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HORIZONTAL MOBILITY OF
HEALTHCARE ASSISTANTS AND REGISTERED NURSES IN THE
SWISS HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

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Background: two new professions with general orientation

- Education reform of health professions early 2000s: → two new very popular occupations: registered nurses (RNs; BSc or diploma of HE) and healthcare assistants (HCA)
- General orientation of both occupations enables graduates to work in all healthcare segments (long-term, acute, emergency care etc.)
 - secure flexibility when staffing needs change, facilitate individual mobility between segments
- Relevance: skill shortage of registered nurses, especially in long-term care. Horizontal mobility as one remedy against skill shortages?
 - Little is known about such individual mobility between segments (= horizontal mobility)

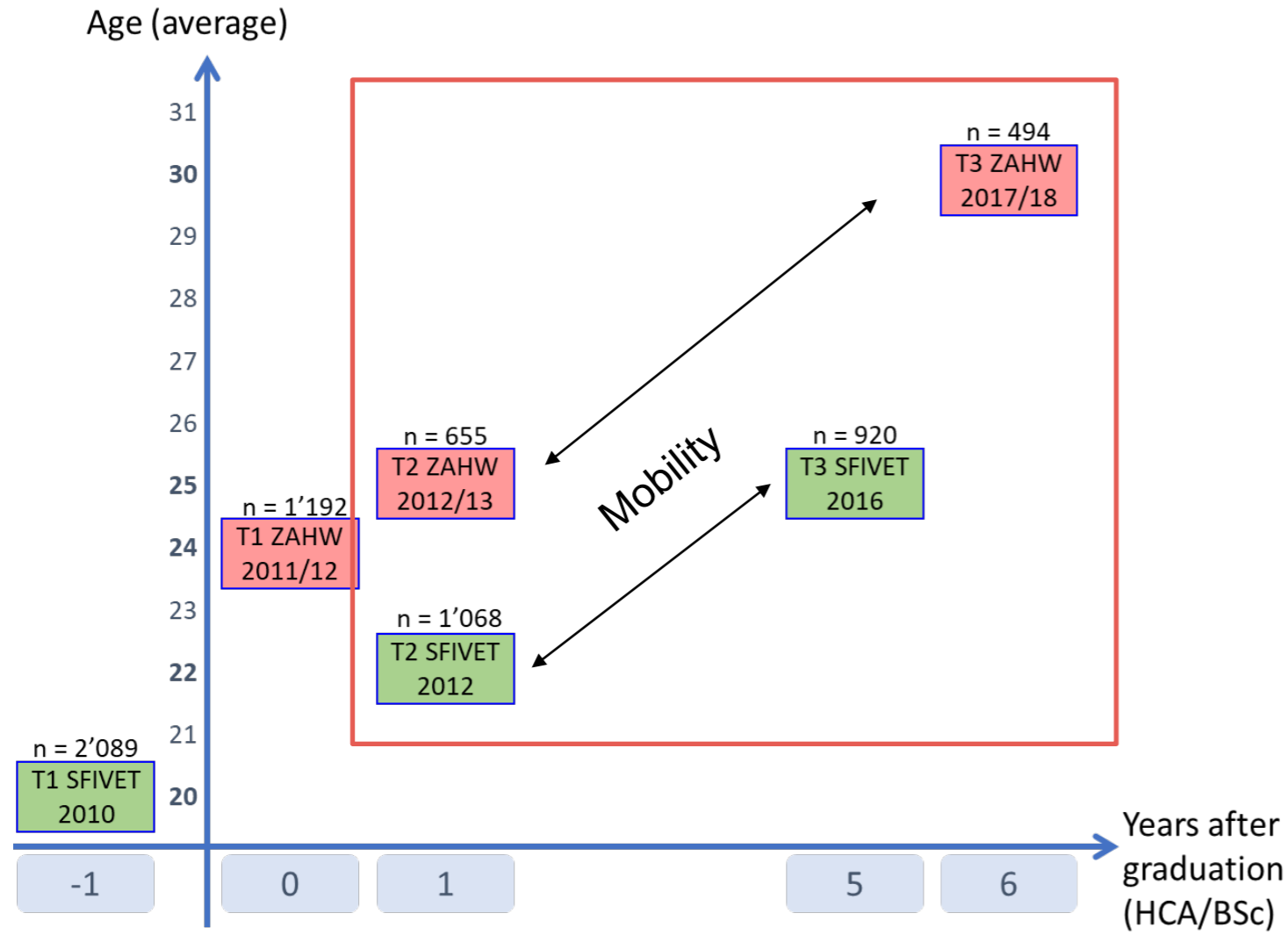
Research questions

- How often do RNs and HCAs make use of the general orientation of their education and change healthcare segments during the first years after graduation? Where do they go?
- How do individual factors such as work satisfaction and career opportunities influence the likelihood to leave the initial healthcare segment?

