

# Early professional careers of nurses in Switzerland

Results from a longitudinal study after career start 2011/12

Presentation for SCOHPICA conference  
2023-11-23

**René Schaffert<sup>1</sup>**

**Research Team: Dominik Robin<sup>1</sup>, Esther Helfenstein<sup>1</sup>, Andreas Bänziger<sup>2</sup>**

1) Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Institute for Health Sciences

2) Bänziger SozWiss & docyard GmbH, Zurich





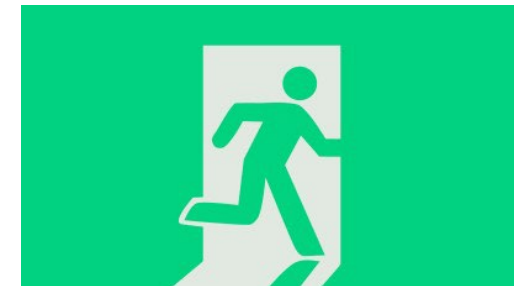
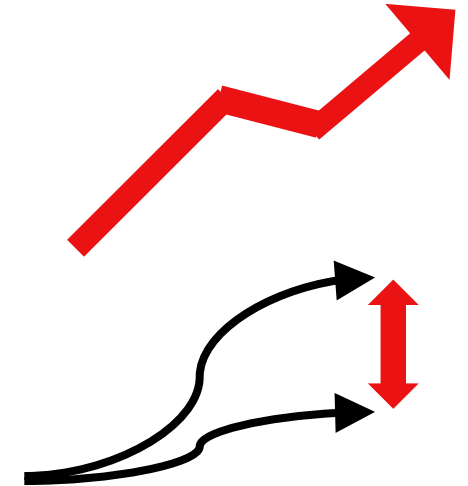
# Background

## Nursing shortage in Switzerland

Zürich University  
of Applied Sciences



- **More nurses needed** (expected rise of 29 % between 2019 to 2035) (Merçay, Grünig & Dolder, 2021)
- **Only 2/3 of demand is covered** by nurses trained in Switzerland (Merçay, Grünig & Dolder, 2021)
- **Higher exit rate** for nurses compared to other health professions  
(nurses 43 %; medical doctors with 31 %)  
(Lobsiger & Liechti, 2021)



Merçay, C., Grünig, A., & Dolder, P. (2021). Gesundheitspersonal in der Schweiz – Nationaler Versorgungsbericht 2021. Bestand, Bedarf, Angebot und Massnahmen zur Personalsicherung (Obsan Bericht 03/2021). Neuchâtel: Schweizerisches Gesundheitsobservatorium.

Lobsiger, M., & Liechti, D. (2021). Berufsaustritte und Bestand von Gesundheitspersonal in der Schweiz. Eine Analyse auf Basis der Strukturerhebungen 2016–2018 (Obsan Bericht 01/2021). Neuchâtel: Schweizerisches Gesundheitsobservatorium.



# Aims and Method

- Professional careers of tertiary level nurses in Switzerland after graduation?
  - Reasons for leaving profession?
  - Expectations to professional future?
- 
- **Longitudinal study**
  - **1 cohort of nurses graduating 2011/12**
  - **3 waves (end of studies, 1 year, 6 years)**
  - **Online questionnaires (instruments in collaboration with study to health care assistants by SFUVET)**
  - **Mainly descriptive analysis**

The screenshot shows the zhaw website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the zhaw logo and links for Medien, Hochschulbibliothek, Jobs und Karriere, and language options (DE, EN, FR, IT). Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for Hochschule and Gesundheit. The main content area features the title 'Berufskarrieren Pflege: Längsschnittstudie nach dem Berufseinstieg' and a subtitle 'Welche beruflichen Wege streben Absolvierende im Pflegebereich an und welche Karrieren verfolgen sie nach dem Berufseinstieg?'. There are four tabs: Ausgangslage, Zielsetzung, Ergebnisse, and Projektorganisation. The 'Ausgangslage' tab is selected, showing a photograph of three healthcare professionals (two women and one man) looking at a laptop. To the right of the photo is a text block describing the projected shortage of healthcare personnel and the need for measures to address it. Below the photo is a link to 'Projektbeschreibung (PDF 207,4 KB)'. At the bottom of the page, the word 'Ausgangslage' is displayed.





