



Future of Healthcare & Wellbeing Report

2021



EUROPEAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE (SINGAPORE)



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This inquiry conducted by the European Chamber of Commerce (Singapore) surveyed respondents from 15 well-established European organisations relevant to the sector of healthcare and wellbeing and based in Singapore to assess their initiatives and strategies in the sector, as well as to gain a better understanding of their perceptions of Singapore's healthcare system.

The report highlights the organisations' recognition of healthcare-related trends in Singapore, and exposes some of the key challenges that they encounter while operating in the industry. Opportunities are also clearly identified in this report.

The intention of this survey is to raise awareness in the healthcare and wellbeing area and to advocate for closing the gap between companies' needs and government support programmes, while keeping in mind consumer trends.

The most pressing concern is the increased need for public awareness and accessibility to healthcare innovations, and healthier food and wellbeing choices, which many organisations are attempting to mitigate. However, organisations are experiencing a clear barrier as the broader public seems to lack trust towards initiatives by private entities.

When it comes to the future of healthcare and wellbeing in Singapore, almost all respondents indicated a need for more government incentives with broader applications as well as the establishment of a collaborative and cohesive ecosystem. This ecosystem should derive common goals from the general public, the government, and the private sector so as to create an environment that encourages and reinforces innovations in healthcare, healthy lifestyle and wellbeing choices, and healthy and sustainable food initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 saw a crisis of unprecedented magnitude hit the world - an ongoing predicament in 2021. Even before the pandemic surfaced, world leaders and international organisations were expressing concern over the rapidly evolving demography trends in many countries, which consequently necessitated a rethinking of the ways in which to cater to the changes in healthcare and wellbeing needs.

The European Commission ran their Third Healthcare Programme from 2014 to 2020 and are currently in the midst of finalising and implementing their EU4Health Programme 2021. Singapore has also launched the CareShield Life programme in October 2020. All of these are a response to trends in healthcare needs such as the rise in lifestyle diseases and mental health concerns; the need for accelerated digitalisation and innovative technology to compensate for health concerns that cannot be dealt using only traditional methods; and an ageing population, to name a few.

EuroCham's Healthcare Programme 2021 is an ambitious project in line with the commitments and aspirations of Singapore, and towards the EU4Health Programme 2021. It also has the goal of showing the degree of involvement of European companies in the healthcare and wellbeing area.

The focus is on 3 key strategic topics as identified by the industry as being important for any conversation around healthcare: Healthcare & Innovation, Healthy Lifestyle & Wellbeing, and Healthy & Sustainable Food.

In conducting this survey, the European Chamber of Commerce (Singapore) has the ambition of highlighting the perceptions regarding the healthcare system of Singapore - its areas of excellence and weakness, the initiatives in place and their challenges, and opportunities for growth.

All respondents have our deep appreciation and gratitude for their valuable contributions and inputs in this survey; we cannot neglect to mention the openness and transparency of the respondents of this survey, made up of 15 leading European companies who have shared their views with us and identified potential challenges for the future.

Alongside this initiative, EuroCham is also the organiser of a series of sharing sessions - known as the "Best Practice Sharing Sessions". This is another opportunity for our members to expose their healthcare best practices and start a dialogue between private entities, non-profits, government, and academia. Only by involving all existing actors, are we then able to tackle the enormous challenge that we face.

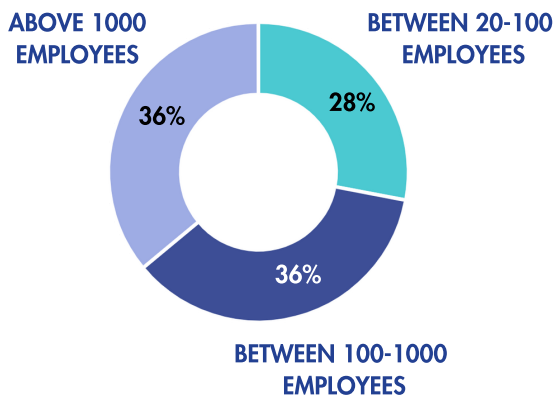
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

For this study, respondents from 15 European companies in Singapore were surveyed. All of these companies have a vested interest in the future of Healthcare & Wellbeing, and are well-established in the sector for their products and services.

