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Executive Summary
Executive Summary

The survey questionnaire covered a number of questions related to well-being (including WHO-5 questionnaire) and the impact of COVID-19 on health and well-being. The survey fieldwork was undertaken between 7th May and 5th June 2020 and was available in English and French. 5,539 people responded to the survey from the 13 UN agencies who took part.

In this report we present a summary of the results for the 5,539 respondents. A key findings report, which includes further detailed findings and information on the survey methodology, is available upon request.

The survey was a partnership between UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Implementation Board and Agenda Consulting. The team was as follows:

UN System
Dr. Binta Ahmed, Dr. Matthias Lademann, Therese Fitzpatrick and Danijela Milić

Agenda Consulting
Roger Parry, Aiden Stead and Emily Rann

In addition, a team of survey focal points from participating organizations and support from staff federations/unions ensured the survey success.

Well-being

Overall, 64% of people who responded to the survey are considered to have ‘Healthy’ well-being, as measured by the WHO-5. 22% are considered to have ‘Poor Well-being’, while 14% have ‘Very Poor Well-being’.

There is substantial variation in well-being by organization, with proportions of healthy staff ranging from 40% to 79% among the 13 participating organizations (Figure 2.2).

There is also notable variation by:

- Duty station country – Of duty station countries with over 50 respondents, proportions of healthy staff range from 42% in the United States, to 77% in France. Switzerland and Austria appear to have more positive results than other duty stations (Figure 2.3).
- Gender – a higher proportion of males (72%) are classified as healthy in comparison to female respondents (61%) (Figure 2.4).
- Age – older respondents are more likely to be classified as healthy, in comparison with younger respondents (Figure 2.4).
- Living with – respondents who live with others are more likely to be classified as healthy in comparison to those who live alone (Figure 2.4).
- Length of service – respondents with more years of service are more likely to be classified as healthy in comparison to respondents with fewer years of service. However much of this variation is due to age (Figure 2.4).
Overall, for more than half of the time in the two weeks prior to completing the survey (Table 2.1):

- 69% of all respondents say they have felt cheerful and in good spirits.
- 65% have felt calm and relaxed.
- 64% have felt active and vigorous.
- 59% have woken up feeling fresh and rested.
- 64% have felt their daily life has been filled with things which interest them.

**Impact of COVID-19**

Overall, during the COVID-19 restrictions (Table 3.1):

- 83% of respondents say they have been able to eat in a healthy manner the same or more than usual.
- 79% say they have been able to support their spiritual needs the same or more than usual.
- 72% say they are able to stay connected with people by different means the same or more than usual.
- However, just 52% say they have been able to exercise and do some training for physical well-being the same or more than usual.

The majority of respondents (77%) say they noticed some positive aspects or outcomes of new working arrangements due to the COVID-19 restrictions. These include: working from home / teleworking, more time with family, greater flexibility with their work schedule, less or no commute, being more productive, feeling less stressed.

During times of COVID-19 restrictions, the majority of respondents say they have had help from, and/or felt supported by (Figure 3.2):

- Friends/Family (89%).
- Colleague(s) (65%).
- Supervisor(s) (54%).
- Online workplace announcements (35%).
- Medical services (26%).

During the COVID-19 restrictions, some respondents have experienced the following more than usual or for the first time (Figure 3.3):

- Sleep disturbances (44%) – this ailment was reported more frequently by female respondents, younger (i.e. 18-45-year-old) respondents, respondents living alone, respondents with shorter lengths of service (under 10 years) and respondents in duty stations outside of Austria and Switzerland.
- Aches and pains in muscles, joints or bones (34%) – this ailment was reported more frequently by female respondents.
During the COVID-19 restrictions, the majority of respondents say they have been bothered by (Figure 3.4):

- Concerns about friends/family living in a different country (64%).
- Worries, anxiety or feelings of sadness (51%) – this experience is reported significantly more frequently by female respondents and younger respondents.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the majority of respondents say they have experienced (Figure 3.5):

- More screen time (59%) – this experience is more commonly reported by younger respondents, respondents living alone, respondents who do not have responsibilities of care for others, respondents who do not supervise children, respondents with fewer years of service and internationally recruited staff respondents.
- Weight gain or loss (51%) – this is experience is more commonly reported by younger respondents, respondents with fewer years of service and respondents in ‘Other’ duty station countries (i.e. not Austria or Switzerland).

