



# Cigna Healthcare Vitality Study 2023

Jumpstarting Your Journey to Vitality

Hong Kong Edition



As a hub of global trade and ideas, Hong Kong has been deeply influenced by evolving conceptions of health in recent years. Once considered solely a reflection of people's physical condition, health is now becoming a broader term that covers everything from mental health, to work, to family life. Hong Kong's residents are increasingly aware of the impact their famously fast-paced work culture and pressurized lifestyle is having on their bodies and emotional well-being.

**Cigna Healthcare has been in step with this evolution in thinking over the past nine years, enabling our customers, clients, and partners to understand the changing dynamic and be part of it. In Hong Kong, as elsewhere, our services today reflect the real needs of people and organizations.**

As part of our forward-looking practice, we have commissioned the Cigna Healthcare Vitality Study, which measures twelve markets around the world, including Hong Kong. The study comprises eight key aspects – social, occupational, financial, intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, and environmental – to provide us with a comprehensive overview of people's ability to thrive, both individually and in an organizational setting.

Dr Tony Leung, Associate Medical Director, APAC, Cigna Healthcare



**“As the world increasingly shifts to a more holistic view of health and well-being, Hong Kong in particular has an acute need for new approaches. People in the city now place greater importance on their health and are looking to employers to discuss ways of improving their lives.”**





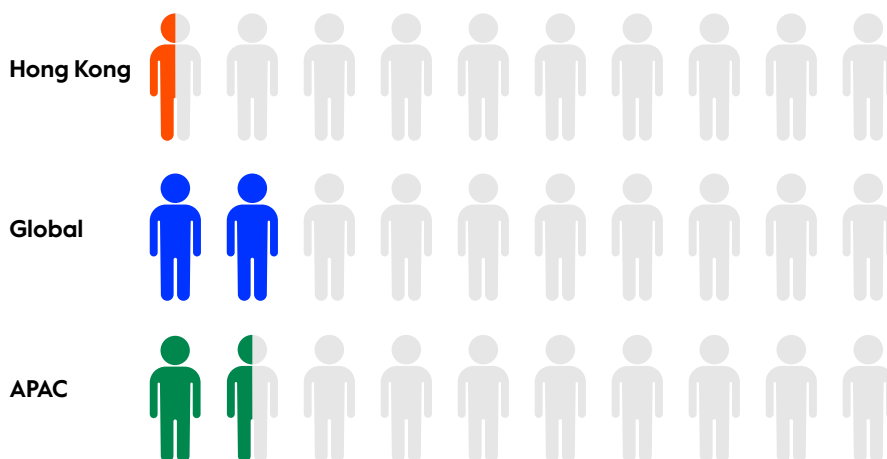


## Lower vitality levels in Hong Kong and other developed markets

In Hong Kong, only 5% of respondents reported high levels of vitality, compared to one in five individuals globally. The proportion of high vitality individuals in Hong Kong has halved since January 2023, with average vitality score falling by over 3 points to 60.4, the lowest vitality score across all APAC and global markets. This reflects a concerning decline in the city's level of vitality.

As for the other markets, Singapore and European markets also reported lower vitality scores than the global average, while mainland China, Africa, and the Middle East scored higher. Interestingly, markets reporting lower vitality levels are all developed economies, perhaps reflecting the higher demands and expectations of societies with better standards of living. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that culture and identity likely play a major role in these differences; for example, the expectation to manifest positivity is stronger in some cultures than others.

## Proportion of respondents with high levels of vitality





## Vitality goes beyond common notions of health

When we asked people to score how well they are doing across various aspects of vitality, prioritization of physical health ranked the highest in Hong Kong, followed by having “a place where they can feel safe and well” and having “the freedom and opportunities to financially support myself”.

This stands in contrast with the global picture, where the largest proportion of respondents said they “value learning new things”, ranked fourth in Hong Kong with only a quarter of people agreeing that they do. In today’s

knowledge economy, this disjuncture might indicate that Hong Kong needs to re-incentivize people to continually upskill and develop their capabilities to stay relevant.

While the greatest number of respondents in Hong Kong said they choose to prioritize their physical health (35%), significantly fewer said they “have all the skills and tools necessary to live a healthy life” (21%). There is a clear gap between people’s wish to take care of their physical health and their ability and resources to do so. It is thus imperative that policymakers and employers implement measures to close this gap.

## Top Vitality indicators in Hong Kong







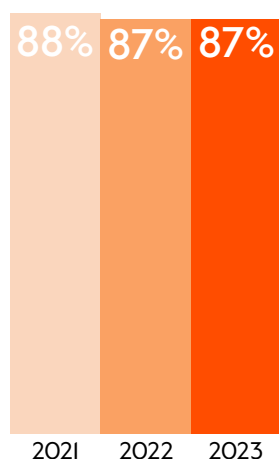
## Mental health is critical

The ability to manage one's emotions was ranked fourth among all other dimensions of health by the Hong Kong respondents, but emotional or mental health also emerges as an important indicator of overall vitality. When asked to rate their mental well-being, people diverged greatly between those with high and low vitality scores: 76% of those with high vitality said they have strong mental well-being, compared to only 10% of those in the low vitality group.

