

Factsheet

Psychosocial health surveillance: Current findings

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AI-based translation, reviewed by experts

Background

In view of multiple social crises, it is becoming increasingly important to monitor the development of psychosocial stress in society in order to be able to provide adequate support. For this reason, mental health surveillance is steadily gaining importance internationally. The challenge lies in identifying indicators and key figures for monitoring the psychosocial health of the population or vulnerable groups. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Gesundheit Österreich (GÖG) developed a concept for an "early warning system" on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (BMASGPK), based on the observation of existing data sources. Selected results are published at regular intervals.

Current results

The following developments can be observed based on the available data (as of February 2026):

Psychosocial health in the general population

- Panel *Agenda Gesundheitsförderung* and panel *So geht's uns heute* by Statistics Austria: mental well-being stable
- Use of general psychosocial hotlines by adults relatively stable (*Telefonseelsorge* slightly more consultations, *Ö3 Kummernummer* slightly fewer, but longer consultations); use of helpline for children and adolescents (*Rat auf Draht*): less use overall, but more content-related consultations
- regional *Telefonseelsorge* in Upper Austria: sharp increase in consultations by men on the subject of mental health/illness

Socio-economic situation and unemployment

- Unemployment rate in 2025 consistently above 2024 levels, with an increase mainly among women and people aged 50 and over; long-term unemployment significantly higher than in 2024
- Statistics Austria panel *So geht's uns heute*: Respondents aged 65 and over significantly more satisfied with their own financial situation than younger people

Family burdens and violence

- Increase in the number of calls to the women's helpline against violence *Frauenhelpline* and the men's helpline *Männernotruf*, stable at *MÄNNERINFO 24/7* crisis helpline for men
- Fewer police restraining orders issued in 2025

(Treated) mental illnesses and crises

- Increase in contacts to crisis hotline *PsyNot Steiermark* and the *BÖP helpline*, increase to *Krisenhilfe OÖ* only in the first half of 2025
- Strong increase in crisis calls from men to *PsyNot Steiermark*
- After slight declines in previous years, increase in involuntary admissions to psychiatric wards in 2025; strongest percentage increases among underage boys