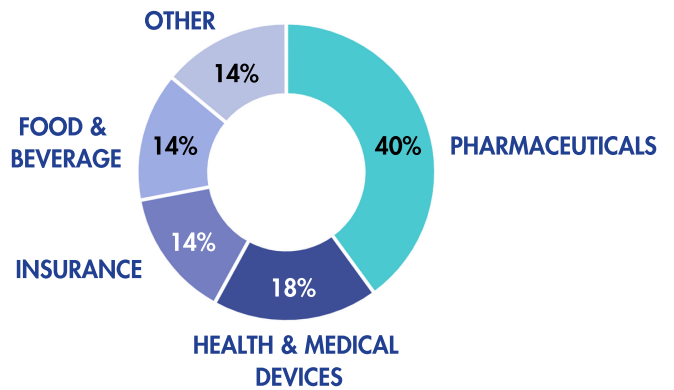
40% of the respondents were employees of Pharmaceutical companies. 18% of the respondents were employees of companies working with 'health & medical devices'. Respondents from 'insurance' companies, 'food & beverage' companies, and 'other' companies each made up 14% of the sample respectively.

The ratio of respondents from various sizes of companies was fairly well-distributed. 28% of the companies reported have 20 to 100 employees, while both companies with number of employees being between 100 to 1000 and companies with number of employees above 1000 made up 36% of the sample each.

COMPANY SIZE



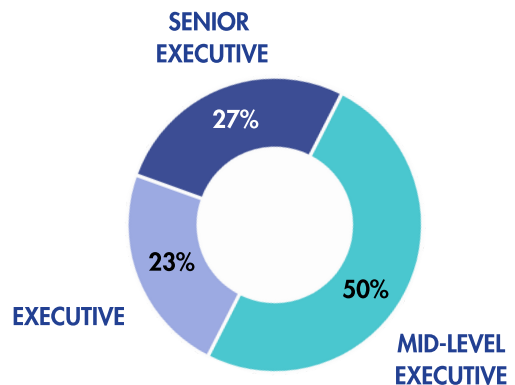
INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN



Majority of the respondents held mid-level executive positions, with 50% being mid-level executives, 27% being senior executives and 23% being executives.

This is an indication that the survey results were gathered from a well-rounded group of individuals with knowledge at various levels of a corporate business in the healthcare sector.

POSITION IN THE COMPANY

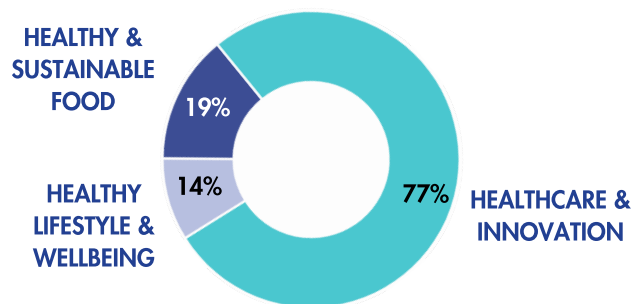


HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING PRIORITIES

Which of the following is the most relevant area of interest for your organisation?

77% of the organisations reported are involved in 'healthcare & innovation', indicating that this is an aspect of the healthcare system that is currently seeing a boost in terms of engagement from the private sector.

At the same time, organisations that are reportedly involved in 'healthy lifestyle & wellbeing' and 'healthy & sustainable food' make up 14% and 19% of the sample respectively.



At which stage are your organisation's efforts with regards to improving healthcare & wellbeing?

With regards to improving healthcare and wellbeing, 68% of the respondents have reported that their organisations are at the phase where their healthcare concepts are being 'incorporated to mission'. This shows that most organisations are invested in improving healthcare & wellbeing and are in the process of working towards it.