Varying attractiveness of healthcare segments

- Perception of attractiveness of healthcare segments differs among students
- Long-term care considered as least attractive by (nursing) students (Hayes, Orchard, et al., 2006)
 - More routine tasks (Hayes, Orchard, et al., 2006)
 - Less diverse work profiles (Grønning & Trede, 2019)
 - Fewer career opportunities, but not necessarily true for HCAs (Trede et al., 2017)
- Influence of general explanations of staff fluctuation
 - Job satisfaction
 - Career opportunities
 - Physical and emotional stress
 - Work-life balance
 - ...

Data and Method

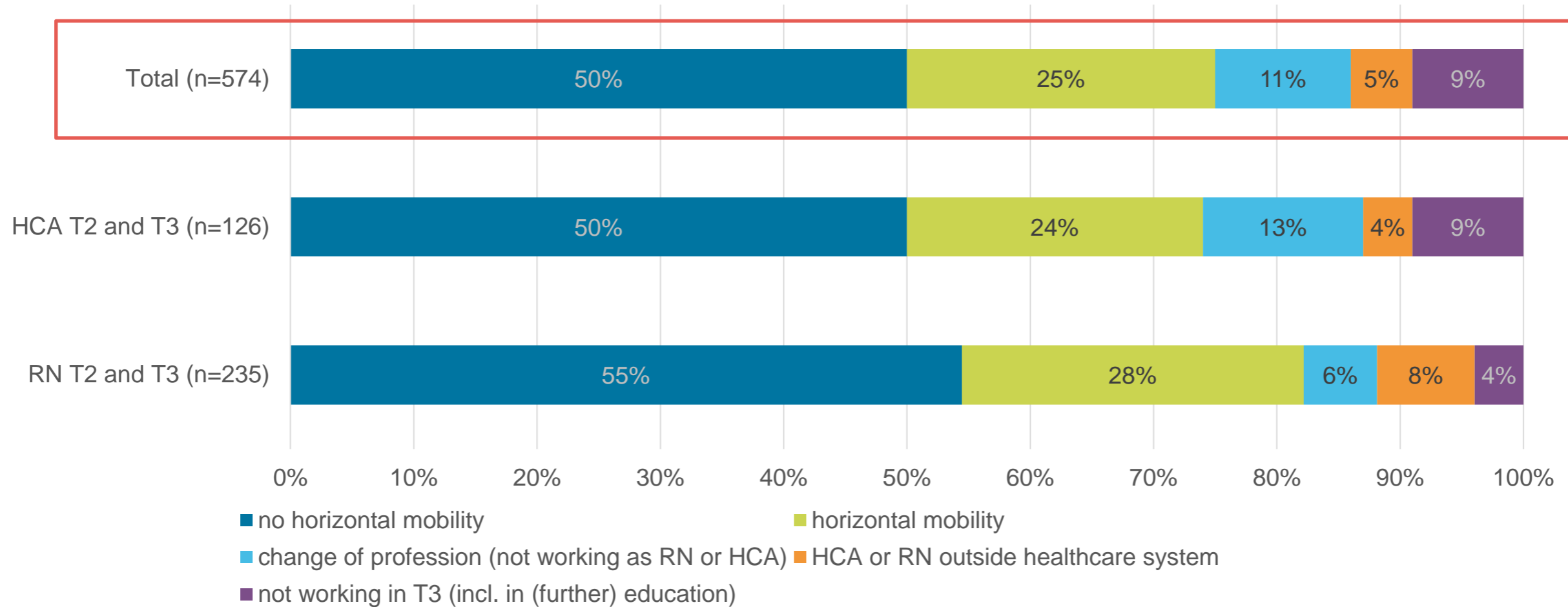


- Combination of two longitudinal studies with comparable designs
- Sample: persons working as HCA or RNs one year after graduation (T2), participation in T3, information on healthcare segment available (n=575)
- DV: mobility between healthcare segments from T2 to T3
- Method: descriptive analysis of patterns of horizontal mobility

