



# The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health.

Special report on physical health and wellbeing

Singapore | April 2023



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# What you need to know for April 2023.

## 1. More than one-third of workers in Singapore have a high mental health risk.

- At 61.5, the mental health of workers in Singapore is nearly unchanged from the prior period
- Optimism, financial risk, general psychological health, and work productivity mental health sub-scores declined from January 2023
- 37% have a high mental health risk, 47% have a moderate mental health risk, and 17% have a low mental health risk
- Labourers have a lower mental health score than service industry and office workers
- Managers have a higher mental health score than non-managers

## 2. One in seven workers report mental health decline or significant mental health challenges.

- The mental health scores of workers reporting a decline in their mental health or significant mental health challenges are 37 or more points below workers reporting good mental health and 24 or more points below the national average
- Workers older than 50 are more likely than workers under 40 to self-report good mental health



**do not exercise**  
this group's mental health scores are much lower than those who exercise most days



say their **physical health is in decline** or have significant health challenges



**exercise to improve or maintain** their mental health



say their **mental health is in decline** or have significant mental health challenges

### 3. Nearly one in six workers report a decline in their physical health or significant physical health challenges.

- The mental health scores of workers reporting a decline in their physical health or significant physical health challenges are 28 or more points below workers reporting good physical health and 17 or more points below the national average
- 32 per cent of workers say they do not have time to exercise regularly
- 28 per cent of workers cite motivation and/or no energy as the barrier to exercising regularly
- 19 per cent do not exercise and the mental health score of this group is 14 points below workers who exercise four or more times per week
- 14 per cent exercise to improve or maintain their mental health
- Workers over 50 are more likely to exercise to maintain their health whereas workers under 40 are more likely to exercise to improve or maintain their appearance

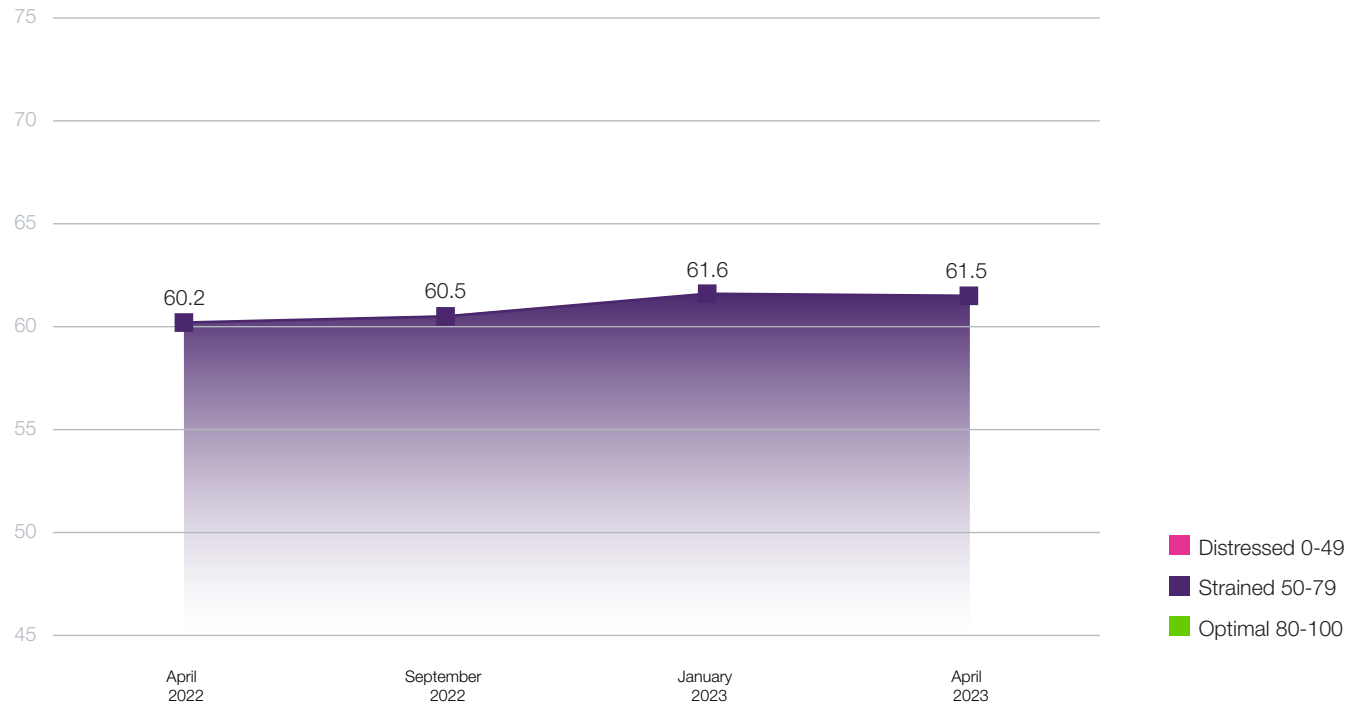
### 4. More than two in five say better sleep would be most helpful in managing their physical health

- 79 per cent believe physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health
- Most workers indicate that they exercise vigorously less than 1.5 hours a week
- Seven per cent say managing their physical health starts with their mental health; this group has a mental health score nine points lower than the national average
- 15 per cent of workers have a physical health issue that interferes with work
- Among workers with a physical health issue that interferes with work, 43 per cent say their employer is unaware, or are unsure whether their employer is aware, of their physical health issue



# The Mental Health Index.

The overall Mental Health Index (MHI) for April 2023 is 61.5. The mental health of workers in Singapore remains nearly unchanged from the previous period.

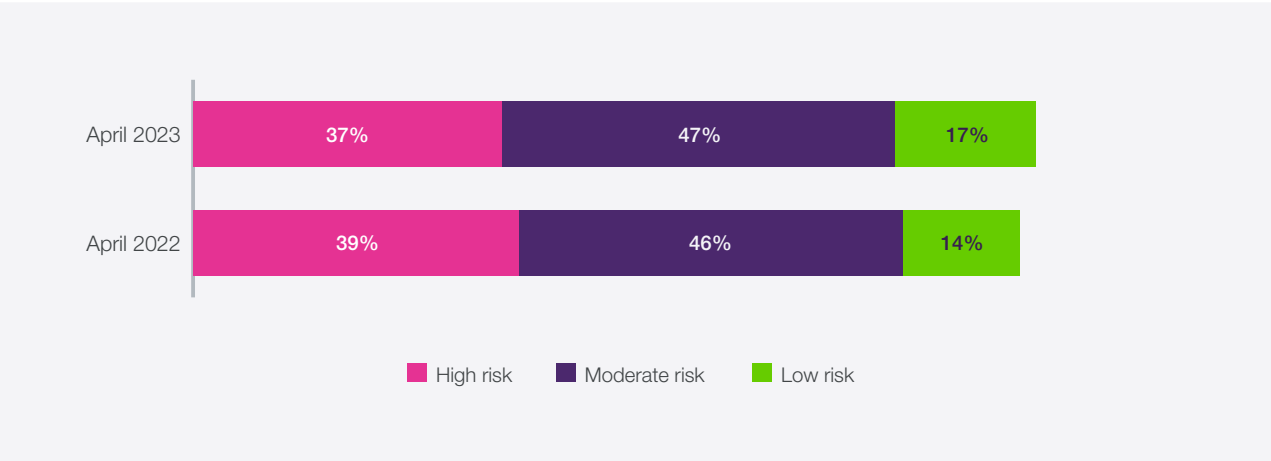


| MHI Current Month<br>April 2023 | January 2023 |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 61.5                            | 61.6         |



### Mental health risk.

In April 2023, 37 per cent of workers in Singapore have a high mental health risk, 47 per cent have a moderate mental health risk, and 17 per cent have a low mental health risk. One year since the launch of the Index in April 2022, there has been a slight reduction in high-risk workers (2 per cent) and a modest improvement in low-risk workers (3 per cent).