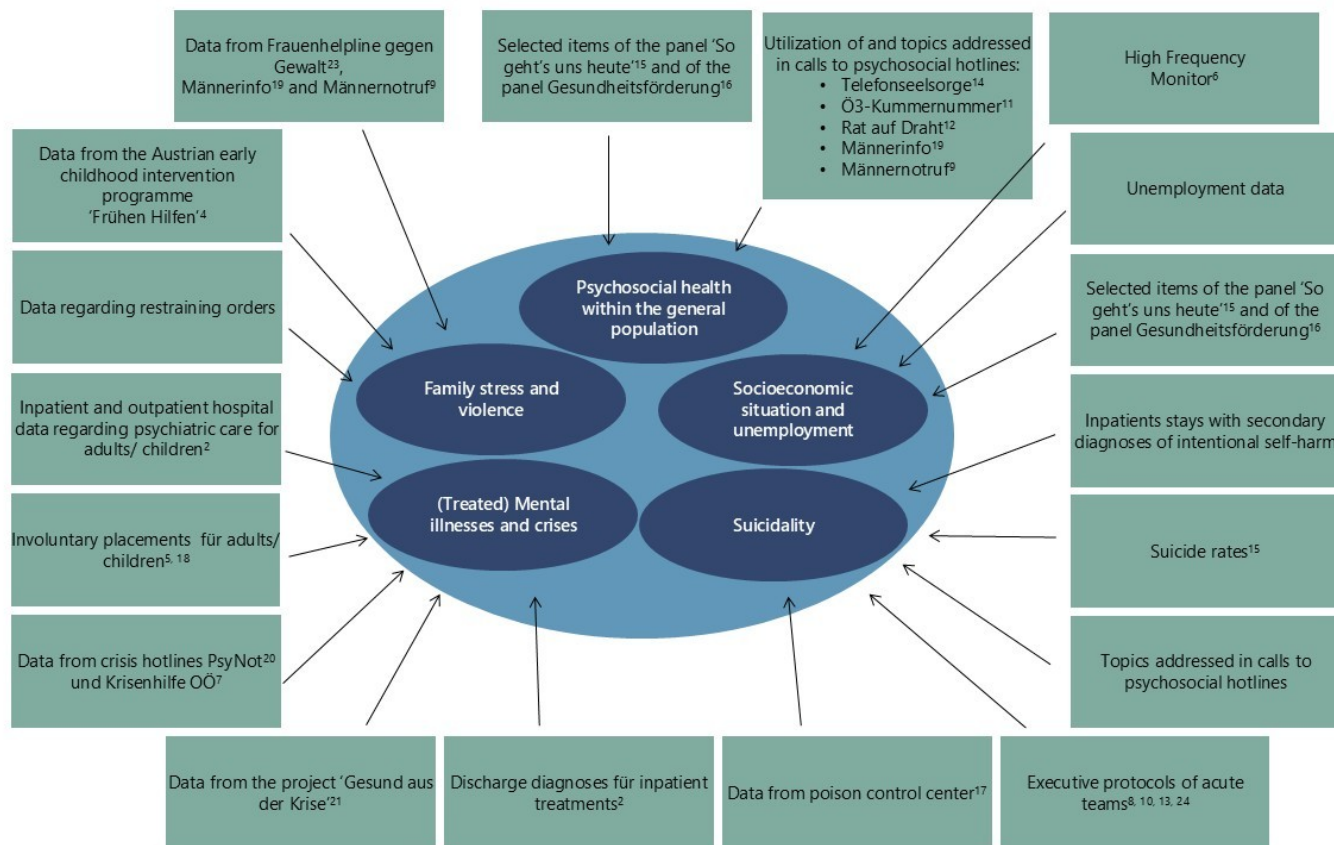
Suicidal thoughts and behaviour

- Increase in the number of people affected by intentional self-poisoning based on enquiries to the Poison Information Centre; 37 per cent of all those affected are female between the ages of 15 and 29.

Introduction

Mental health surveillance is becoming increasingly important in view of multiple social crises and the associated increased psychological stress. Internationally, there are already several initiatives for close monitoring of psychosocial health (Thom et al. 2023). Psychosocial stress and the consequences of crises cannot be easily quantified. Unlike, for example, infection rates or figures on bed occupancy in intensive care units, there is no generally established and daily updated measurement for psychosocial health. In addition to regular collection of survey data, close monitoring of routine data can serve to identify changes in the psychosocial health of society at an early stage (Thom et al. 2023). In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, a concept for an "early warning system" was developed on behalf of the Ministry of Health, based on the observation of existing data sources. The data sets included in this system (see Figure 1) have since been continuously processed, validated and interpreted. Selected results are published at regular intervals in fact sheets.

Figure1: Data currently included



Sources: 1 AMS, 2 BMASGPK – Diagnosis and service documentation of Austrian hospitals, 3 Federal Criminal Police Office, 4 FRÜDOK, 5 ifs Vorarlberg, 6 IHS, 7 Krisenhilfe OÖ, 8 Burgenland Provincial Security Centre, 9 Männernotruf, 10 Lower Austria Emergency Hotline, 11 Ö3 Kummernummer, 12 Rat auf Draht, 13 KIT Steiermark, 14 Telefonseelsorge, 15 Statistics Austria, 16 Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, 17 Poison Information Centre, 18 VertretungsNetz – Patient Advocacy, 19 MÄNNERINFO 24/7 Crisis Helpline, 20 Psychosocial Services Steiermark, 21 BÖP Professional Association of Austrian Psychologists, 23 Association of Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters 24 Red Cross Vorarlberg; Illustration: GÖG

Limitations

When interpreting the results, certain limitations in terms of data availability must be taken into account, which restrict both the selection of indicators and the informative value of the data. For some indicators, the necessary data is currently not available at the required frequency or is incomplete. For most data sources, data is only available for the period from 2019 onwards, which makes it difficult to interpret trends. Data sources that reflect usage behavior (including data from hotlines, early intervention services and inpatient psychiatric care) cannot provide any information about those groups of people who are unable to take advantage of the support services available due to various barriers or who are not actively seeking help. It is also possible that the data from some institutions does not reflect an increased need for support due to capacity limits already being reached. It should also be noted that the improved availability of data may lead to greater weighing of individual problem areas. The developments and key figures listed below can therefore only provide an approximation of the actual situation and cannot be interpreted as a complete reflection of reality.