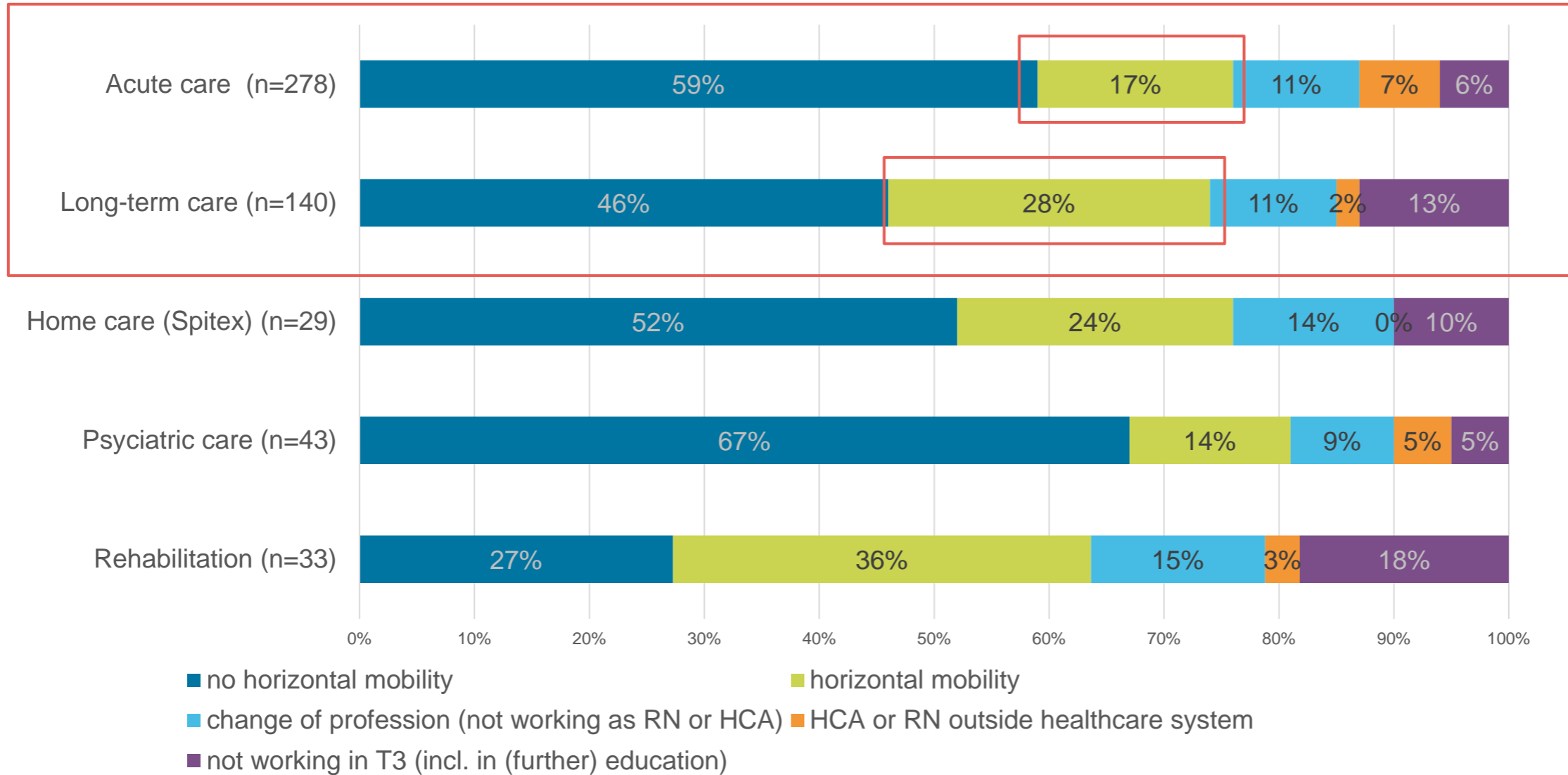
Explanatory variables

- Occupation: HCA vs. RN
- Health care segment: long-term, acute, psychiatric, or home care (Spitex); rehabilitation, and other healthcare segments (e.g. emergency or ambulant care, institutions for individuals with disabilities)
- Satisfaction with current work; scale: 1 = does not apply at all – 6 = does fully apply
- Career opportunities: possibility to gain additional responsibilities without further formal education
 - HCA: additional responsibilities such as responsibility for a shift
 - RNs: managing tasks and responsibilities; tasks in education; other career opportunities with additional responsibility

