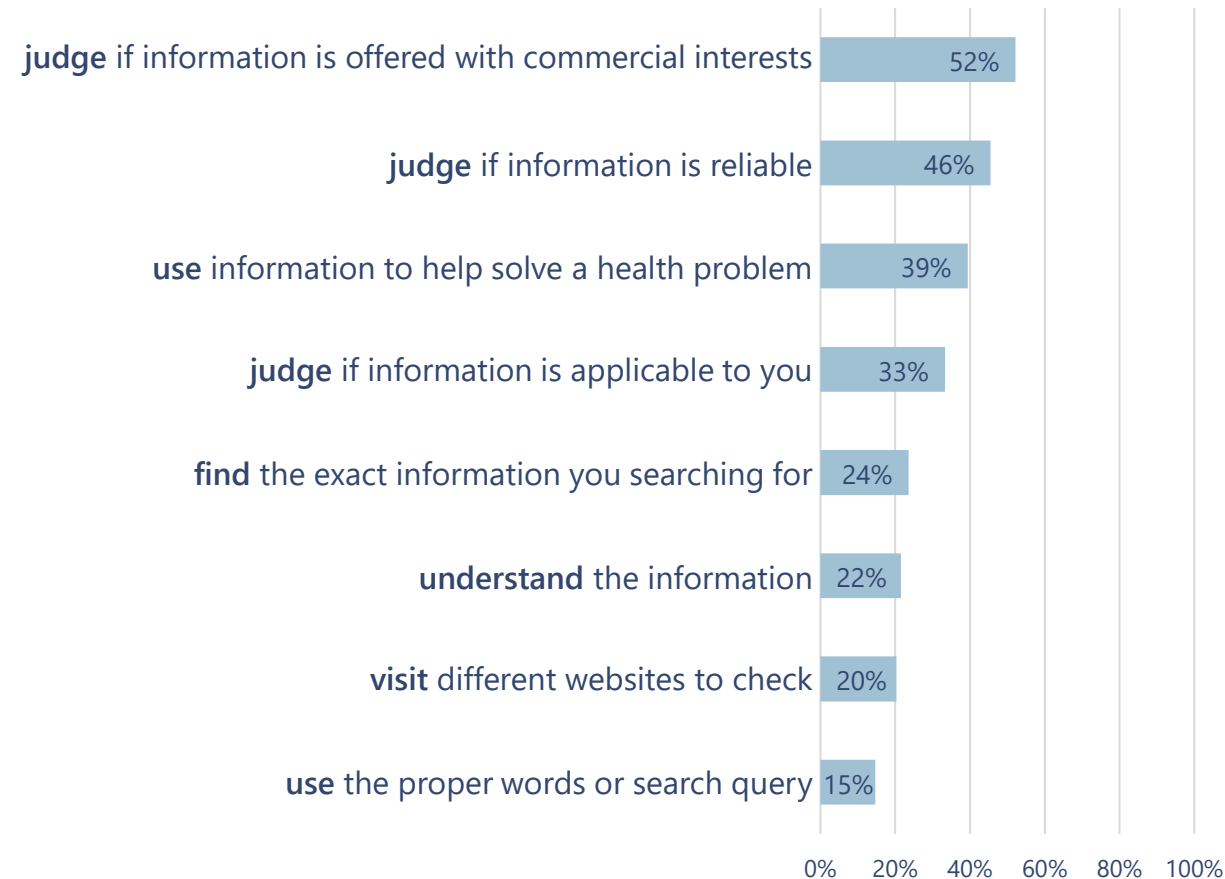
General adult population



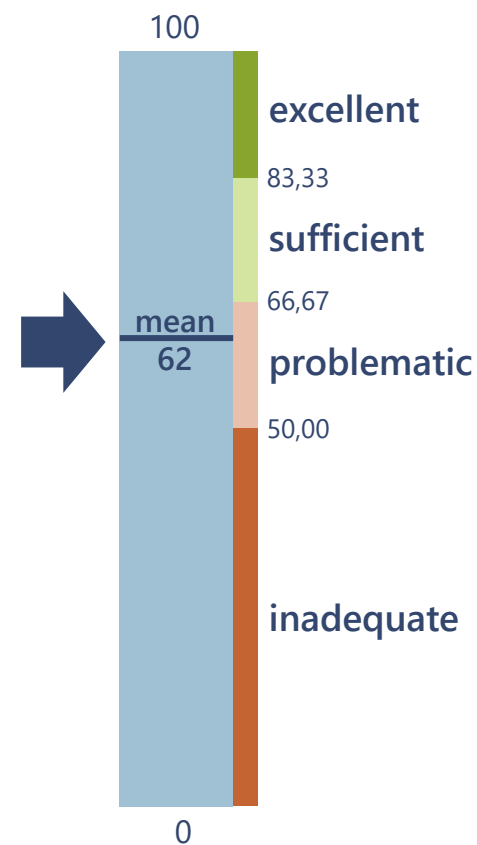
Challenges dealing with online health information