Current results

The following presentations and information are based on the data available up to and including December 2025, with only selected relevant results being presented. Data has been available for most data sources since 2019.

Psychosocial health in the general population

In the panel *Agenda Gesundheitsförderung*, the score calculated on the basis of seven variables relating to **mental well-being** was **at approximately the same level** in the eighth wave of the survey (October 2025) as in the two previous waves of the survey¹. Among **people under the age of 25, those at risk of poverty and those with chronic illnesses**, the average score in the current wave was **significantly lower** than that of the respective comparison group, as in previous waves².

The scores calculated for **social connectedness, life satisfaction, sense of meaning and coping**, which are related to mental health, are also at roughly the same level as in the previous survey waves³. Here, too, there are some **significant differences with regard to younger people, those at risk of poverty and those with chronic illnesses**: in the eighth wave of the survey, as in almost all previous waves, people at risk of poverty and those with chronic illnesses scored lower than

¹ Average values (scale 1–5; lower numbers indicate lower well-being):

Wave 1: 3.63; Wave 2: 3.60; Wave 3: 3.62; Wave 4: 3.67; Wave 5: 3.70; Wave 6: 3.70; Wave 7: 3.70; Wave 8: 3.68

² < 25 years: 3.31 vs. ≥ 25 years 3.73***; at risk of poverty: 3.55 vs. not at risk of poverty: 3.73*; chronically ill: 3.56 vs. not chronically ill: 3.82*** (* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p< 0.001)

³ Mean social connectedness (scale 1–6; low numbers indicate few difficulties with social connections): Wave 8: 2.87

Mean life satisfaction (scale 0–10; high numbers indicate high satisfaction): Wave 8: 7.31

Mean sense of meaning (scale 0–10; high numbers indicate a high sense of meaning): Wave 8: 7.14

Mean coping ability (scale 1–6; low numbers indicate few difficulties with coping ability): Wave 8: 3.12

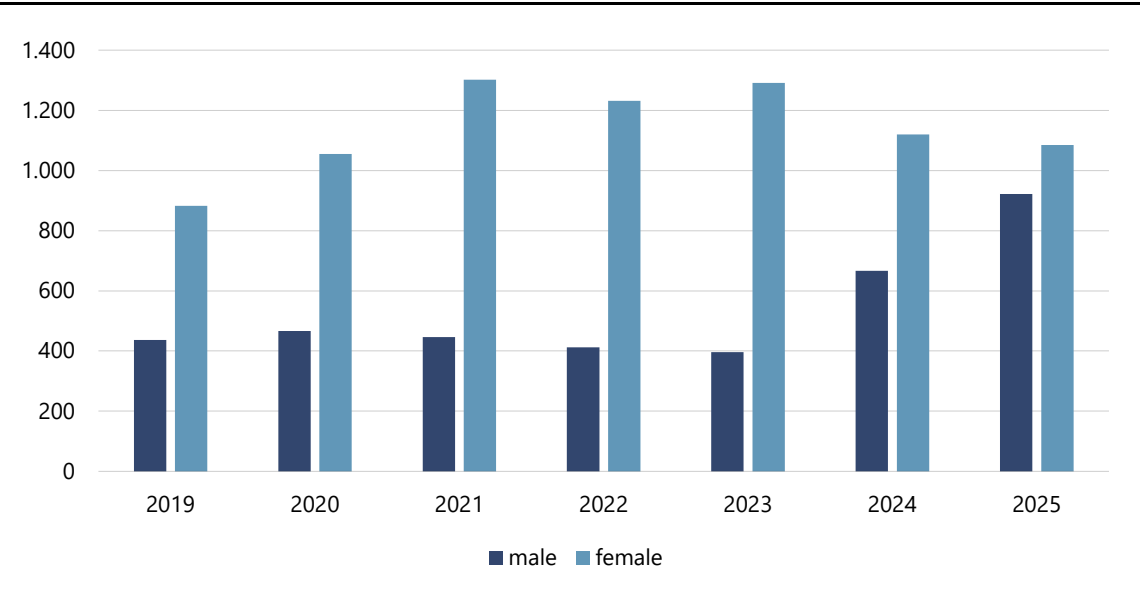
the respective comparison groups on all variables⁴ . As in the seventh wave, people under the age of 25 reported significantly lower scores for sense of meaning than older people (6.35 vs. 7.25**).