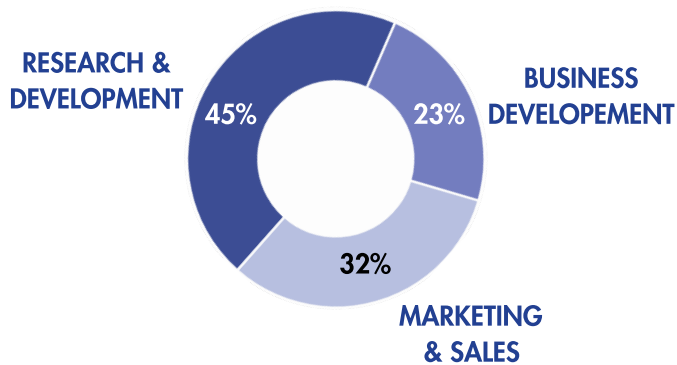
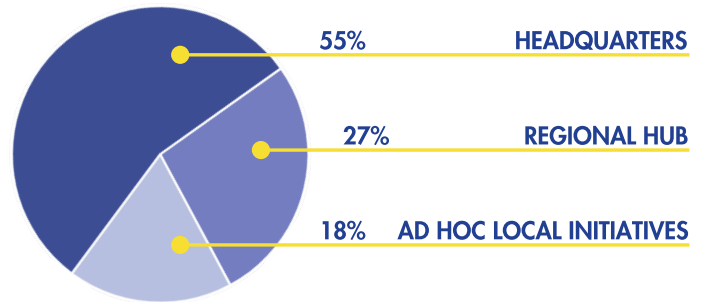
None of the organisations are at the 'ideation' level, 18% of organisations are at the 'strategy' stage, 9% in the 'investment plan' stage, and 5% at the 'blueprint' stage.



HEALTHCARE & WELLBEING PRIORITIES

Which of the following is the main driver of these efforts in your organisation?

At 55% majority, 'headquarters' are the main drivers behind most efforts towards improving healthcare & wellbeing. 'Regional hubs' and 'ad hoc local initiatives' have been cited to be responsible for these efforts by 27% and 18% of the respondents respectively.



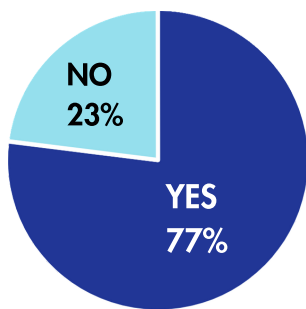
Which type of project does your organisation execute in the area of healthcare and wellbeing?

45% of the organisations are involved in 'research & development' projects, whereas 32% are involved 'marketing & sales' projects, and 23% are involved in 'business development' projects.



HEALTHCARE & INNOVATION

Does your organisation provide or promote innovative technologies to support the management of personal healthcare?



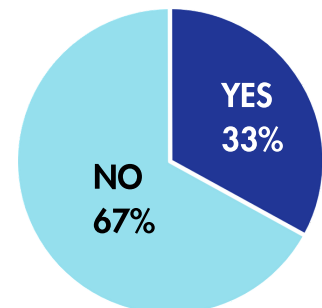
77% of the organisations were reported to provide or promote innovative technologies to support the management of personal healthcare.

23% do not provide or promote such technologies and this can be attributed to these organisations having other healthcare priorities.

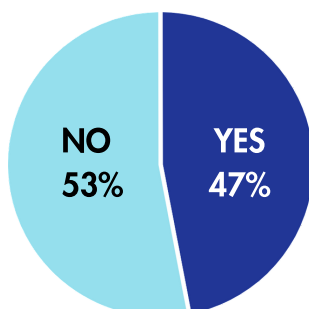
In your opinion, is there widespread public awareness of the healthcare potential of innovation such as smart home technologies?

With majority 67% of the respondents disagreeing that there is widespread public awareness, this is a clear signal to address a potential knowledge gap for future community engagement with such innovation in the healthcare system.

Only 33% of the respondents agreed that there is, in fact, widespread public awareness of the healthcare potential of innovation such as smart home technologies.



Do you believe that there is sufficient acceptance of healthcare innovations like smart home technologies among the general public?

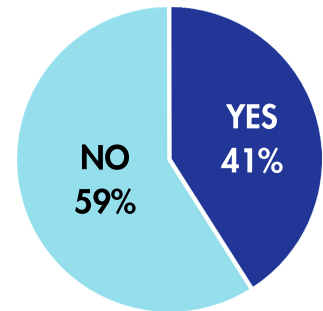


There is an almost equal split between the number of respondents believing that there is sufficient acceptance of healthcare innovations among the general public, with 47% saying yes, and 53% saying no.

HEALTHCARE & INNOVATION

In your opinion, has the government done enough to help the public accept these healthcare technologies?

41% of respondents indicated that the government has done enough to help the public accept healthcare technologies, while 59% of respondents indicated that the government has yet to do enough.



