

# Health Perception and Lifestyle in Global Pandemic Times

WIN International, the world's leading association in market research and polling, has published the Annual WIN World Survey (WWS - 2020) exploring the views and beliefs of 29,252 individuals among citizens from 34 countries across the globe about their health and lifestyle. The survey analyzes views and opinions related to the perception of health and habits of citizens.

## HEADLINES

The year 2020 was full of unexpected changes, marked mainly by COVID-19 pandemic. Global economic and health crisis, alongside the adjustment of people to new lifestyles, were central last year.

In this context, WIN analyzed individuals' health perception. While health *per se* used to be considered primarily as a biological and physical condition, nowadays other variables are considered as much important, such as the context we live in, our culture, our values, as well as the mental, cognitive and psychological conditions.

Despite all the negative consequences caused by the pandemic during the year 2020, **79% of the global population perceived themselves as healthy<sup>1</sup>**. The consistent result with previous measurements reveals that individuals worldwide might have started thinking about health as a set of different aspects besides the physical state. Of course, COVID19 is a very real and tangible threat, but for this very reason, people might consider themselves healthy even just because they could survive or avoid COVID19. In addition, precisely because of the threat caused by the pandemic, people might have started taking better care of themselves with simple, everyday actions.

However, despite the large majority considers themselves healthy, **20% of the population still consider themselves not healthy<sup>2</sup>**. Results shows that **males tend to perceive themselves healthier than females**. On the other hand, the survey reveals that **the highest the education level of individuals, the healthiest they perceive themselves**: some could argue that maintaining certain levels of activity by having an employment, studying and/or being a housewife seems to impact positively on the health perception compared to people being unemployed or retired.

While keeping in mind the broader meaning of health, citizens in Africa consider themselves among the healthiest continent (90%)<sup>1</sup>. On the global picture, Africa was far less hit by the pandemic in 2020 compared to other continents like Europe and Americas. On the other hand, MENA is the region with the lowest rate of health perception observed (72%). When looking at countries, citizens in Indonesia (92%), South Korea (91%) and Pakistan (91%) consider themselves healthier than citizens in Hong Kong (66%), Finland (65%) and Chile (61%), which are on the bottom of the ranking.

As previously mentioned, health perception involves a complex mixture of variables, including everyday habits. In the present study, we focused on five specific habits which were both categorized as good and bad habits, and as action based and non-action based- habits.

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<sup>1</sup> Healthy + Very Healthy

<sup>2</sup> Somewhat unhealthy + Unhealthy

The difference is that the latter relies on variables not always subjected by people's choice. The positive habits explored in the study were "sleep well" (a non-action based habit) and "exercise" (an action-based habit).

## Sleep well

Sleeping well is necessary for the good maintenance of both the body and the cognitive functioning, as well as emotional regulation. During 2020, **64%<sup>3</sup> of the global population admits to sleep well**, an even better rate compared to last year's (+3).

Males tend to sleep well more frequently than females, whereas people aged 35 to 45, probably because they're more involved in their work lives than other age groups, tend to sleep well less often. Additionally, the highest the social class of belonging, the better they sleep; a similar tendency was observed in the relation between academic achievement and quality of sleep.

While retired people, full time workers and self-employed seems to have the better quality of sleep, housewives are the ones who sleep the worst, especially considering this specific context brought by the pandemic. Having children at home for months and being more often in charge of their activities (eating, studying, sleeping...) might have increased the stress within this category, unleashing a worst sleep quality.

APAC and Europe are the regions with the better sleep quality among their citizens (69%<sup>3</sup> and 64%<sup>3</sup>, respectively), while the opposite occurs in MENA region (54%). Palestinian Territories (51%), Mexico (49%) and Chile (48%) are at the bottom of the ranking.

## Exercise

According to the results, **39%<sup>3</sup> of people worldwide exercised regularly during 2020**, +2% than the two previous years. Nonetheless, there is still a high rate of people doing little or no exercises at all (31%). Despite the safety measures put in place, which prevented people from going to the gym or to field courts, people who already exercised before adapted to the new conditions and kept doing exercises. Probably, many others, considering the difficulties of walking and moving around, started exercising at home precisely due to the safety measures adopted.