Twenty-four per cent of people in the high-risk group report a mental health condition or issue, six per cent report a mental health condition or issue in the moderate-risk group, and two per cent of people in the low-risk group report a mental health condition or issue.

### Mental Health Index sub-scores.

For the third consecutive period, the lowest Mental Health Index sub-score is for the risk measure of work productivity (52.1), followed by anxiety (54.1), isolation (55.1), depression (56.2), optimism (64.3), and general psychological health (70.4). Financial risk (71.6) continues to be the most favourable mental health measure in Singapore.

- Work productivity, optimism, financial risk, and general psychological health scores declined from January 2023
- With a 1.1-point increase, the isolation score has the greatest improvement from the prior period
- Despite a 0.8-point decline from January 2023, financial risk continues to be the strongest of all sub-scores

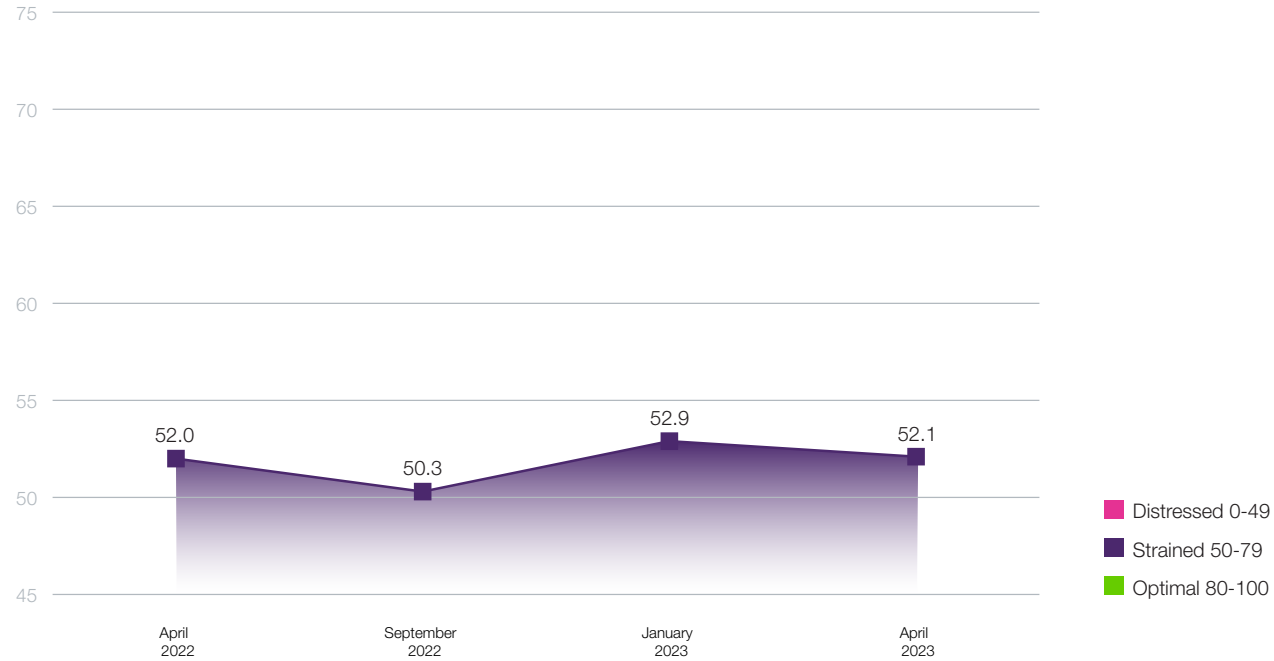
| Mental Health Index Sub-scores | April 2023 | January 2023 |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Work productivity              | 52.1       | 52.9         |
| Anxiety                        | 54.1       | 53.7         |
| Isolation                      | 55.1       | 54.0         |
| Depression                     | 56.2       | 56.2         |
| Optimism                       | 64.3       | 64.7         |
| Psychological health           | 70.4       | 71.4         |
| Financial risk                 | 71.6       | 72.4         |



## Work Productivity

The work productivity sub-score measures the impact of mental health on work productivity and goals.

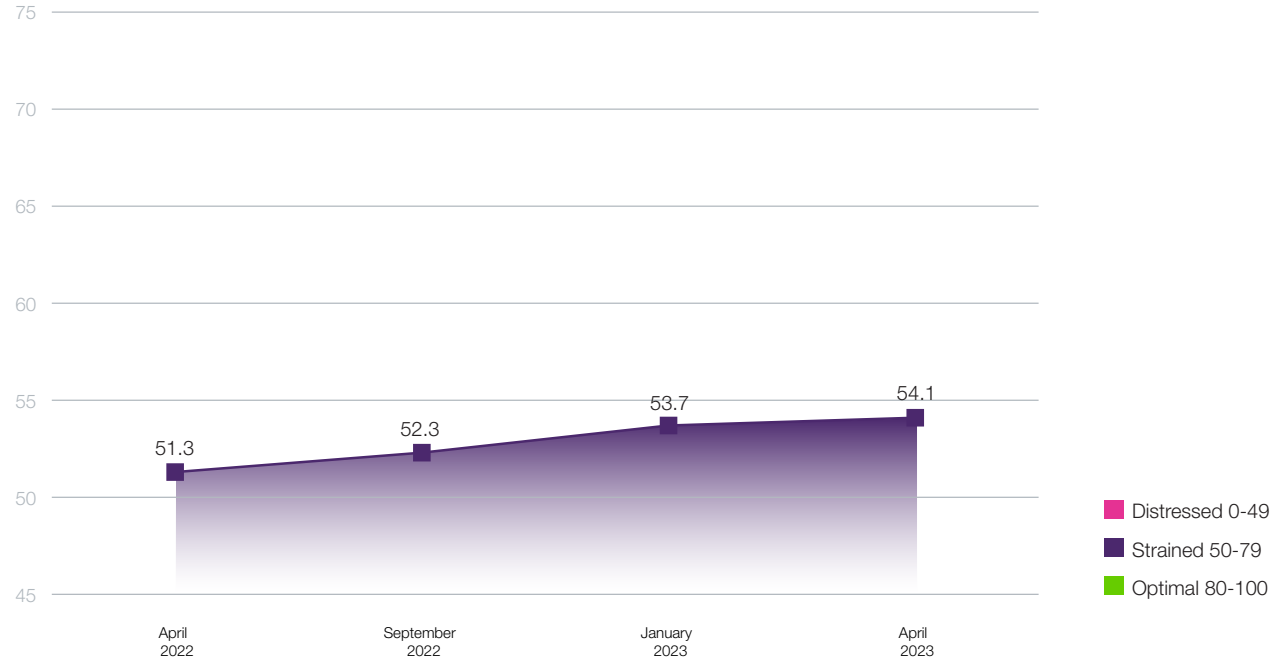
The work productivity sub-score declined from April to September 2022 but made significant improvement from September 2022 to January 2023. A 0.8-point decline is observed in April 2023 and work productivity continues to be lowest sub-score.