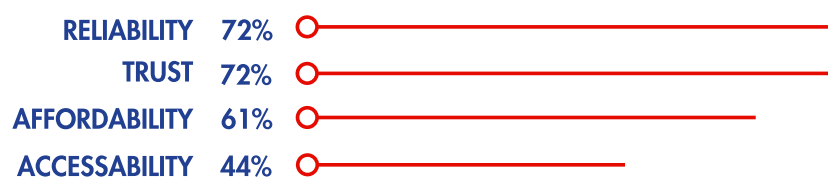
From the above 4 questions and respective responses, it is clear that European organisations in Singapore are keen on providing and promoting healthcare technologies. While there is awareness amongst the general public of such technologies, there is still much room for improvement. At the same time, European organisations and the Singapore government can look towards opportunities of collaboration to make such healthcare technology-based efforts a success for both.



In your opinion, which of the following are the top three public concerns with regards to the use of smart technologies for managing personal health?

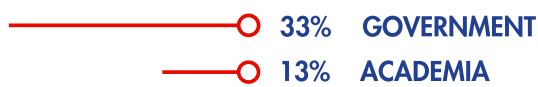
The no 1 concerns are tied at 72% each for both 'reliability and trust', followed by 'affordability' at 61% and 'accessibility' at 44%.

At 5.6% each, the other options included 'stigma', 'data ownership', 'privacy', 'understanding of choices', 'accuracy', 'adoption & know-how', and 'user experience'.



HEALTHCARE & INNOVATION

Which of the following stakeholders does your organisation collaborate with to promote the adoption of smart technologies for managing personal health?



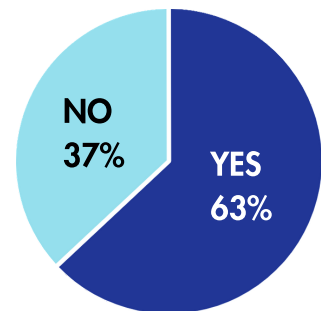
Most organisations reportedly collaborate with the Singaporean 'government' the most, at 33%. Collaboration with 'academia' is the second most common, at 13%.

The following stakeholders are all collaborated with at an equal rate of 6.7% each - 'trade associations', 'MNCs', 'start-ups', 'business partners', 'private industry', 'in-house developments', and 'medical societies & associations'. 6.7% respondents also chose none of the above options.



Do you believe that the market for smart technologies for managing personal health is sufficiently regulated?

63% of the respondents agreed that the market for smart technologies for managing personal health is sufficiently regulated, while 37% disagreed on this account.

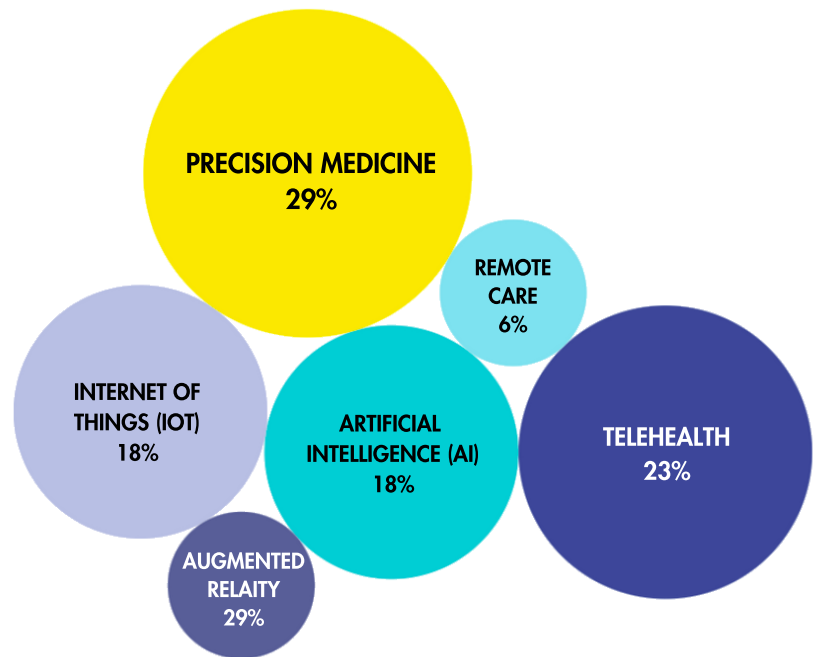


HEALTHCARE & INNOVATION

Which areas of innovation do you believe has the highest potential for improving today's healthcare system?