In times of COVID-19 restrictions, many respondents say they have experienced (Figure 3.6):

- Worries about the future (58%) – this experience is more commonly reported by younger respondents, respondents with responsibilities of care for others and respondents in ‘Other’ duty station countries.
- Anxiety of possible exposure to, or being sick with COVID-19 (50%) – this experience is more commonly reported by female respondents, younger respondents, respondents living with others, respondents with responsibilities of care for others, and respondents in ‘Other’ duty station countries.
- Concerns about job stability (44%) – this experience is more commonly reported by younger respondents, respondents with fewer years of service and respondents in ‘Other’ duty station countries.
- Worries about coming back to work (43%) – this experience is more frequently reported by female respondents, younger respondents, locally recruited respondents and respondents in ‘Other’ duty station countries.

When asked the open question: ‘If you could change one thing about how your organization is supporting your health and well-being during this time, what would it be?’ (Figure 3.7):

- 20% of respondents said more communication, in particular, updates on timelines for returning to work, the financial situations and health measures.
- 20% said there is nothing they would change.
- 16% said they would like more flexible working arrangements, and realistic workloads.
Recommendations

We recommend that agencies:

- Undertake a qualitative analysis of their responses to question 22 – one change your organisation could make.
- Explore and discuss their own results in more detail and understand the range of experiences among their staff.
- Pinpoint their strengths and issues.
- Develop a plan for moving forward on the issues identified.
- Continue the conversation within the UN.

This survey provided an opportunity for personnel from participating organizations to share their views of how they were experiencing and coping with the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the survey have yielded a wealth of data that can be further analyzed depending on the requirements identified by the UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Implementation Board or organizations participating in the survey. It provides useful insight into the perceptions of respondents and may be utilized when shaping the issues and priorities in the ongoing work on the psycho-social and well-being issues arising from COVID-19. There are opportunities to target future strategies and interventions, both at a system and organization level.
2 Well-being
Well-being

The WHO-5 is an internationally recognized measure of well-being developed by the World Health Organization.

Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>More than half of the time</th>
<th>Less than half of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>At no time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 2.1: WHO-5 Questions

Over the last two weeks...

1. I have felt cheerful and in good spirits

   - %
   - 7
   - 37
   - 25
   - 14
   - 14
   - 2

2. I have felt calm and relaxed

   - %
   - 7
   - 33
   - 24
   - 17
   - 15
   - 3

3. I have felt active and vigorous

   - %
   - 7
   - 31
   - 26
   - 20
   - 13
   - 3

4. I woke up feeling fresh and rested

   - %
   - 8
   - 29
   - 22
   - 19
   - 15
   - 7

5. My daily life has been filled with things that interest me

   - %
   - 8
   - 32
   - 24
   - 17
   - 16
   - 3

Figure 2.2: Well-being by Organization (% Healthy as per WHO-5)
Figure 2.3: Well-being by Duty Station Country (% Healthy as per WHO-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% Healthy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Sample</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were asked to “Please mark all that applies”

Figure 2.4: Well-being by Demographic Group (% Healthy relative to the Whole Sample (64%))

- **Gender**
  - Female (-4)
  - Male (+8)

- **Age**
  - 26 - 35 (-8)
  - 36 - 45 (-6)
  - 46 - 55 (+5)
  - 56 - 65 (+10)
  - 66+ (+17)

- **Living with**
  - I live by myself (-4)
  - I live with others (+1)