## Data

**Graduates  
2011 / 2012**

CHE G 940 CHE I 95 CHE F 0
BSc D 93 BSc I 40 BSc F 469

**Wave 1  
End of studies  
2011 / 2012**

CHE G 718 CHE I 31
BSc D 72 BSc I 32 BSc F 276

**Wave 2  
1 year after  
graduation  
2012 / 2013**

CHE G 407 CHE I 14
BSc D 56 BSc I 13 BSc F 129

**Wave 3  
6 years after  
graduation  
2017/2018**

CHE D 396 CHE I 22
BSc D 49 BSc I 14 BSc F 128

**100 % ~1640**

**69 % ~1120**

**38 % ~620**

**37 % ~620**

<sup>1</sup> CHE – College of Higher Education (Höhere Fachschule, École supérieure)



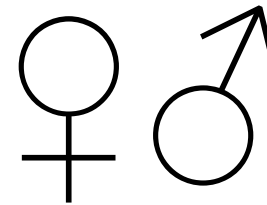
# Results Participants

Zürich University  
of Applied Sciences



## Socio-demographic variables:

- 93 % female
- 4 % with children during studies
- 29 % having children 6 years after graduation



## Region and degrees

- French speaking:  $\frac{1}{1}$  BSc (21 % of participants)
- German speaking:  $\frac{1}{10}$  BSc (8 % of part.)  $\frac{9}{10}$  CHE (65 % of part.)
- Italian speaking:  $\frac{4}{10}$  BSc (2 % of part.)  $\frac{6}{10}$  CHE (4 % of part.)



<sup>1</sup> CHE – College of Higher Education (Höhere Fachschule, École supérieure)



## Results: Situation six years after graduation

General situation 6 years after graduation (n=609)	Valid percent
Employed	73 %
Employed and in (further) education	22 %
Studies or further education but no employment	1 %
Neither employment nor studies	4 %

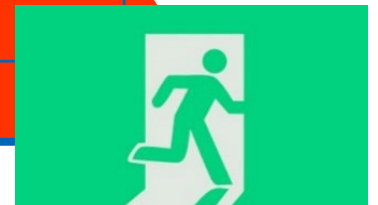


## Results:

### Working situation six years after graduation



Working situation 6 years after graduation (n=609)	%
<b>Nursing</b> without special tasks or functions	38 %
Nursing with <b>additional responsibilities</b>	18 %
<b>Nursing Experts</b> (Anesthesia, emergency, intensive care, or other nursing experts)	16 %
<b>Professional trainer or teacher</b>	9 %
<b>Management</b>	5 %
Other, but nursing studies required	4 %
<b>No employment*</b>	5 %
<b>Working outside of nursing</b>	5 %
* Mainly family break (4% ) or full time studies (1 %)	







## Results: Part-time work six year after graduation

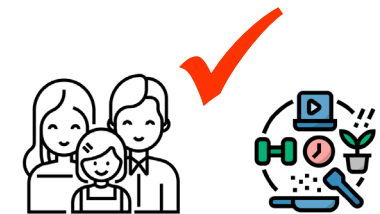
### Employment percentage (for those still working as nurses)

- mean value 83 %
- 40 % of nurses work part-time 80 % or less



### Reasons for working part-time (multiple answers)

- 48% more time for private life / family
- 42% care responsibilities; housework; family
- 30% full-time too physically or mentally demanding