Females exercise less than males and, once again, housewives are the ones who exercise the less among other employment categories. A positive outcome is that it's not only the youngest (from 18 to 34) who exercise the most, but also people aged 65 or more, another possible consequence of COVID19 which is a higher threat for seniors.

In Africa, Europe and APAC 4 out of 10 people practice exercises regularly. Citizens in Finland (58%) and Spain (57%) are more likely to exercise than citizens in Peru (26%), Mexico (23%) and Chile (20%).

## Suffer from stress

Suffer from stress is the first bad and non-action-based habit considered. During 2020, **31%<sup>3</sup> of population suffered from stress regularly**, while only 35% didn't. Once again, despite the difficult context experienced, the variation between the results from 2020 and previous years is minimum.

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<sup>3</sup> A lot/Very often + Moderately/Fairly often

Younger females (from 18 to 24), people with low incomes, students, unemployed, housewives and part-time workers are among the individuals who tend to suffer from stress the most. Unsurprisingly, these individuals also represent the most vulnerable population around the globe, a result that emphasizes **the relation between social vulnerability and stress**.

While MENA is the region with the highest rates of stress within the population (37%), the region with lesser stress rate is APAC (28%). In terms of countries, top countries with more stressed individuals are Japan (49%) and Serbia (49%). Bottom countries are Vietnam (11%) and Denmark (13%).

### Smoking and drinking

Nowadays, both smoking and drinking are uncommon habits, which were classified in the study as bad, action-based behaviors. Overall, **17%<sup>3</sup> of the global population smokes regularly, while 15% drinks alcohol regularly**. Even if last year's rates didn't change considerably in comparison with previous years, it is highly relevant at this moment to reduce the consumption of cigarettes and alcohol.

It is identified that males smoke and drink considerably more than females (smoking: 22% vs. 11%, and drinking: 20% vs. 11%).

Citizens in MENA region smoke more frequently (34%), while citizens in Africa smoke way less (4%). Palestinian Territories (36%), Lebanon (28%) and Serbia (28%) are the countries with the higher number of smokers. On the other hand, Nigeria (4%), Peru (5%) and Paraguay (5%) are the ones with less smokers.

In Europe (20%) and APAC (16%) we find the most recurrent alcohol drinkers, the opposite of the habits in MENA (4%) region. Japan (45%), Ireland (32%) and Great Britain (30%) have the higher percentages of drinkers, while Palestinian Territories (1%), Indonesia (3%) and Peru (4%) show the lowest rates.

**Vilma Scarpino, President of WIN International Association, said:**

*“Despite the difficulties faced during last year, which largely involved health and economic resources, individuals’ health perception did not change significantly from previous measurements. On one hand, the COVID19 pandemic might have made us more sensible and careful towards our own health, pushing us to keep up with good and healthy habits or to start new ones. On the other hand, being faced with such an enormous threat as coronavirus, might have led us to consider the little aspects in life as more important, and more significant when evaluating our overall health. In previous years, people might have considered themselves healthy when living without severe biological and physical conditions, while this year a healthy individual might also be someone who feels lucky just to have avoided Covid19”.*

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**NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Methodology:**

The survey was conducted in 34 countries. Please, find below the methodological sheet table.

**Sample Size and Mode of Field Work:**

A total of 29,252 people were interviewed. See below for sample details. The fieldwork was conducted during October 21<sup>st</sup> and December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The margin of error for the survey is between 4.4 and 2.5 at 95% confidence level.

The global average has been computed according to the covered adult population of the surveyed countries.

**About WIN:**

The Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research (WIN) is a global network conducting market research and opinion polls in every continent.

Our assets are:

- Thought leadership: access to a group of the most prominent experts and business entrepreneurs in Market Research, Polling and Consultancy
- Flexibility: tailor-made global and local solutions to meet clients' needs
- Innovation: access to the latest strategic consultancy, tool development and branded solutions
- Local experts: access to a network of experts that truly understand the local culture, market and business needs
- Trust: highest quality of talented members in all countries covered

In the years, WIN has demonstrated wide competences and ability to conduct multi-country surveys following the highest standards requested by the market. The accumulated expertise of the Association is formidable: among others, researched themes are gender equality and young people, communication and media research, and brand studies.