General adult population

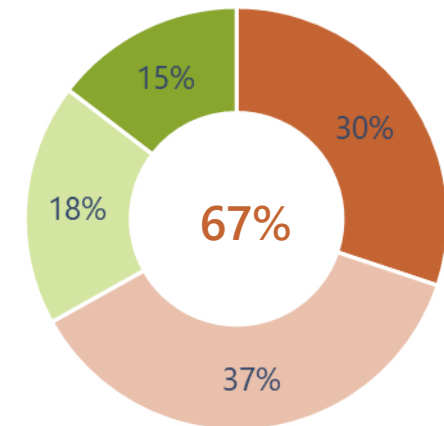
Difficulties



Score



Levels

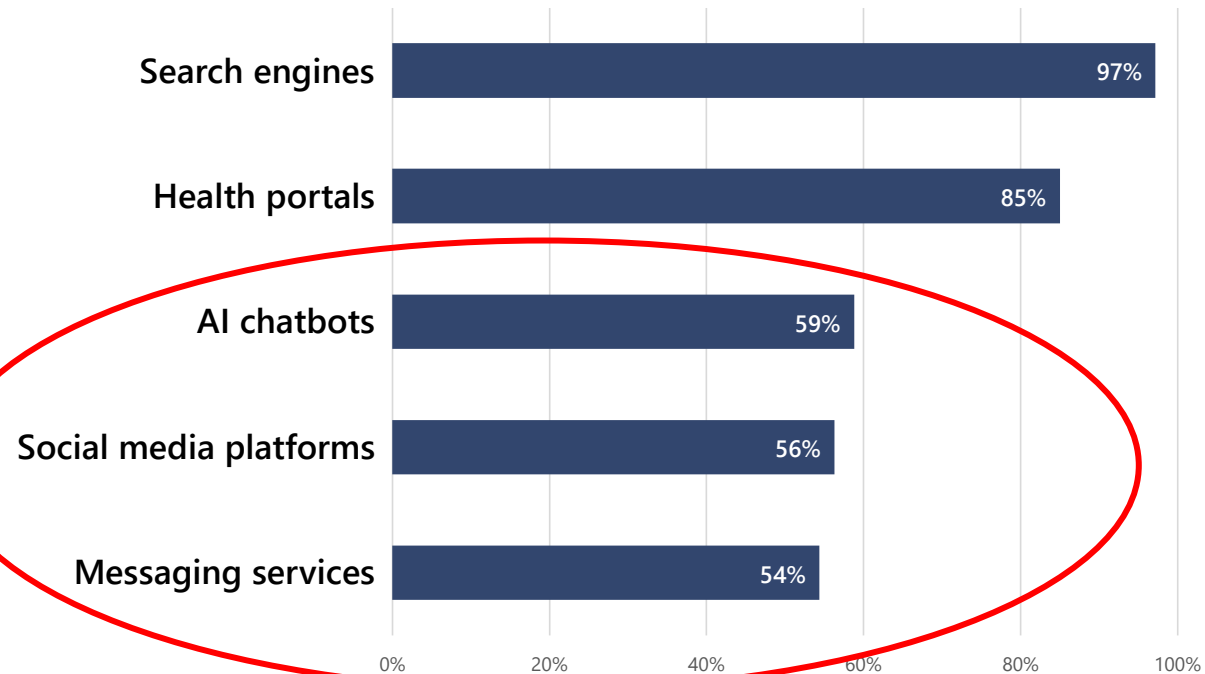


Use of online services to search for health information

General adult population

89%

have already searched for
health information online



Most frequent search topics:

