

# Living in COVID Times - IDF Europe COVID & Diabetes Survey

## Experiences from People living with Diabetes



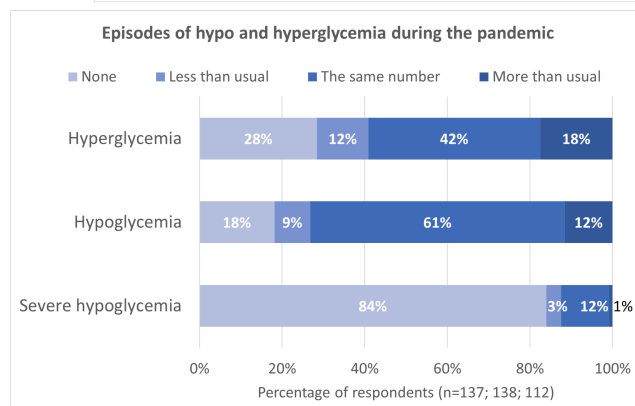
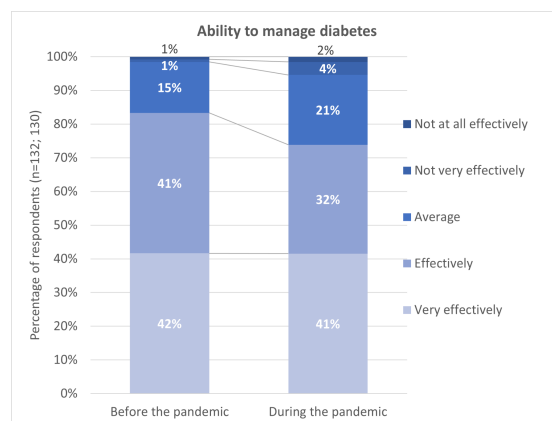
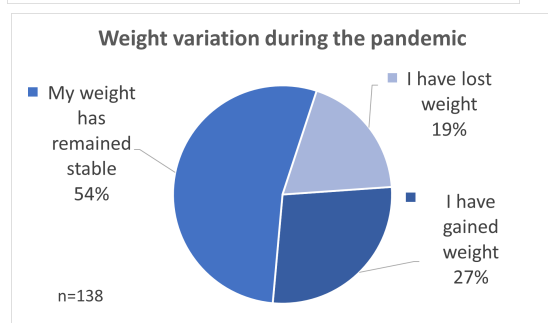
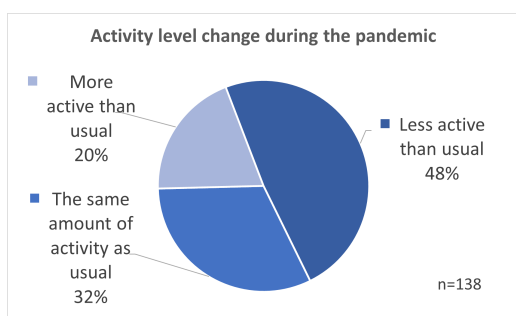
Germany

### Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic led to marginal disruption in access to care, medicines, supplies, and technologies for people living with diabetes (PwD) in Germany. A very small number of PwD found it difficult to manage their diabetes during the crisis, although this increased sharply in comparison to before COVID-19. Recorded disruptions related primarily to access to all types of healthcare. Accessing medicines or supplies was rarely mentioned as a challenge. Getting tested for COVID-19 was generally considered easy. As in many countries, a significant issue for PwD was the lack of guidance given: 67% of respondents did not receive any from their healthcare team; 47% reported that no guidance was given specifically for PwD and 77% mentioned that more information and clearer recommendations for PwD would have helped them manage their diabetes better. COVID-19 had a significant psychological impact; over one in four respondents worried about shortages of medicines and supplies and 50% experienced more frequent episodes of low mood. As in many other countries, the healthcare system did adapt somewhat to the constraints resulting from the pandemic. Many more people attended virtual consultations than had done pre-COVID and most appeared satisfied with them, although the number of PwD attending such consultations remained low. While some PwD expressed reservations about attending remote consultations in the future, a large majority felt ready to use them, either exclusively or as part of a mix of options.

