

Heat stress and implementation of heat protection measures in the care sector in Switzerland

A Swiss-wide online survey of 913 care professionals

Alexandra Bürgler^{1,2}, Axel Luyten^{1,2}, Daniel Jeannetot^{1,2}, Martina Ragettli^{1,2}

¹Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Allschwil; ²University of Basel, Basel

Full report (coming in Spring 2026) and more information:



Introduction

- **Study aim:** to assess heat stress and the implementation status of heat measures to protect both patients/clients and healthcare workers in Switzerland's care sector in 2025
- **Study commissioned by** the Federal Office of Public Health in collaboration with the Federal Office for the Environment

Methods

- **Swiss-wide online survey** in September and October 2026 among healthcare workers
- Descriptive and statistical regression analyses

Results

- > 900 employees from 23 cantons participated
- 39% worked in long-term care, 27% in outpatient care, 27% in hospitals/clinics and 7% in other institutions
- Established **heat protection measures for employees** were reported by 6 out of 10 employees
- Established **heat protection measures aimed at patients/clients** were reported by 6 out of 10 employees

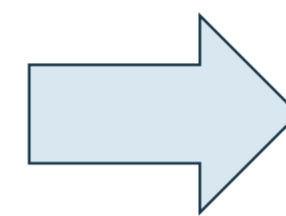


Figure 1: "Are there special measures in place at your primary workplace to protect employees (or patients/clients) from heat?" (n=913).