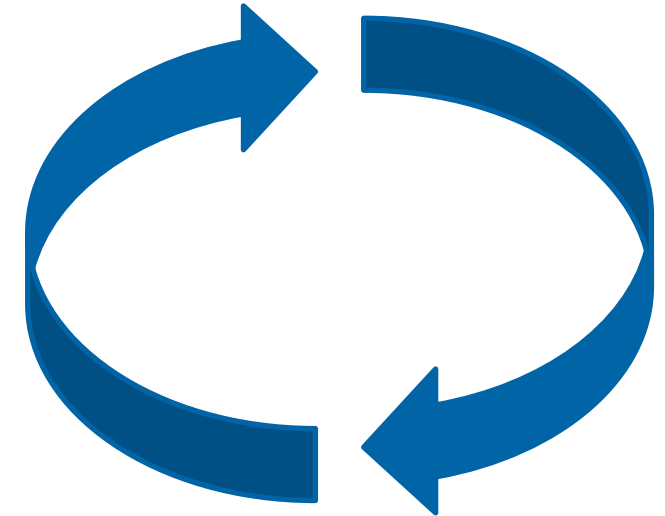


## Results: Change as the norm in the first years after graduation

Zürich University  
of Applied Sciences

zhaw

- **$\frac{3}{4}$  changed job between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year**
- **Ø 2.6 jobs in six years**
- **$\frac{1}{2}$  of jobs lasted less than 2 years**
- **28 % of the jobs lasted less than 1 year**
- **72 % attend or finished further or continuing education**





# Results: Transitions between fields

Analysis in extended dataset with health care assistants (conducted by SFUVET)