The mode area of innovation amongst organisations is 'precision medicine' at 29%.

'Telehealth' is at a close 23%, while the potential for 'artificial intelligence (AI)' and 'internet of things (IOT)' to improve today's healthcare system are at 18% each. The least likely to improve the healthcare system is 'remote care' at 6%.



Legitimacy and trust are key enablers in the adoption of healthcare innovations by the general public, both of which can be achieved through a strong public-private partnership, especially between companies and the government.

Innovation can be achieved by having a novel mindset while inspiring teams to push through barriers. To promote these technologies, messages of benefits and reliability have to be emphasised.

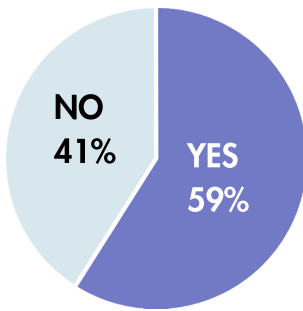
There is a need for more funding and promotion of research on the efficacy of innovative approaches to healthcare. More platforms for healthcare tech startups to showcase solutions would also be beneficial.



In your opinion, how can key stakeholders help drive innovation in healthcare? Additionally, how can stakeholders help promote these technologies to the general public?

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE & WELLBEING

Does your organisation adopt programmes to support the general public in pursuing a healthy lifestyle?



59% of organisations reported adopt programmes to support the general public in pursuing a healthy lifestyle, while 41% of organisations do not adopt such programmes.

This 41% could possibly be engaged in more niche healthcare areas, as opposed to programmes that support healthy lifestyle.

In your opinion, what are the 3 most efficient programmes to promote a healthy lifestyle amongst the general public?

At 57%, 'healthy lifestyle apps on mobile' is considered to be the most efficient programme to promote a healthy lifestyle amongst the general public. 'Corporate programmes for employees', at 50%, and 'government-led campaigns to promote healthy literacy', at 36%, round off the Top 3 most efficient programmes.

The least efficient programme is a tie between 'collaborating with existing communities beyond healthcare clubs' and 'public recreation facilities, bike lanes, parks, wildlife areas', both which are at 7% each.

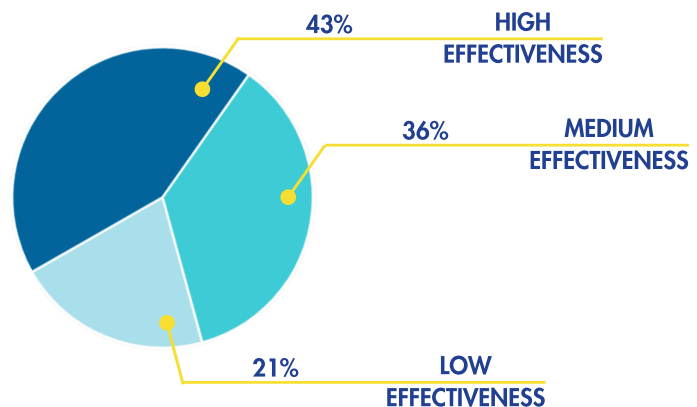


HEALTHY LIFESTYLE & WELLBEING

In your opinion, how effective are mobile apps in advancing behavioural change towards a healthy lifestyle?

At 43%, most respondents believe that mobile apps are highly effective in advancing behavioural change towards a healthy lifestyle.

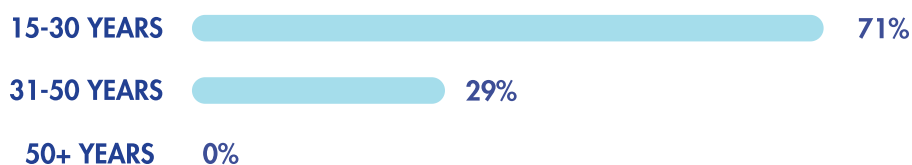
36% of respondents believe there is medium effectiveness and 21% of respondents believe there is low effectiveness of such mobile apps.



In your opinion, which age groups are more accepting of mobile apps?

Predominantly, the age group of 15-30 years olds are perceived to be more accepting of mobile apps, at 71%.

