

Gentle Handling of Mice in Switzerland

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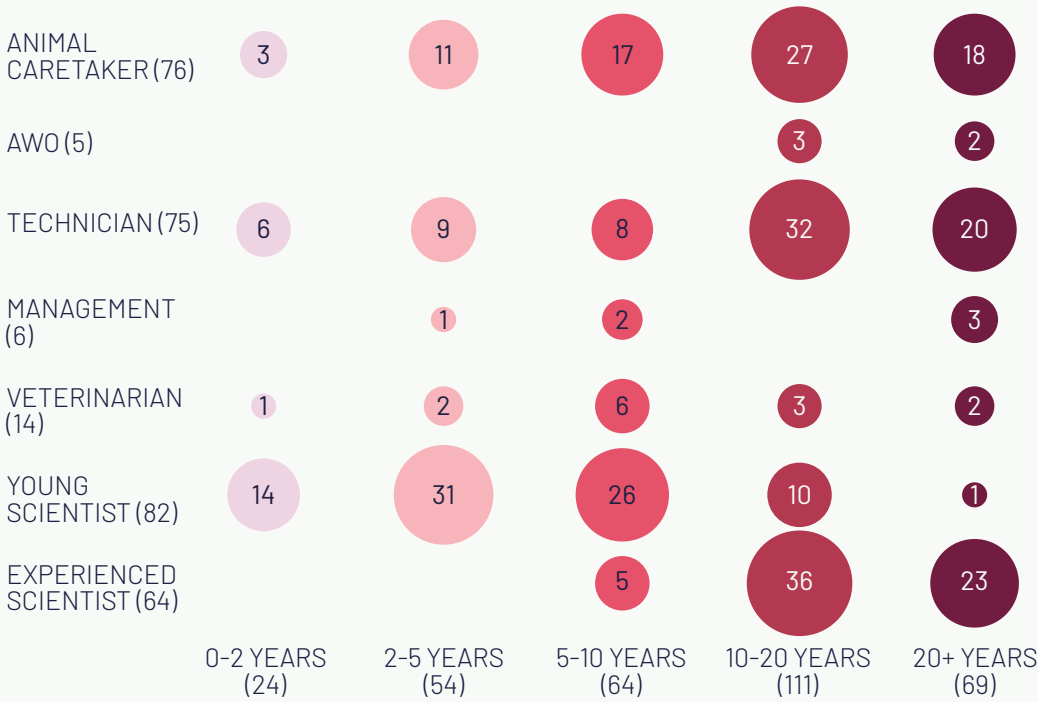
In 2020 and 2024, the Swiss 3RCC and the Swiss Culture of Care Network carried out two surveys on the use of non-aversive mouse handling methods among animal care and research staff in Switzerland. The goal was to assess:

- ➔ Awareness and understanding of these techniques
- ➔ How widely they are being applied
- ➔ The main factors driving (or hindering) their adoption
- ➔ Whether they are effective and practical for those using them

▶ The first survey conducted in 2020 gathered 231 answers. In 2024 a total of 322 people from all across Switzerland answered the second survey.

RESPONDENTS' ROLE & YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH LABORATORY RODENTS (2024 SURVEY)

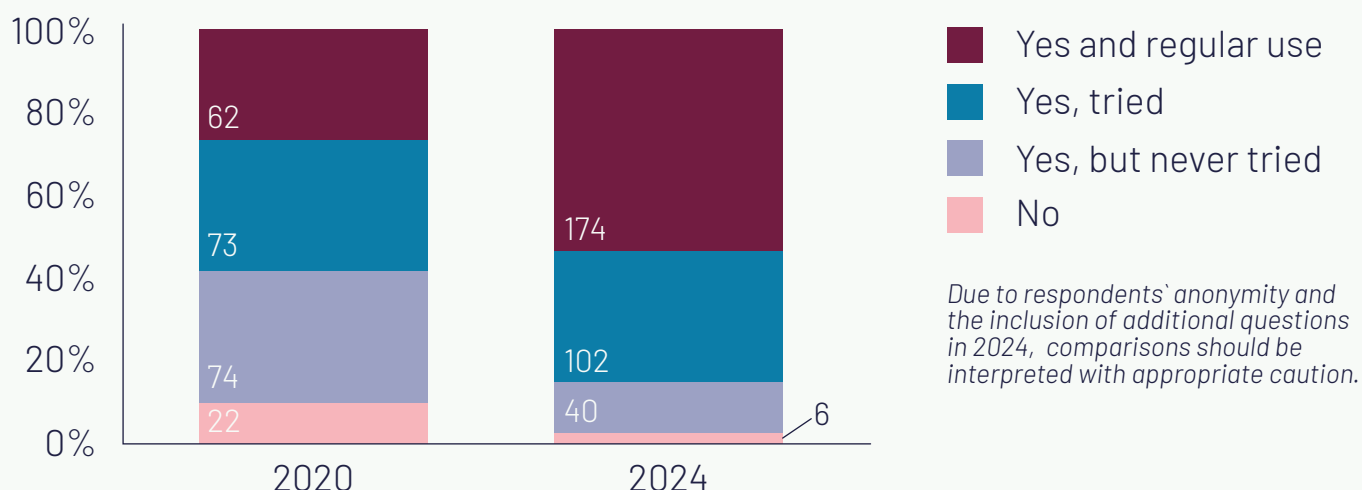
The distribution of participant roles was uneven, with more animal caretakers, technicians, and scientists represented than other roles, whereas levels of experience were relatively well balanced in the survey.