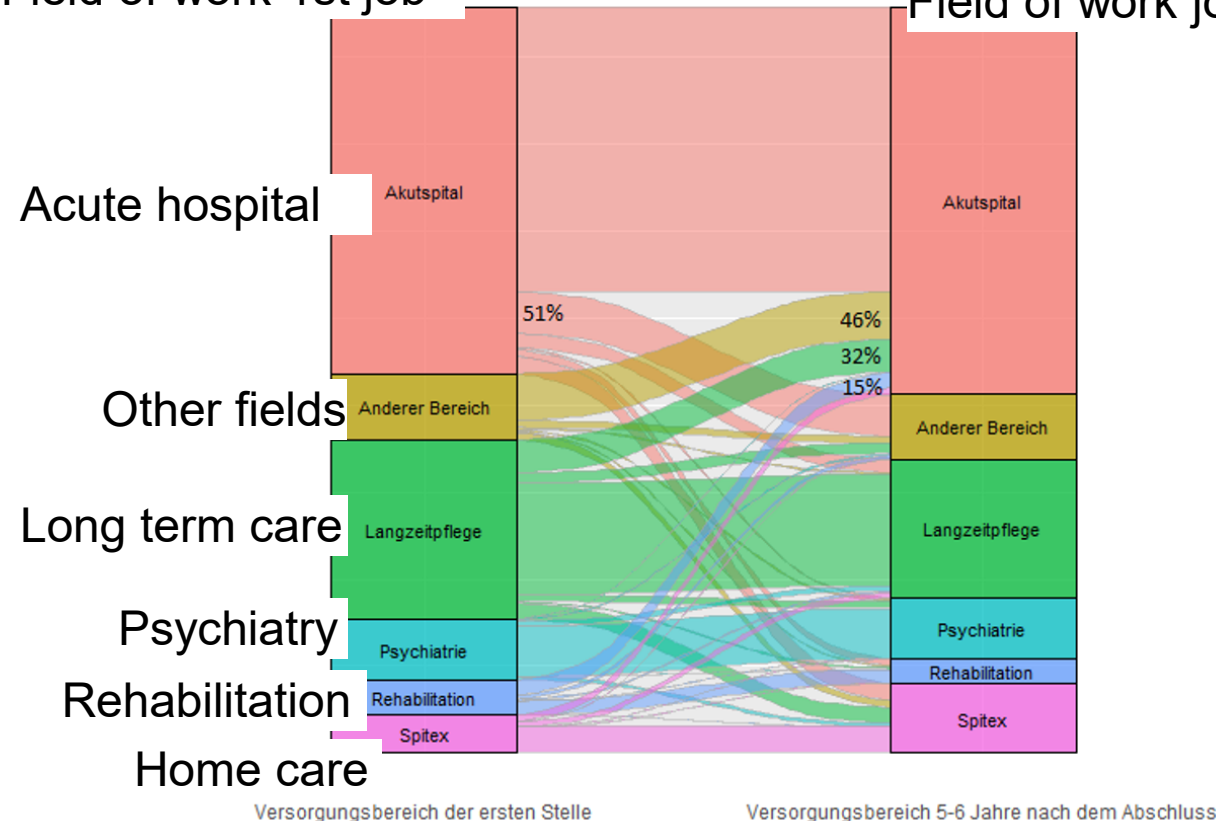
Zürich University  
of Applied Sciences



Erkenntnisse aus einem kombinierten Datensatz zu FaGe- und diplomierten Pflegenden  
I. Trede, M. Gröning, M. Hänni (EHB Schweizerisches Observatorium für Berufsbildung)

ZHAW-Departement-Gesundheit

Field of work 1st job      Field of work job 5-6 years after graduation



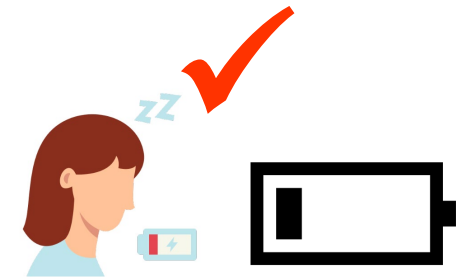
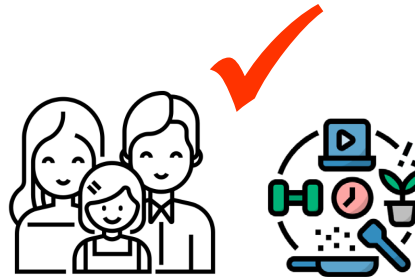
Datset with healthcare assistants and nurses 1 year and 5-6 year after graduation:

- long term care loses persons
- main transitions from long term care and from other fields to acute hospitals

Abbildung 11: Mobilität nach Einstiegs- und Zielbereich (Grafik: EHB / n=428)  
Bemerkung: Prozente auf der linken Seite beziehen sich auf Ausgänge aus dem Bereich, Prozentangaben auf der rechten Seite auf Einstiege in den Bereich. Lesebeispiel: 32% der Zugänge in den Akutbereich kommen aus der Langzeitpflege.