29% of respondents perceive the age group of 31-50 years olds as being more accepting of mobile apps, while none of the respondents chose the 50+ years old age group. These results are not an indication that either of these age groups are in any way opposed or unwilling to accept and use mobile apps, but simply that the 15-30 years olds are perceived to be more accepting.

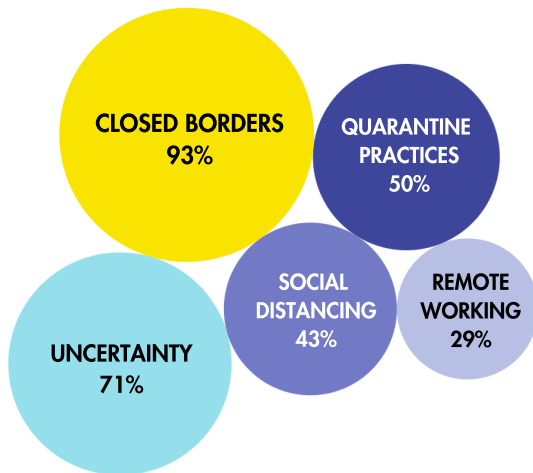


In the wake of the pandemic, do you agree that there are sufficient programmes supporting public mental health?

A large majority, at 64%, disagree that there are sufficient programmes supporting public mental health. Only 22% agree that there are sufficient programmes, while 14% are neutral on this matter.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE & WELLBEING



In your opinion, which are the top 3 challenges with the highest psychological toll on the public?

The perceived challenge with the highest psychological toll on the public is 'closed borders' at 93%.

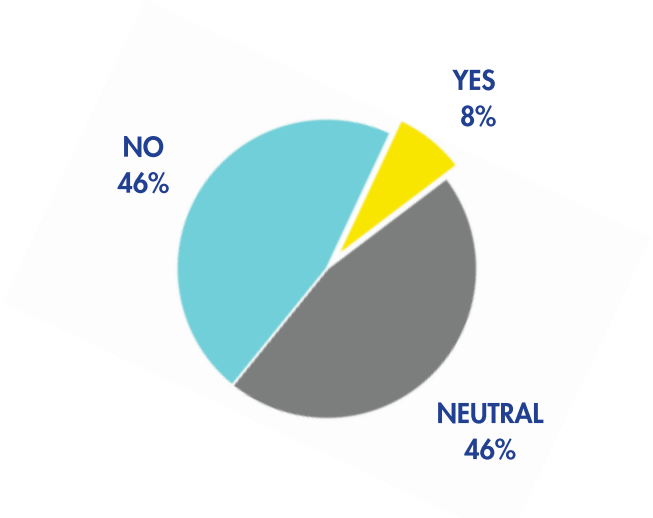
'Uncertainty' at 71% and 'quarantine practices' at 50% round-off the top 3 challenges for the public. The challenge with the least psychological toll is perceived to be 'remote working' at 29%.



In your opinion, are existing programmes spearheaded by the government sufficient in supporting public mental health?

With the vast majority of the respondents choosing either 'no' or 'neutral', there is only 8% who agree that existing programmes spearheaded by the government are sufficient in supporting public mental health.

The large proportion of responses being 'neutral' could indicate a wait-and-see approach due to a lack of immediate data and or self-censorship due to a conflict of interest or not having a clear enough perspective of the existing government programmes.

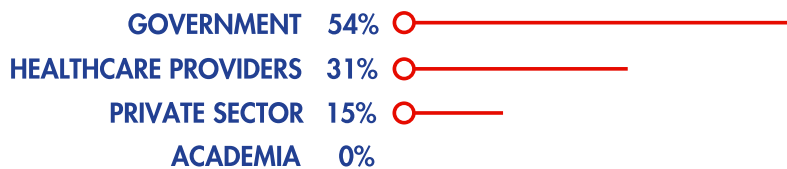


HEALTHY LIFESTYLE & WELLBEING

In your opinion, which stakeholders are best placed to conduct programmes to support public mental health?

54% of the respondents believe that the 'government' is best placed to conduct programmes to support public mental health.

While 31% chose 'healthcare providers' and 15% chose 'private sector' to be best placed, none of the respondents believe that 'academia' is in a position to conduct such programmes.



In your opinion, how can key stakeholders improve programmes to promote a healthy lifestyle and support public health?