3RCC SURVEY

ARE PROFESSIONALS AWARE OF GENTLE HANDLING TECHNIQUES FOR MICE?

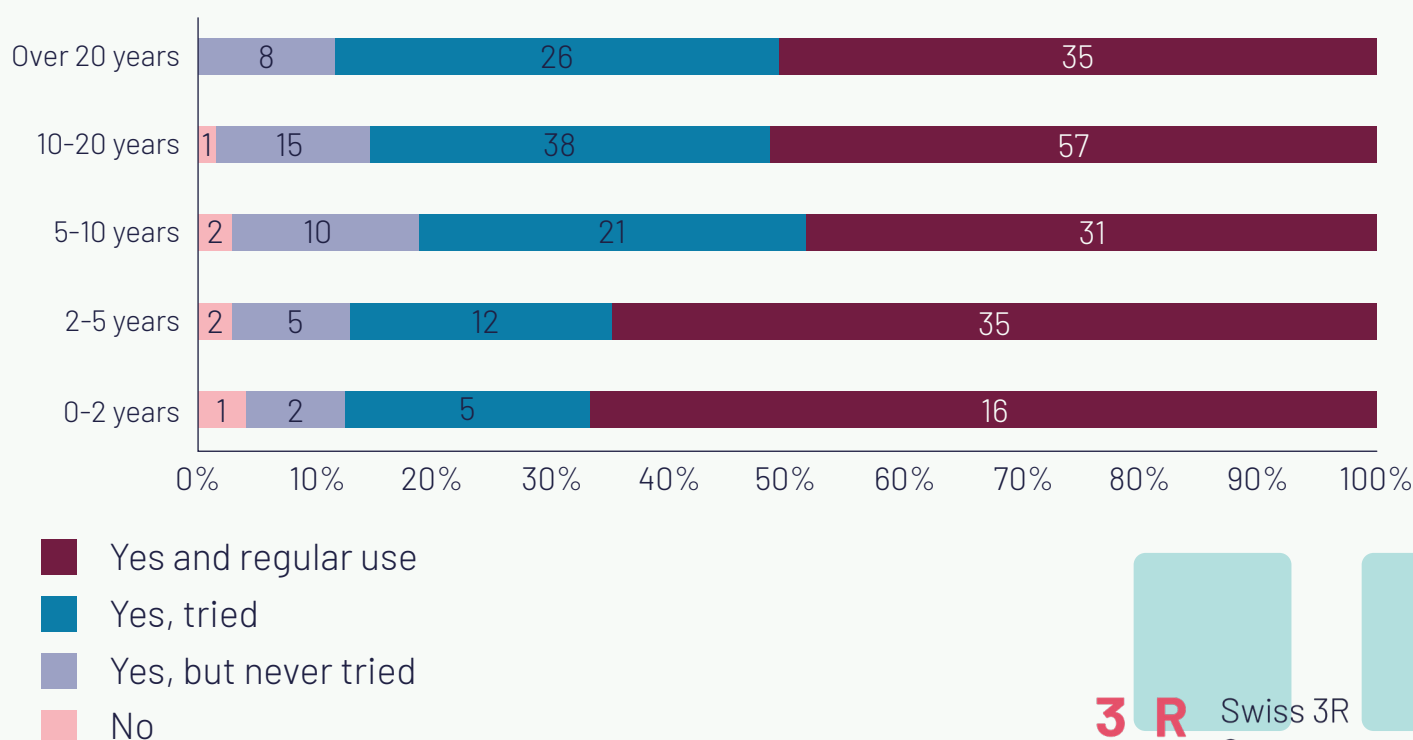
A majority of the respondents in 2024 (53.9%) know and regularly use non-aversive handling methods. Only 1.9% of participants are not aware of these methods. **This shows a clear increase in the use of gentle-handling techniques in comparison to the 2020 survey.**



HOW DOES EXPERIENCE IMPACT THIS? (2024 SURVEY)



Respondents with the least experience (0-5 years) are the most eager to regularly use non-aversive methods, likely because modern qualifying education focuses on gentle handling techniques.



