IDHEAP
POLICY BRIEF

The aim behind IDHEAP Policy Briefs is to make the general public aware of scientific research conducted at IDHEAP, underlining its pluridisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity, while bringing out its implications for public policy, thereby asserting our place "at the heart of public service".

The theme of this fifth edition is inclusion. The first article looks at the tensions between, on the one hand, social policy actors who want vocational training structures to impart skills to disadvantaged groups and, on the other hand, vocational training system actors, whose primary goal is not social inclusion. The article draws on various studies to highlight factors that could serve to overcome these tensions. The second article examines the use of plain (simplified) language by the public administration in Switzerland, where 16% of the adult population has difficulty understanding written documents. It reports on current practices in the cantons, highlighting the fact that adoption of this inclusiveness tool has accelerated somewhat in the wake of the recent coronavirus crisis. The final contribution explores equity in access to personalized medicine in France, where data on the practice of this type of cutting-edge medicine are already available. The article maps out access rates based on patients' *département* of residence and presents the main determinants that could promote more inclusive access.

Enjoy!

Vocational training and inclusiveness

Social Policy unit Prof. Giuliano Bonoli

Introduction

Current economic and social transformations make lack of training a penalizing factor in the labour market. Those who have no vocational training are overrepresented among the beneficiaries of social assistance. **Faced with this state of affairs, increasing numbers of social policy actors want to see vocational training structures impart skills to members of these disadvantaged groups**.

However, the vocational training system's primary goal is not social inclusion. The results is a certain amount of tension. For example, actors in the social policy or migrant integration fields often consider that vocational training authorities are too restrictive in the recognition of foreign qualifications, or in the validation of acquired experience. On the other hand, vocational training actors and employers take the firm view that efforts to promote inclusion must not lead to lowered standards in training courses or qualifications. Is the vocational training system being used for social policy purposes? With what consequences?

The research process

Thanks to funding from SERI (State secretariat for education, research and innovation) we have been able to develop a research programme with multiple components on the governance of vocational training. On the one hand, we were able to examine the trade-off between efficiency and inclusiveness in vocational training systems from a comparative perspective. On the other hand, we conducted studies of programmes or issues that are particularly important in Switzerland, such as the role of vocational training in policy on integrating refugees, or discrimination in the recruitment of apprentices.

We used various methods in our research: case studies of reforms that were important for the social dimension of vocational training, surveys of training enterprises to ascertain the extent to which employers are prepared to play a social role, and qualitative studies of disadvantaged groups (young school dropouts and refugees, for example).