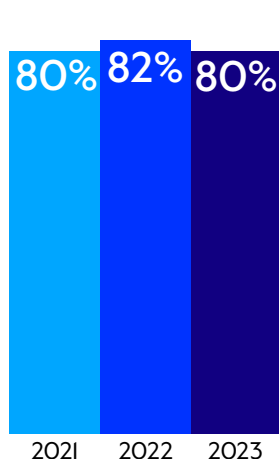
Those with low vitality also tend to be more stressed (nine in 10) compared to those with high vitality (seven in 10). Stress levels remain high in Hong Kong, with 87% of people experiencing stress in this year's study, significantly more than both the global (80%) and Asia Pacific average (84%). Burnout rate in Hong Kong – which we reported as being at almost universal levels in 2022 – remains highest in APAC since post-pandemic, with **96% still reporting at least one burnout symptom over the course of the past year.**

## Incidence of stress

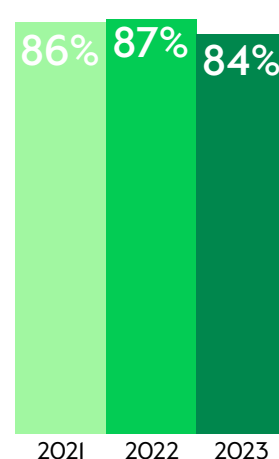
Hong Kong



Global



APAC



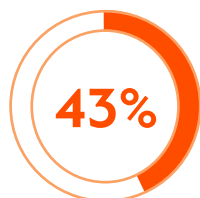


## Uncertainty and money worries exacerbating Hong Kong's high stress levels

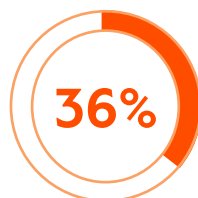
"Uncertainty about the future" is the leading cause of stress in Hong Kong, as mentioned by 43% of the people we spoke to. This was closely followed by financial issues, namely "personal finance" and the "current cost of living". With global interest rates set to stay high in the months ahead, people will likely remain concerned about their finances for the foreseeable future.

## Top causes of stress

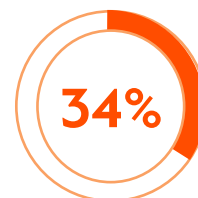
### Hong Kong



Uncertainty about the future

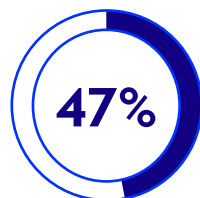


Personal finance

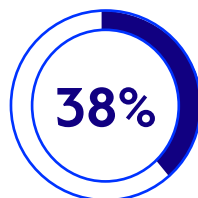


Current cost of living, e.g., rising fuel and utility costs

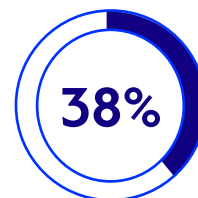
### Global



Current cost of living, e.g., rising fuel and utility costs

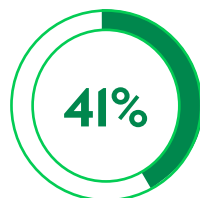


Uncertainty about the future

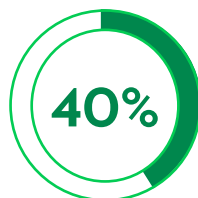


Personal finance

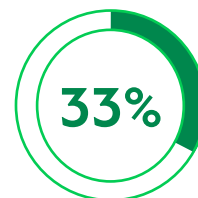
### APAC



Uncertainty about the future



Current cost of living, e.g., rising fuel and utility costs



Personal finance





## Continued adjustments at work

Despite the ongoing stress levels, we can see an overall improvement in some of the scores associated with work. In Hong Kong, 71% of people are now working full-time back in the office, and the remainder are working predominately in a hybrid manner.

The return to a regular office routine appears to be recognized as delivering productivity benefits, with 59% in Hong Kong saying they felt this was the most productive environment.

Among those who have returned to the office full-time or adopted a hybrid model, four in 10 (43%) indicated that they have closer relationships with coworkers, and 38% say they can concentrate better at work.

Fewer people now say they regularly work outside of normal working hours, down to 22% from 24% last year. Nevertheless, almost three quarters (74%) of Hong Kong workers said they feel constantly connected to work and unable to switch off, up from 69% in 2022.