## Results: Reasons for already leaving nursing (multiresponse) N=26



**New job has / is ...**

**Percent of  
Cases**

Better working hours

62 %

Better conditions for reconciliation of job and family

42 %

Mentally less strainful

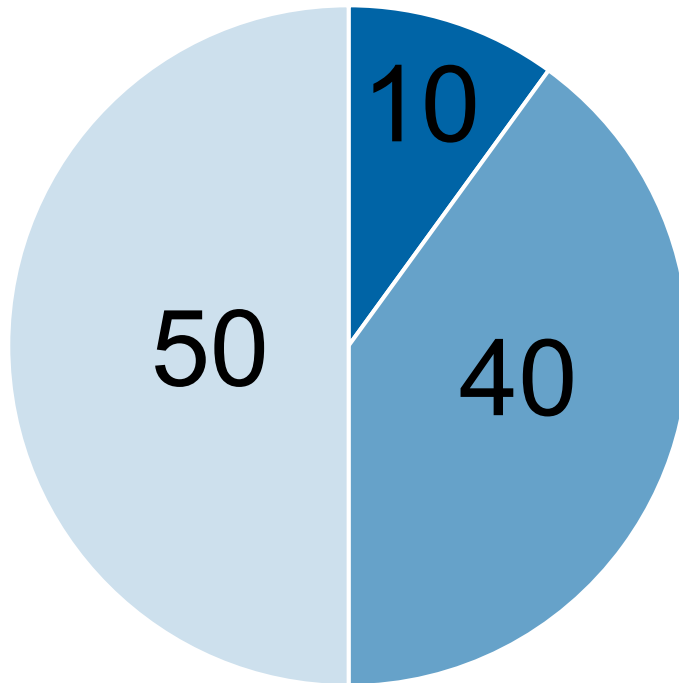
31 %

Physically less strainful

27 %



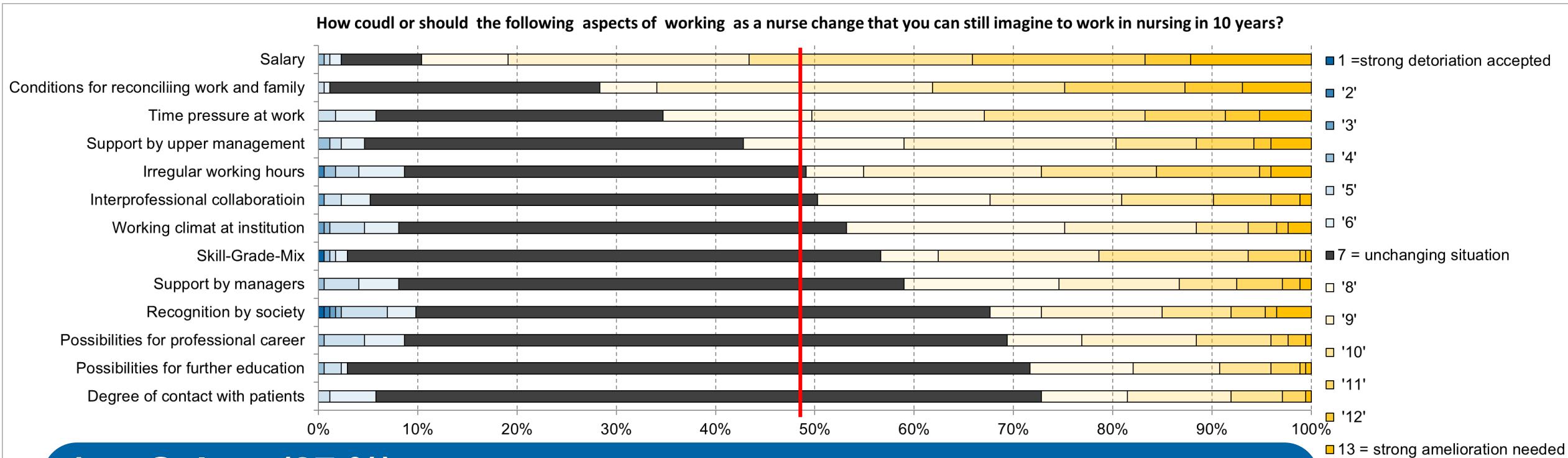
## Results: Intention to stay (n=547)



- No, I have already left the profession or am considering it due to other interests.
- Yes, I can imagine staying under the existing conditions.
- Yes, but the current situation in nursing must change for this to happen.



# Results: Expected changes in situation to stay in nursing in upcoming 10 years



1. Salary (87 %)
2. Conditions reconciliation work and family (72 %)
3. Less time pressure at work (62 %)
4. Better support by management (57 %)

(n=221; due to an error in a filter only those who indicated that they would stay in the profession even when nothing changes got this question)



# Results: Suggestions for improving conditions for reconciliation work and family

(Question was asked to respondents indicating that amelioration is expected)

Categories derived from short text answers (n=129)	Proportion of responses
Offer low-percentage part-time models	41 %
More regularity in working days and work planning	40 %
Flexibility and consideration of wishes	33 %
Suitable care services (e.g. costs, compatibility with shift work)	23 %



# Results: Suggestions for improving situation regarding working hours

(Question was asked to respondents indication that amelioration is expected)

Categories derived from short text answers (n=84)	Proportion of responses
Optimization of shift planning	63 %
More regularity in shifts and working days	58 %
Improvement in working conditions and terms of employment	32 %
Fixed shift work, reduction in shifts and weekend work	10 %





# Results: Sugestions for improvement in management

(Question was asked when respondants indication that amelioration is expected)

Categories derived from short text answers (n=96)	Proportion of responses
More visibility and communication	39 %
Positioning regarding the conflict between economic efficiency vs. quality of care	38 %
Involvement of employees	27 %
More recognition and appreciation	21 %



# Results: Mismatch between reality and expectations

1. Time private life
2. Reconciliation work and family

3. Meaningfulness

4. ...