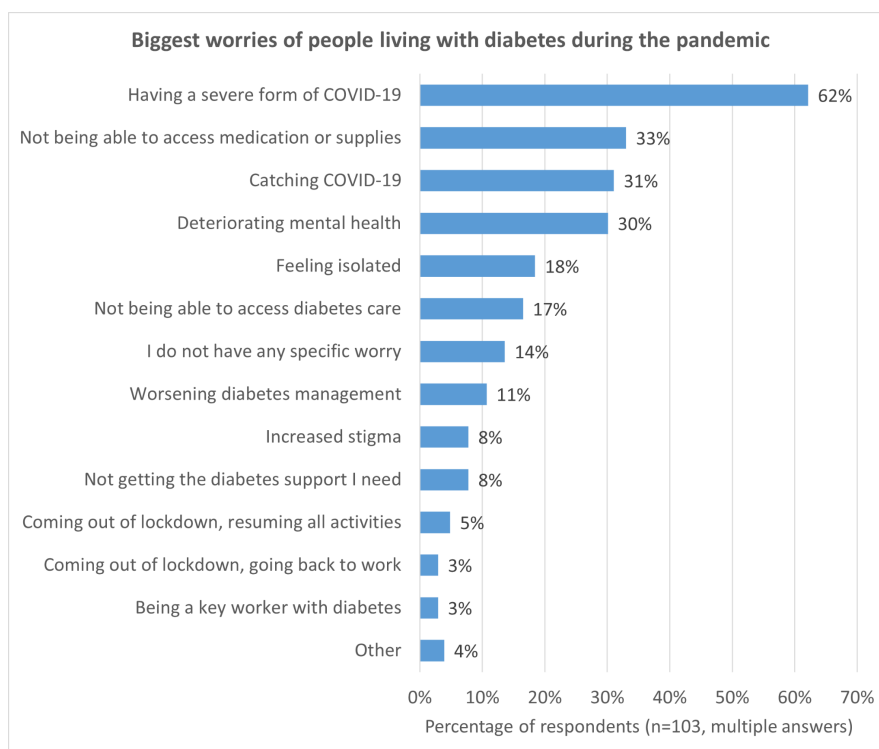
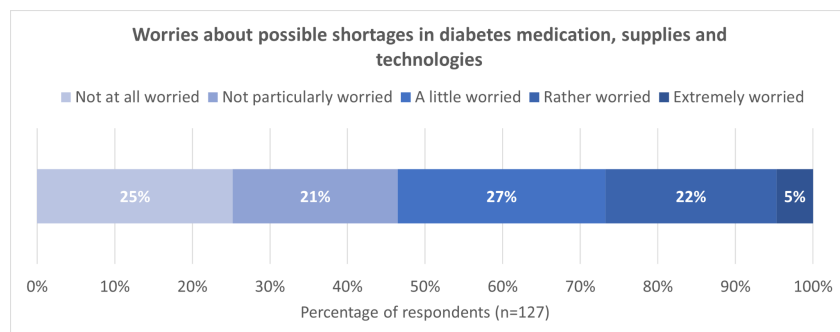
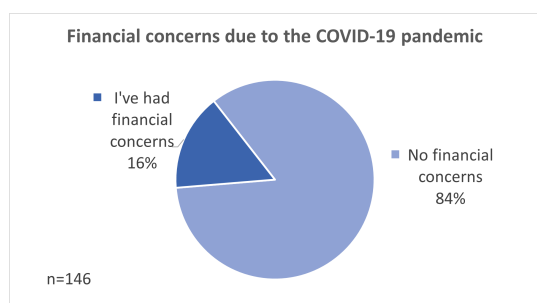
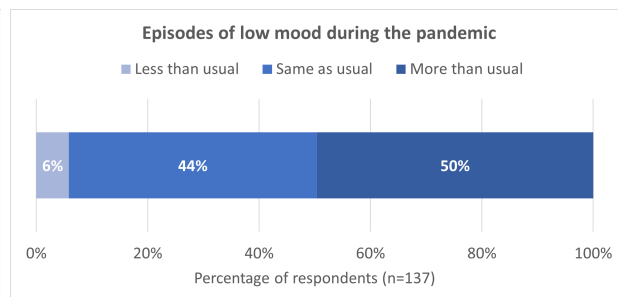
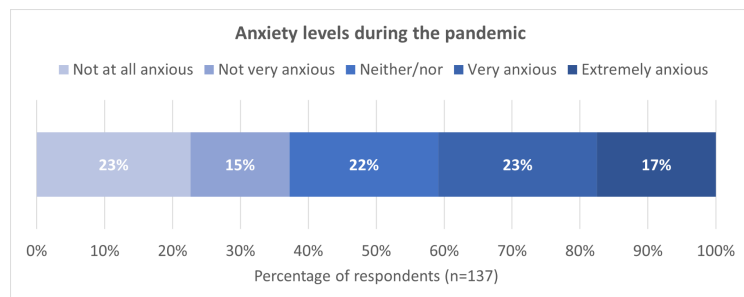
### Diabetes Management