## Anxiety

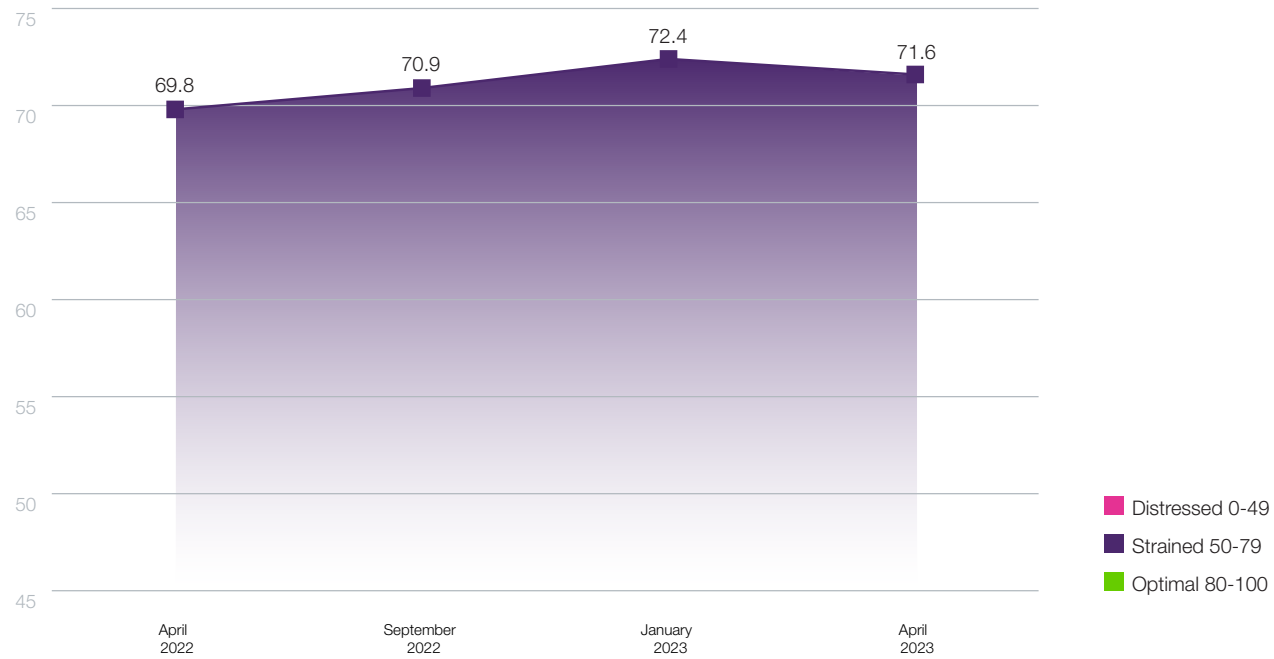
The anxiety sub-score has improved each period since the launch of the Index in April 2022. Despite consistent improvements, the anxiety score remains in the lowest end of the “strained” range and has been the second lowest sub-score for one year.



## Financial risk

The financial risk sub-score measures the level of an individual's emergency savings.

The financial risk sub-score has been the most favourable of mental health sub-scores since the launch of the Index in April 2022. After three periods of continuous improvement, the financial risk score declined by 0.8-points in April 2023.



## Mental health by gender and age.

- Since the launch of the MHI, women have had a lower mental health score than men. In April 2023, the mental health score of women is 60.6 compared to 62.4 for men
- Mental health scores improve with age
- Differences in mental health scores between individuals with and without children have been reported since the launch of the Index. After one year, this pattern continues with a lower score for individuals with at least one child (60.7) than individuals without children (62.1)

## Mental health by employment status.

- Overall, three per cent of respondents are unemployed<sup>1</sup> and eight per cent report reduced hours or reduced salary
- Individuals reporting reduced salary compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (43.2), followed by individuals working fewer hours (59.3), individuals not currently employed (61.6), and individuals with no change to salary or hours (62.2)
- Managers have a higher mental health score (62.0) than non-managers (60.8)
- Labourers have a lower mental health score (58.8) than service (62.0) and office workers (61.7)
- Respondents working for organizations with more than 10,000 employees have the highest mental health score (63.3)
- Respondents working for companies with 101-500 employees have the lowest mental health score (59.4))

## Emergency savings

- Workers without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (44.2) than the overall group (61.5). Workers with emergency savings have a mental health score of 71.0

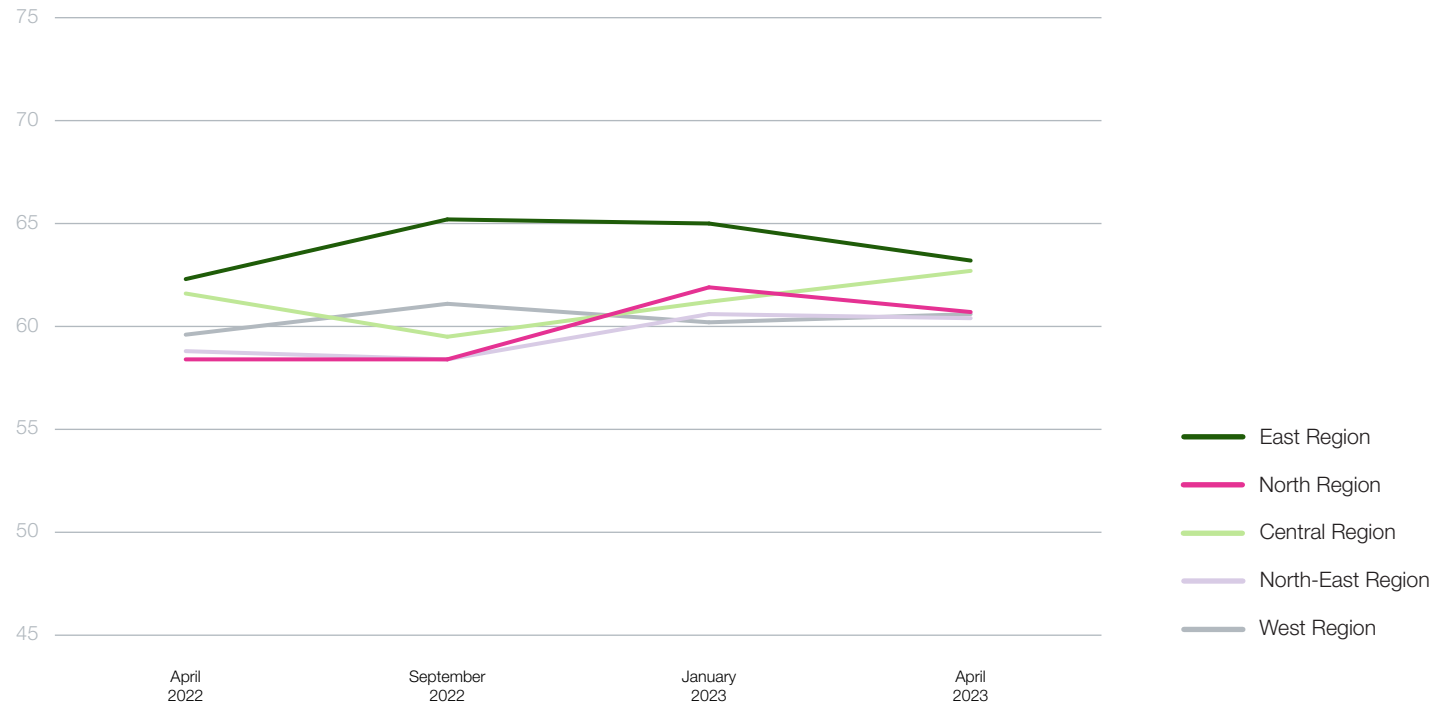


<sup>1</sup> MHI respondents who have been employed in the past six months are included in the poll.