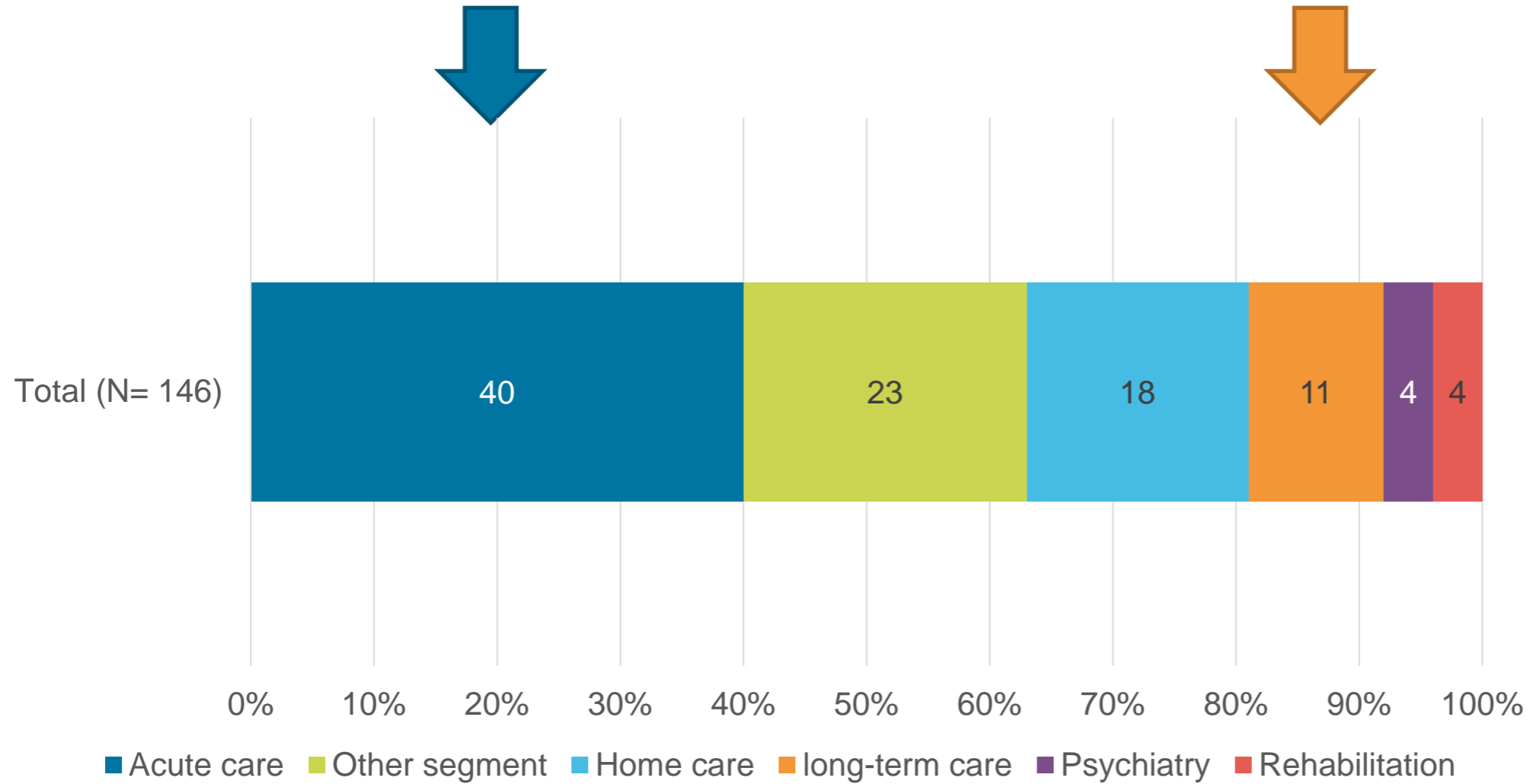
Horizontal mobility between segments of HCAs and RNs