Under six percent of the respondents reported that their ability to manage their diabetes was ineffective or very ineffective during the pandemic, up from just 1.5% pre-COVID-19. Nearly all (94%) were able to follow their diabetes regimen as usual. For three quarters of the respondents, blood glucose readings stayed the same or were more stable. A small number of PwD reported a higher frequency of hyperglycemic episodes. Close to half the respondents engaged less in physical activity during COVID-19, and over one quarter gained weight.



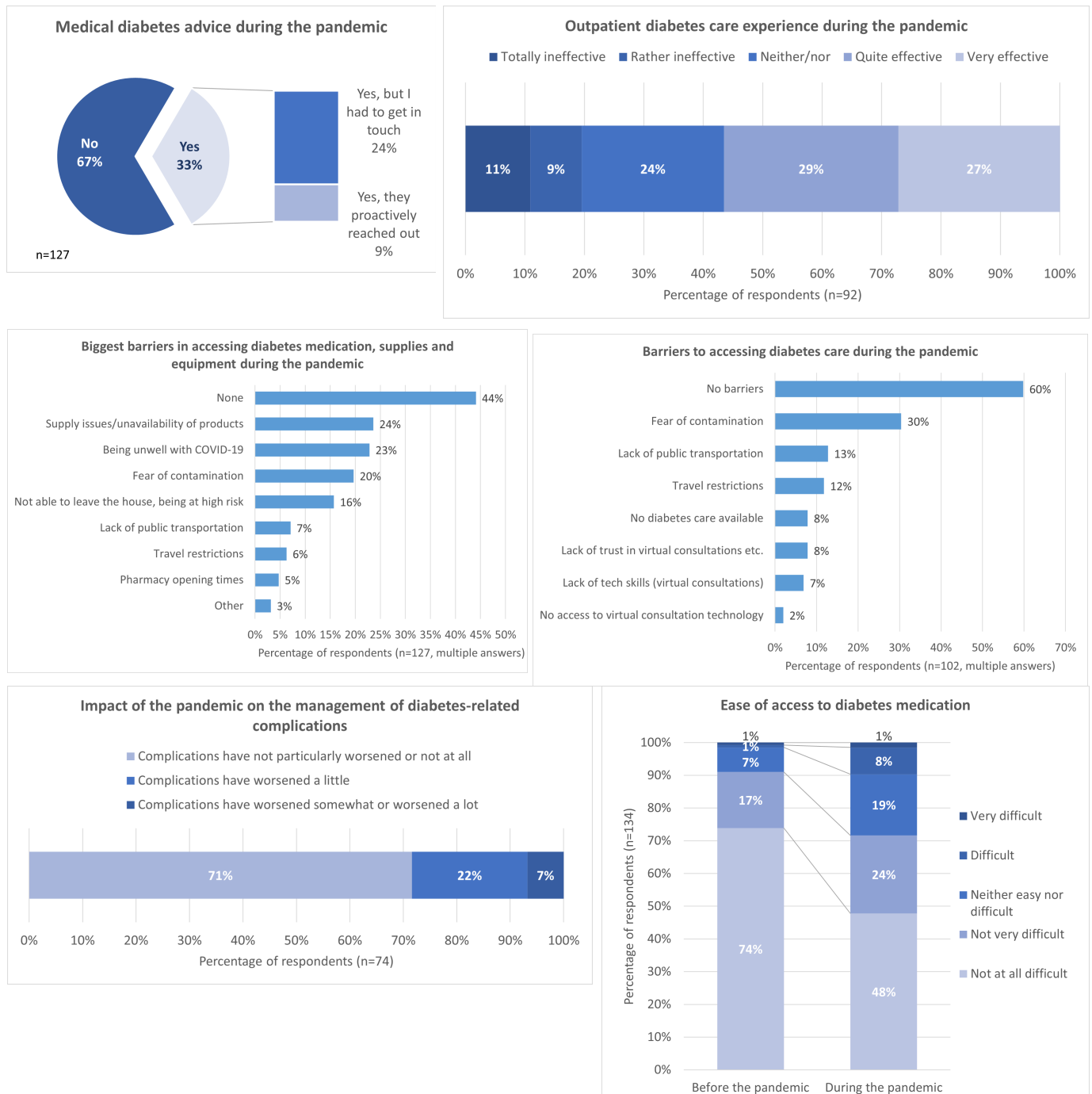
