

Press release

Launch of scientific research

SWISS100, the first study of centenarians in Switzerland

Lausanne, 27 May 2021 - **One in four women and one in six men born in 2019 will reach the age of 100 in Switzerland. In view of this important demographic development, it is necessary to know more about the living conditions of centenarians. The SWISS100 research project aims to study this population at the national level until 2024. The purpose is to analyse the characteristics, living conditions, resources and needs of a population about which little is known, but whose numbers are increasing every year. Managed by the LIVES Centre at the University of Lausanne, SWISS100 is the result of a collaboration between six Swiss university institutes, including the University of Zurich's Centre for Healthy Ageing (UFSP Dynamik Gesunden Alterns), the University of Geneva and the University of Applied Sciences of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI). It is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).**

Switzerland is one of the countries in the world with the highest number of centenarians in relation to its population. As of 31 March 2021, there were 1813 centenarians, of whom 516 lived in French-speaking Switzerland, 1163 in German-speaking Switzerland and 134 in Italian-speaking Switzerland. This population is set to grow. Indeed, one in four women and one in six men born in 2019 will reach the age of 100 in Switzerland. Knowledge about people who have passed the century mark is still extremely limited. The SWISS100 study aims to fill this gap. It is managed by the Swiss Centre of Competence in Life Course and Vulnerability Research (LIVES Centre) at the University of Lausanne with the collaboration of the University of Zurich, the University of Geneva and the SUPSI in Ticino.

Understanding the resilience of centenarians through an interdisciplinary study

The main objective is to better understand the living conditions, resources and needs of centenarians living in Switzerland: what is their health status, how do they organise their daily life, what support can they count on, what is their level of well-being, etc. Particular attention is paid to the vulnerability of centenarians, in its different facets (physical, cognitive, psychological, psychiatric, social and economic), and to their resilience, i.e. their capacity to face the challenges of old age. With this in mind, the research team is made of experts from a number of disciplines, who can grasp the full richness of these life courses.

The study consists of interviewing 240 randomly selected centenarians as well as one of their relatives or a reference person in a personal interview whenever possible in the French-speaking part of Switzerland (Geneva and Vaud), in the German-speaking part (Basel-City, Bern and Zurich) and in Ticino. This includes people living at home and those living in homes for the elderly. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the start of SWISS100 has been postponed and the face-to-face interviews can only take place once the health emergency has passed. In the meantime, an exploratory study is being carried out by means of short telephone interviews throughout Switzerland.

In the next few weeks, the first people will be invited to take part in the telephone survey on the basis of a list provided by the Federal Statistical Office. The interview, which will last between 15 and 30 minutes, will focus on aspects of the lives of centenarians such as health, well-being and social relationships, as well as their experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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SWISS100 is an interdisciplinary project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and managed by LIVES, the Swiss Centre of Competence in Life Course and Vulnerability Research. This study, which will run until 2024, is the first to focus on centenarians living in all linguistic regions of our country. The project is led by Prof. Daniela S. Jopp (University of Lausanne) and includes a research team from the universities of Geneva and Zurich, SUPSI (HES Ticino) as well as the CHUV and the HUG.

SWISS100 website: <https://wp.unil.ch/swiss100/>