66% Medication and pharmaceuticals

60% Symptoms of diseases

60% Self-treatments

Trust in online services

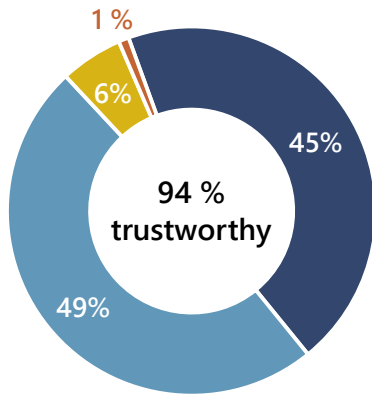
General adult population

Very trustworthy

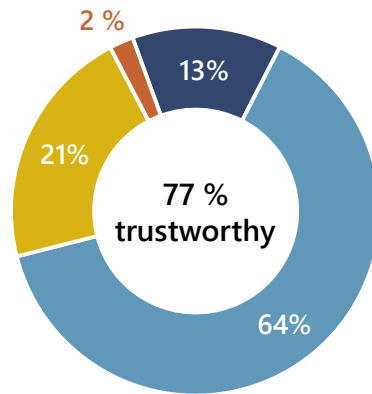
Rather trustworthy

Rather not trustworthy

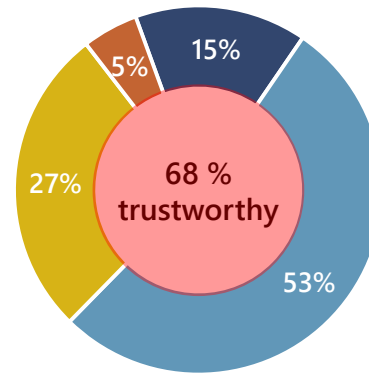
Not trustworthy at all



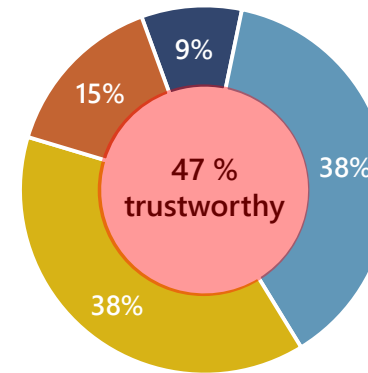
Health portals



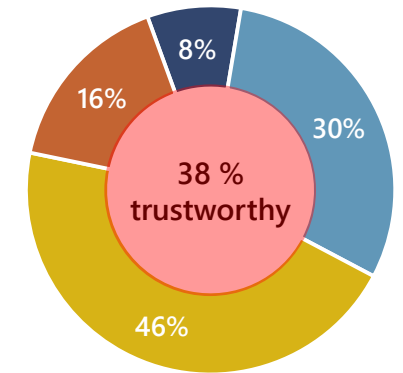
Search engines



AI chatbots



Messaging services



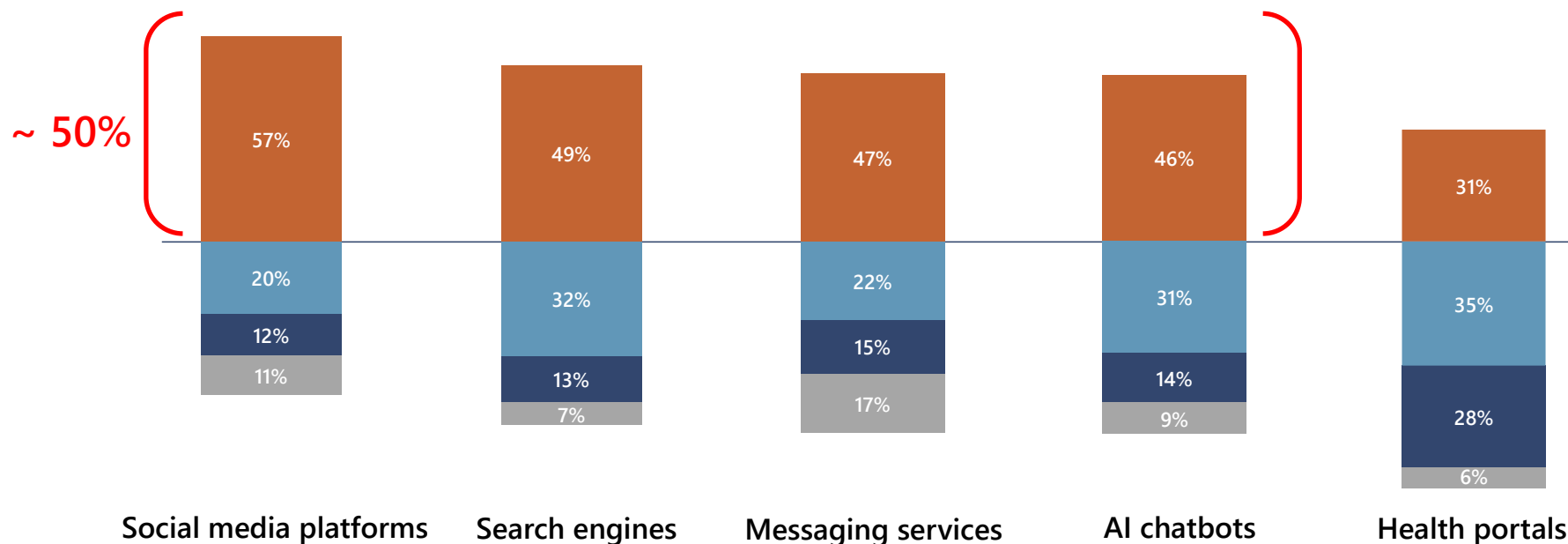
Social media platforms

Misinformation and demand for quality assurance

General adult population

How often have you felt misinformed about health or medical topics when using the following online services?

■ Frequently or occasionally
 ■ Rarely
 ■ Never
 ■ Don't know / no answer



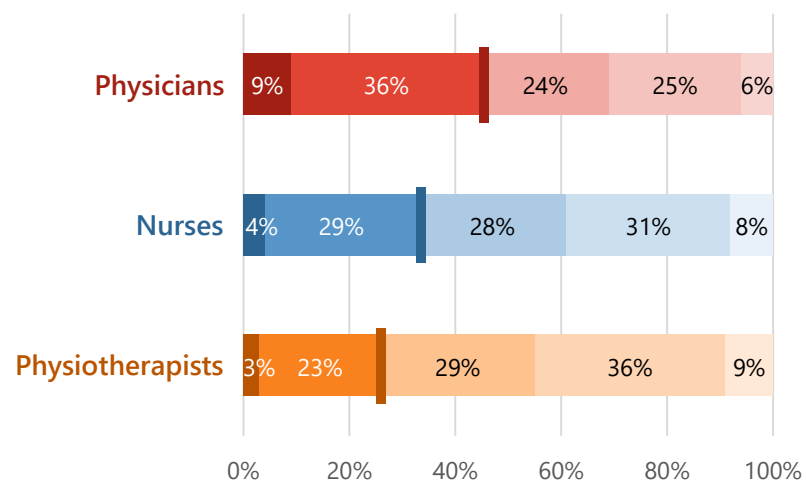
95%

consider quality assurance of
online health and medical
content to be very or rather
important.