5. Learn new things

6. Good salary

7. ...

8. Job opportunities

9. ...

10. ...

11. ...

12. ...

1. Job opportunities
2. Learn new things
3. Meaningfulness

4. ...

5. ...

6. ...

7. ...

8. ...

9. ...

10. Reconciliation work family

11. Time private life

12. Good salary

Expectations



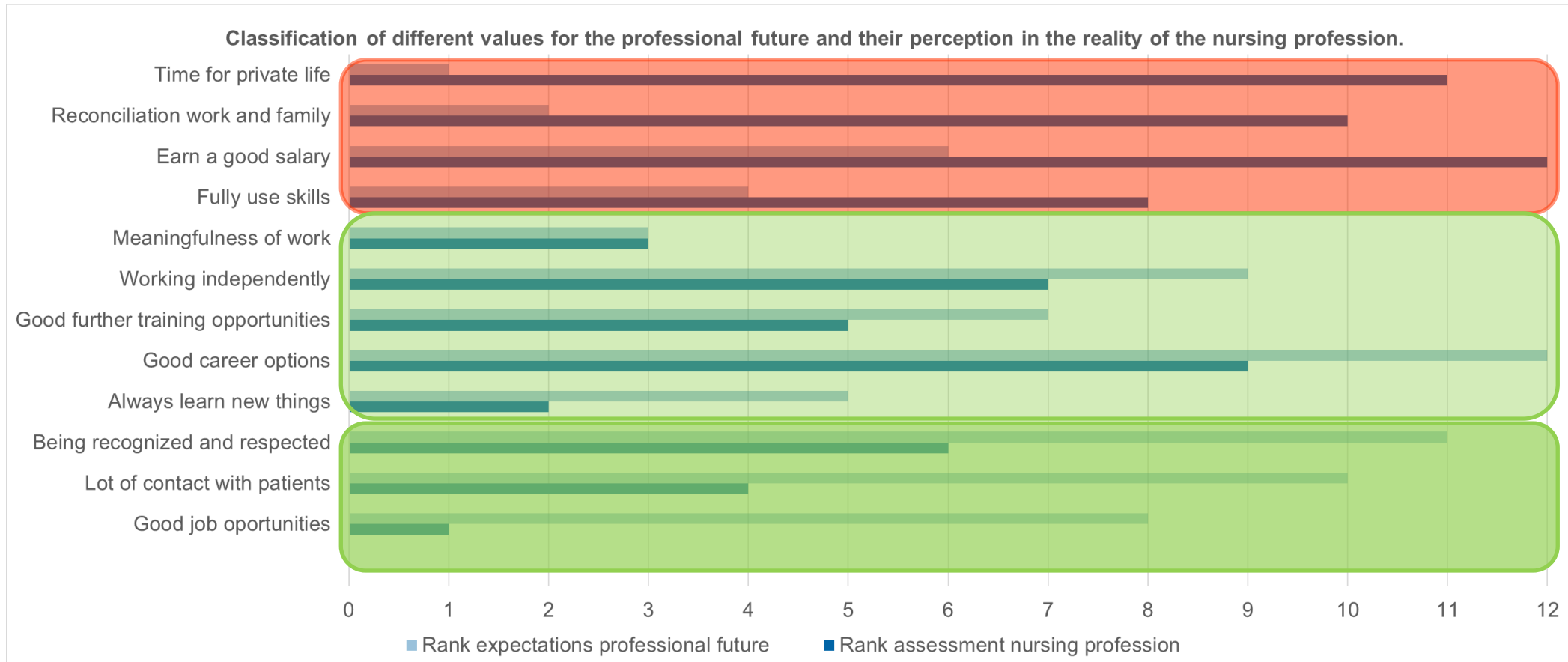
Reality





# Results: Mismatch between expectations and assessment nursing profession

(n = 585)