- **Caring responsibilities**
  - Yes (taking care of others) (-2)
  - No (taking care of others) (+2)

- **Supervise Children**
  - Yes (supervising children) (-2)
  - No (supervising children) (+1)

- **Own a pet**
  - Yes (Animal/pet) (-2)
  - No (Animal/pet) (+1)

- **Recruited**
  - Internationally recruited (-1)
  - Locally recruited (+1)
3 Impact of COVID-19
Impact of COVID-19

Table 3.1: Maintaining Habits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than usual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the COVID-19 restrictions are you able to...

12. Eat in a healthy manner  
- 31% More than usual  
- 52% Same as usual  
- 17% Less than usual

13. Exercise and do some training for physical well-being  
- 26% More than usual  
- 27% Same as usual  
- 48% Less than usual

14. Stay connected with people by different means  
- 35% More than usual  
- 37% Same as usual  
- 29% Less than usual

15. Support your spiritual needs (e.g. prayers, meditation, inspirational talks/podcasts etc.)  
- 30% More than usual  
- 49% Same as usual  
- 21% Less than usual

Note: Question 15: A 'not applicable' option was available for this question. These responses have been excluded from this report.

Figure 3.2: Help and Support

6. During the time of COVID-19 restrictions, have you had help from, and/or felt supported by the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help and Support</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends/family</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleague(s)</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor(s)</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online work-place announcements</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and support from your organization’s medical service</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological support/counselling from your organization</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare services from outside the organization</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological support/counselling from outside the organization</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – please specify</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were asked to "Please mark all that applies"
Figure 3.3: Issues Experienced

8. During the COVID-19 restrictions, have you experienced any of the following more than you usually do or for the first time?

- Sleep disturbances: 44.4%
- Aches and pains in muscles, joints or bones: 34.2%
- None of the above: 32.6%
- Eye symptoms and/or changes in vision: 20.9%
- Physical discomfort, illnesses or other ailments: 18.5%
- Difficulties with getting or keeping health care appointments: 14.7%
- Others – please specify: 4.0%

Note: Respondents were asked to “Please mark all that applies”

Figure 3.4: Concerns

10. Have any of the following bothered you more during the COVID-19 restrictions?

- Concern about friends/family living in a different country: 63.8%
- Worries, anxiety or feeling of sadness: 50.7%
- Loneliness and/or feeling isolated: 29.7%
- Anger, helplessness or other intense emotions: 23.5%
- None of the above: 14.7%
- Other concerns – please specify: 6.1%

Note: Respondents were asked to “Please mark all that applies”
18. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, have you experienced any of the following?

- More screen time: 59.3%
- Weight gain or loss: 50.9%
- None of the above are applicable: 21.4%
- Greater consumption of alcohol: 13.8%
- Shopping online excessively: 7.5%
- Smoking more than usual: 5.5%
- Others – please specify: 3.4%
- Taking drugs/controlled substances more than usual: 1.4%
- More gambling: 0.6%

Note: Respondents were asked to “Please mark all that applies”

20. In these times of COVID-19 restrictions, have you experienced?

- Worries about the future: 57.7%
- Anxiety of possible exposure to, or being sick with COVID-19: 50.2%
- Concerns about your job stability: 43.7%
- Worries about coming back to work: 43.4%
- None of the above: 16.4%
- More aggression towards yourself or persons close to you: 13.0%
- People avoiding you after you/family member had/were thought to have COVID-19: 4.5%
- Others – please specify: 2.9%

Note: Respondents were asked to “Please mark all that applies”
If you could change one thing...

Figure 3.7: If you could change one thing...

If you could change one thing about how your organization is supporting your health and well-being during this time, what would it be?

- More communication: 20%
- Nothing: 20%
- Flexible working arrangements/workload: 16%
- Provision of tools and equipment to: 9%
- Manager / supervisor: 8%

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