Difficulties in dealing with mis-/disinformed patients

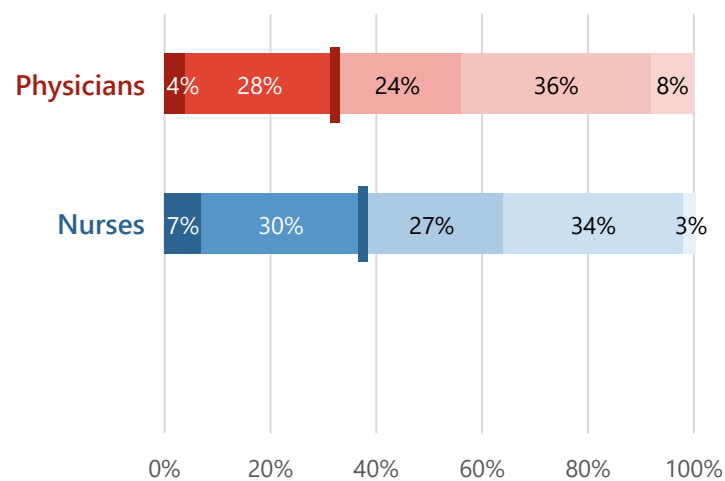
AT

26-48% report difficulties



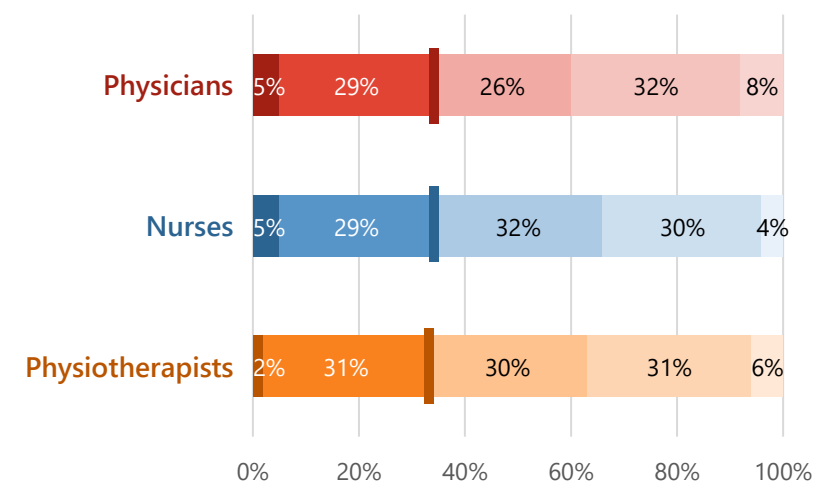
DE

32-37% report difficulties



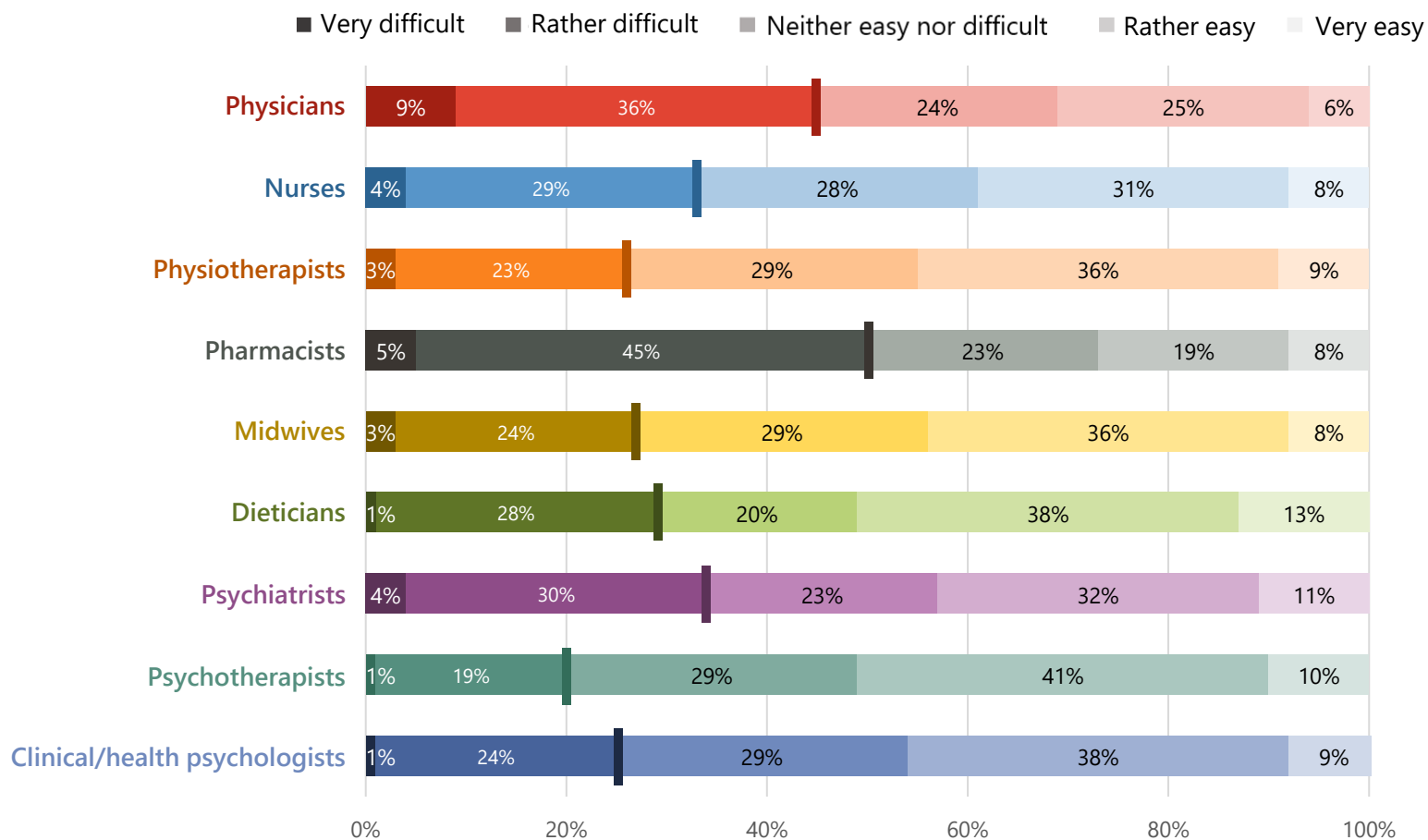
CH

33-39% report difficulties



■ Very difficult ■ Rather difficult ■ Neither easy nor difficult ■ Rather easy ■ Very easy

Difficulties in dealing with mis-/disinformed patients



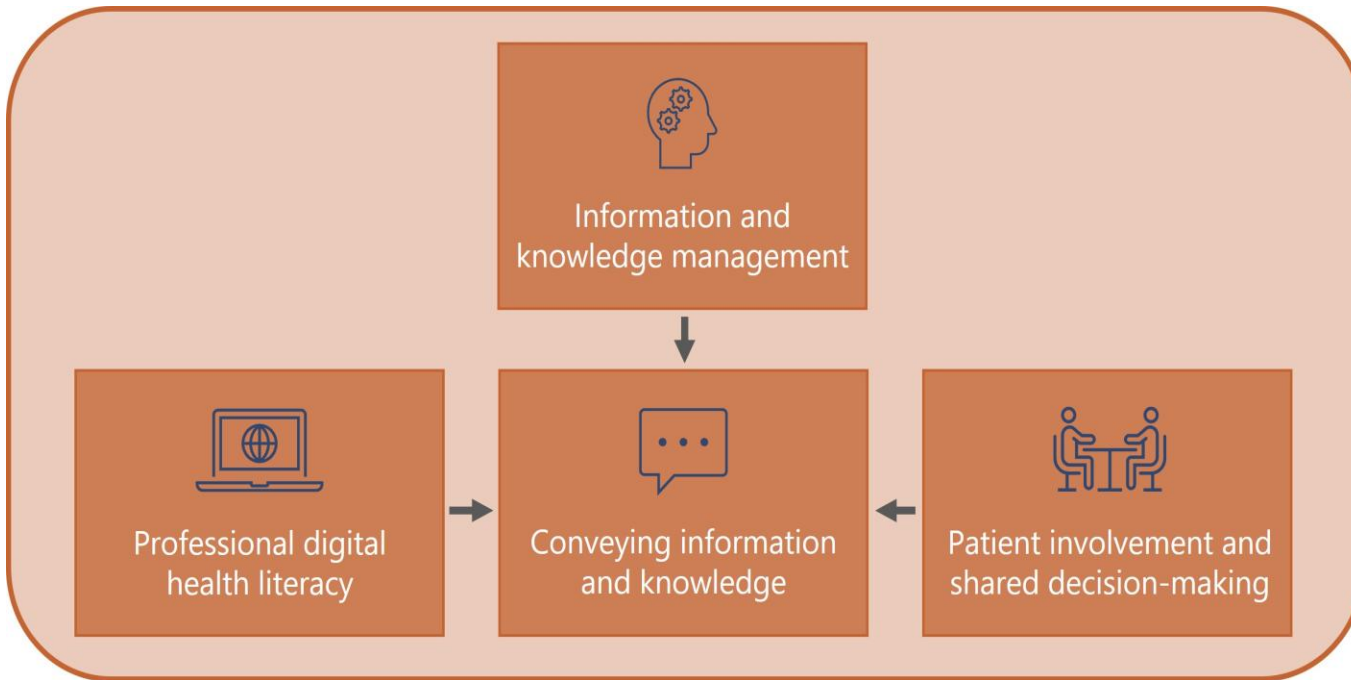
20-50% report difficulties

Professional HL of health professionals: Concept



Professional health literacy (PROF-HL) refers to the extent to which health professionals are able to strengthen their patients' HL within given organizational conditions. It includes:

- (i) acquiring and managing professional knowledge,
- (ii) preparing, explaining and communicating health-related information in ways that enable patients to understand, appraise and apply it,
- (iii) involving and engaging patients in decision-making, and
- (iv) supporting patients in using online health information and services.