# The Mental Health Index by region.

The mental health scores across all regions in Singapore continue to be significantly strained. In April 2023, the mental health scores in the East, North, and North-East regions have declined while scores in the Central and West regions have improved.

- Despite a sharp 1.8-point decline, the mental health score in the East Region remains strongest (63.2)
- With a 1.5-point increase, the Central region has the most significant improvement in mental health from the prior period
- Following a 0.2-point decline, the lowest mental health score (60.4) is among respondents in the North-East region of Singapore



| Employment status                                   | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Employed<br>(no change in hours/salary)             | 62.2      | 62.1      |
| Employed (fewer hours<br>compared to last month)    | 59.3      | 61.1      |
| Employed (reduced salary<br>compared to last month) | 43.2      | 49.3      |
| Not currently employed                              | 61.6      | 62.1      |

| Age group | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Age 20-29 | 55.3      | 56.9      |
| Age 30-39 | 57.2      | 57.1      |
| Age 40-49 | 61.3      | 59.6      |
| Age 50-59 | 65.7      | 68.0      |
| Age 60-69 | 72.3      | 73.1      |

| Number of children       | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| No children in household | 62.1      | 62.6      |
| 1 child                  | 60.9      | 59.6      |
| 2 children               | 60.7      | 62.2      |
| 3 children or more       | 58.3      | 54.2      |

| Region            | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Central Region    | 62.7      | 61.2      |
| East Region       | 63.2      | 65.0      |
| North Region      | 60.7      | 61.9      |
| North-East Region | 60.4      | 60.6      |
| West Region       | 60.6      | 60.2      |

| Gender | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Men    | 62.4      | 61.2      |
| Women  | 60.6      | 62.2      |

| Household income       | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| \$50K/annum            | 59.0      | 57.2      |
| \$50K to <\$100K/annum | 60.7      | 60.2      |
| \$100k to <\$150K      | 62.8      | 64.6      |
| \$150K to \$200K       | 60.5      | 61.7      |
| \$200K and over        | 69.5      | 67.4      |

| Employer size                 | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Self-employed/sole proprietor | 63.3      | 59.4      |
| 2-50 employees                | 61.1      | 65.0      |
| 51-100 employees              | 62.0      | 62.0      |
| 101-500 employees             | 59.4      | 61.9      |
| 501-1,000 employees           | 61.1      | 58.8      |
| 1,001-5,000 employees         | 63.1      | 60.2      |
| 5,001-10,000 employees        | 61.6      | 62.2      |
| More than 10,000 employees    | 63.3      | 61.6      |

| Manager     | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Manager     | 62.0      | 61.5      |
| Non-manager | 60.8      | 61.8      |

| Work environment | Apr. 2023 | Jan. 2023 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Labour           | 58.8      | -         |
| Office/desk      | 61.7      | -         |
| Service          | 62.0      | -         |

Numbers highlighted in pink are the most negative scores in the group.

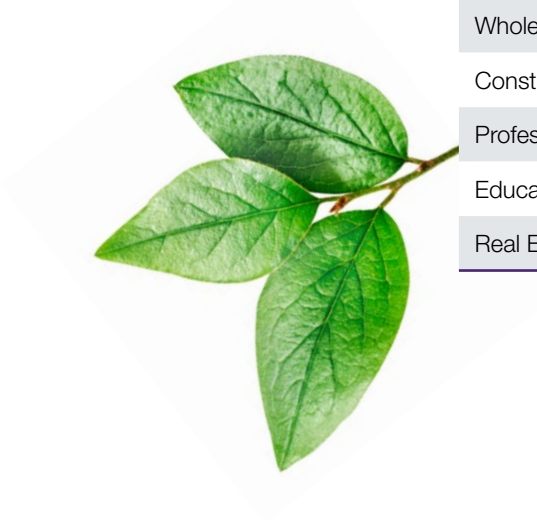
Numbers highlighted in green are the least negative scores in the group.

# The Mental Health Index by industry.

Employees working in Real Estate Activities have the lowest mental health score (54.7) in April 2023, followed by individuals working in Financial and Insurance Activities (57.6), and Public Administration and Defence (58.0).

Respondents employed in Transportation and Storage (67.1), Manufacturing (64.6), and Health and Social Services (63.3) have the highest mental health scores this month.

Changes from the prior month are shown in the table.



| Industry  | April 2023 | January 2023 | Change |
|---|------------|--------------|--------|
| Information and Cultural Industries               | 59.0       | 51.4         | 7.6    |
| Administrative and Support Service Activities     | 60.4       | 56.8         | 3.7    |
| Manufacturing                                     | 64.6       | 62.3         | 2.3    |
| Public Administration and Defence                 | 58.0       | 56.5         | 1.5    |
| Health and Social Services                        | 63.3       | 62.6         | 0.7    |
| Other Service Activities                          | 62.4       | 61.9         | 0.5    |
| Technology  | 59.1       | 59.8         | -0.7   |
| Accommodation and Food Service Activities         | 62.6       | 63.6         | -0.9   |
| Transportation and Storage                        | 67.1       | 68.4         | -1.3   |
| Financial and Insurance Activities                | 57.6       | 59.2         | -1.6   |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade                        | 58.8       | 60.7         | -1.8   |
| Construction                                      | 60.4       | 62.5         | -2.1   |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities | 62.7       | 65.5         | -2.8   |
| Education   | 62.2       | 65.9         | -3.7   |
| Real Estate Activities                            | 54.7       | 62.1         | -7.4   |

# Spotlight

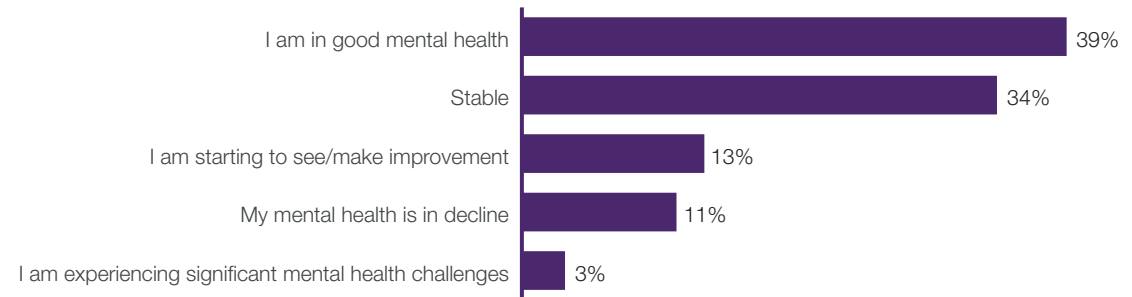
## Self-reported mental health.

Workers in Singapore were asked to describe their current mental health.

