

# Evaluating, Identifying and Reducing determinants for Mental Health Conditions in Youth (EARLY)

An international project to improve the mental health of young people

## Initial situation and objectives

EARLY is an international study in which 14 countries are participating. The aim of the study is to assess the burden of mental health conditions (MHC) in 15- to 24-year-olds and to identify associated protective and risk factors. Details of the project can be found on the international website: [ABOUT EARLY: EARLY \(early-project.eu\)](https://www.early-project.eu).

As part of EARLY, the ZHAW is conducting an **online survey of 15 to 24-year-olds in Switzerland**. The aim of the survey is to determine the frequency and distribution of mental health problems and the associated risk and protective factors. Data collection will start in summer 2025.

In addition, the ZHAW is also conducting an **online survey with experts** from the health, education and social sectors as well as from research, politics and legislation. The aim of this survey is to find out how experts from various fields view the mental health of young people in Switzerland and how they assess the existing laws, strategies and services on this topic.

The ZHAW is also involved in **systematic reviews** that are produced in collaboration with international researchers. One of the studies examines international literature to identify which instruments are used to assess mental health problems in 15- to 24-year-olds. A second paper summarizes the

literature on the links between risk and protective factors and mental health problems in adolescents and young adults.

## Methods and procedure

For the **online survey of 15- to 24-year-olds**, adolescents and young adults are recruited in selected urban and rural regions as well as nationwide via various channels such as social media, youth organizations and schools. The online survey takes around 45 minutes to complete and includes questions on psychological stress and associated risk and protective factors. The data collected in Switzerland is analyzed separately as well as together with the data from other countries.

For the **online survey with experts**, selected individuals whose work focuses on adolescents and young adults and/or mental health are contacted. Care is taken to ensure that the various sectors - health, education and social services as well as research, policy and legislation - are adequately represented. The results are analyzed both for Switzerland and for all countries involved in the EARLY project.

## Results

The main results of the study are expected to be published on this website from fall 2026.

**Project management**

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