



Looking for a needle in a haystack?
Digitalisation, job quality
and social dialogue in Poland

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The impact of digitalisation on job quality and social dialogue in the public services

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- **To assess the impact of digitalisation on job quality in public services**
- **To explore the presence of the digitalisation issue in the social dialogue**
- **To enrich the debate about the digitalisation issue among social partners**

Identifying the changes affecting the nature, content and implementation processes of the tasks involved in the jobs of public service workers, as well as the outcomes for the workers themselves

Exploring how the challenges and opportunities for job quality generated by the digitalisation of work in public services are included and addressed in the dynamics and practices of social dialogue at national and sectoral levels

To enrich the debate about this topic among social partners and to provide advice, through hands-on policy recommendations, to trade unions and decision-makers, on suitable ways to address the digital transformation of work

SECTORS UNDER SCRUTINY



Electricity



Healthcare



Public administration

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Desk research

Strategic documents, legal acts, literature, statistical records

Online survey

Sample size: **542**

public administration: 447

healthcare: 47

electricity sector: 32

Individual interviews

Sample size: **13**

Trade union leaders and experts

Focus groups

Three online meetings

Sample size: **17**

DIGITALISATION OF THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR



One of the most digitalised sectors in Poland, digitalisation since the 1990s

Systems for management and monitoring of production processes

Systems for storing data on transmission network elements, identification of failure and anomalies in the distribution system

Operational logbooks, programmes for recording power supply interruptions, applications allowing for contact with consumers coupled with a call centre service

Electricians using tablets linked to the network management system to receive orders, instructions and report on repairs made

Smart grid solutions for fully digital communication with clients and remote management of electricians servicing the grid

Constant modernisation resulting in incompatibility between old and new systems

DIGITALISATION OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



Ongoing Programme for the Integrated Informatisation of the State – goal: a single public administration portal, giving access to information on the functioning of the entire administration and to all e-services offered by the public administration in the country

Already: several government portals and platforms e.g.:

obywatel.gov.pl portal

Electronic Platform of the Public Administration Services (ePUAP)

Electronic Services Platform of the Social Insurance Institution (PUE ZUS)

The central and local public administration and government agencies use specific internal electronic tools to process administrative matters.

In government agencies - e.g. the Financial Supervision Authority (KNF), State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (PFRON - the highest level of digitisation - numerous systems, such as electronic document workflow (SZD), personnel programme (OCP system)

DIGITALISATION OF THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR



e-health tools enabling remote communication and handling certain matters with a doctor or medical entity, e.g:

- The Patient Online Account (IKP), accessible through a trusted profile

- Digital sick-leave note (e-sick note, e-zwolnienie)

- Digital referral (e-referral, e-skierowanie)

- Digital prescription (e-prescription, e-recepta)

Introduction of electronic medical documentation systems in hospitals

- Mandatory use of electronic medical records (EDM) from 2022

Digital tools for diagnosis, measurement of patient vital signs and therapy in hospitals (intensive care units leading the way) and integrated hospital IT systems along with universal tools for personnel management.

Digitisation of electroradiology, laboratory diagnostics

IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR



Digitalisation generally viewed positively by most interviewees as an instrument for modernising energy production and distribution, and even as a prerequisite for functioning in the modern world

Positive impact on (survey):

- + public service in general
- + society in general
- + the quality of the service to users
- + overall quality of jobs
- + working conditions
- + personal well-being at work and improved job quality

Phase of introducing new digital tools → increased workload (in terms of working hours, work intensity)

Phase of regular operation → the predominance of advantages reported

IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR



↑ Increased workers' autonomy

flexibility and independence in carrying out tasks

↑ Greater workplace safety, fewer accidents and less exposure of workers to harmful conditions and substances

↑ Reduced work intensity thanks to the ordering of procedures, routinisation, introduction of greater transparency and accessibility for employees

↑ Reduced stress levels thanks to better access to information about networks and failures and possibility to manage work more flexibly

↓ Exception: Increased stress sometimes during the phase of implementation of new tools