In the Statistics Austria panel survey *So geht's uns heute*, the values for the variables relating to mental well-being remained stable across the individual age groups. As before, people over the age of 65 scored significantly higher than younger people in terms of life satisfaction and relationship satisfaction.

In 2025, telephone counselling service *Telefonseelsorge* recorded more consultations than in 2024 (2025: 174,731, 2024: 172,940), with an increase particularly noticeable in the second half of 2025. This increase was observed in both telephone and online counselling. The counselling figures were above pre-pandemic levels, but still below the peak values of 2021 to 2023.

As in 2024, the regional branch of *Telefonseelsorge* in Upper Austria observed a further sharp increase in counselling sessions with male individuals on the topic of mental health/illness. In 2025, the number of calls on this topic continued to approach the number of counselling sessions with female individuals (seeFigure2).

Figure2 : Number of consultations on mental health/illness at *Telefonseelsorge* Upper Austria by gender, 2019–2025



Data source: Upper Austria Telephone Counselling Service; evaluation and presentation: GÖG

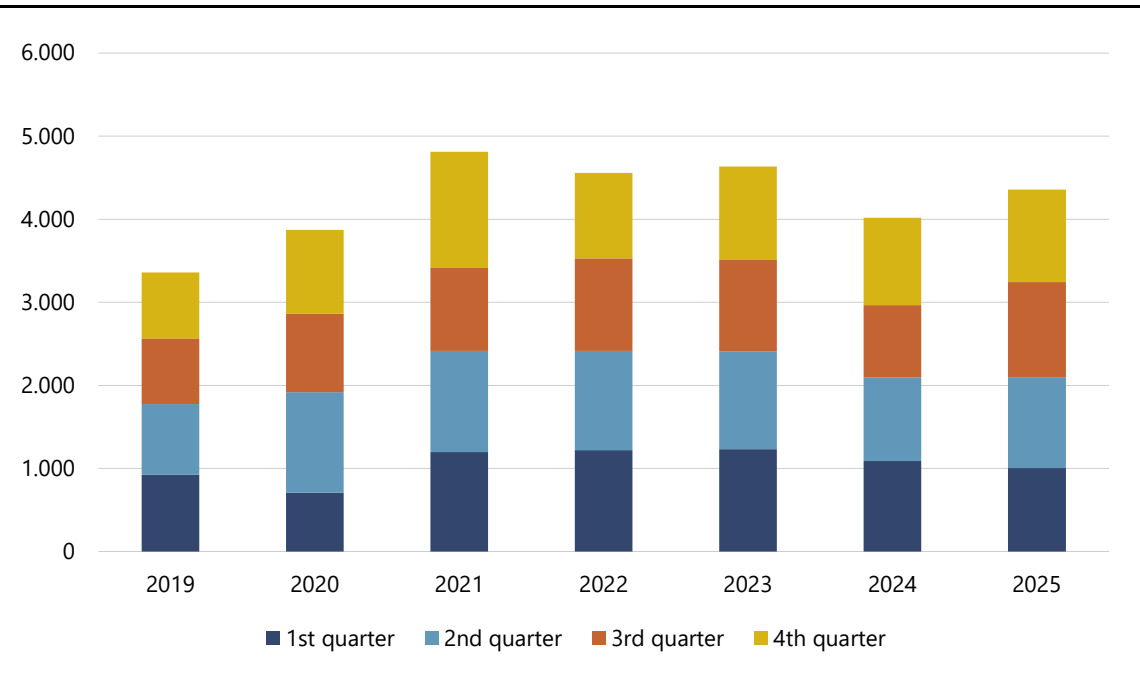
⁴ People at risk of poverty: social connectedness: 3.14 vs. 2.79**; meaning: 6.70 vs. 7.28*; coping: 3.28 vs. 3.06*; satisfaction: 6.64 vs. 7.51***
 Chronically ill persons: social connectedness: 3.00 vs. 2.69***; meaning: 6.70 vs. 7.65***; coping: 3.27 vs. 2.95***; satisfaction: 6.95 vs. 7.75***