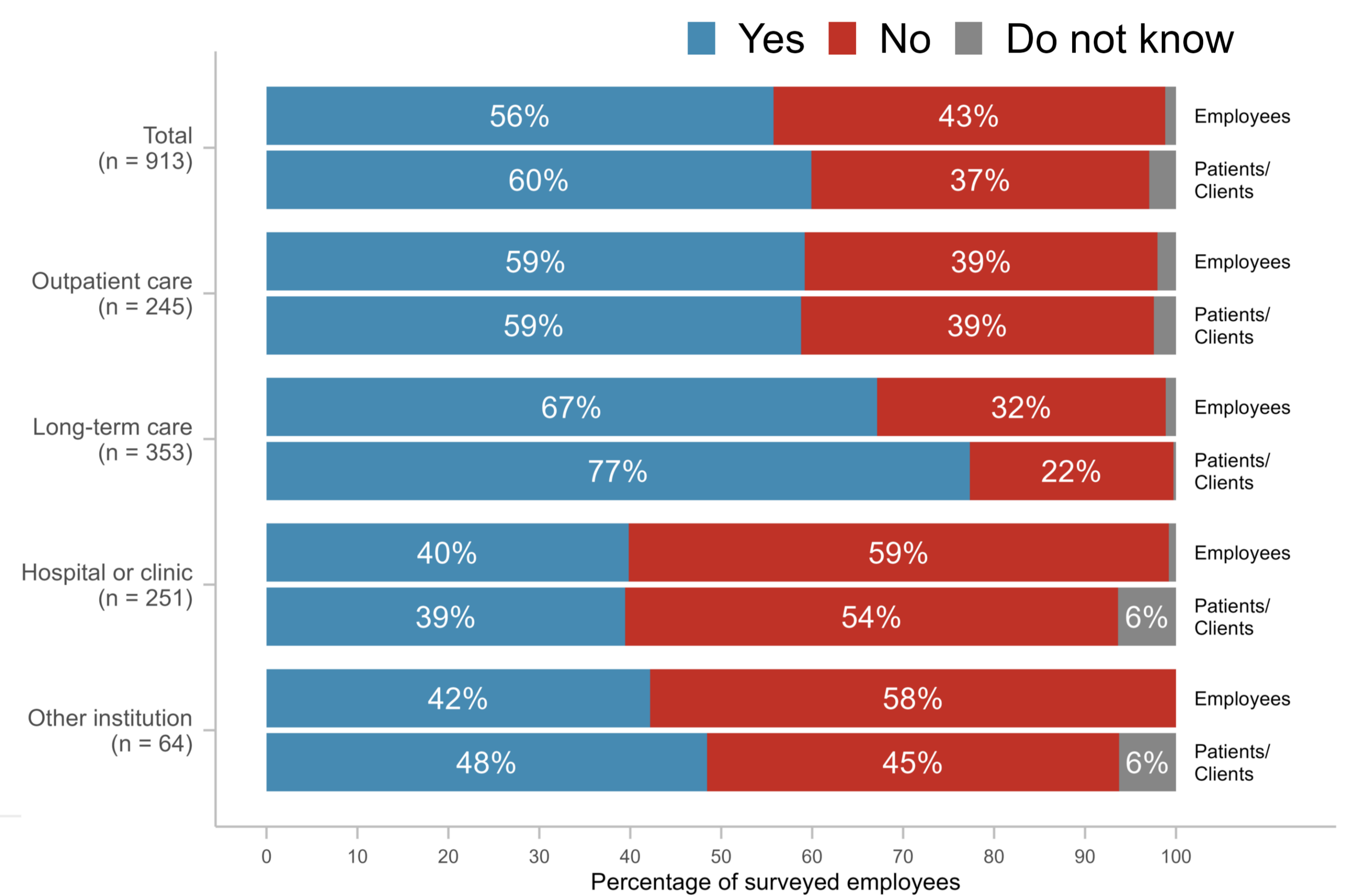
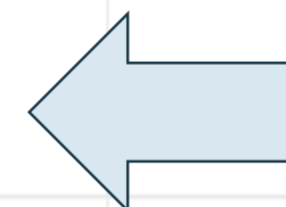
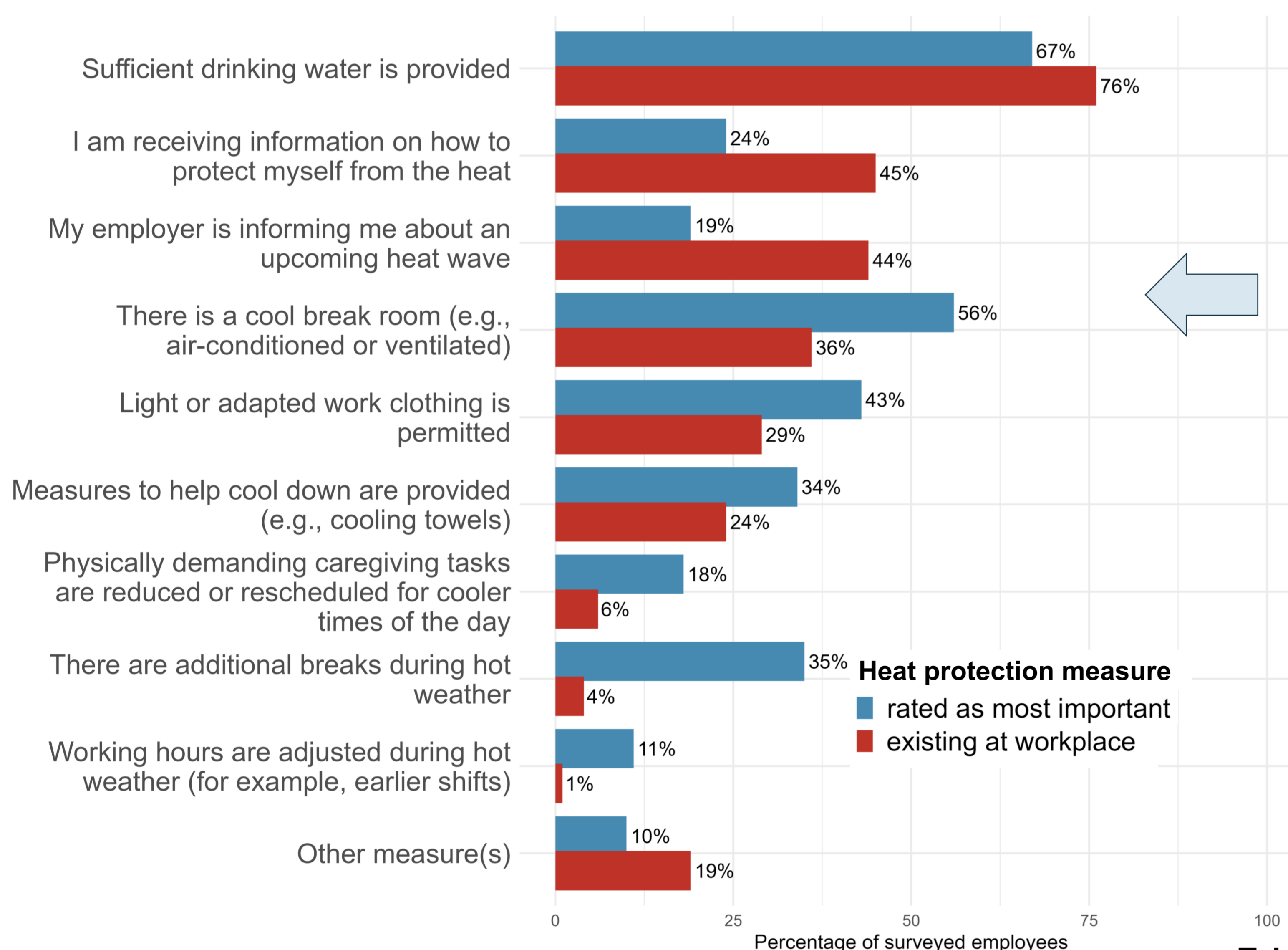


Figure 2: Comparison of implemented heat protection measures (red) and those rated most important (blue) by participants with at least one existing measure in place at their primary workplace (n=509).



- **Discrepancy** between what participants considered important and what was implemented for certain measures
- **Heat protection for employees** was rated as
 - Insufficient by 4 out of 10 participants
 - Sufficient (or better) by roughly 6 out of 10 participants
- **Heat protection for patients and clients** was rated as
 - insufficient by 3 out of 10 participants.
 - Sufficient (or better) by 7 out of 10 participants

Table 1: Sociodemographic, work-related, geographic characteristics (geographic: major region of the primary workplace) values associated with lower (blue) or higher (red) compared to the main result of the total sample.

Indicator	Main result total sample	Characteristics with favorable effect (lower values, better situation)	Characteristics with an unfavorable effect (higher values, worse situation)
Share of employees that perceived heat at work as burdensome	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat protection measures for employees • Leadership role • Hospital/Clinic • Lake Geneva region, Eastern Switzerland, Central Switzerland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age group up to 30 years • Long-term care • Northwestern Switzerland, Ticino, Zurich

Conclusions

- In Switzerland, heat places a **considerable burden** on health care professionals
- **Heat protection measures** for care professionals and patients/clients **can be substantially improved**
 - **40%** of participants reported absence of measures
 - Some of the most **employee-relevant** measures are **not implemented**