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# European Health Crisis Driving Consumers Towards Self-Care – Stada Report

by David Ridley

European consumers are increasingly turning towards self-care options, research by Stada Arzneimittel shows. Especially in the areas of stress, sleep and mental health, they are seeking out alternatives to conventional medicine, such as dietary supplements, and support from new health technologies, like digital health apps.

The coronavirus pandemic has put an almost unbearable strain on Europe's health infrastructure.

Unable to meet their everyday medical needs, the region's consumers are increasingly turning towards self-care options, research by Stada Arzneimittel AG shows.

Especially in the areas of stress, sleep and mental health, they are seeking out alternatives to conventional medicine, such as dietary supplements, and support from new health technologies, like digital health apps, the latest Stada Health Report reveals.

## Rx Drugs Losing Their Sheen

Surveying around 30,000 Europeans across 15 countries, the Stada Health Report 2022 shows a decrease in satisfaction with healthcare systems from 78% of respondents to 64% in the last three years. Satisfaction is lowest in Eastern Europe, with Kazakhstan (25%), Romania (31%), Serbia (31%) and Poland (36%) all at the bottom of the list.

This loss of confidence in primary care is starting to impact perceptions of conventional medicine, including prescription drugs, Stada's research shows.

Just over two-thirds (65%) of respondents still trust conventional medicine, down three percentage points since 2021. However, Spain (78%), the UK (73%) and France (72%) "remain its

fiercest supporters,” Stada reports.

## **Europeans Burning Out**

While many trust pharmaceutical companies and pharmacists – the latter being “one of the most credible sources of health-related information,” according to Stada’s survey – an increasing proportion of consumers are looking elsewhere for advice about how to self-care.

Nowhere more so than in areas not well served by conventional medicine, such as stress, sleep and mental health. The proportion of people suffering from exhaustion reached an all-time high in 2022, Stada notes, with 59% of respondents experiencing, or being on the verge of experiencing, burnout.

Generally speaking, women and those aged between 25 and 34 are most susceptible to this condition, Stada points out.

## **Stress And Sleep Problems**

The number of people suffering from stress is also steadily rising. Over a third of Europeans now maintain that they have felt increasingly stressed since the beginning of the pandemic, compared to a quarter last year, Stada says. Adults in Italy, Portugal, Romania and Spain are most likely to report greater stress, its survey shows.

Many Europeans also sleep poorly, in addition to their stress problems. 35% of respondents report struggling to get a full night’s rest, Stada reveals. Poor quality of sleep is particularly a problem in France, Italy, Spain and the UK.

## **Supplements and Apps**

To cope with increased levels of stress, many Europeans are turning to nutritional supplements.

Eastern Europeans are most fond of using supplements to boost mood, with Romanians (41%), Czechs and Serbians (40% respectively) “their most dedicated advocates,” Stada notes. Europeans are also increasingly turning to digital health technologies, with sleep monitoring and mental well-being tracking among the most popular types of app, according to Stada’s survey.