

Telework and PSR during the pandemic

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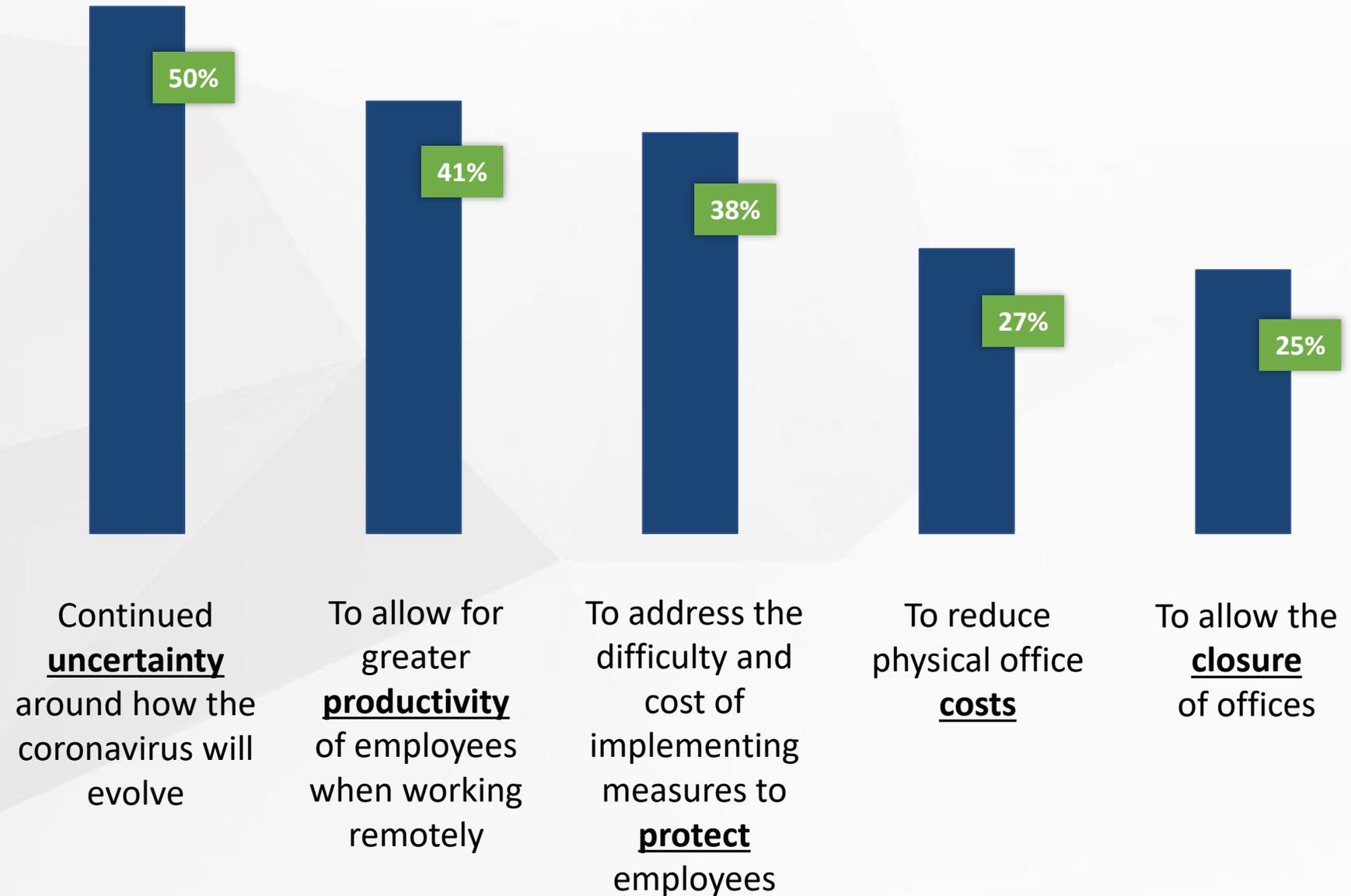
7th ETUI meeting on psychosocial risks at work

Online meeting, 23 September 2021

SURGE IN REMOTE WORK



of employers are requiring or considering requiring more employees to work remotely.



A MISLEADING DEFINITION

Telework is traditionally defined as the use of **information and communication technologies (ICT)** — such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers — for the purpose of working **outside the employer's premises**¹