## Psychological Impact

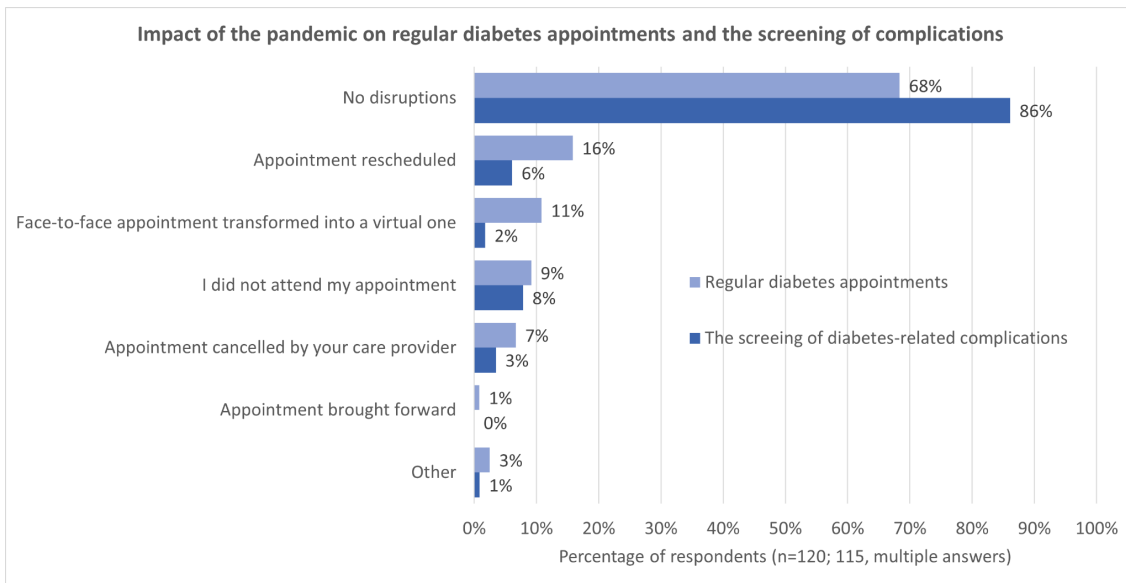
The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant psychological impact on PwD in Germany. About 40% of the respondents felt more or much more anxious during the pandemic and half experienced more episodes of low mood than usual. Over 60% were afraid of developing a serious form of COVID-19. Financial concerns and worries about deteriorating mental health were also reported. While few PwD experienced difficulties in accessing their medicines, supplies, and technologies, more than one in five were worried about possible shortages and about 30% stockpiled essentials.