# Results: Correlations between mismatch in expectations and satisfaction or exit

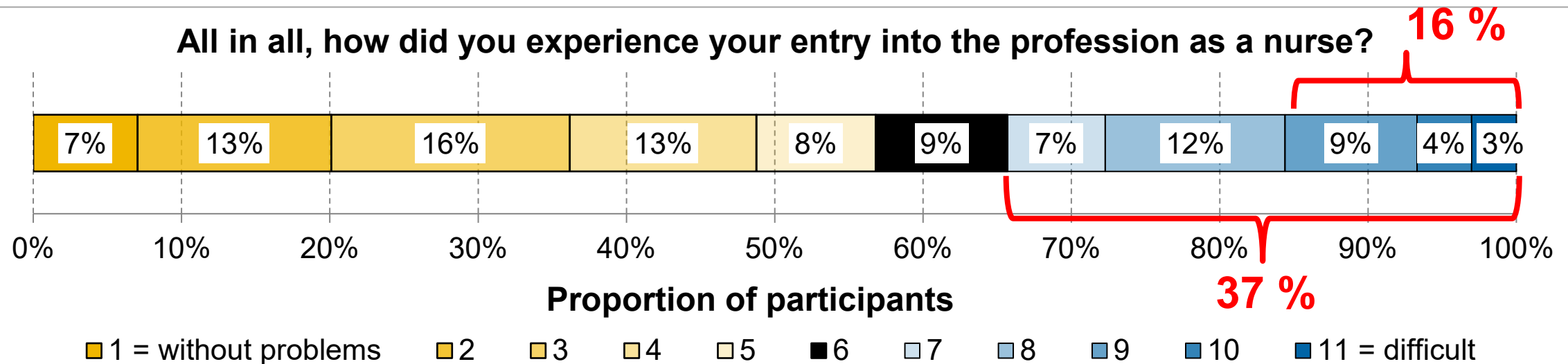
Zürich University  
of Applied Sciences



Discrepancies between expectations and reality	Satisfaction with professional situation (Spearman's rho)	Thoughts of leaving profession (Spearman's rho)
Reconciliation work and family	-.293**	.194**
Time for private life	-.275**	.223**
Meaningfulness of work	-.275**	.190**
Fully use skills	-.273**	.228**
....		
Earning a good salary	-.190**	.190**



## Results survey one year after graduation: Entry into profession



Categories derived from short text answers to challenges experienced entering professional life (n=595).

Proportion of  
respondents

Responsibility

37 %

Not enough practical expertise

30 %

To be on your own

22 %

Change of role between student at nurse

21 %



## Discussion

### Strengths

- Detailed information to first years of professional careers of one cohort of nurses.

### Limitations

- Narrow focus on situation until six years after graduation of one cohort graduation 2011/12 → other topics could be relevant in later career.
- Possible selection bias: Nurses that already left nursing may be underrepresented in the second and third wave.



## Discussion:

### Starting points for measures to increase retention and reduce exit from the profession

- high intention of caregivers to remain in the profession if the situation improves,
- **compatibility between work and private or family life**,
- the mostly **unfulfilled professional expectations** for the future,
- high **workload** and its impact on private life and health,
- **recognition** of care by management and through higher wages and
- **transitions** between fields of work and between studies and professional life





## Some conclusions How to increase retention?

### Support for reconciliation of work and family life

- One of two reasons for leaving nursing
- One of the two main requirement for change for staying
- Main reason for working part time



### Ideas suggested by participants

- ✓ Offer low-percentage part-time models
- ✓ More regularity in working days and work planning
- ✓ Flexibility and consideration of wishes
- ✓ Suitable care services (e.g. costs, compatibility with shift work)







## Some conclusions

### How to increase retention?

#### Improve working conditions

- Working hours as one of two main reasons for leaving
- Time pressure, mental and physical strain as important reasons for part-time work or leaving the profession

#### Ideas suggested by participants to working hours

- ✓ Optimization of shift planning
- ✓ More regularity in shifts and working days





## Some conclusions

### How to increase retention?

#### Improve recognition

- 87% expect improvement in salary for staying in the profession
- 57 % expect a better support by management

#### Ideas suggested by participants regarding management

- ✓ More visibility and communication
- ✓ Positioning regarding the conflict between economic efficiency vs. quality of care





# Good news from the field: Less shortage in hospitals in the city of Zurich after measures to improve retention

**zürich** Mein Profil Men


Stadt Region Gastro Zürich(s) Kurzmeldungen Meine Gemeinde

**So gelang es Zürich, den Pflegenotstand zu entschärfen**

Höhere Löhne und flexible Arbeitsmodelle: Das Stadtspital Zürich konnte die Vakanzen in der Pflege markant reduzieren.