The **Ö3 Kummernummer** recorded **fewer consultations** in 2025 than in the comparable period in 2024 (2025: 14,322, 2024: 15,320), with calls lasting slightly longer on average at 15.6 minutes than in the years 2020 to 2024⁵.

Rat auf Draht, the psychosocial helpline for children and adolescents, recorded **fewer contacts** in 2025 than in previous years (2025: 45,317, 2024: 47,894, 2023: 55,046). However, it appears that the renewed decline was due to a reduction in initial contacts and other contacts without substantive counselling⁶. **Substantive counselling increased** from 2024 to 2025 in almost all subject areas. Only counselling on the topics of "sexuality" and "digital media" decreased.

In 2025, there were also more **consultations on mental illness and problems**⁷ than in 2024, although the number was below the peak values from 2021 to 2023 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 : Number of consultations on mental illness and problems by quarter at *Rat auf Draht*, 2019–2025



Data source: Rat auf Draht; evaluation and presentation: GÖG

⁵ 2020: 12.8 min, 2021: 13.3 min, 2022: 13.7 min, 2023: 14.9 min, 2024: 14.7 min; for the Ö3 helpline, only data from 2020 onwards is available for surveillance.

⁶ Contacts include service transfers, information about *Rat auf Draht*, feedback, small talk/relationship building and miscellaneous; other contact classifications include hang-ups, wrong numbers, abusive contacts, non-reporters, test contacts and disconnected calls; Contacts and other contact classifications accounted for 42% of contacts in 2025.

⁷ Topics covered: until February 2022, self-harm/cutting, eating disorders, mental illness, sleep disorders and suicidal thoughts; from March 2022, anxiety/obsessive-compulsive disorders, depression/low mood, eating disorders, personality disorders, psychosocial deprivation, sleep disorders, self-harming behaviour, suicidal tendencies, trauma and other mental illnesses.

Socio-economic situation and unemployment

The socio-economic situation and, in particular, unemployment can have a demonstrable negative impact on psychosocial health (Compton/Shim 2015).

In 2025, the **unemployment rate** was **higher** in every month **than in 2024**. In December 2025, it stood at 8.4 per cent, 0.2 percentage points above the figure for December 2024. The increase was observed **among both women and men** but was more pronounced among women (w: +6.6%, m: +2.9%). In terms of age, unemployment rose **particularly sharply** among **people aged 50 and over**, at 4.4 per cent compared with the same period last year. **Long-term unemployment** in December 2025 was 24.8 per cent higher than in December 2024.

As in previous waves of Statistics Austria's "**So geht's uns heute**" panel, people over the age of 65 also reported significantly higher satisfaction with their financial situation than younger people in the current 16th wave (3rd quarter of 2025).

Family burdens and violence

In 2025, the **women's helpline against violence *Frauenhelpline*** run by the Association of Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters (AÖF) received **more calls from women** than in 2024 (2025: 4,960, 2024: 4,489). The average duration of individual consultations with women also increased slightly in 2025 compared to 2024 (2025: 23 minutes, 2024: 21 minutes).

After a sharp increase from 2023 to 2024, the **number of calls** to the ***MÄNNERINFO 24/7* crisis helpline** remained **at roughly the same level** in 2025 as in 2024 (2025: 5,202, 2024: 5,238). While there were more calls in the first half of the year than in the same period in 2024 (2025: 2,443, 2024: 2,281), there were slightly fewer calls in the second half of the year than in the same period in 2024 (2025: 2,759, 2024: 2,957).

The **helpline for men *Männernotruf***, which is mainly contacted for family problems and violence issues, continued to see an **increase in calls** in 2025 (2025: 6,859, 2024: 6,198), albeit to a much lesser extent than in the previous year (2023: 3,629).

