

Living in COVID Times - IDF Europe COVID & Diabetes Survey

Experiences from People living with Diabetes



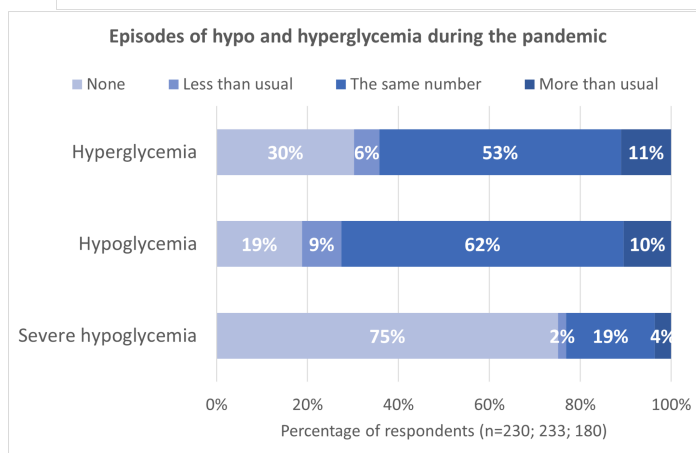
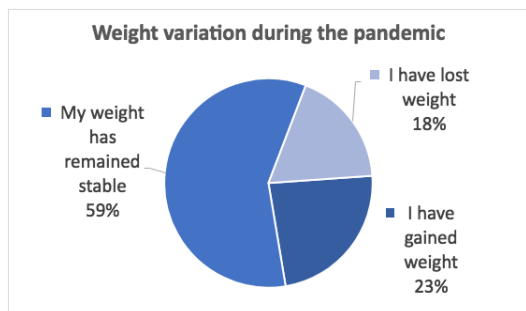
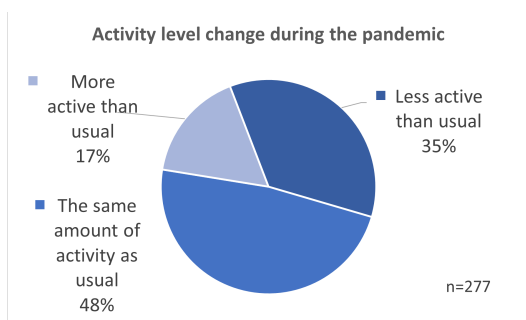
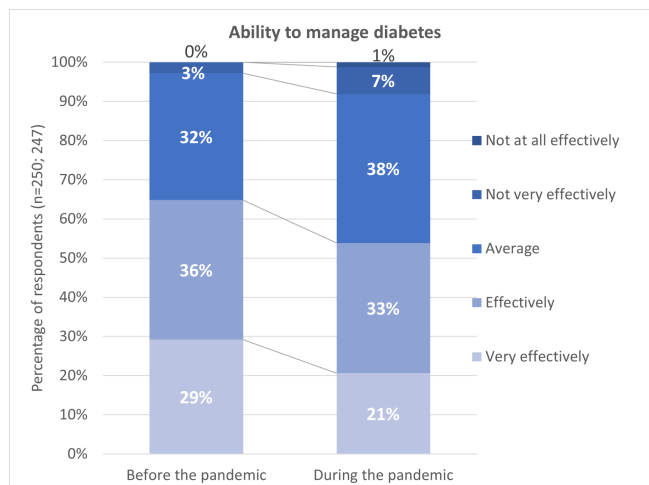
Sweden

Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic led to marginal disruption in access to care, medicines, supplies and technologies for most people living with diabetes (PwD) in Sweden. Less than 10% of respondents reported that their ability to manage their diabetes was ineffective or very ineffective during the pandemic, although this was up from just 3% before COVID-19 started. More than 50% of respondents rated their ability as effective or very effective, although this was down from more than 60% prior to the pandemic. Disruptions were related, primarily, to access to care, with accessing medicines and/or supplies rarely mentioned as a challenge. As in many countries, a significant issue for PwD was the lack of guidance provided to them; 63% of respondents did not receive any guidance from their healthcare team and 86% mentioned that more information would have helped them manage their diabetes better. COVID-19 had a significant psychological impact on PwD; more than one in three respondents were worried about shortages of medicines and supplies and 37% experienced more frequent episodes of low mood during the pandemic compared to before. The Swedish healthcare system reacted to the crisis with the deployment of virtual healthcare solutions. Just under half the respondents availed of these, but not all were convinced of their effectiveness, although this may partly reflect the technologies used (primarily telephone).