Telework is a new way of organising and performing work



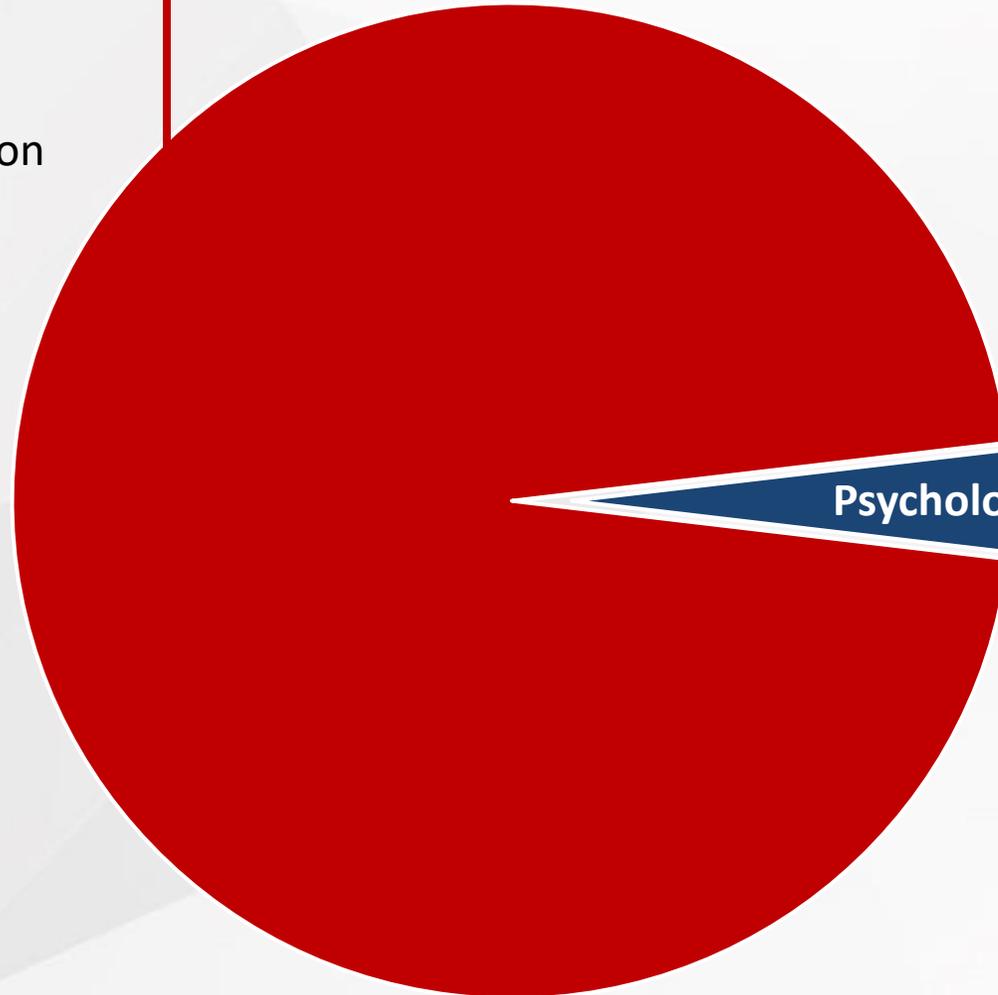
Switching to telework requires a reorganisation of the conduct of work

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS OF THE PANDEMIC



Medicine studies – 98%

Treatment of the disease, epidemiological reports, development and evaluation of vaccines, etc.



Psychology

Psychological factors associated with hospitalization, post-traumatic symptoms, etc.



Clinical psychology

1.1%

Work psychology

0.9%

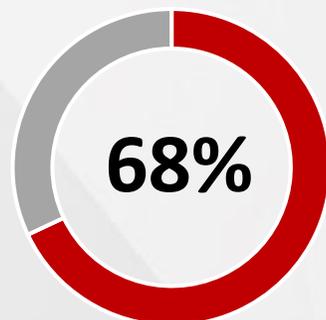


Work-related implications of the pandemic (including telework)

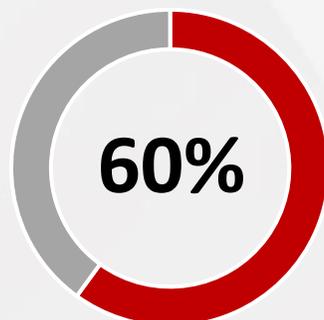
Well-hidden... but it's there!

TELEWORKING DURING THE PANDEMIC

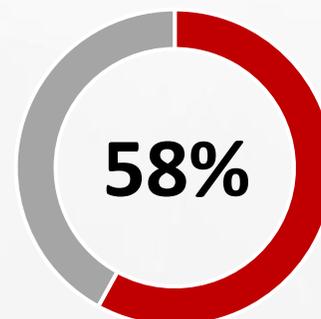
Too tired after work
for household chores