In 2025, **fewer** people were protected by newly issued police **restraining orders** than in the comparative period from 2022 to 2024 (2025: 13,910, 2024: 14,332).

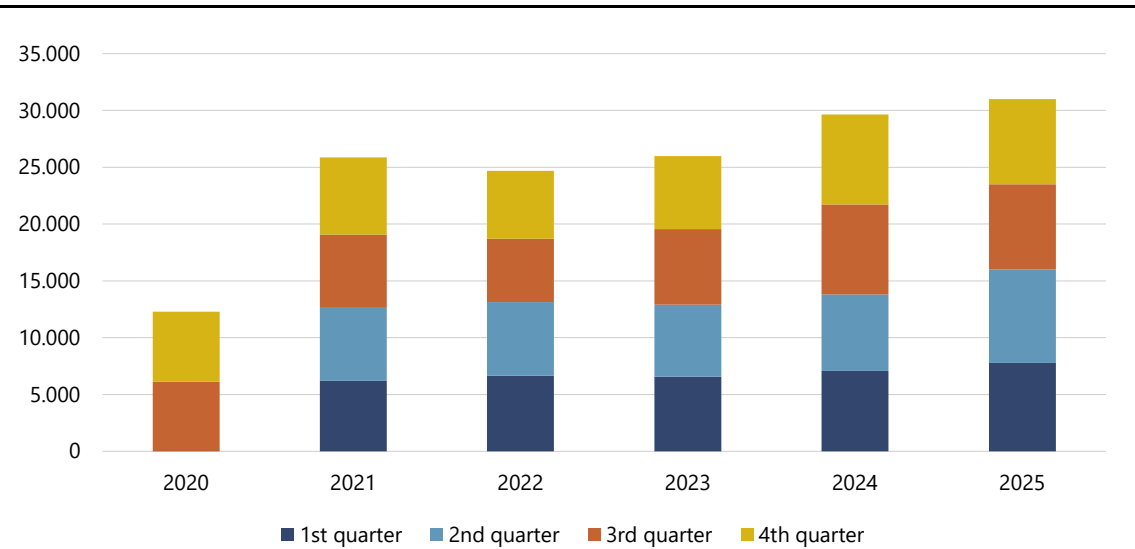
(Treated) mental illnesses and crises

In 2025, the ***BÖP helpline***, a crisis helpline run by the Austrian Professional Association of Austrian Psychologists, handled **more cases** by telephone and email overall (2025: 1,807, 2024: 1,610), with a shorter average call duration compared to the same period in the previous year (2025: 13.0 min,

2024: 17.9 min). The **total number of calls**⁸ remained relatively **stable** over the same period (2025: 4,712, 2024: 4,682).

In 2025, *Krisenhilfe OÖ*, a local crisis support organization, recorded a total of 31,005 contacts, which is **more** than in the comparable periods from 2020 to 2024⁹ . After significantly more contacts in the first half of 2025 than in the comparable period in 2024, the number of contacts in the second half of the year was below the figure for the second half of 2024 (seeFigure4).

Figure4 : Number of contacts to Crisis Support Upper Austria by quarter, 2020–2025