Results, discussions and implications

In most of our studies, we identified tensions between vocational training and social policy. The temptation to use an efficient vocational training system for social policy purposes appears to be a widespread phenomenon (Bonoli, Emmenegger 2022). Resistance is also strong. In Germany, for example, a "Training Bonus"—a subsidy paid to businesses that hire apprentices in difficulty—was successfully contested by employers' associations, with the support of unions, which is evidence that social partners are strongly attached to the vocational training system. In Switzerland, a pre-apprenticeship programme designed to make access to vocational training easier for young refugees could only be introduced following tough negotiations between actors in the world of migration and those in vocational training. The provisions implemented are complex, requiring a large number of actors in different fields to collaborate, as Figure 1 shows. The programme is nevertheless considered a success by the main parties concerned, particularly by employers who are having difficulty recruiting (Aerne, Bonoli 2021).
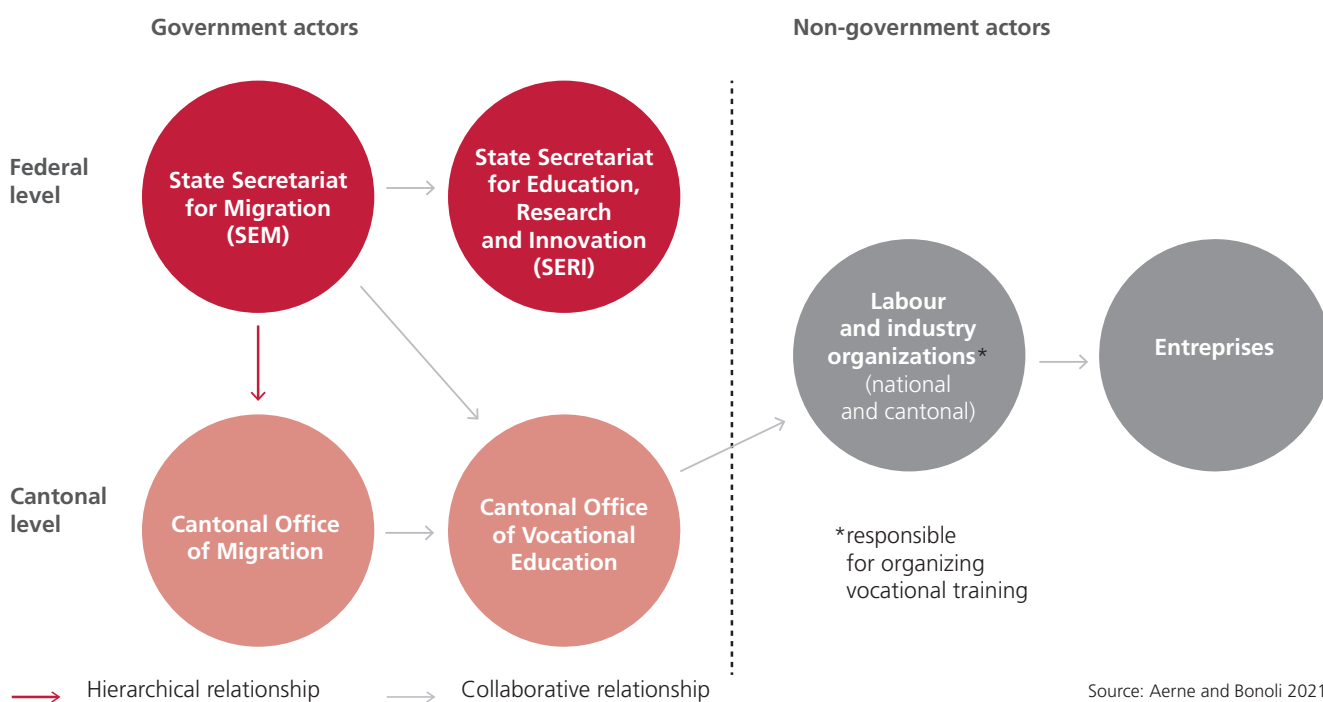
Government actors   Non-government actors

Federal level

State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)

Labour and industry organizations* (national and cantonal)

Entreprises

Cantonal level

Cantonal Office of Migration

Cantonal Office of Vocational Education

*responsible for organizing vocational training

Hierarchical relationship   Collaborative relationship   Source: Aerne and Bonoli 2021

Figure 1 | Complex collaboration: the "Préapprentissage intégration" programme developed by the State secretariat for migration (SEM) to make it easier for refugees to access training.

"In most of our studies, we identified tensions between vocational training and social policy. The temptation to use an efficient vocational training system for social policy purposes appears to be a widespread phenomenon (Bonoli, Emmenegger 2022)."

Overall, the various studies that we carried out show that achieving collaboration between social policy actors and vocational training actors is a complex matter, because their interests are not always aligned. **However, the few examples of success show that calling on vocational training to improve inclusion for disadvantaged groups can bring results**. In general, measures that favour inclusion are more likely to be implemented if they are external to the system—that is, if they act on persons in difficulty without changing the way that vocational training structures operate (Bonoli, Wilson 2019). On the other hand, when measures intervene directly in the operation of the vocational training system, the risks of failure are greater. In such cases, it is vital that measures be perceived as win-win solutions, bringing benefits to all actors.