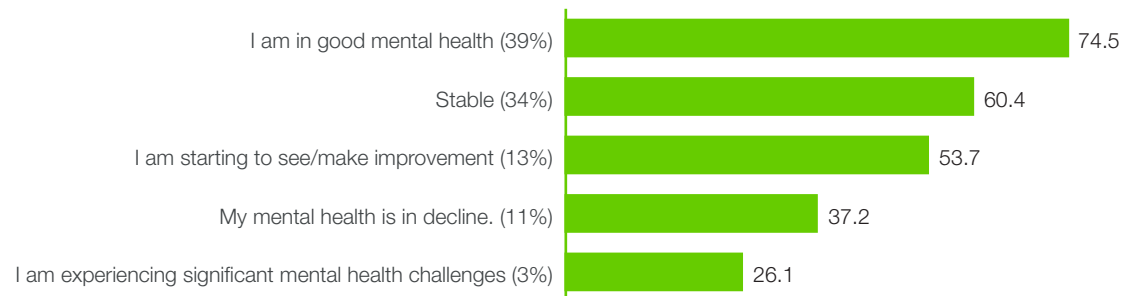
- One in seven (14 per cent) say their mental health is in decline or they are experiencing significant mental health challenges; workers in these categories have mental health scores 37 or more points lower than workers reporting good mental health and 24 or more points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Workers under 40 are three times more likely than workers over 50 to report they are starting to see/make improvement in their mental health
- Nearly two in five (39 per cent) self-report good mental health; this group has the highest mental health score (74.5), 13 points higher than the national average (61.5)
- Workers older than 50 are 50 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to report being in good mental health



### Current mental health



### MHI score by “Current mental health”



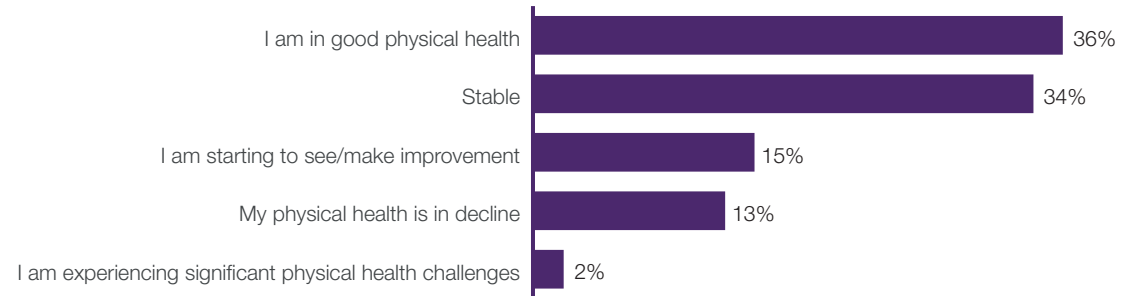
## Self-reported physical health.

Workers in Singapore were asked to describe their current physical health.

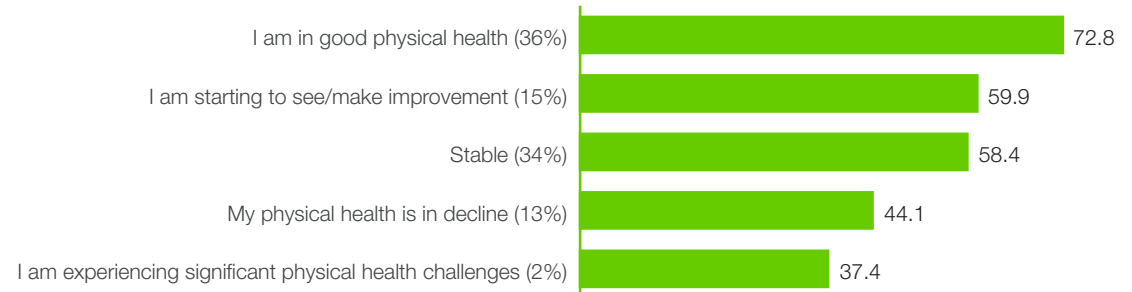
- Nearly one in six (15 per cent) say their physical health is in decline or they are experiencing significant physical health challenges; workers in these categories have mental health scores 28 or more points lower than workers reporting good physical health and 17 or more points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Workers under 40 are 70 per cent more likely than workers over 50 to report they are starting to see/make improvement in their physical health
- Nearly two in five (36 per cent) self-report good physical health; this group has the highest mental health score (72.8), 11 points higher than the national average (61.5)



### Current physical health



### MHI score by “Current physical health”





## Physical health effect on mental health.

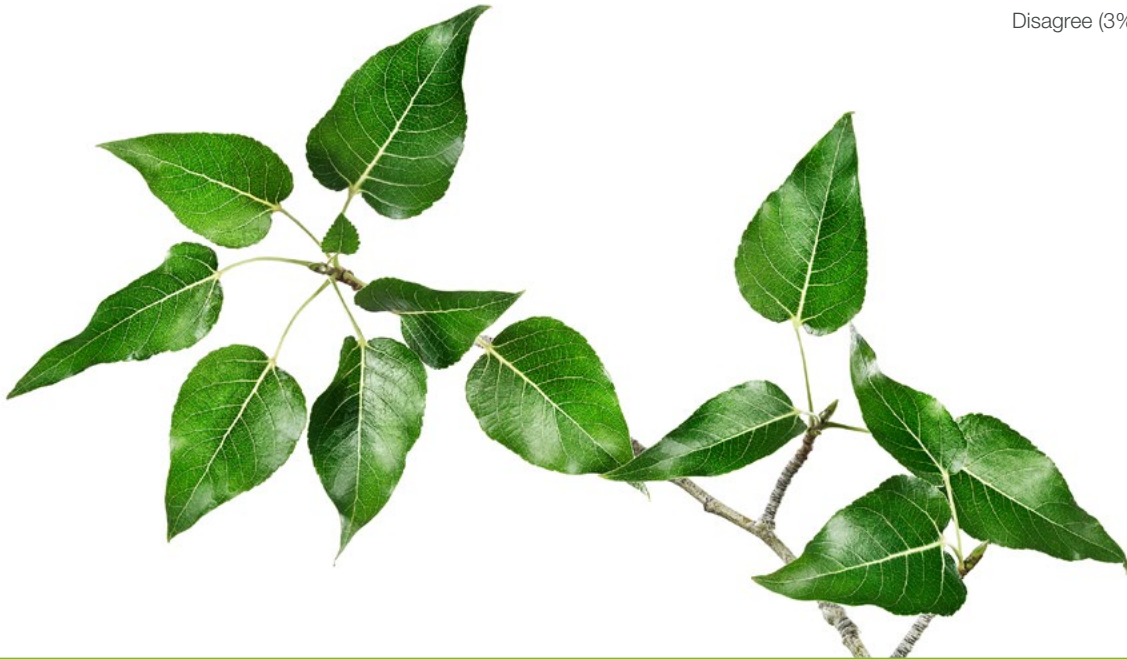
Workers in Singapore were asked whether physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health.

Four in five (79 per cent) believe that physical activity has a positive effect on their mental health; this group has the highest mental health score (63.7), nearly 11 points higher than workers who are neutral (53.0) and two points above the national average (61.5)

### Physical activity has a positive effect on my mental health



### MHI score by “Physical activity has a positive effect on my mental health”



Workers in Singapore were asked whether physical activity and good mental health are linked.