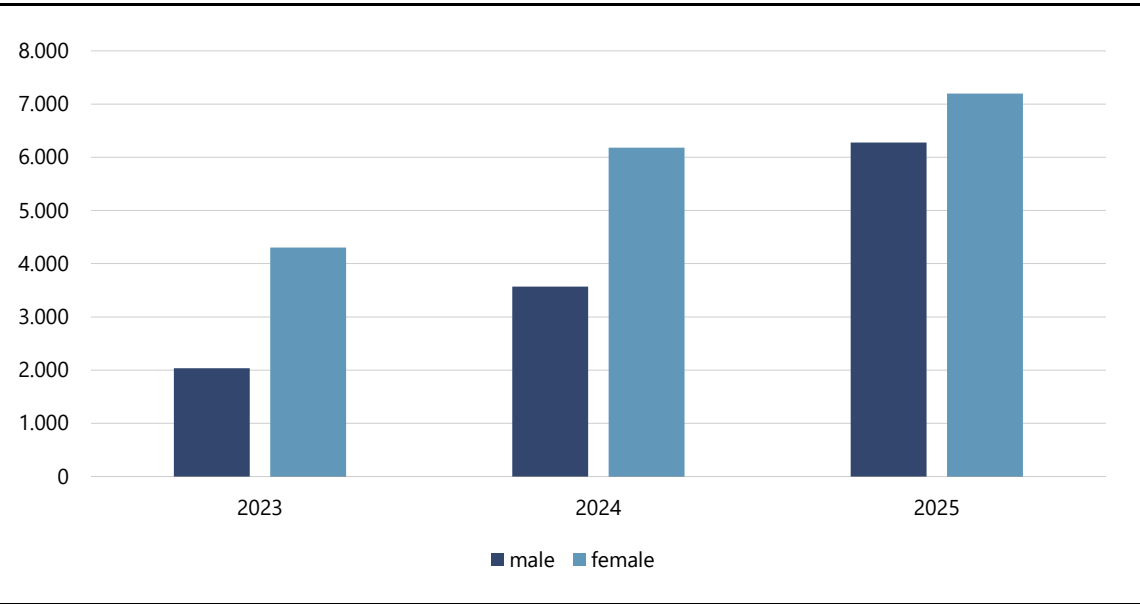
Data source: Crisis Support Upper Austria; evaluation and presentation: GÖG

The number of crisis calls to the regional psychiatric crisis hotline *PsyNot* also continued to rise. In 2025, significantly **more crisis calls** were made than in previous years (2025: 13,617, 2024: 9,940, 2023: 6,624). In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in crisis calls from men, with the number approaching that of calls from women in 2025 (seeFigure5).

⁸The total number of calls also includes those calls that could not be answered.

⁹ 2024: 29,640, 2023: 25,973, 2022: 24,697, 2021: 25,883

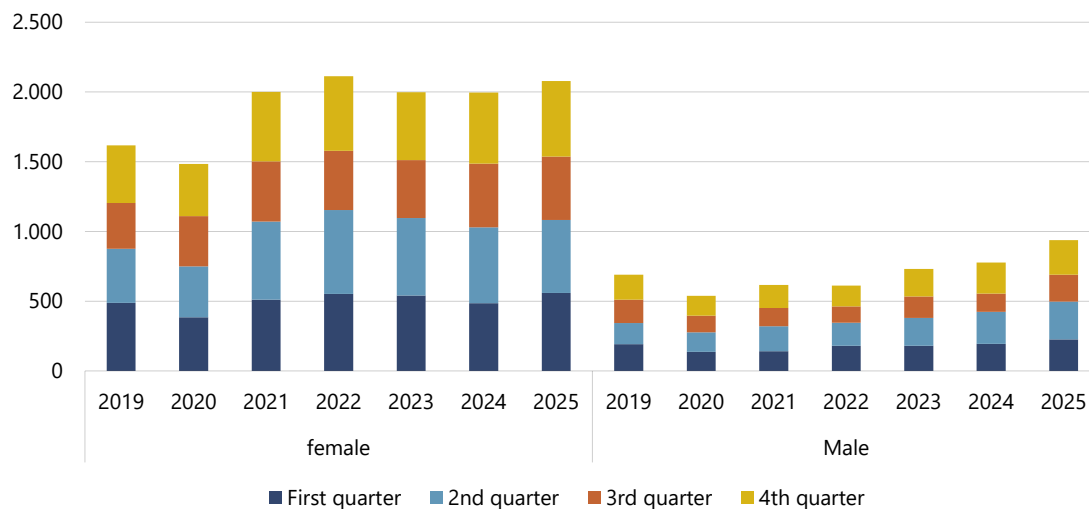
Figure5 : Number of crisis calls to *PsyNot* by gender, 2023–2025



Data source: PsyNot; evaluation and presentation: GÖG

In 2025, following a slight decline in 2023 and 2024, there was once again an increase in **involuntary admissions to psychiatric wards** (2025: 26,805, 2024: 26,136, 2023: 26,427). In 2025, there were **more admissions** than ever before since the start of the observation period in 2019 **for both minors and people between the ages of 19 and 64**. The **largest increases** were **among minors**, with the increase among **boys and young men** reaching as high as 20 per cent. Nevertheless, more girls and young women continued to be admitted (seeFigure6).