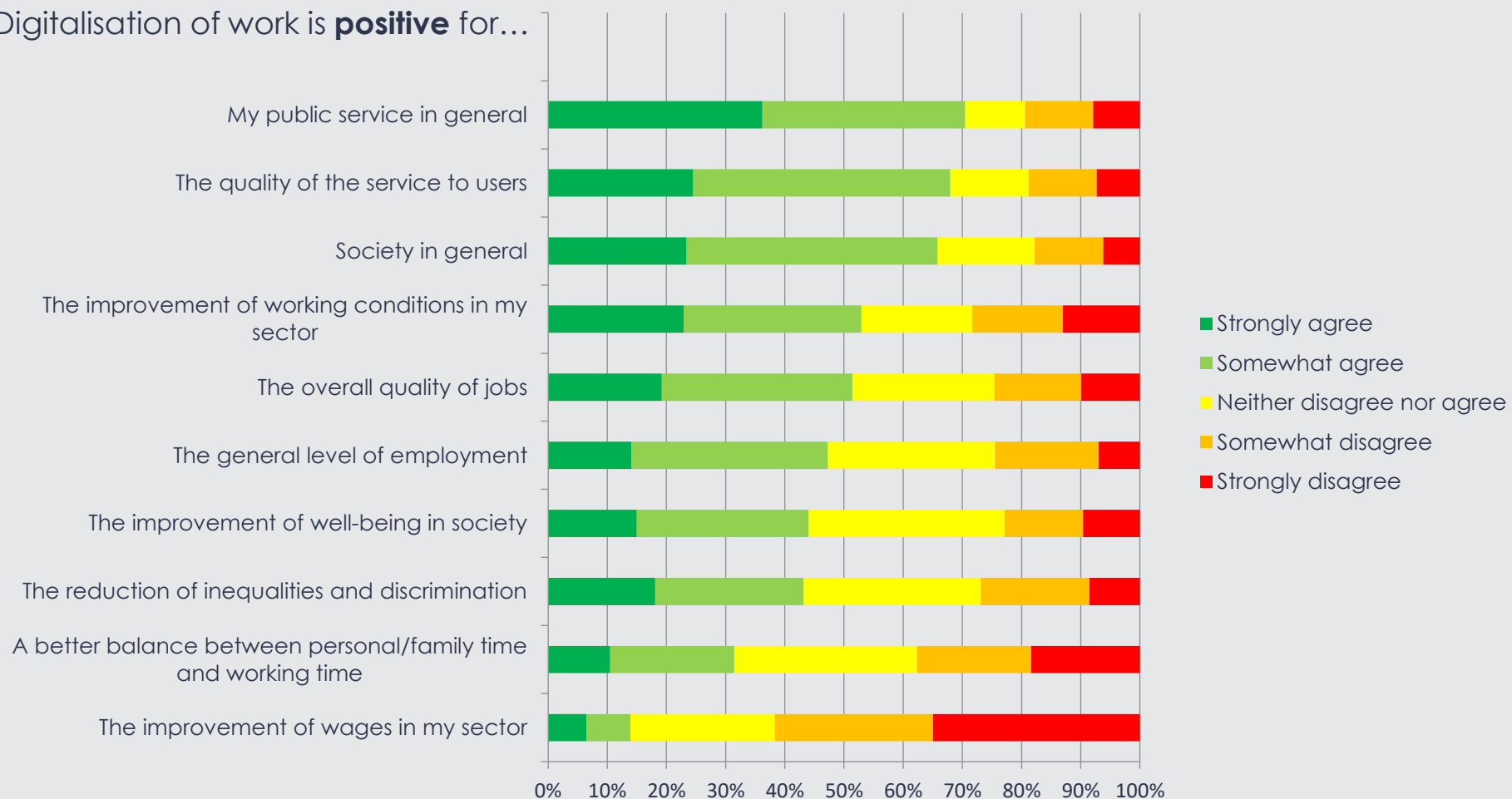
↓ Greater routine at work

No significant impact on: work-life balance, job security

IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

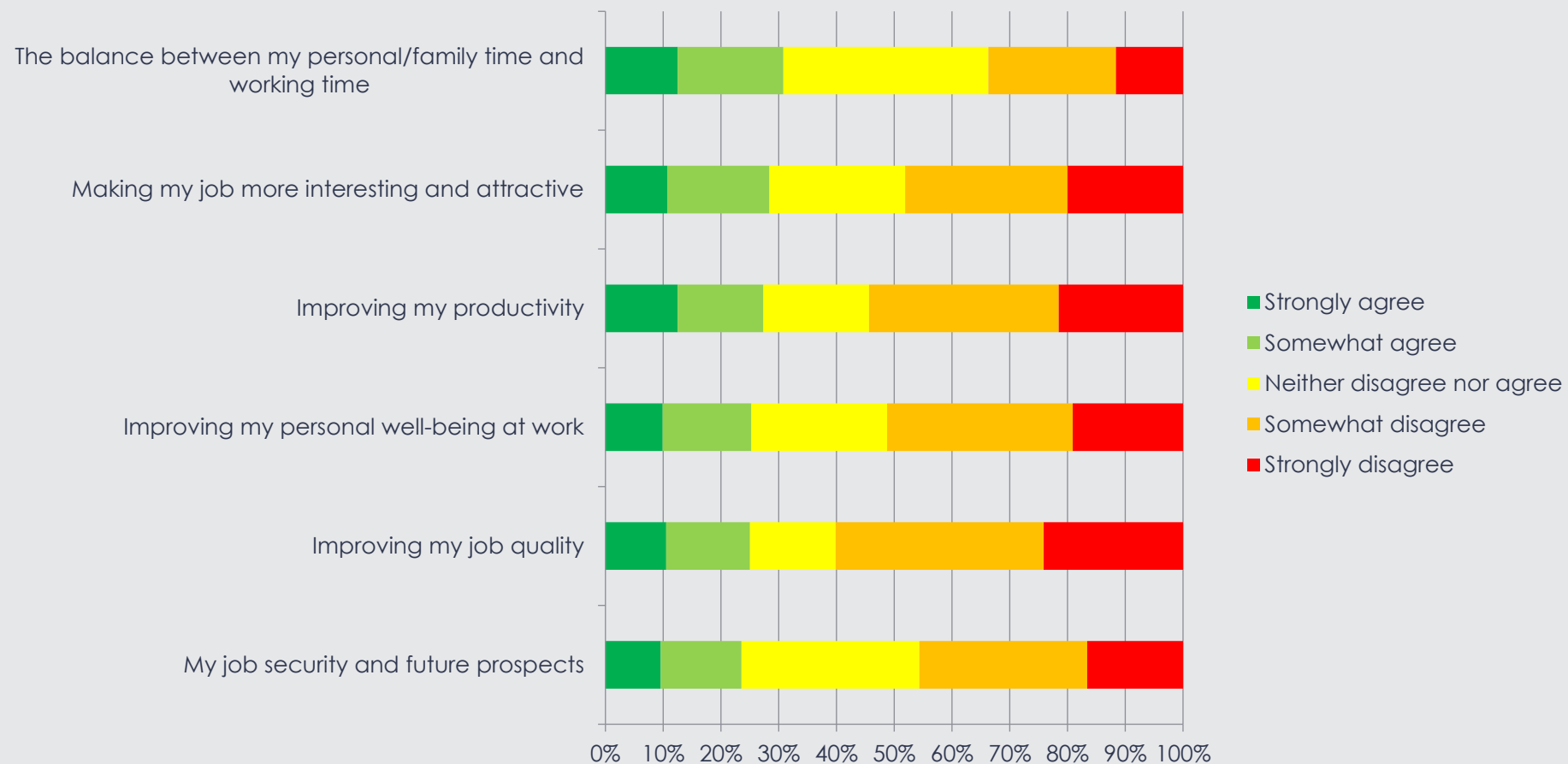


Digitalisation of work is **positive** for...