## Access to Medicines, Supplies, Technologies, and Care

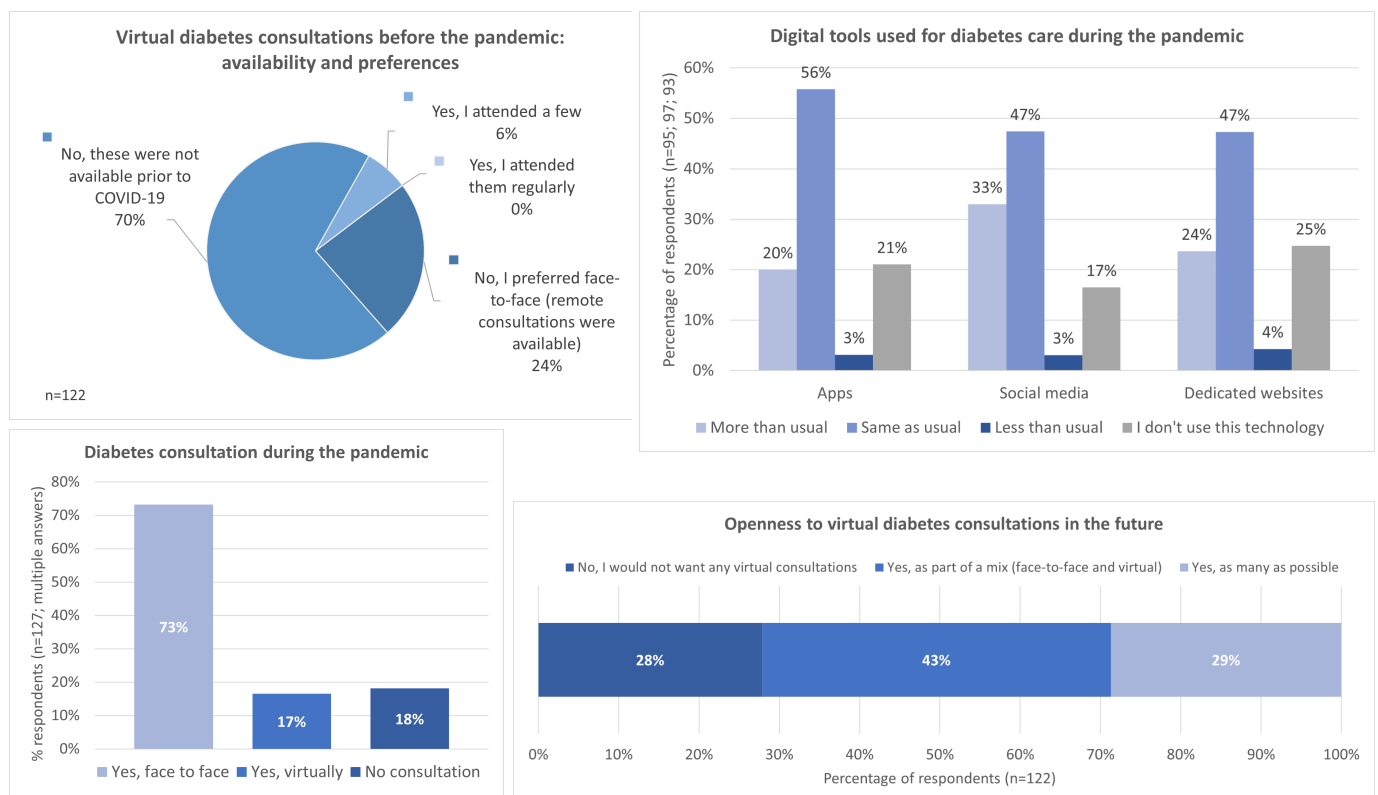
Just 9% of respondents experienced difficulties in accessing medicines. A similar proportion reported challenges in accessing diabetes supplies or equipment. Getting hold of doctors to get or renew prescriptions was a frequently recorded issue. There was limited disruption in access to care, with fear of COVID-19 contamination the most frequently cited barrier. A high (compared to other European countries) 60% of PwD did not encounter any obstacles. About one in six respondents reported that their appointment for regular diabetes care was rescheduled, while two thirds did not experience any disruptions.





## E-health

During the pandemic, few PwD attended virtual consultations in Germany, although this number was much higher than before COVID-19. Of those who did attend such consultations, the majority found them helpful and just 16% did not. Overall, most respondents were open to remote consultations, in many cases with a preference for a mix of face-to-face and remote appointments in the future. Perhaps driven by their perceived lack of information and guidance, usage of social media platforms increased significantly during the pandemic, as did usage of dedicated websites.



## Background

This country profile was developed as part of 'Living in COVID times', an online survey conducted by IDF Europe between August and October 2020. It collected answers from 3,480 people living with diabetes across 32 countries in Europe and aimed to understand how the COVID-19 crisis affected PwD's lives and their diabetes care. In Germany, 160 people responded to the survey. Some were parents or caregivers for PwD, but most of them lived with diabetes (85% with type 1 diabetes). Some 70% were women. A majority of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 60. The median time respondents had been living with diabetes was between 11 and 20 years, and the answers covered a broad spectrum and reflected a variety of situations.

The Europe-wide report "Living in COVID times" can be found [here](#).

If you wish to share a testimonial of your life with diabetes in Germany during the pandemic, write to [idf-europe@idf-europe.org](mailto:idf-europe@idf-europe.org). We look forward to hearing from you!



**International  
Diabetes Federation**  
Europe