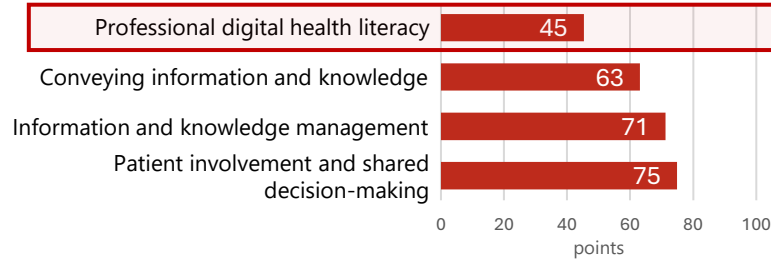


Professional health literacy scores

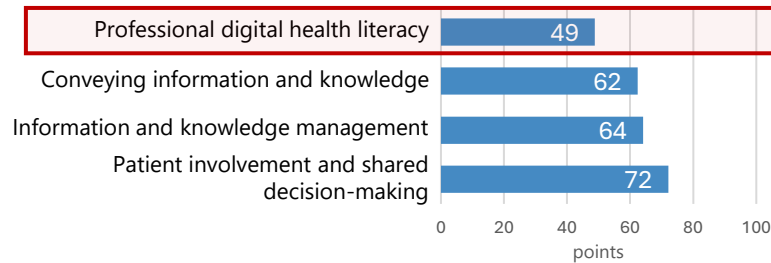
2022

 AT

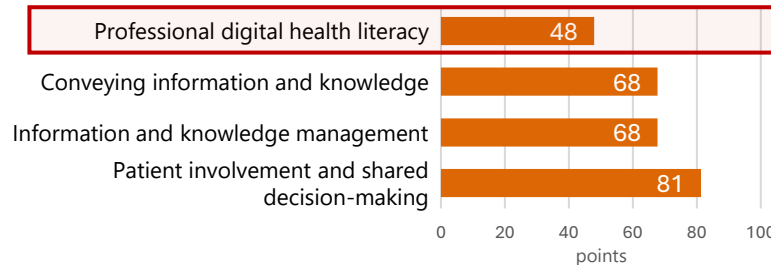
Physicians



Nurses

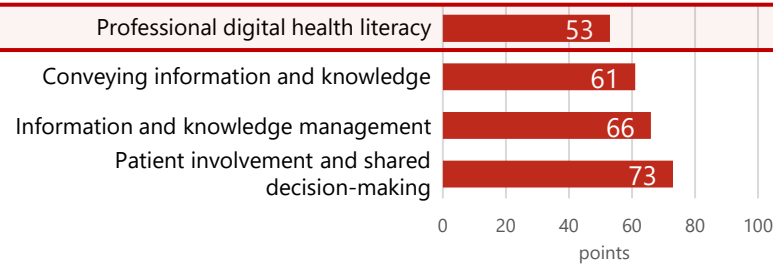


Physiotherapists

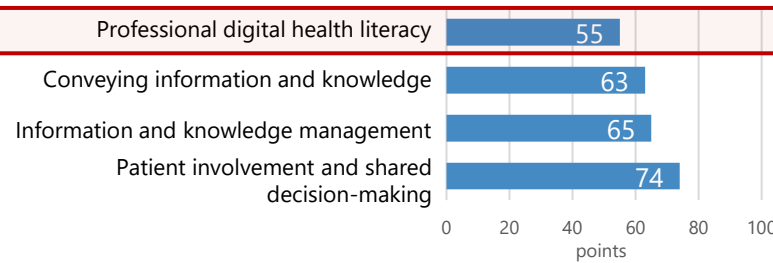


 DE

Physicians

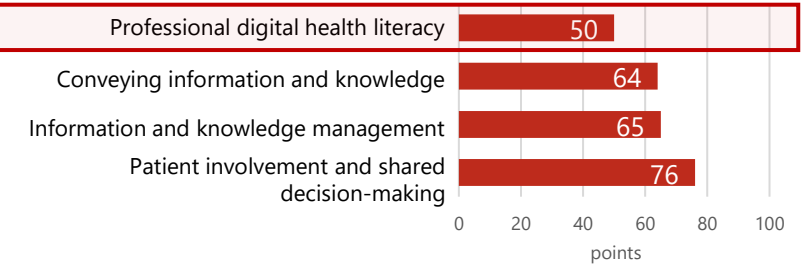


Nurses

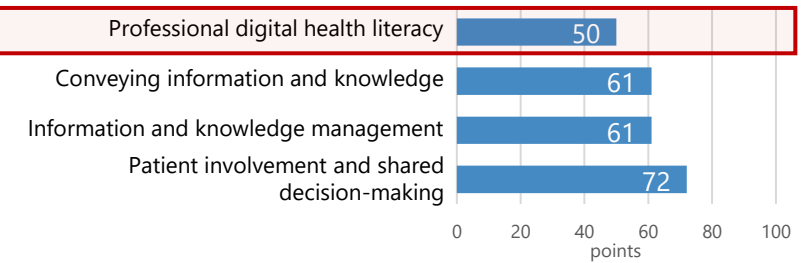


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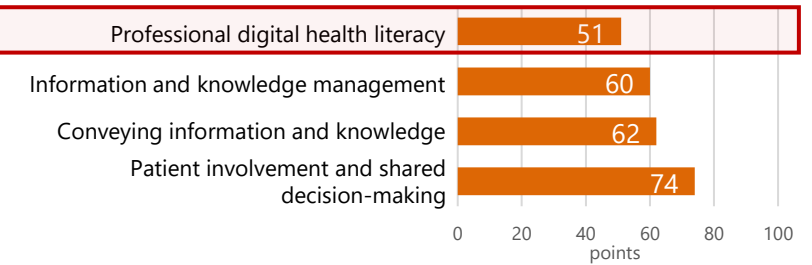
Physicians