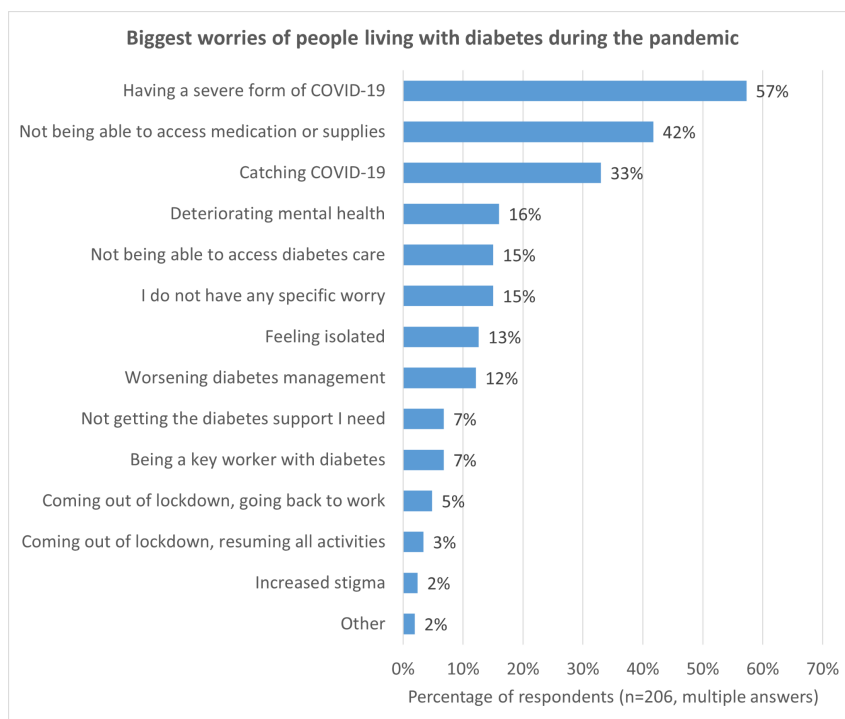
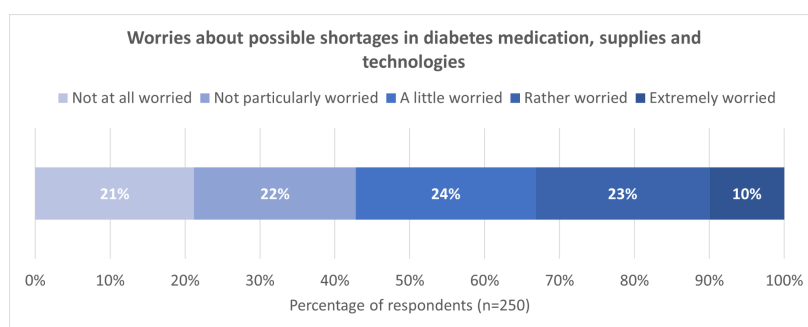
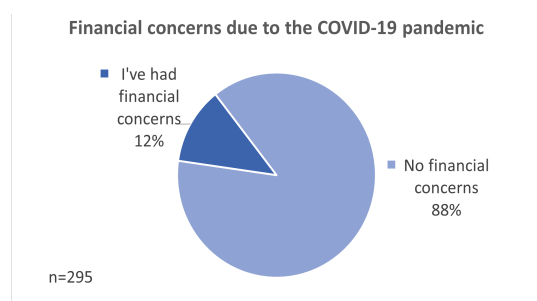
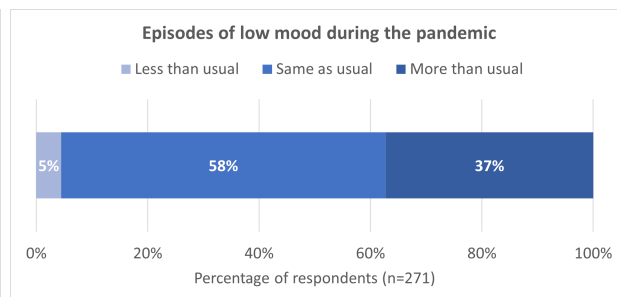
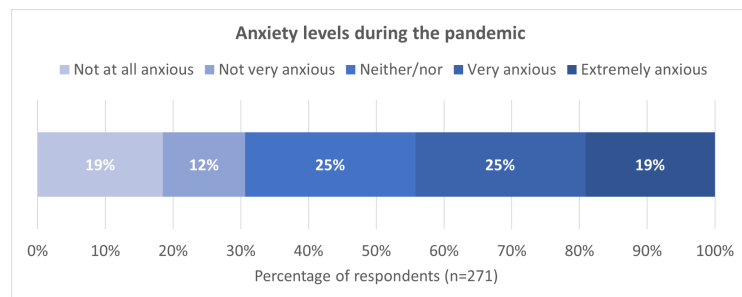
Diabetes Management

Just under one in ten respondents felt that their ability to manage their diabetes had worsened during the pandemic. About one fifth of respondents did record more variable blood glucose levels and 10% experienced a greater number of hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic events. Physical activity levels also declined during the COVID-19 pandemic and nearly a quarter of respondents reported gaining weight.