**Massnahmen gegen Fachkräftemangel**

**Susanne Andenegg**  
Publiziert: 15.11.2023, 18:52



Die Bettenstation der Herzchirurgie ist eine der grössten im Triemli. Das ermöglicht relativ viel Flexibilität in der Dienstplanung.  
Foto: Jonathan Labusch

Die Zahlen aus dem Stadtspital Zürich sind beeindruckend: Innert eines Jahres ist die Fluktuation beim Pflegepersonal von 16 Prozent auf unter 10 Prozent gesunken. Die Kosten für Temporärpersonal sind um ein Drittel gesunken. Und die Zahl der unbesetzten Stellen an den Standorten Wald und Triemli konnte von 60 auf 15 reduziert werden.

Reduction of turnover rate from 16% to 10 % in one year ([Tagesanzeiger, 15.11.2023](https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/fachkraeftemangel-in-zuerich-so-gelang-es-dem-stadtspital-den-pflegenotstand-zu-entschaerfen-872697497218)) after introduction of a package of measures to reduce turnover and increase retention in the city of Zurich with elements as:

- ✓ More flexibility in work planing and working time models (involement in planing, models for low-percentage part-time-work)
- ✓ Higher salary (10% more for 70% of staff)
- ✓ Creation of a staff pool to reduce pressure
- ✓ Improvement in organisation focusing on skill grade mix
- ✓ Empowerment through further education and career planing ([Stadt Zürich – Stadtratsbeschluss, 08.11.2023](https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/stadtratsbeschluss/08.11.2023))



# *Thank you for your attention Questions?*

Zürich University  
of Applied Sciences



**Contact:**  
*[rene.schaffert@zhaw.ch](mailto:rene.schaffert@zhaw.ch)*

## **Sources of pictures, icons & symbols:**

- ZHAW Dep.G: students; nurses
- Katrin Simonet: team meeting
- Sonja Langford: clock (unsplash.com)
- Schedule: Laura Reen (CC BY 3.0)
- Kids: Gustavo Rezende at Pixabay
- Regions Switzerland: BFS
- Family: Chanut is Industries (CC BY 3.0)
- Hobby: Wichai.Wi (CC BY 3.0)

***Link to final report (in German with  
English and French Summary:***

***<https://doi.org/10.21256/zhaw-3132>***

Zürcher Hochschule  
für Angewandte Wissenschaften



## **Berufskarrieren Pflege**

Resultate einer Längsschnittstudie zum Berufseinstieg von  
diplomierten Pflegenden und  
Erkenntnisse aus einem kombinierten Datensatz zu diplomier-  
ten Pflegenden und Fachfrauen/Fachmännern Gesundheit

René Schaffert<sup>1</sup> (Hrsg.)

Unter Mitwirkung von  
Ines Trede<sup>2</sup>, Miriam Grønning<sup>2</sup>, Miriam Hänni<sup>2</sup>,  
Andreas Bänziger<sup>1</sup>, Esther Helfenstein<sup>1</sup>

In Kooperation mit  
Eidgenössische Hochschule für Berufsbildung EHB

Oktober 2021

doi: <https://doi.org/10.21256/zhaw-3132>

<sup>1</sup> ZHAW Zürcher Fachhochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften,  
Institut für Gesundheitswissenschaften

<sup>2</sup> EHB Eidgenössische Hochschule für Berufsbildung,  
Schweizerisches Observatorium für die Berufsbildung

**Forschungsstelle  
Gesundheits-  
wissenschaften**