Nurses



Physiotherapists



Tasks related to professional digital health literacy

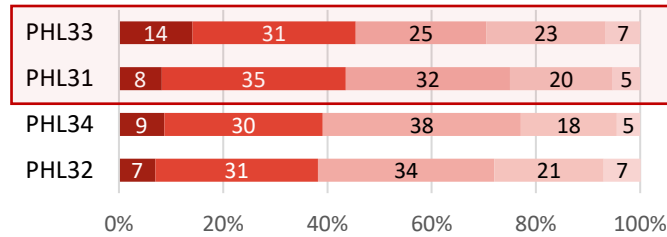
2022

 AT

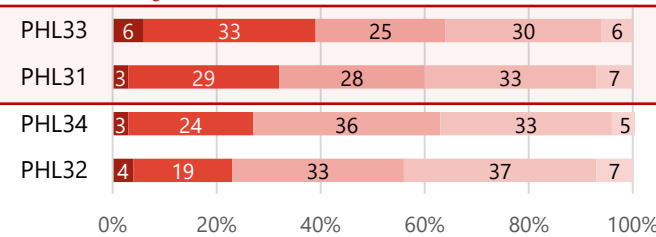
 DE

 CH

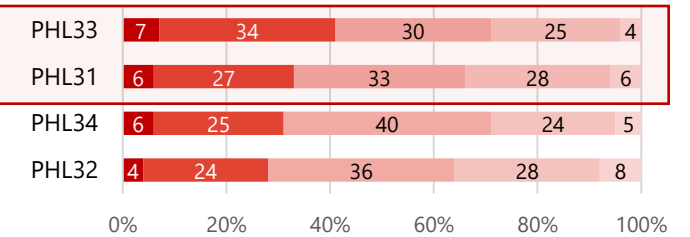
Physicians



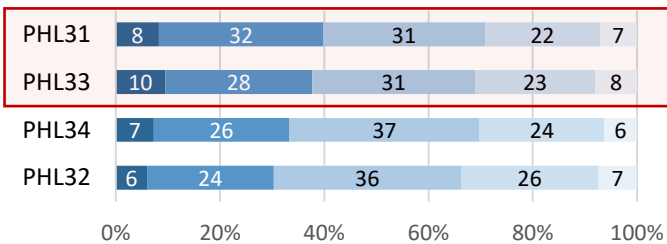
Physicians



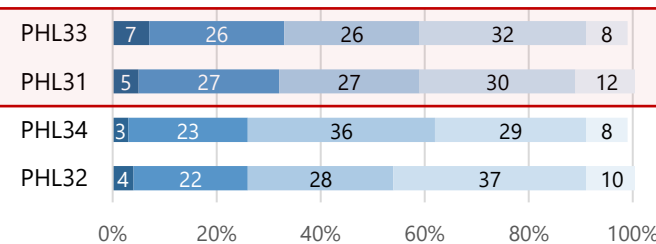
Physicians



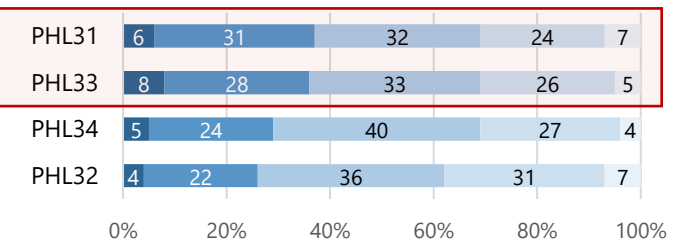
Nurses



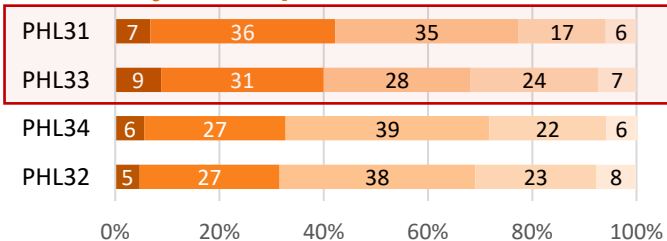
Nurses



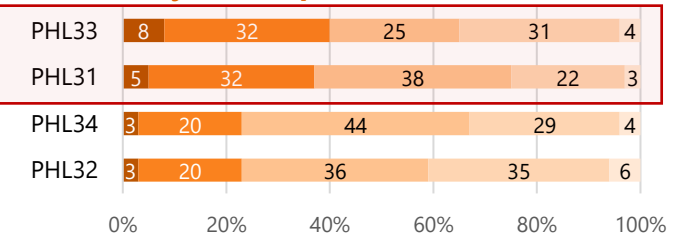
Nurses



Physiotherapists



Physiotherapists



How easy or difficult is it for you to support patients and, if applicable, their relatives ...

PHL31 to find digital health information that is relevant to them?

PHL33 to assess the trustworthiness of the digital health information they have found (e.g., whether it is reliable, false or misleading)?

PHL32 to understand the digital health information they have found?

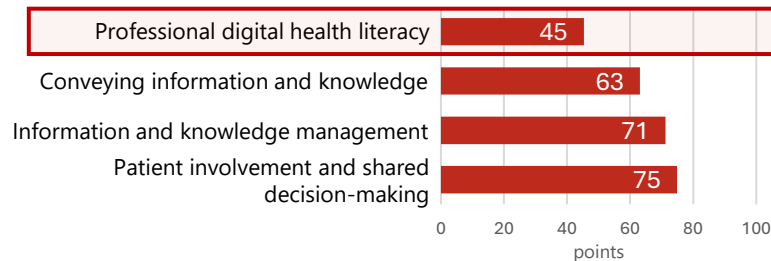
PHL34 to use the digital health information they have found to improve their health issue or health?