Nearly nine in ten workers (86 per cent) believe that physical activity and good mental health are linked; this group has the highest mental health score (63.0), nine or more points higher than workers who are neutral or disagree, and more than one point higher than the national average (61.5)

### I believe that physical activity and (good) mental health are linked



### MHI score by “I believe that physical activity and (good) mental health are linked”

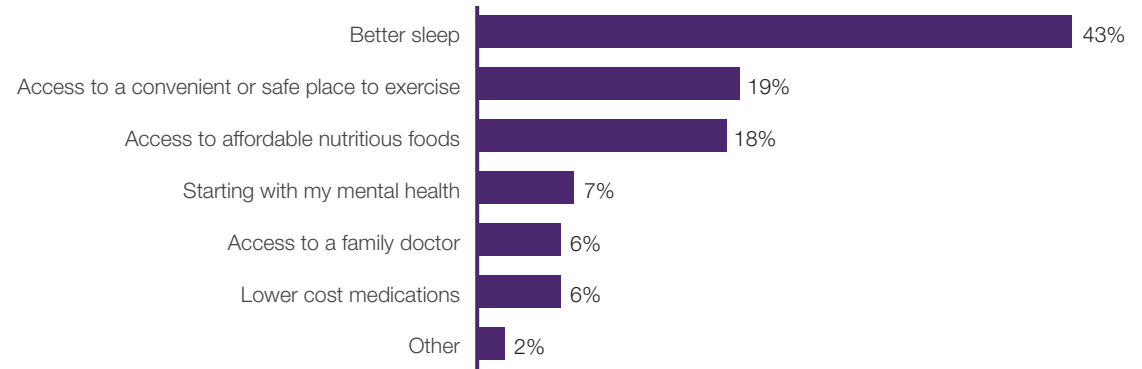


Workers in Singapore were asked what would be most helpful in managing their physical health.

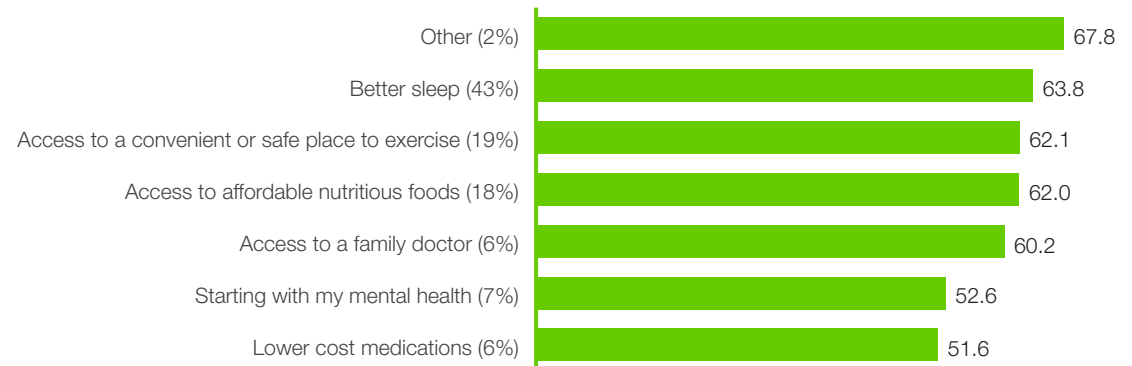
- More than two in five (43 per cent) report better sleep would be most helpful in managing their physical health, 19 per cent report access to a convenient or safe place to exercise, and 18 per cent report access to affordable nutritious foods as most helpful in managing their physical health
- Seven per cent said that starting with their mental health would be most helpful in managing their physical health; the mental health score of this group (52.6) is nine points lower than the national average (61.5)



### Most helpful in managing physical health



### MHI score by “Most helpful in managing physical health”



# Exercise

Workers in Singapore were asked how frequently they exercise.

- Nearly one in five (19 per cent) do not exercise. The mental health score of this group (54.7) is more than 14 points lower than workers who exercise four or more times per week (69.1) and nearly seven points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Females are nearly twice as likely as men to report not exercising
- Nearly one in six (15 per cent) exercise four or more times per week; this group has the highest mental health score (69.1), more than seven points higher than the national average (61.5)



## How frequently do you exercise?



## MHI score by “How frequently do you exercise?”

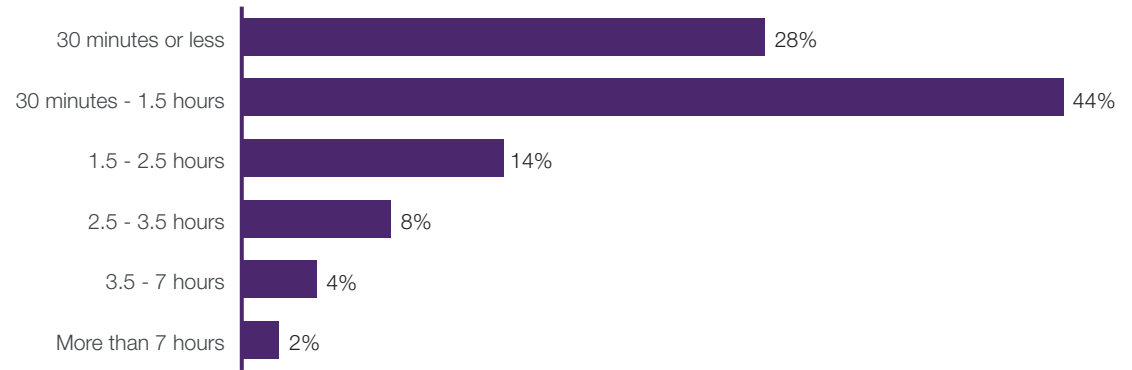


Workers in Singapore who exercise were asked about their total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise in a typical week.

The highest mental health score (74.2) is among two per cent of workers reporting more than seven hours of moderate to vigorous exercise per week. The mental health score of this group is nearly 15 points higher than workers who report 30 minutes or less of moderate to vigorous exercise (59.6) and nearly 13 points higher than the national average (61.5).



### Total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise



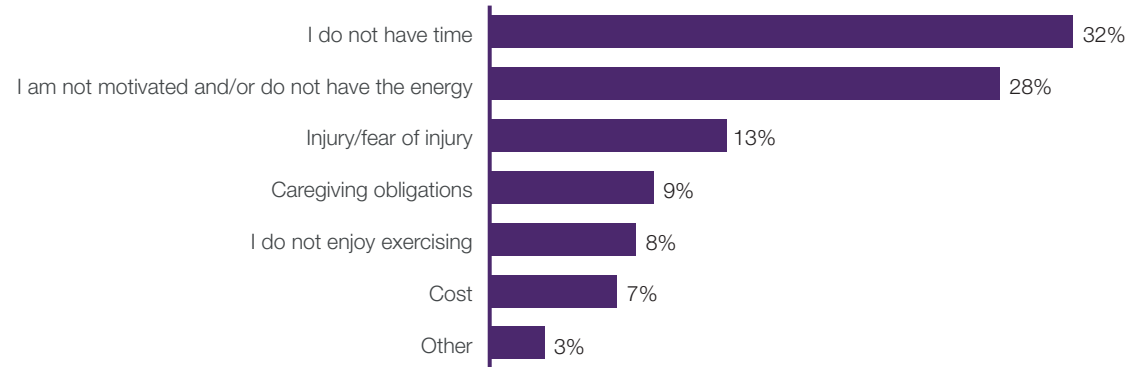
### MHI score by “Total duration of moderate to vigorous exercise”



