

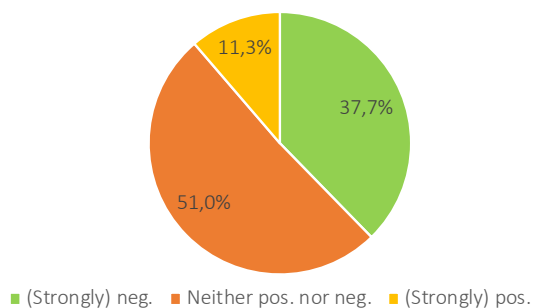
## Scientific report "People aged 65 and over at the heart of the COVID-19 crisis" – Executive summary (Fribourg, October 2020)

- During the period of April 17<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, the HETS-FR launched a survey in order to investigate the livelihoods of people aged 65 and older (hereon '65+') during the social-health crisis linked to COVID-19. 5,085 participants completed the survey (of which 2.5% were from outside the French-speaking part of Switzerland).
- Main characteristics of the participants:
  - aged 65 to 98 (average age = 72.55; standard deviation = 5.45)
  - 60.6% women
  - 59.2% were in a relationship and 34.9% live alone
  - 32.2% with primary education
  - 10.4% still professionally active
  - 15.2% reported having financial difficulties
  - 83.4% said they were in (very) good health

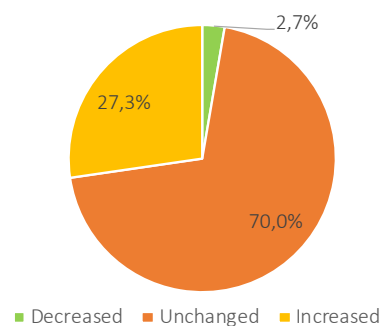
### Three main findings emerge from the descriptive analysis of the answers:

- **The crisis had a negative impact on the well-being and daily functioning of 65+**
  - More than 1 out of 3 indicated that the crisis had a negative to very negative impact, on their affectivity (see Figure 1);
  - More than 1 out of 4 testify to an increased feeling of loneliness since the beginning of the crisis (see Figure 2).

**Figure 1.** The impact of the crisis on one's own affectivity

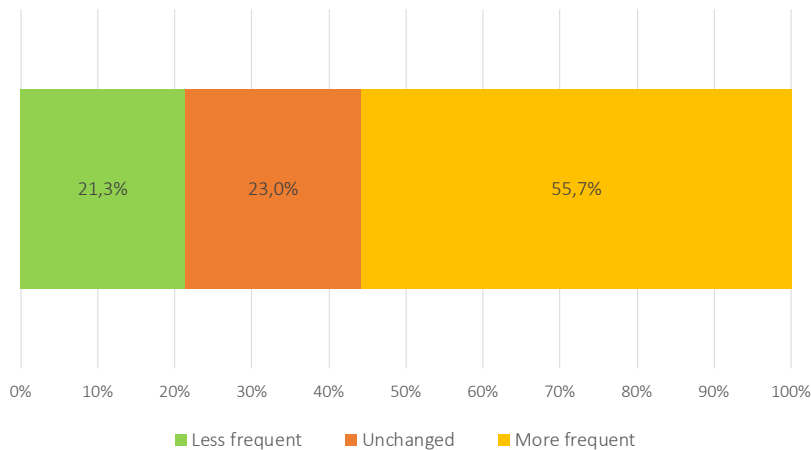


**Figure 2.** The evolution of the feeling of loneliness since the beginning of the crisis



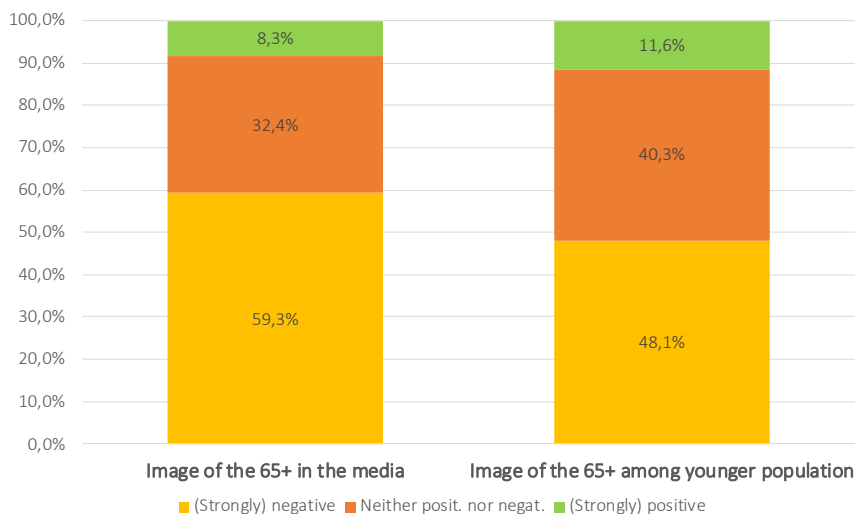
- **65+ as caregivers and active people, and not just as the aided**
  - 65+ as caregivers: 1 out of 5 participants provided support for others not living in the same household and 1 out of 5 participants had to take on new tasks at home previously carried out by someone outside of the household;
  - 65+ as active participants (I): The crisis increased contact with family and friends for more than 1 out of 2 participants but decreased for more than 1 out of 4 participants (see Figure 3);
  - 65+ as active participants (II): 2 out of 5 participants have discovered new ways to stay in contact (virtual or physical) with their loved ones;
  - 65+ as the aided: Help was required for groceries (55%), to go to a pharmacy (26%), to obtain information on COVID-19 (18%). This support was primarily provided by their children (40%), partners (25%) and neighbors (20%).

**Figure 3.** Evolution of the frequency of contact with family and friends during the crisis



- **The crisis revealed a negative perception with respect to the 65+ and fueled intergenerational tensions**
  - 3 out of 5 believe that the media conveyed a negative to very negative image of the 65+ during the crisis (see Figure 4);
  - Almost 1 out of 2 believe that the views of the rest of the younger population towards the 65+ evolved in a negative to very negative way (see Figure 4);
  - 1 out of 4 state that they have been victim to unfair treatment due to their age;
  - 3 out of 4 believe that the opinions of the 65+ were barely heard or completely dismissed by the authorities during the health crisis.

**Figure 4.** The perception of the image of the 65+ in the media and among the rest of the younger population during the crisis



Finally, more in-depth analyses have shown that the crisis:

- Did **not** have the **same** impact on all 65+;
- The **eldest** are **not** systematically the most affected;
- Seems to have **subsequently weakened** already risky or precarious situations.

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