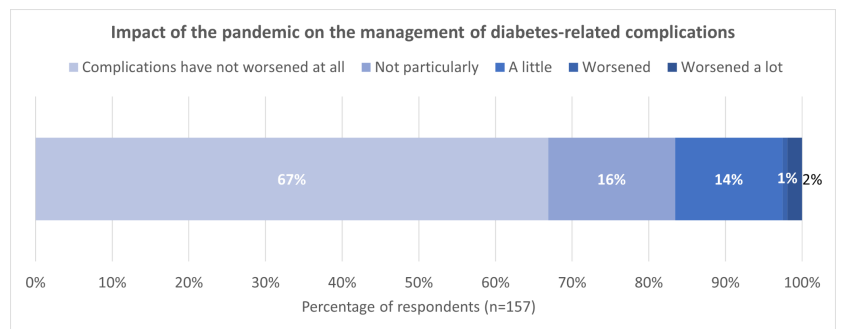
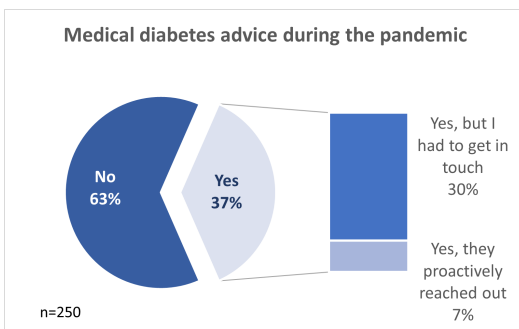
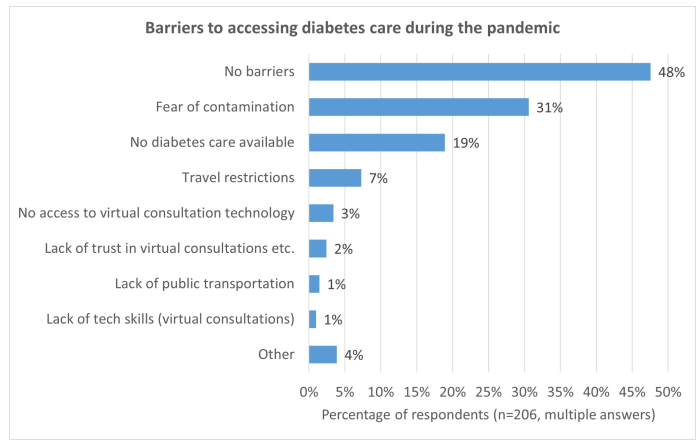
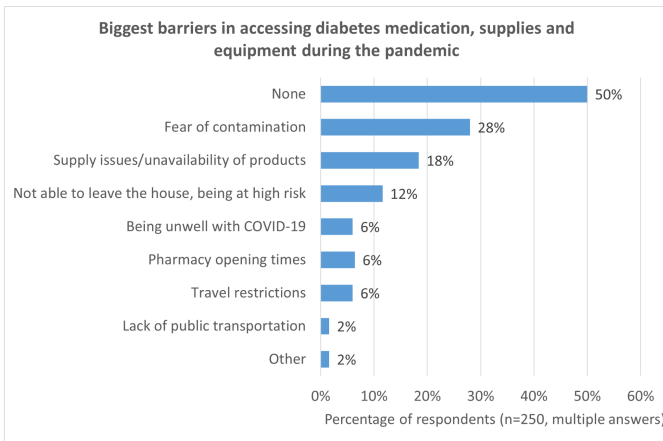
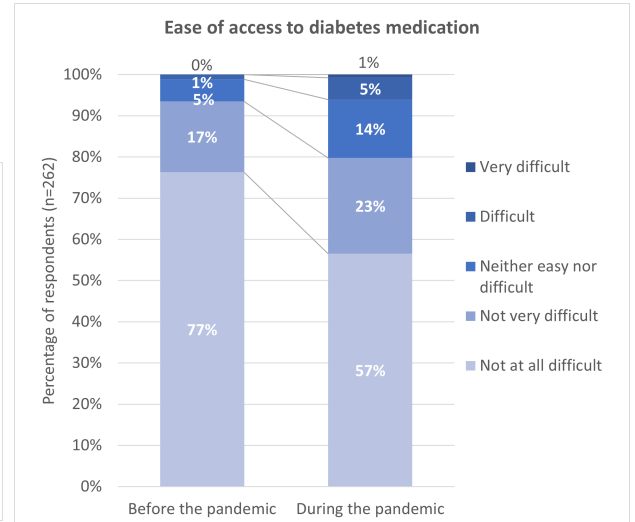
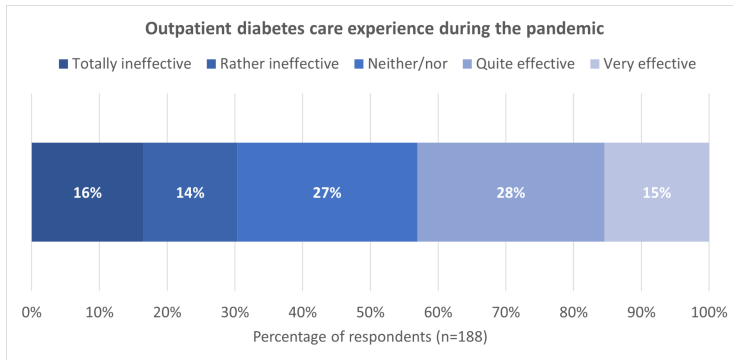
Psychological Impact