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Often the public sees a need for healthy lifestyle but due to lack of motivation, they do not engage in appropriate activities. Hence, programmes need to be user-friendly and incentivising to counteract this challenge.

Stakeholders need to understand the user, and provide a user experience that is as customized as possible to the individual.

There needs to be better promotion and visibility of issues. This can be achieved by establishing a robust partnership between the private and public sector.

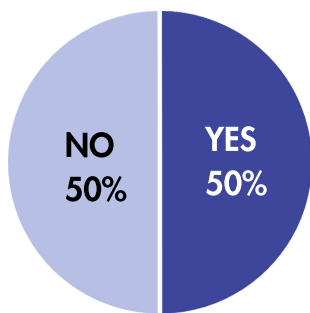
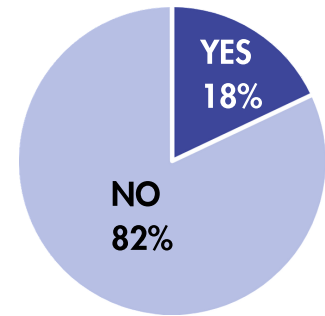
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HEALTHY & SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Does your organisation produce healthy and sustainable food?

18% of respondents reported that their organisations produce healthy and sustainable food.

82% of respondents reported that their organisations do not produce healthy and sustainable food. This could be an indication that these organisations are not involved in the food sub-sector of healthcare and wellbeing.



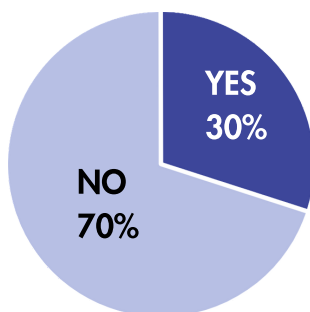
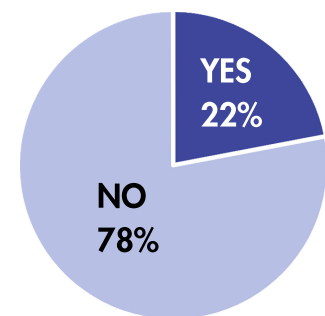
Does your organisation conduct programmes promoting consumption of healthy and sustainable food?

There is an even split between the number of organisations which conduct programmes promoting consumption of healthy and sustainable food.

Do you believe that there is adequate public awareness of the health and sustainability attributes of the food consumed?

At 78%, most respondents believe that there is inadequate public awareness of the health and sustainability attributes of the food consumed.

Only 22% of respondents believe that there is sufficient public awareness.



In your opinion, is there sufficient labelling of food as healthy and sustainable?

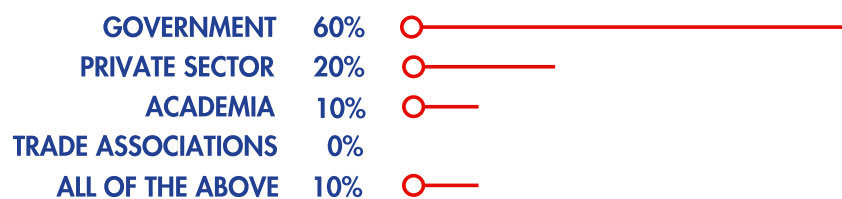
70% of the respondents do not find there to be sufficient labelling of food as healthy and sustainable, while only 30% agree that there is in fact sufficient labelling.

HEALTHY & SUSTAINABLE FOOD

In your opinion, which stakeholders are best placed to improve public awareness on healthy and sustainable food?

'Government', at 60%, is the stakeholder best placed to improve public awareness on healthy and sustainable food.

At 20% and 10% respectively, there is a large gap between the 'government' and the next best stakeholders - 'private sector' and 'academia'. Although none of the respondents chose 'trade associations', 10% of the respondents believe that all of the mentioned stakeholders are important in improving awareness on healthy and sustainable food.



In your opinion, how can awareness and consumption of healthy and sustainable food be improved by key stakeholders?

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Campaigns need to specifically target raising awareness through proper education on healthy and sustainable food. These campaigns need to be a joint, concerted effort from both the government and private sector.

Better regulation is important in that there needs to be greater transparency regarding the parameters used when labelling food as healthy and/or sustainable - for example, country of origin, content of fat, content of sugar versus daily need, or what is the carbon footprint from producing this food, etc.