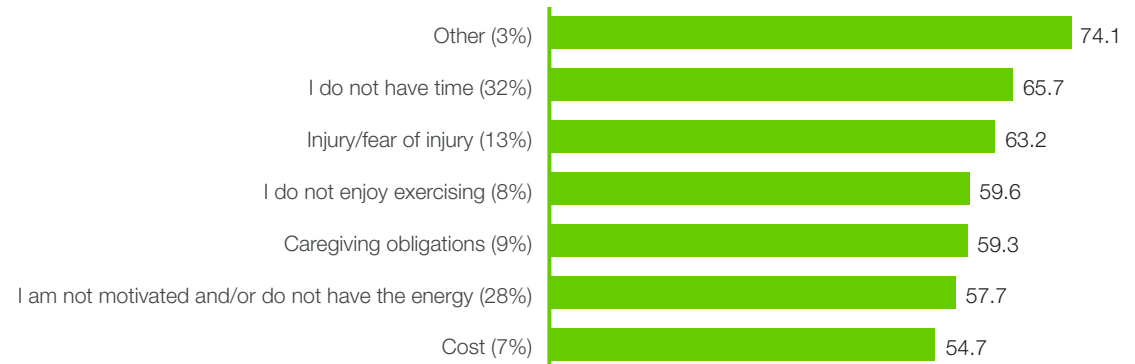
Workers in Singapore were asked about the biggest barrier to exercising regularly.

- Nearly one-third (32 per cent) do not have time to exercise regularly and 28 per cent say they are not motivated and/or do not have the energy to exercise
- Nearly one in ten (seven per cent) say cost is the biggest barrier to exercising regularly; this group has the lowest mental health score (54.7), seven points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Labourers are nearly twice as likely as office workers and more than two times more likely than service workers to report injury/fear of injury as the biggest barrier to exercising regularly
- Non-parents are 80 per cent more likely than parents to report not enjoying exercising

### Biggest barrier to exercising regularly



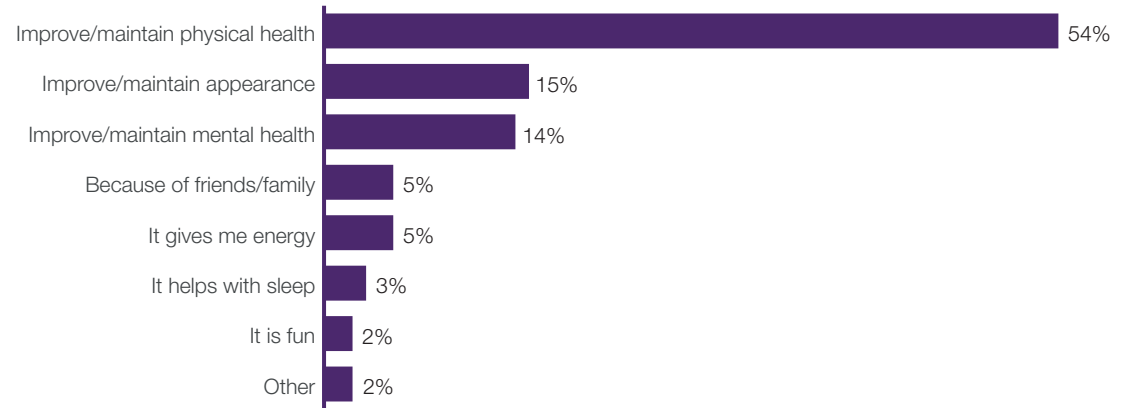
### MHI score by “Biggest barrier to exercising regularly”



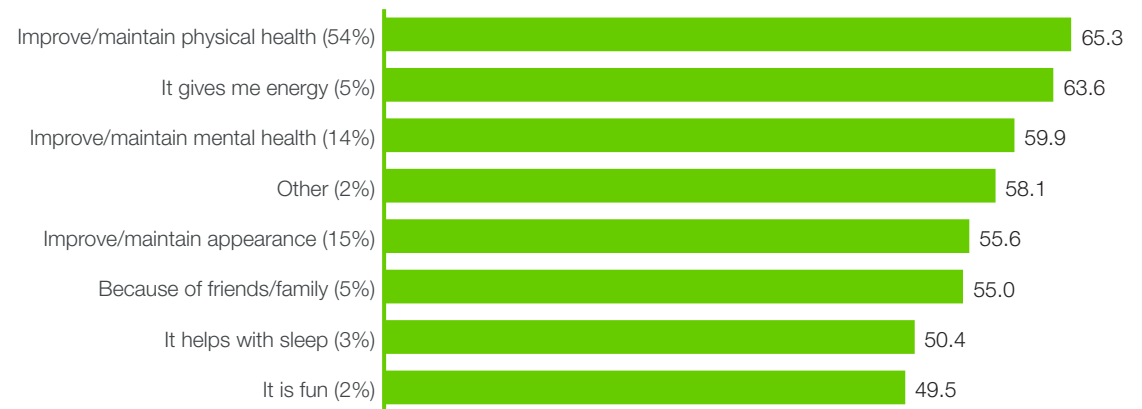
Workers in Singapore were asked about the primary reason they exercise.

- More than half (54 per cent) exercise to improve/maintain physical health; this group has the highest mental health score (65.3), nearly four points higher than the national average (61.5)
- Workers over 50 are 60 per cent more likely than workers under 40 to exercise to improve/maintain their physical health
- One in seven (14 per cent) exercise to improve/maintain their mental health; this group has a mental health score (59.9) nearly two points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Fifteen per cent exercise to improve/maintain their appearance; the mental health of this group (55.6) is six points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Workers under 40 are nearly three times more likely than workers over 50 to report exercising to improve/maintain their appearance

### Primary reason for exercising



### MHI score by “Primary reason for exercising”



## Physical health issues that interfere with work.

Workers in Singapore were asked whether they have a physical health issue that interferes with work.

- Nearly one in six (15 per cent) have a physical health issue that interferes with work; this group has a mental health score (47.9) 16 points lower than workers not reporting a physical health issue that interferes with work (63.9) and 13 points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Labourers are more than twice as likely as office workers and 70 per cent more likely than workers in service industries to have a physical health issue that interferes with work
- Parents are twice as likely as non-parents to have a physical health issue that interferes with their work



### Do you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?



### MHI score by “Do you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?”

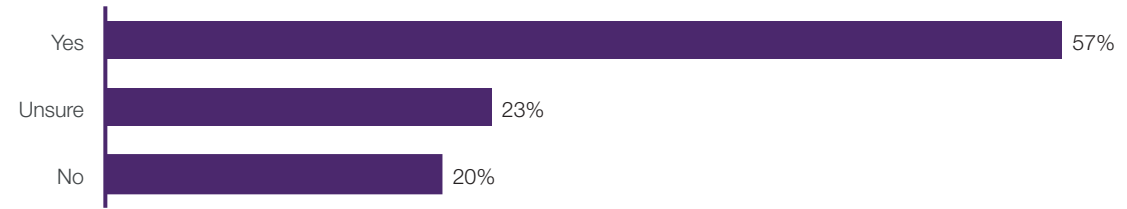




Workers in Singapore reporting a physical health issue that interferes with their work were asked whether their employer is aware of the issue.