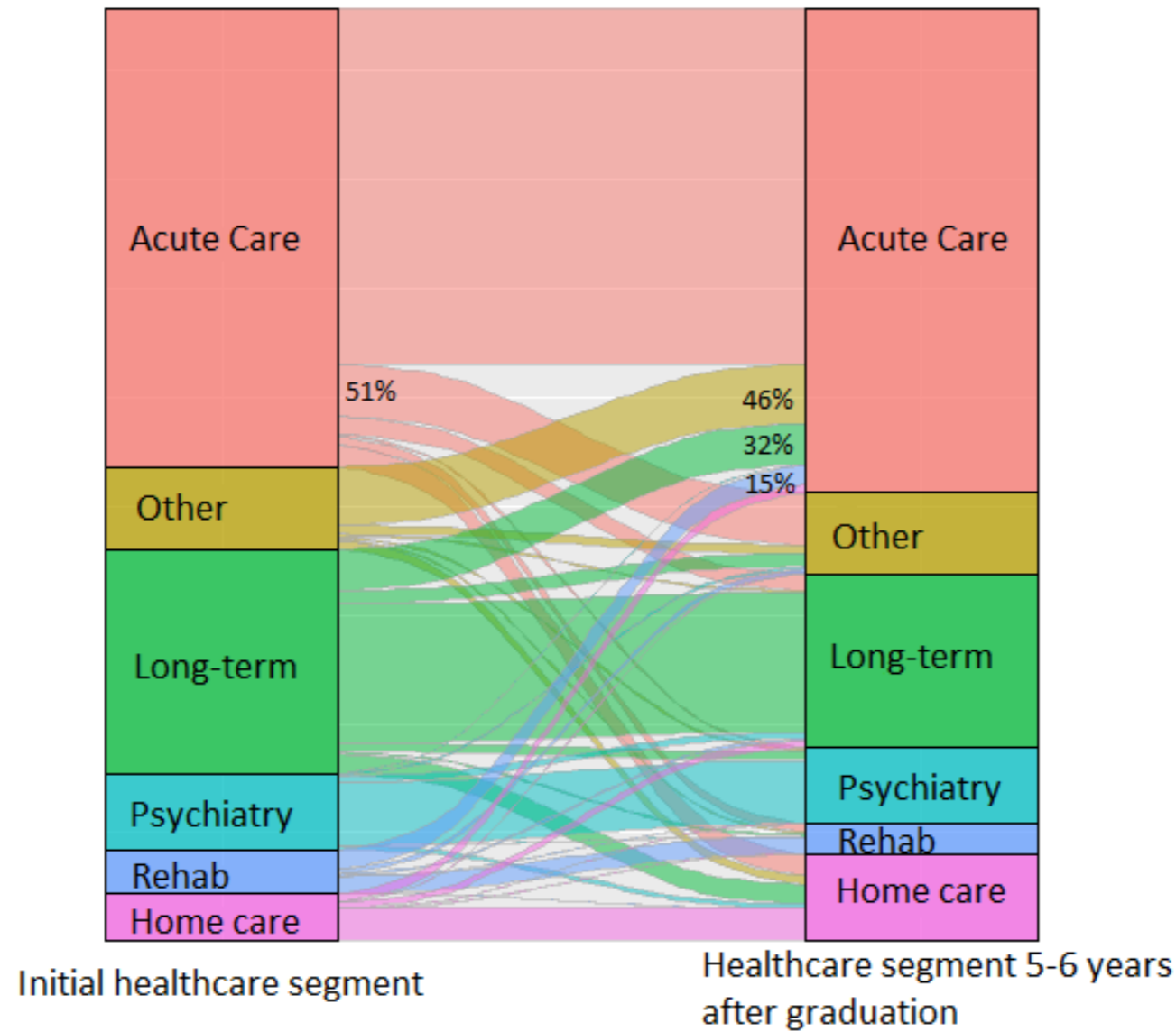
Horizontal mobility differs by healthcare segment



Where do they go?



Mobility patterns during first years after graduation



What individual factors explain horizontal mobility?

More horizontal mobility...

- from the long-term or rehabilitation segment
- among graduated RNs
- among individuals with little work-satisfaction
- among individuals with fewer career opportunities in first position

Horizontal mobility becomes less likely with more work experience...

Conclusions and policy implications

- Many stay in the segment of their graduation (50%), but 25% change the healthcare segment during the early career
 - Unequal mobility: from less to more «attractive» segments
 - Long-term care and rehabilitation tend to «lose» graduates, acute care « gains » graduates → often in combination with RN education
 - General orientation and possibility of easy horizontal mobility does not suffice to reduce staff shortages in long-term care
 - But: short-term mobility, unclear how many return to their initial segment
- Policy implications for long-term care, rehabilitation
 - Create attractive image of long-term care in an integrated healthcare system → establish attractive education and career opportunities for RNs in long-term care
 - Market horizontal mobility as a strength and something to consider in career planning
 - Establish long-term care as attractive places for RN education to reduce loss of HCA when they continue their studies and even attract new students

Further Information

Online:

<https://www.sfivet.swiss/obs/healthcare-and-nursing>

<https://www.ehb.swiss/obs/gesundheitsberufe>

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Literature

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