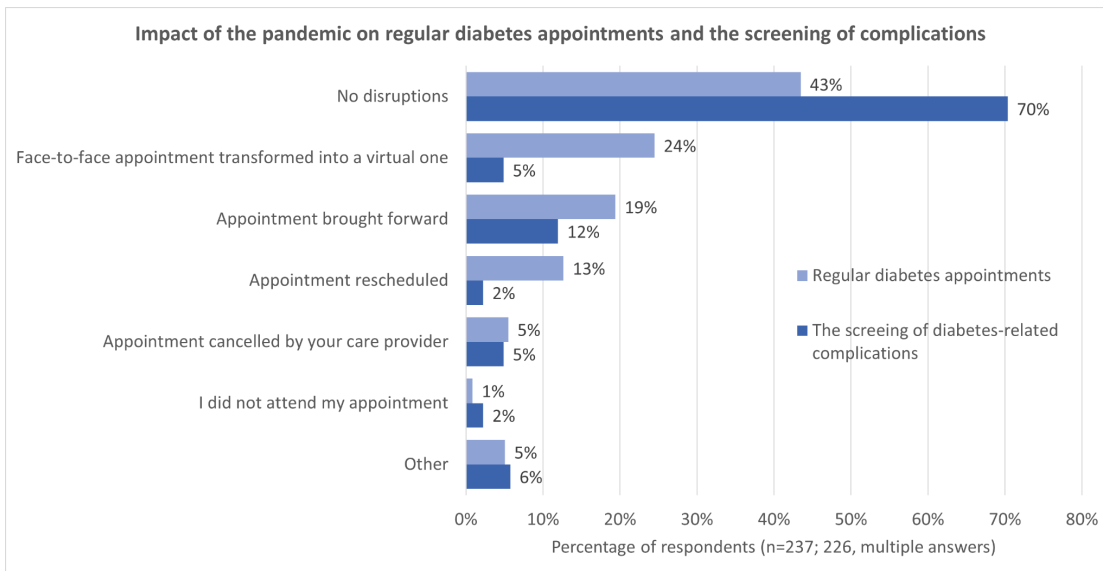
The psychological impact of COVID-19 was significant in Sweden. Anxiety levels were high for about 45% of respondents and about one third experienced more episodes of low mood than usual. Just under 60% were afraid of developing a serious form of the disease. Financial concerns and worries about medicine shortages were also reported.