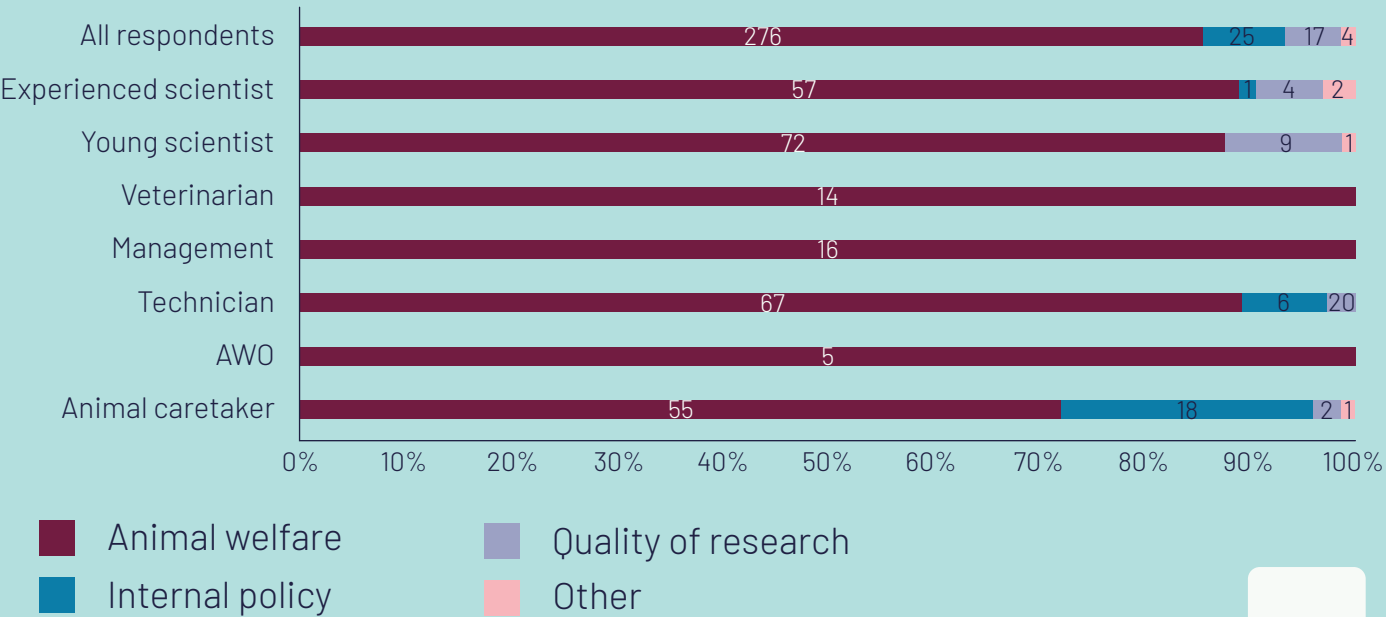
WHICH GENTLE HANDLING TECHNIQUES ARE BEING USED? (2024 SURVEY)

In 2024, most respondents have used tunnel handling, followed by cup handling technique, while only a few use other methods, such as scooping mice with a mouse house or other tools. Since multiple selections were allowed, some respondents may use several techniques.



WHAT WAS DRIVING THE USE OF NON-AVERSIVE TECHNIQUES? (2024 SURVEY)

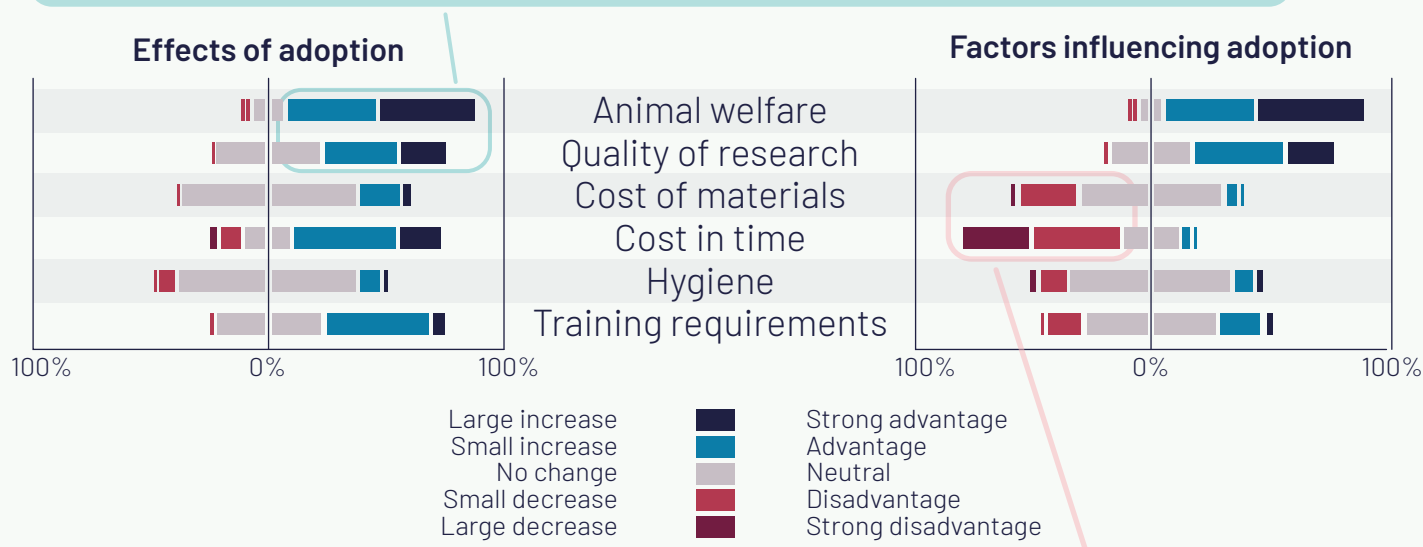
Regardless of their professional role, most respondents have adopted gentle handling techniques out of concern for the animals' welfare