Figure6 : Number of involuntary placements of minors in psychiatric wards by gender and quarter, 2019–2025



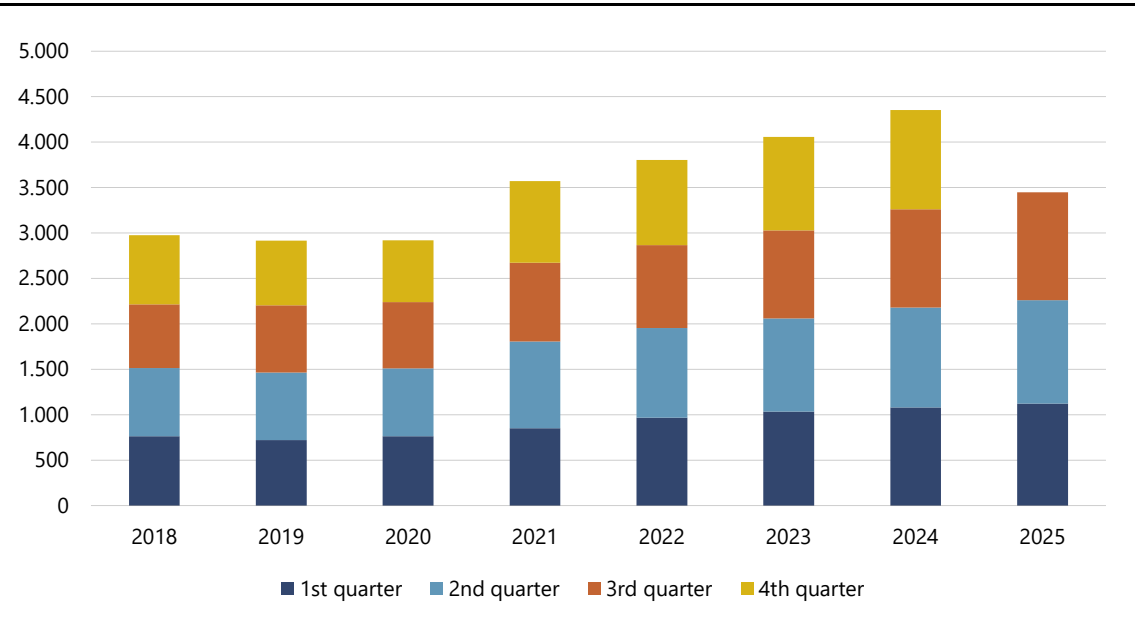
Data sources: VertretungsNetz – Patient Advocacy, ifs Vorarlberg; evaluation and presentation: GÖG

Suicidal thoughts or behaviour

Various data sources that can provide information on suicidal thoughts or behaviour are used to assess the development of suicidal incidents in Austria. However, increases in suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts do not necessarily lead to increases in suicide cases.

Based on enquiries to the **Poison Information Centre (*Vergiftungsinformationszentrale*)**, the number of people affected by **intentional self-poisoning** rose again in 2025 by the end of the third quarter compared to the same period in 2024 (see Figure 7). This is mainly due to increases in enquiries relating to people between the ages of 15 and 49. Furthermore, there are **significantly more female victims**. The largest group, accounting for 37 per cent of all victims, is women between the ages of 15 and 29.

Figure7 : Number of people affected by intentional self-poisoning based on enquiries to the Poison Information Centre by quarter, 2018–2025



Data source: Poison Control Centre; evaluation and presentation: GÖG

Literature

Compton, Michael T; Shim, Ruth S (2015): The Social Determinants of Mental Health. American Psychiatric Publishing, Arlington

Thom, Julia; Walther, Lena; Eicher, Sophie; Hölling, Heike; Junker, Stephan; Peitz, Diana; Wilhelm, Julia; Mauz, Elvira (2023): Mental Health Surveillance am Robert Koch-Institut – Strategien zur Beobachtung der psychischen Gesundheit der Bevölkerung. In: Bundesgesundheitsblatt 66/4:379-390

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