 Very difficult
 Rather difficult
 Neither nor
 Rather easy
 Very easy

Professional health literacy scores

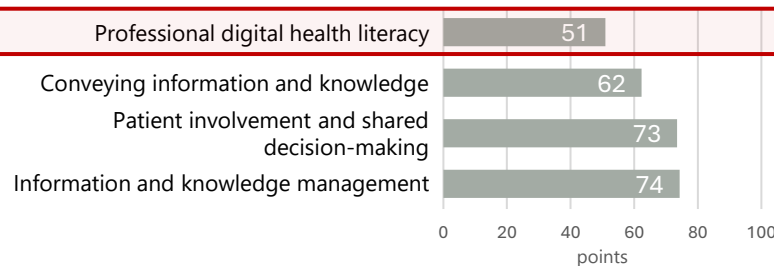
2022

Physicians



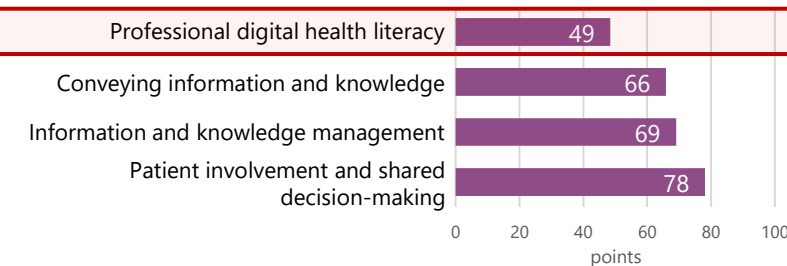
2023

Pharmacists

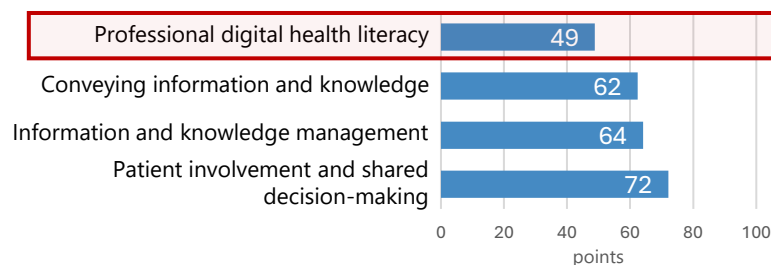


2024

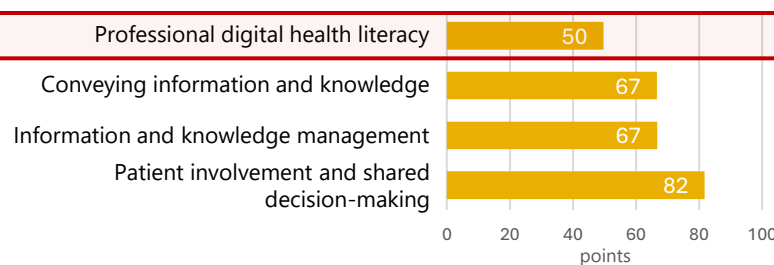
Psychiatrists



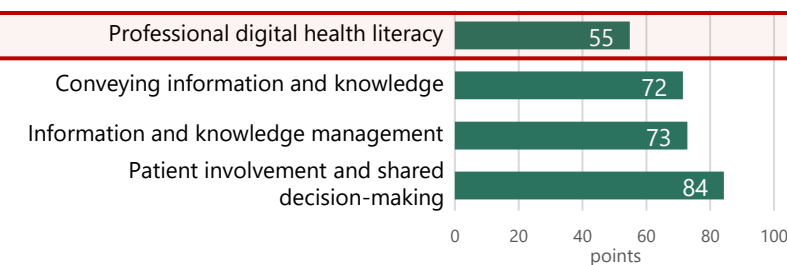
Nurses



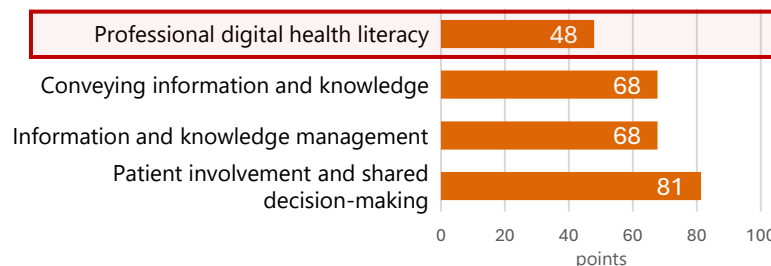
Midwives



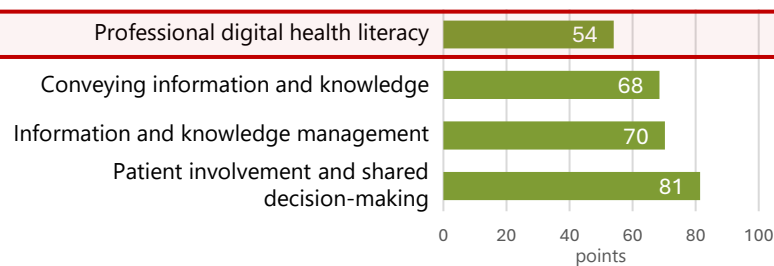
Physiotherapists



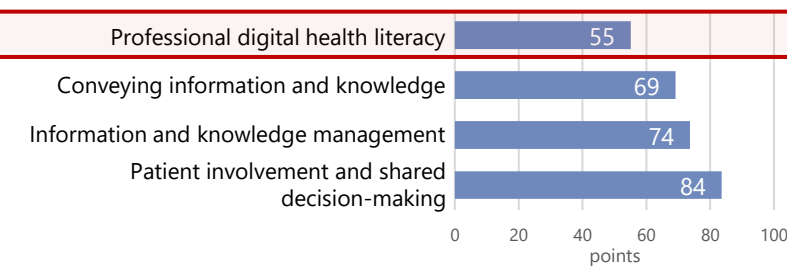
Physiotherapists



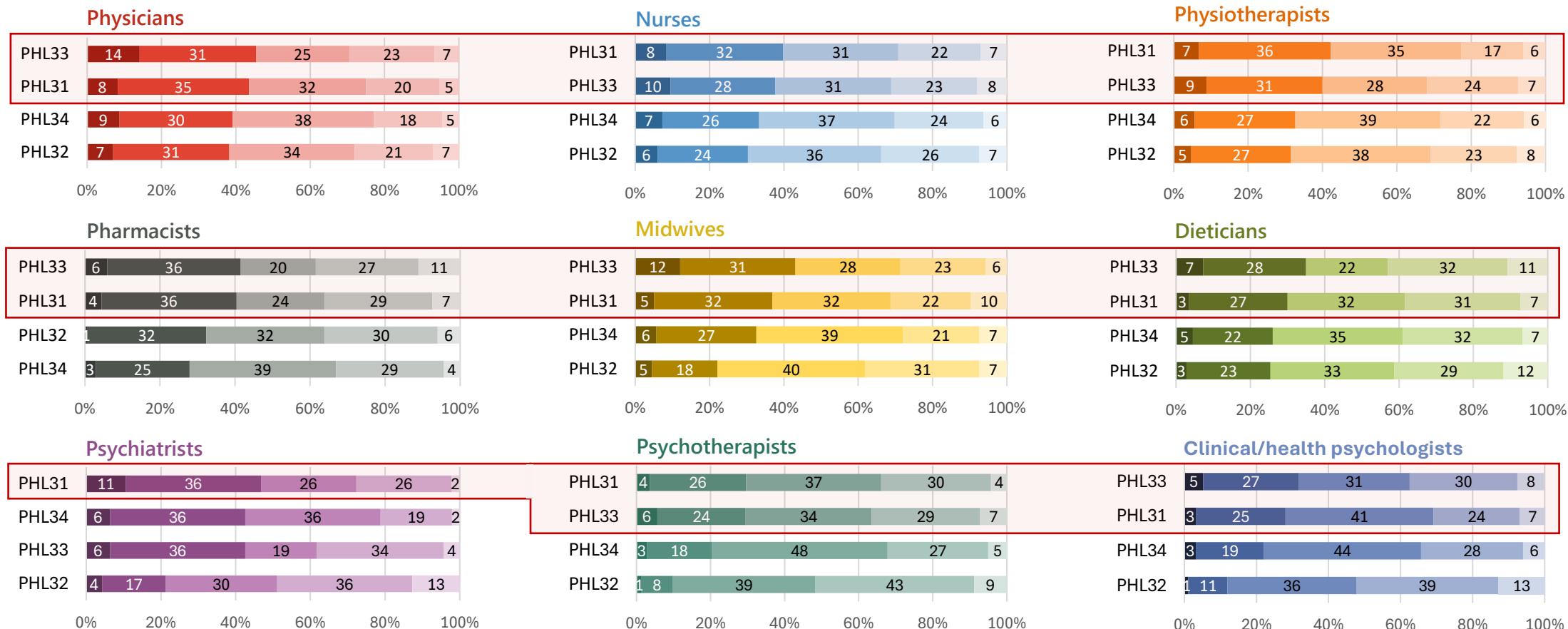
Dieticians



Clinical/health psychologists



Tasks related to professional digital health literacy



How easy or difficult is it for you to support patients and, if applicable, their relatives ...