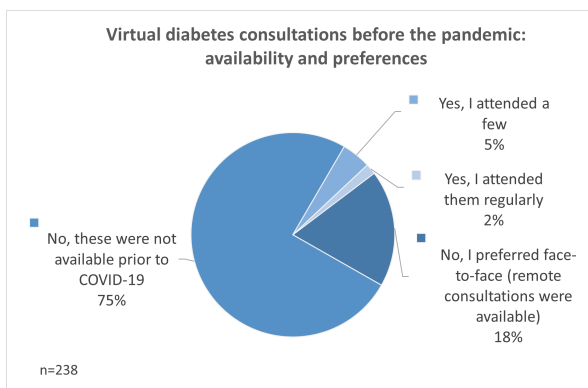
Access to Medicines, Supplies, Technologies and Care

Just 6% of respondents experienced some difficulties in accessing medicines. A similar proportion recorded difficulties in accessing supplies. There was some limited disruption in accessing care. About 13% of respondents reported that their appointments for regular diabetes care were rescheduled, although 43% of respondents did not experience any disruptions.

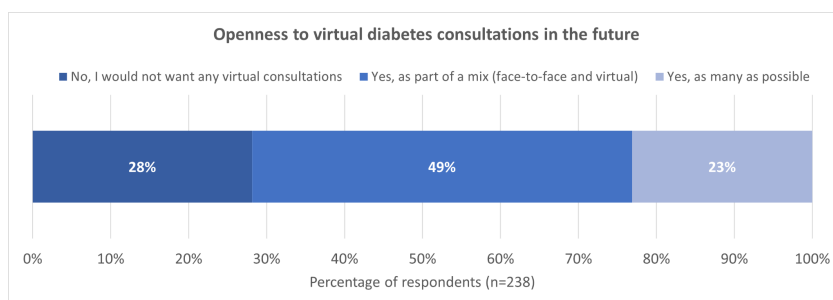
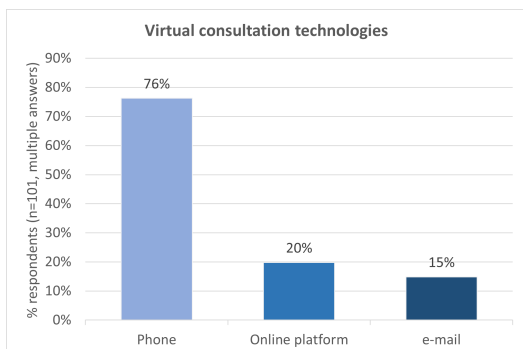
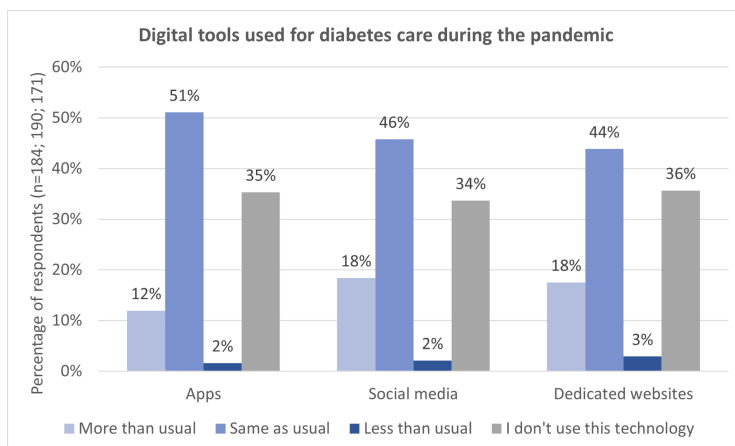
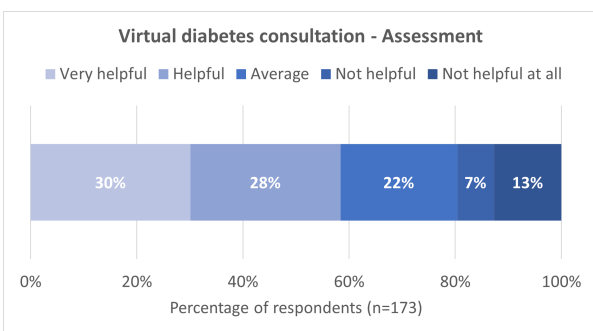




E-health



Although 75% of respondents reported that virtual consultations were not available prior to the pandemic, 40% were able to attend one during the crisis. Most virtual consultations were conducted over the phone, but online platforms and emails were also used. Such consultations seemed to work well for most, although not for all. More than a quarter of respondents indicated that they would not be interested in virtual consultations in the future.



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 Sweden, 308 people responded to the survey. Most of them lived with diabetes (three quarters with type 1 and one quarter with type 2 diabetes) and there was a majority of women (75%) represented. There was a balanced mix of younger, middle-aged and older adults, with most respondents between the ages of 21 and 70. 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 Sweden during the pandemic, write to idfeurope@idf-europe.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



**International
Diabetes Federation**
Europe