## Work-life balance among working respondents

Feel always on

### Hong Kong



### Global



### APAC



Regularly working outside normal hours



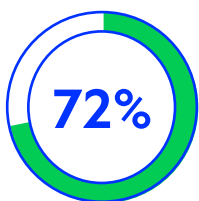


## Pandemic reprioritization is here to stay

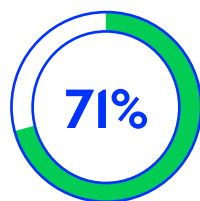
During the pandemic, many people reexamined their lives and what mattered to them – with many focusing more on their health, trying to achieve a better balance between work and family or personal life, and some even opting to take early retirement. According to our study, these habits and attitudes have become set.

More than seven in 10 (72%) respondents in Hong Kong say looking after their health and well-being has become more important after the pandemic, and 71% say being close to their family and friends is more important than before. The rebalanced work/life equation is also holding fast, with 59% saying they value time for themselves over a well-paid job. Among all the markets surveyed, Hong Kong has the most respondents saying they aim to retire early (46%), alongside Singapore.

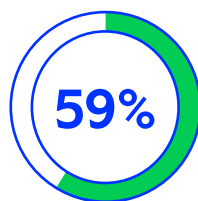
## Changes in perceptions that have persisted since the pandemic



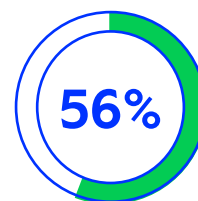
Value looking after health and well-being



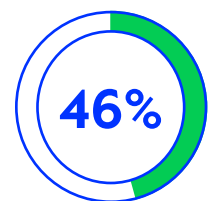
Want to be close to friends and family



Value time for themselves over a well-paid job



Want to make changes to their lifestyle and life priorities



Aim to retire earlier, even if that means having less money





## How employers can help

There is a clear role for employers to step in and support people, as the cost-of-living crisis is having a direct impact on health. 72% of people in Hong Kong say that inflation is making it too expensive to stay healthy, and 66% of employees say they wish they had more support from their employer to live a healthier life.

This is where our vitality approach fits in. When asked their top three preferences in terms of a

robust health and well-being program, the number one ask was a private health insurance plan. This was followed by 'flexible time off or work arrangements' – mentioned by nearly half of everyone we spoke with, and mental health support – which was raised by over a third.

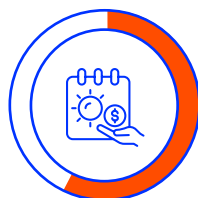
Interestingly, subsidized gym memberships – perhaps the most traditional form of health support from employers – was only mentioned by about one in five Hong Kong respondents.

## Preferred elements of health and well-being programs



**73%**

Private health insurance plan



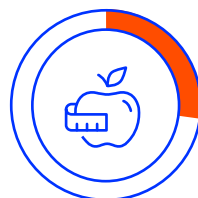
**58%**

Flexible time off



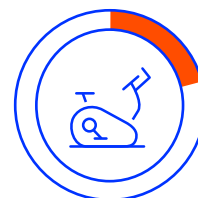
**28%**

Mental health support



**27%**

Wellness programs (e.g., fitness challenges, nutrition counseling)



**21%**

Gym membership



## Why we should embrace vitality

With global well-being remaining fragile in the face of continued macroeconomic challenges and geopolitical uncertainty, the vitality approach is critical to protect and enhance people's health. Encompassing crucial aspects of well-being, energy levels, and attitude towards life, vitality offers us a more accurate sense of health in society.

As our study indicates, people's understanding of health is now more balanced, with mental health generally viewed as being just as important as physical health. We also see the continued desire for better work-life balance, often at the expense of professional ambitions.

This presents a challenge to employers and society. The long-established model of work as a "place" has been disrupted, and many people are questioning its "function" too. As businesses and economies rebuild in the face of considerable headwinds, retaining and motivating talent will be crucial, which requires organizations to look more closely at their overall approach to vitality.

Our findings show employers need an approach that respects vitality on an individual level. Organizations' success is best achieved by providing employees with the support they need to be at their best and integrating this with the organization's collective needs.

Jonathan Spiers, CEO, Cigna Healthcare Hong Kong



**“At Cigna Healthcare Hong Kong, we adopt a preventive care approach by providing group clients with comprehensive global health solutions that include mental health support and wellness programs that can help them detect potential health issues early, so they can thrive in a healthier workforce and boost business outcomes for companies in the long run.”**







## About the research

We surveyed more than 10,800 respondents in 12 markets – the US, UK, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Kenya, UAE, Saudi Arabia, mainland China, Singapore, and the Hong Kong SAR – between May and June 2023.

### The Evernorth Vitality Index®

The index has been developed in partnership with leading clinical psychologist and author Dr. Richard Ryan. Designed in 2021 using Dr. Ryan's Self-Determination Theory and Subjective Vitality Scales (SVS), it gives a comprehensive measure of people's capacity to pursue life with health, strength, and energy. This is closely aligned with our mission to improve the health and vitality of those we serve around the world.

The index measures eight dimensions of well-being as well as three components of the SVS. We asked 38 questions to gauge respondents' sense of social, occupational, financial, intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, and environmental well-being.