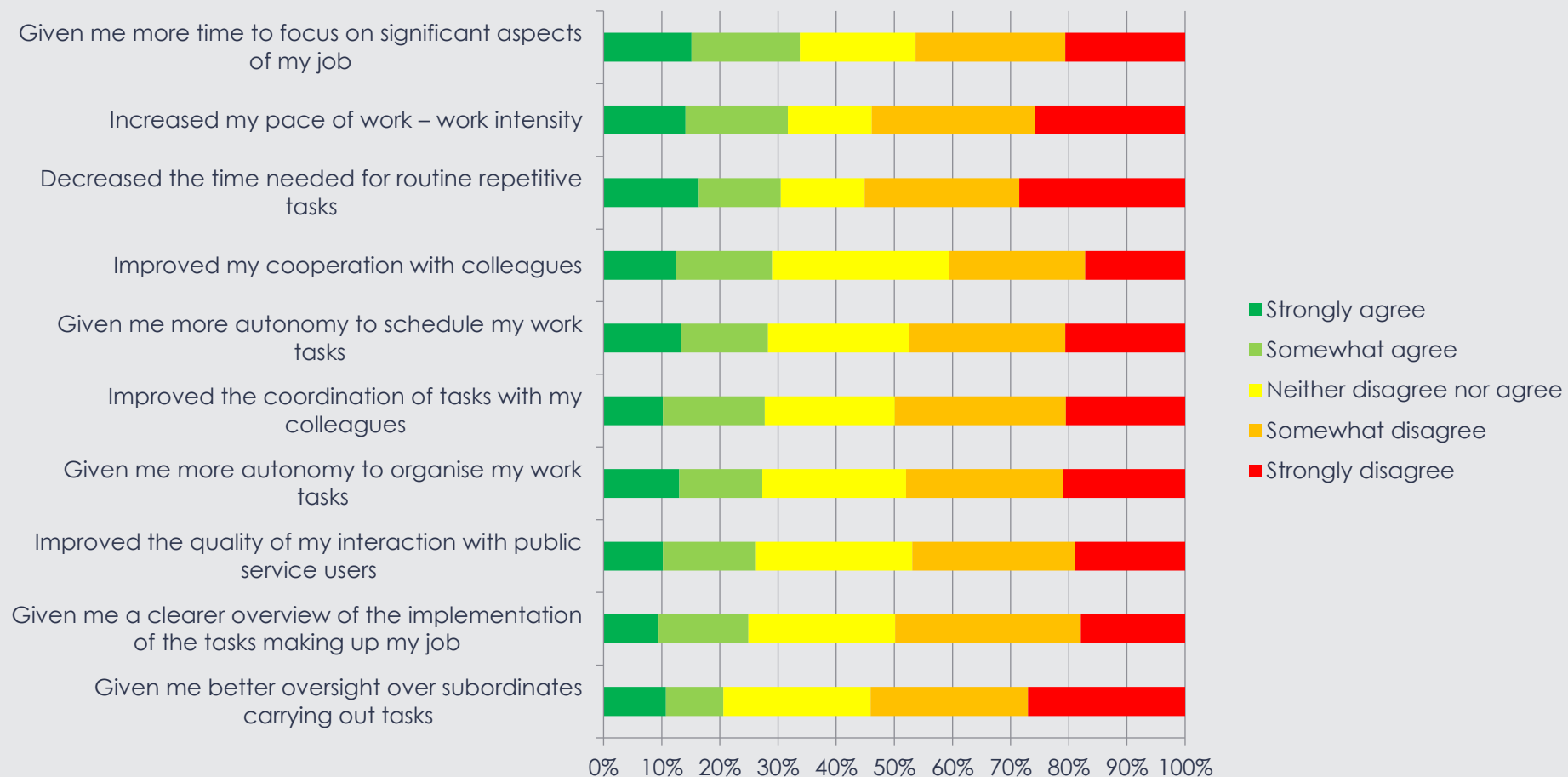
IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Digitalisation of work is **positive** for...



IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

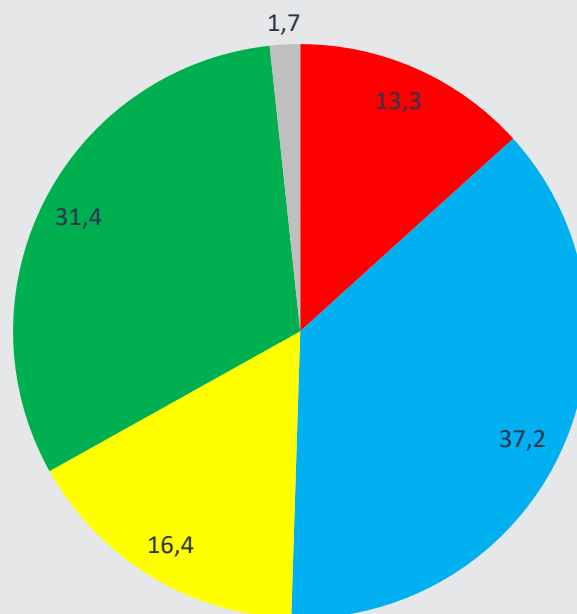
Has the **digitalisation affected** the following aspects of your work?



IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



Need to develop **new skills**

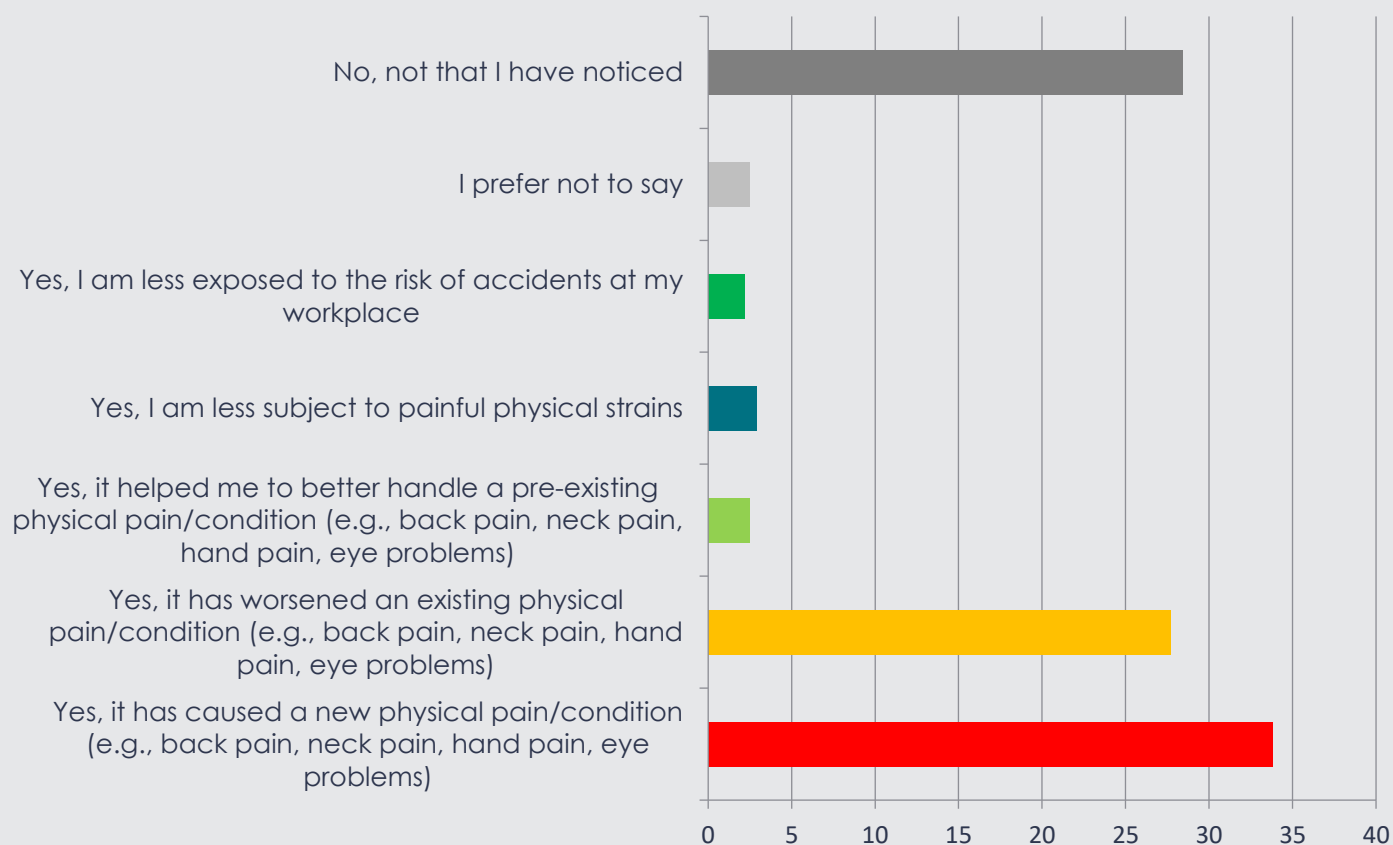


- No, no new digital skills are required for my job
- No, I already had the required digital literacy skills through my education and/or professional experience
- Yes, I had to learn both general digital literacy methods and specific digital skills
- Yes, but only for some specific digital skills required by digitalised tools and/or software
- I prefer not to say

IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



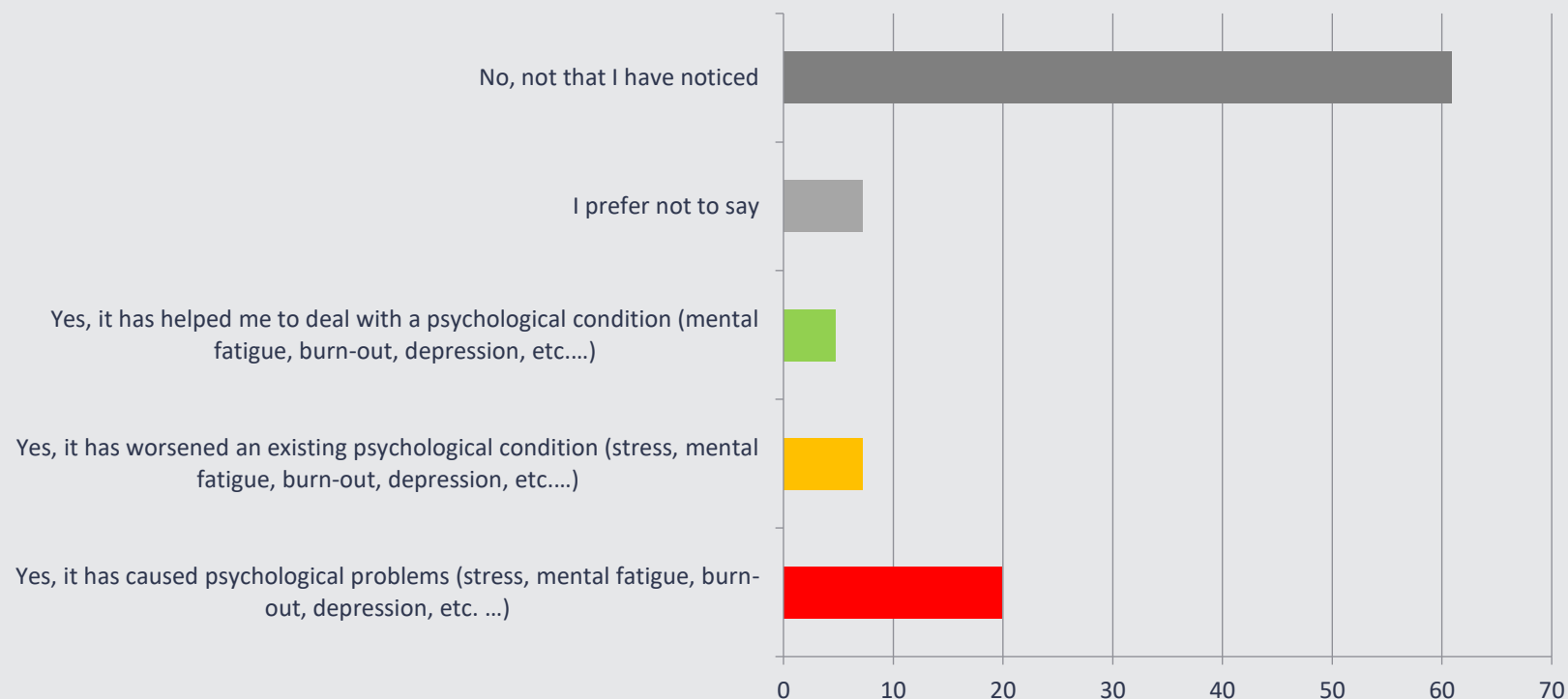
Impact of digitalisation on **physical** health



IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



Impact of digitalisation on **mental** health



IMPACT ON JOB QUALITY IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR



Limited impact compared to other sectors due to:

Strongly regulated sector, procedures, job hierarchies

Limited impact of digitalisation on the content of tasks (digital tools only help with communication, records etc.)

Little and rather ambivalent impact on work organisation, task routine, autonomy. However:

- ↓ Working with electronic medical documentation may cause a worker to fall into a routine, and in turn to miss some important observations
- ↓ Decrease in nurses' autonomy since doctors have greater insight into their work
- ↑ Encouraging nurses to take on new tasks and enhance skills (e-prescriptions)
- ↑ Clearer procedures and fewer mistakes (prescribing of medicines)
- ↓ Increased workload through insufficiently careful implementation of tools
 - Parallel keeping paper and electronic medical records
- ↑ Less painful procedures (e.g. reducing punctures) → better mental condition of both patients and employees, stress reduction
- ↓ Typical health issues related to working in front of a computer (back pain, vision problems)

SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON DIGITALISATION



A fundamental weakness of the dialogue on digitisation

General underdevelopment of social dialogue institutions in Poland (low level of unionisation, low collective bargaining coverage, lack of sectoral collective agreements)

At most, limited interest of the social partners in new trends in the economy, often focusing on “traditional” subjects of negotiation (wages, social benefits)

Absence of digitalisation on the collective bargaining agenda

Limited presence of digitalisation on the agenda of tripartite social dialogue bodies (tripartite and problem teams of the Social Dialogue Council)

Most often, the employer/government initiates the implementation of new digital tools, trade unions remain a step back, their role is reactive

Lack of adequate social dialogue at the workplace level, absence of consultation on the shape of the tools to be implemented



Thank you!

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