- One in five (20 per cent) report their employer is unaware of their physical health issue; the mental health score of this group (42.3) is more than 19 points lower than the national average (61.5) and 10 points lower than workers whose employers are aware of their physical health issue
- Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) are unsure whether their employer is aware of their physical health issue that impacts work. The mental health score of this group (42.1) is 19 points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Nearly three in five (57 per cent) report their employer is aware of their physical health issue; despite this the mental health score of this group (52.3) is nine points lower than the national average (61.5)

### Is your employer aware that you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?



### MHI score by “Is your employer aware that you have a physical health issue that interferes with work?”

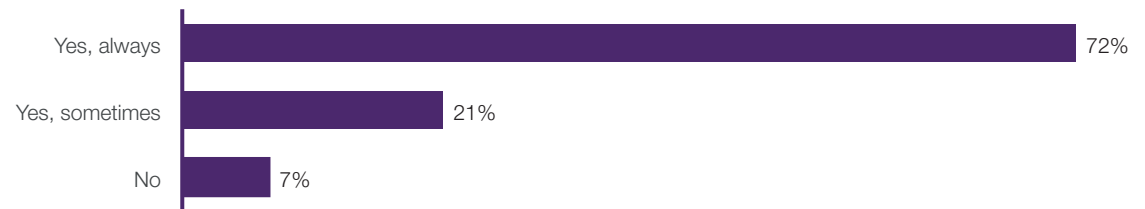




Workers in Singapore whose employers are aware of their physical health issue that interferes with work were asked whether their employer is helpful in managing work.

- One in fourteen (7 per cent) report their employer is not helpful in managing work given the challenges with their physical health issue; the mental health score of this group (54.3) is more than seven points below the national average (61.5) and one point lower than workers whose employers are always helpful (55.2)
- Non-managers are three and half times more likely than managers to report their employer is not helpful in managing work given the challenges with their physical health issue

#### Is your employer helpful managing work given the challenges you have with your physical health issue?



#### MHI score by “Is your employer helpful managing work given the challenges you have with your physical health issue?”

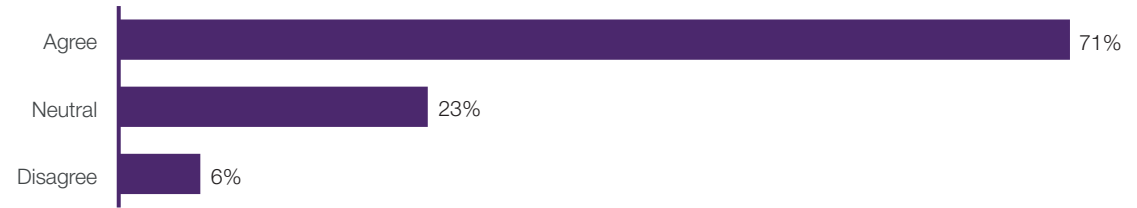


## Satisfaction with healthcare.

Workers in Singapore were asked whether they are satisfied with the level of healthcare available.

- Six per cent of workers are dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available; the mental health of this group is lowest (39.9), 25 points lower than workers who are satisfied (65.3) and nearly 22 points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Men are nearly 50 per cent more likely than women to report being dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available
- Seven in ten (71 per cent) are satisfied with the level of healthcare available; this group has the highest mental health score (65.3), four points higher than the national average (61.5)

### I am satisfied with the level of healthcare that is available to me



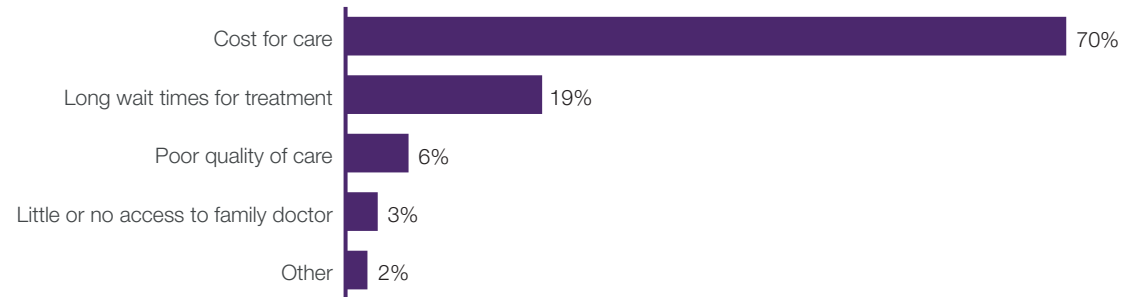
### MHI score by “I am satisfied with the level of healthcare that is available to me”



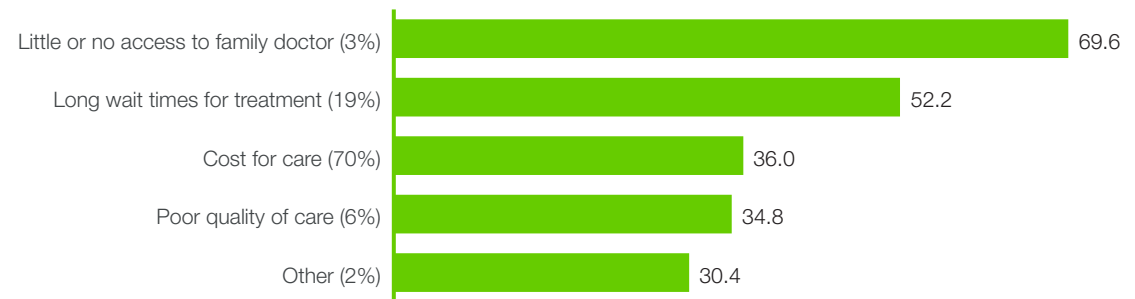
Workers in Singapore dissatisfied with the level of healthcare available were asked for the reason.

- Seven in ten (70 per cent) are dissatisfied because of cost for care. The mental health score of this group (36.0) is more than 25 points lower than the national average (61.5)
- Nearly one-quarter (22 per cent) are dissatisfied because of access to care; specifically, 19 per cent are dissatisfied because of long wait times for treatment and three per cent are dissatisfied because of little or no access to a family doctor.
- The mental health score of six per cent of workers reporting poor quality of care (34.8) is nearly 27 points lower than the national average (61.5)

### Reason for dissatisfaction



### MHI score by “Reason for dissatisfaction”



# Overview of the Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (formerly LifeWorks).

The mental health and wellbeing of a population is essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index provides a measure of the current mental health status of employed adults. The increases and decreases in the MHI are intended to predict cost and productivity risks and inform the need for investment in mental health support by business and government.

## The Mental Health Index report has two parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index (MHI).
2. A spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

## Methodology

Data for this report is collected through an online survey of 1,000 people who live in Singapore and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants are selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry, and geographic distribution in Singapore. Respondents are asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. Data for the current report was collected between April 3 and April 13, 2023.

## Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index, a response scoring system is applied to turn individual responses into point values. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. The sum of scores is divided by the total number of possible points to generate a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores. Distribution of scores is defined according to the following scale:

**Distressed** 0 - 49    **Strained** 50-79    **Optimal** 80 - 100

## Additional data and analyses.

Demographic breakdowns of sub-scores, and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses, are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any sub-group is available upon request.

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