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BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS TO SINGAPORE

AWARENESS & EDUCATION

The public mindset and awareness regarding available healthcare technologies are crucial for its successful integration into Singapore's Healthcare System. The organisations highlight that information about healthcare innovations such as smart home technologies and their importance needs to be spread wider in Singapore, to the public and towards businesses.

Recommendations

- Educate the young in school about available healthcare mobile apps for the management of personal health
- Run awareness campaigns for the general public on upcoming healthcare innovations relevant to their age-group, healthcare needs, etc.

INCENTIVISE

The private sector invests deeply in research and development through the appropriate use of patient data available to them. Companies are at the forefront of awareness of latest developments in healthcare trends and needs. Companies that are investing in and developing technologies that directly answers these needs should be encouraged to continue their operations in Singapore in this beneficial direction.

Recommendation

- While there are governmental funding and grant schemes in place for certain types of healthcare innovation research, funding should be made available for untapped areas of innovation that private organisations are exploring.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE & WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

Given the current rise in both lifestyle diseases and public mental health concerns, it is imperative that the government, in conjunction with the private sector, run programmes to mitigate such negative trends.

Existing programmes are insufficient in tackling these issues - made exponentially worse due to the recent pandemic and other localised epidemics - and many respondents have highlighted their concerns.

Recommendation

- The public sector need to collaborate with the private sector so as to understand the consumer's choices and develop the most appropriate programme suited to smaller sub-communities of the general public. This is to ensure that the campaigns are nuanced enough to target specific lifestyle and wellbeing needs of the public.

BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS TO SINGAPORE

HEALTHY FOOD LABELLING

Many respondents are of the opinion that there is room for improvement in the labelling standards for food in Singapore. While Singapore's Healthier Choice symbol is an excellent initiative from the Health Promotion Board, it can be further developed to be more eye-catching and consumer-friendly.

There is also a limited number of packaged food products carrying this symbol, as the onus remains on the consumer to make a healthier choice. Instead, it should be a joint effort between the public and private sector as well as the general public. It is necessary to encourage companies to not only provide healthy food but also apply for such labelling licenses, so that the consumer can make an informed decision.

Recommendations

- Adopt a healthy food labelling system that is more nuanced and understandable at a glance for the consumer.
- Encourage companies to practice healthy food labelling and apply for such licenses through tax incentives and subsidies to minimise cost of generating the necessary nutrition reports.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD LABELLING

Similar to the nutrition labelling in food products, there is a need for sustainable food labelling in Singapore. Currently, Europe is developing an Eco-score food labelling standard that scrutinises and informs the consumer of the sustainable practices behind the production of the food consumed. Singapore, as a nation that believes in the sustainable approach to living and working, needs to embrace similar methods in their food labelling practices.

Recommendations

- Develop a sustainable food labelling system, which companies in the food industry should also be encouraged to adopt.
- The general public needs to be educated and made aware of the need for food choices that are more sustainable.

BUSINESS RECOMMENDATIONS TO SINGAPORE

COLLABORATION & COORDINATION

Stronger collaboration between the public and private sector is necessary to accelerate and streamline the shift to healthier and sustainable living. The general public is seen to lack trust and feelings of reliability towards many of the private initiatives, a challenge that can be alleviated through cooperation and collaboration with the Singapore government.

By coordinating the initiatives across areas and platforms, authorities and companies can work more easily towards a common goal. Together with a sound regulatory framework, collaboration and coordination between entities will enable an improved healthcare and wellbeing system.

Recommendation

- Develop an ecosystem involving multiple actors that acts towards the betterment of the healthcare system.

These are the focus areas where the organisations feel the need to reinforce action from the government side. There is still a key takeaway that all of them have highlighted: there is an even greater need for intervention for the betterment of public healthcare and wellbeing; urgent needs arising from unprecedented crises such as pandemics will not adapt to our corporate or governmental agenda and we should be prepared for such emergencies. The way to achieve this is to ensure that the public is not only educated and aware of healthcare provisions but also have easy access to these provisions.

In tackling this enormous challenge, all entities have to work together. This is one of the most important elements; it is crucial for individuals, the government, and the the private entities to not act in isolation, but instead work together to create a holistic ecosystem which provides goods and services that are reliable and affordable so as to ensure improved healthcare and wellbeing choices.