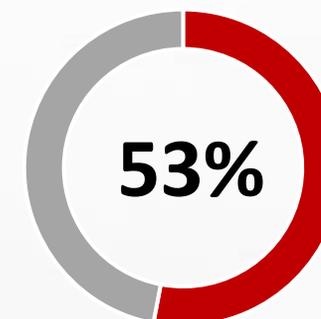
Emotionally drained
by work



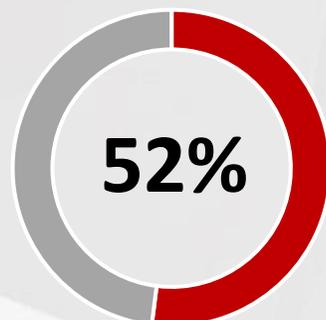
Worried about work
when not working



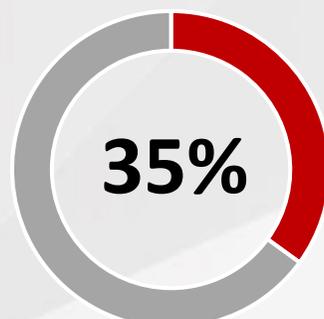
Not enough time
spent with family



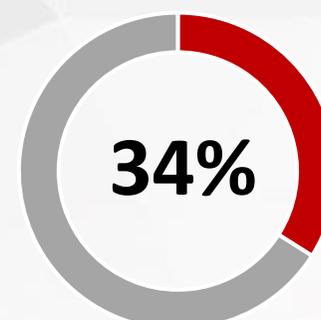
Lack of support
from manager



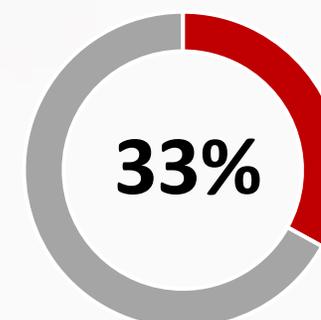
Decreased work
productivity



Isolated while
working



Working during free
time



Teleworkers are primarily exposed to risks of a psychosocial nature

THE PANDEMIC STRESS TEST

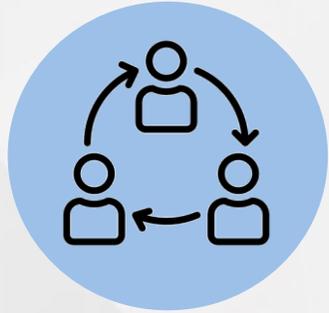
A fair share of these issues can be attributed to the **extraordinary nature** of the crisis

Employers had little time to implement anything beyond the immediate need to provide home working technology

But with greater adoption of structural telework across the globe, the risk is that a model of remote working which has **proved dysfunctional** becomes entrenched and widespread

We have therefore reached a **pivotal period**, and the lack of frame must be rectified if telework is to become a pervasive feature of our working lives

IMPLEMENTING TELEWORK REQUIRES A HOLISTIC APPROACH



Work organisation

Distribution and coordination of tasks and authority



Work relations

Social interactions, integration, cohesion, work atmosphere, etc.



Work content

Nature of the tasks and the skills needed to perform them remotely



Health & safety

Risk assessment, preventive measures, general guidelines, etc.

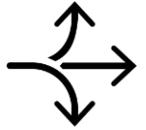
Research provides guidance, not off-the-shelf solutions

WORK ORGANISATION



Clarifying roles and responsibilities for everyone involved

Tasks to be performed remotely, persons to report to, persons to seek help from, etc.



Allowing flexibility in organizing working time and space

Scheduling working time around personal responsibilities, flexible location of work, etc.



Setting guidelines regarding communication methods

Expected response times, preferred communication methods, shared calendars and documents, R2D, etc.



Finding the right balance between autonomy and control

Limiting the use of digital surveillance technologies, greater leeway in structuring one's work, etc.

WORK RELATIONS



Ensuring proper dissemination of corporate information

Election of representatives, introduction of new tools, modification of the telework policy, etc.



Promoting informal exchanges between workers

Virtual coffee corner, established office traditions, team building, etc.



Promoting a culture of trust and openness

Wellbeing check-ins, case-by-case arrangements for work-life balance, etc.



Fostering social and instrumental support

Maintaining a virtual presence, scheduling regular 1-1 meetings, availability and supportiveness, etc.

WORK CONTENT



Specifying clear and achievable objectives

Adequate workload, consensus on the content and amount of work to be performed, etc.



Adapt and rebalance workload if necessary

Revising expectations, re-deploying under-stretched workers to over-stretched teams, etc.



Preventing dispersal of efforts and duplication of work

Clearly defined processes & workflows, shared vision of team members' roles and responsibilities, etc.



Training managers on how to manage workers remotely

Online tools, management style, privacy requirements, etc.

HEALTH AND SAFETY



Assessing and monitoring the risks related to telework

Proactive safety culture, meaningful health and safety communication channels, early warning systems, etc.



Guaranteeing the same level of protection for all workers

Teleworking brings risks of its own but also risks that are similar to those in the workplace.



Ensuring workers are provided with adequate equipment

Ergonomics furniture, second screen, office furniture, reimbursement of expenses, etc.



Raising employee's awareness on the risks

Blurred boundaries, musculoskeletal disorders, professional isolation, burnout, etc.

TELEWORK IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

... and this
entirely depends
on how it is
implemented

Work-life balance

Reconciliation of work and family life | Blurred boundaries



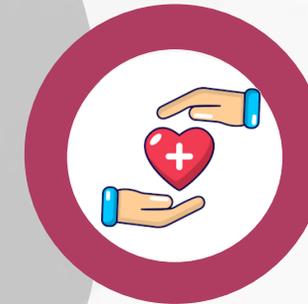
Productivity

Better use of high productivity moments | Long hours and overwork



Quality of life

Higher morale | Stress and sleep deprivation



Job satisfaction

Rewarding and fulfilling | Draining and isolating



Commitment

Mutual trust and loyalty | Resentment and injustice



Empowerment

More autonomy and flexibility | Burden of constant surveillance





Thank you
For your attention