PHL31 to find digital health information that is relevant to them?

PHL33 to assess the trustworthiness of the digital health information they have found (e.g., whether it is reliable, false or misleading)?

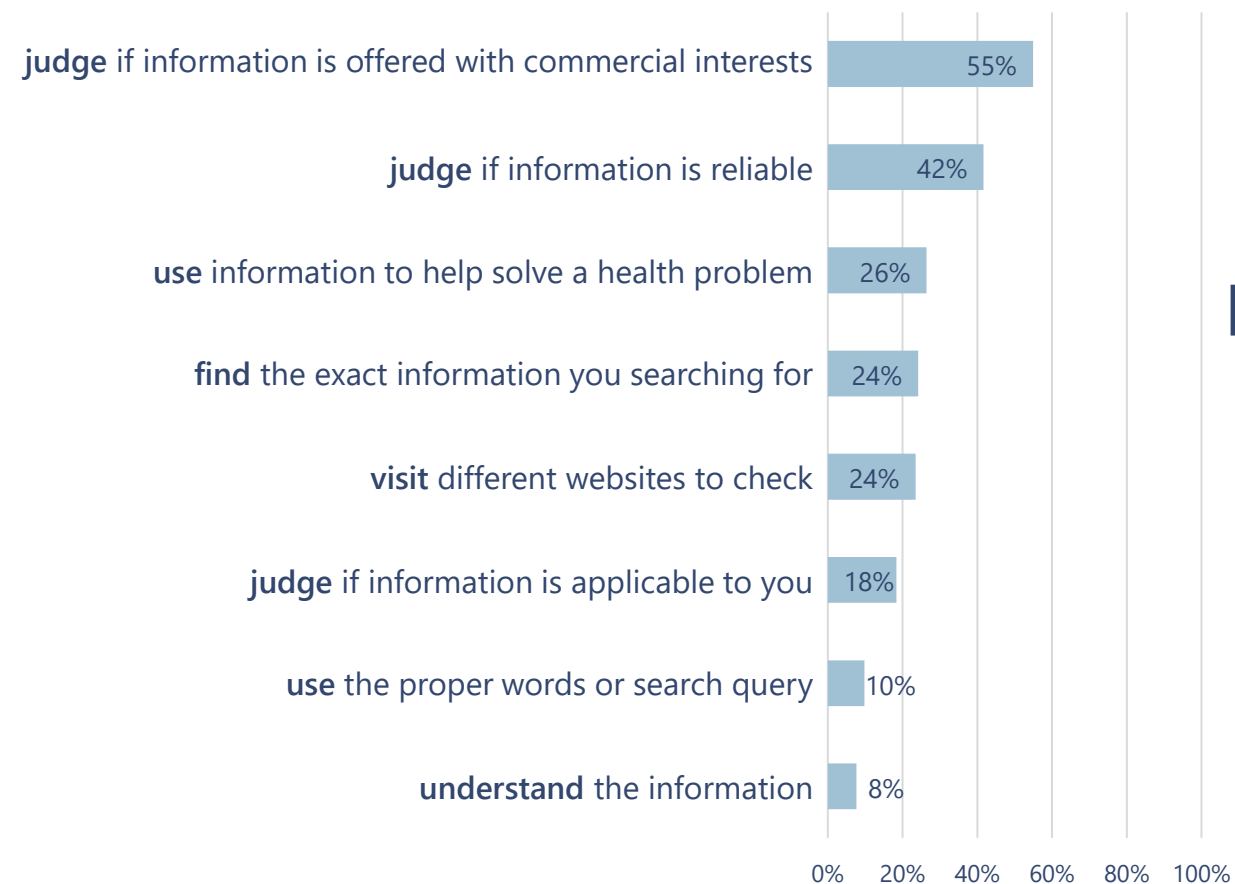
PHL32 to understand the digital health information they have found?

PHL34 to use the digital health information they have found to improve their health issue or health?

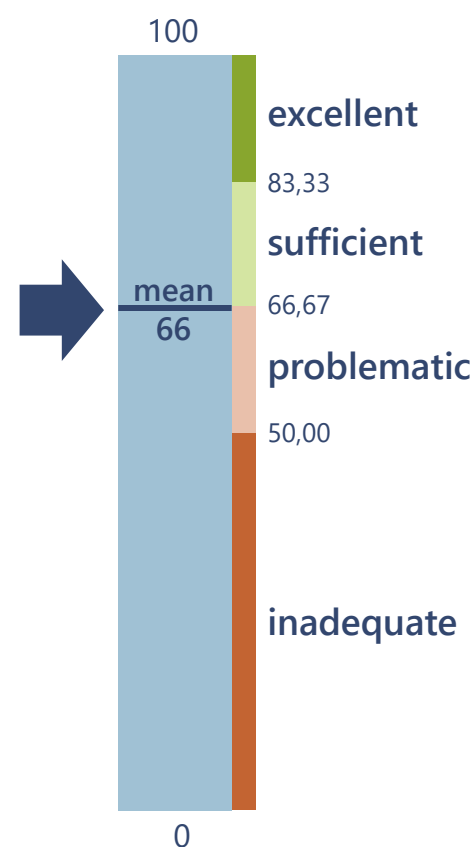
- Very difficult
- Rather difficult
- Neither nor
- Rather easy
- Very easy

Personal DHL of health professionals: Challenges dealing with online health information

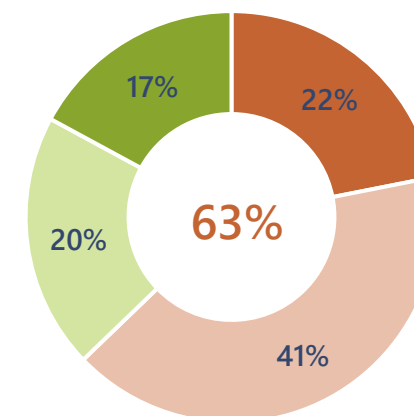
Difficulties



Score



Levels



Strengthening DHL: What does it take?



— And:

How can digital services be used more effectively
to advance health promotion?

Contact information

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