## Methodology Sheet

	Country	Company Name	Methodology	Sample	Coverage	2020 Field Dates
1	ARGENTINA	Voices!	CAWI	1016	Nationwide	Nov. 5-19
2	BRAZIL	Market Analysis Brasil	CAWI	1120	Nationwide	Nov. 13-20
3	CANADA	Legér 360	ONLINE	1000	Nationwide	Nov. 4-14
4	CHILE	ACTIVIA RESEARCH	CAWI PANEL	1000	Nationwide	Nov.6-11
5	CHINA	WisdomAsia Marketing & Research Counseling	ONLINE	1000	Nationwide	Nov. 10-16
6	CROATIA	MEDIANA FIDES	CAWI	520	Nationwide	Nov. 11-12
7	DENMARK	DMA Research A/S	ONLINE	500	Nationwide	Nov. 1-15
8	ECUADOR	CEDATOS	CATI	700	Quito-Guayaquil	Nov. 1-15
9	FINLAND	TALOUSTUTKIMUS Oy	CAWI	651	Nationwide	Nov. 18-20
10	FRANCE	BVA	CAWI	1000	Nationwide	Dec. 8-12
11	GERMANY	Produkt + Markt	ONLINE	1000	Nationwide	Oct. 21-28
12	HONG KONG	CSG	CAWI ONLINE	509	Nationwide	Nov. 18-23
13	INDIA	DataPrompt International Pvt. Ltd.	CAWI	500	Nationwide	Nov. 30 - Dec. 4
14	INDONESIA	DEKA Insight Indonesia	ONLINE	1000	Nationwide	Nov. 14-25
15	Republic of IRELAND	REDC	ONLINE	1001	Nationwide	Nov. 5-10
16	ITALY	BVA Doxa	CAWI	1000	Nationwide	Oct. 26-29
17	JAPAN	NIPPON RESEARCH CENTER, LTD.	CAWI	1137	Nationwide	Nov. 6-9
18	LEBANON	REACH SAL	CATI	500	Nationwide	Nov. 5-19
19	MALAYSIA	Compass Insights Sdn. Bhd.	CAWI	500	Nationwide	Nov. 1-16
20	MEXICO	BRAIN RESEARCH	ONLINE	500	Nationwide	Nov. 13-23
21	NIGERIA	Market Trends International	F2F	1000	Nationwide	Nov. 16-30
22	PALESTINE	PCPO Palestinian Centre for Public Opinion	F2F	1489	Nationwide	Nov. 02– 23

<b>23</b>	<b>PAKISTAN</b>	Gallup Pakistan	CATI	1103	Nationwide	Nov. 5-15
<b>24</b>	<b>PARAGUAY</b>	ICA Consultoria Estratègica	CATI	500	Nationwide	Dec. 2-15
<b>25</b>	<b>PERU</b>	Datum Internacional	CAWI panel	1210	Nationwide	Nov. 2-5
<b>26</b>	<b>PHILIPPINES</b>	PSRC (Philippines Survey & Research Center Inc.)		1000	Nationwide	
<b>27</b>	<b>POLAND</b>	Mareco Polska	CAWI	587	Nationwide	Oct. 28-31
<b>28</b>	<b>Republic of KOREA</b>	Gallup Korea	F2F	1500	Nationwide	Nov. 7-29
<b>29</b>	<b>SERBIA</b>	MEDIANA ADRIA	CAWI	500	Nationwide	Nov. 12-16
<b>30</b>	<b>SLOVENIA</b>	MEDIANA	CAWI	798	Nationwide	Nov. 11-12
<b>31</b>	<b>SPAIN</b>	Istituto DYM	CAWI	1006	Nationwide	Oct. 22-23
<b>32</b>	<b>UK</b>	ORB INTERNATIONAL	ONLINE	1000	Nationwide	Dec. 11-13
<b>33</b>	<b>USA</b>	SSRS	WEB	800	Nationwide	Nov. 11-18
<b>34</b>	<b>VIETNAM</b>	Indocina Research Vietnam	TAPI	600	Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City	Oct. 31- Nov. 12