ADOPTION OF GENTLE HANDLING TECHNIQUES: INFLUENCING FACTORS AND EFFECTS (2024 SURVEY)

For a majority of respondents, adoption of gentle handling techniques increases:

- ▶ **Animal welfare**
- ▶ **Quality of research**

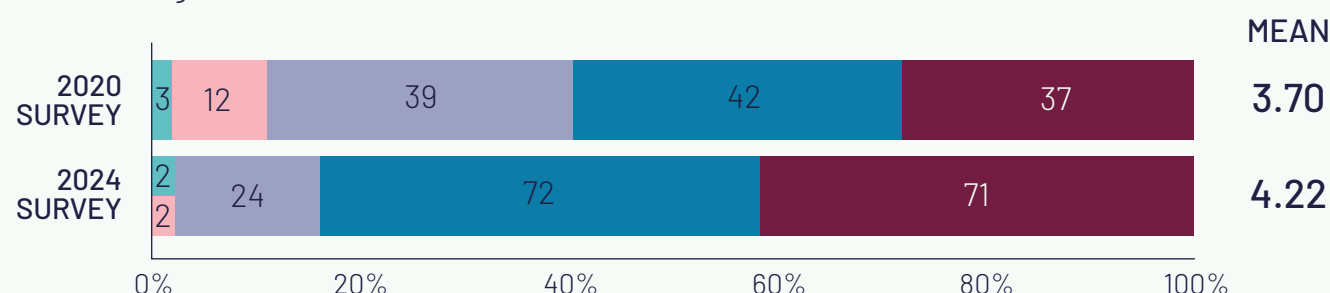


However, respondents also report that implementing these methods incurs **higher costs in time and materials and these were seen as main barriers to implementation.**

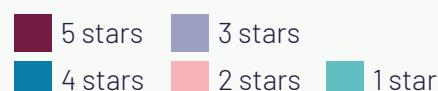
HOW SATISFIED WERE PROFESSIONALS WHEN USING THE NON-AVERSIVE TECHNIQUES COMPARED TO THE TRADITIONAL ONES?

The satisfaction rate for gentle handling methods compared to traditional ones was very high, with an average rating of 4.2 out of 5. **A total of 84% of respondents rated these methods 4 or 5 stars.**

This marks a significant increase in satisfaction compared to the 2020 survey, which had a mean rating of 3.7.



Due to respondents' anonymity and the inclusion of additional questions in 2024, comparisons should be interpreted with appropriate caution.



CONCLUSIONS

▶ The awareness and use of gentle handling techniques for mice have significantly increased in Switzerland since the 2020 survey.

▶ Several international and national initiatives (e.g. [NC3R's mouse handling webpage](#), [3RCC's tunnel handling videos](#) and updated qualifying education) may have contributed to this growing awareness in Switzerland.

▶ In both surveys, participants cited animal welfare concerns and the potential for improved scientific outcomes as the main reasons for adopting these techniques. This positive development reflects the strong commitment of Swiss scientists, animal care staff, and other professionals to animal welfare and the 3R principles.

Various barriers associated with implementing these methods (for example increased cost) may explain the fact that not all participants have adopted them yet.

▶ Despite this, as of February 2025, an updated legislation has come into effect in Switzerland that requires that animals are handled with care. In particular, methods that have been proven to be stressful, such as lifting mice or rats by the tail, must be replaced by gentle handling techniques.

▶ We are optimistic that all professionals working with mice in Switzerland will transition smoothly to gentle handling techniques, especially as most of their colleagues already report high satisfaction with these methods.

Find out more about how you can implement tunnel handling in these videos:



in German



in French

3 R
C C

Swiss 3R
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