Reference

Aerne, A., & Bonoli, G. (2021). Integration through vocational training. Promoting refugees' access to apprenticeships in a collective skill formation system. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 1-20. doi: 10.1080/13636820.2021.1894219

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Bonoli, G., & Wilson, A. (2019). Bringing firms on board. Inclusiveness of the dual apprenticeship systems in Germany, Switzerland and Denmark. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 28(4), 369-379. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12371
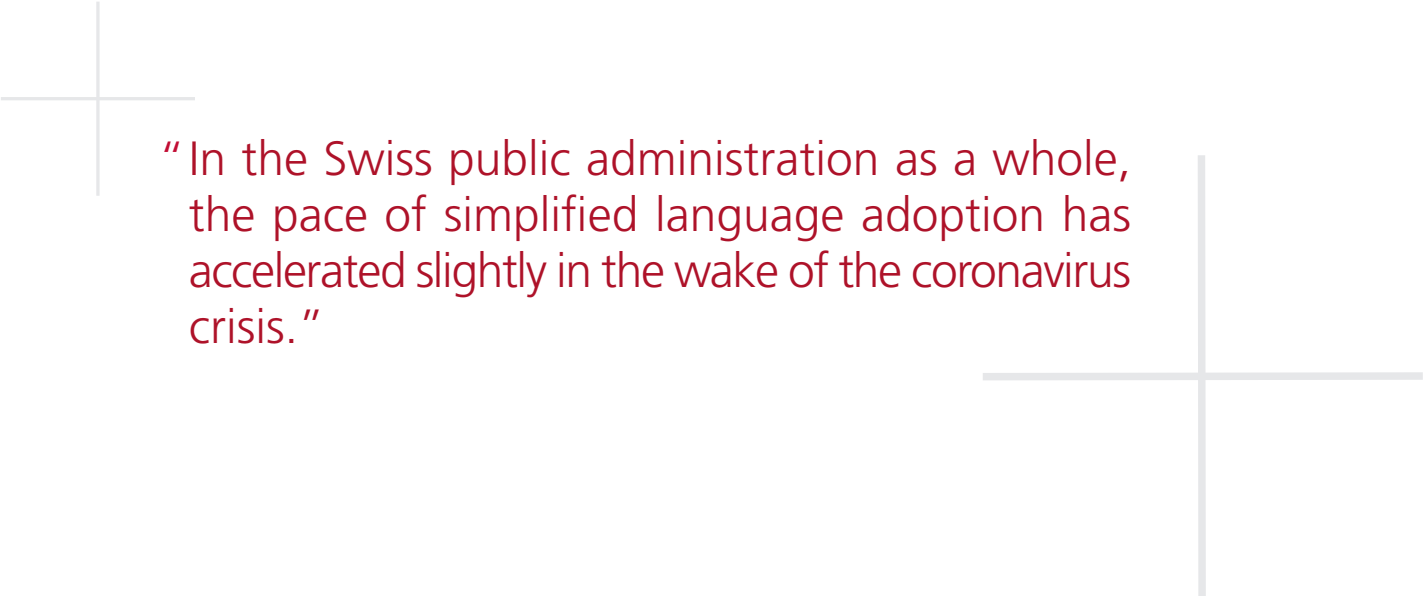
Plain language use in public administration

Public Management and Marketing unit Prof. Martial Pasquier and Iris Bhatia

Introduction

In Switzerland, approximately 16% of the adult population have difficulty understanding written texts (OFS, 2006). Most of these are persons with an intellectual disability, persons with a low level of education, or allophones. When they encounter government documents, people with low reading skills have only limited access to a certain amount of information. This contributes to hindering accessibility to some public services, with a major risk of failure to apply for social benefits. This being so, there is a need to understand **to what extent the public administration is adapting its communications to better meet specific needs of the population**.

Some administrations are indeed attempting to improve communication by using simplified forms of administrative language. Historically, simplified language came in response to demands for accessibility and inclusion. Since the 1940s in the United States, actors in the economic field have been advocating for what is known as "plain language". In 2010, the Obama administration enacted the "Plain Writing Act" aimed at making the use of simplified language mandatory in all federal government services. Starting in the 1970s, movements for the democratization of society that emerged from Scandinavian countries have been demanding the use of "easy-to-read language" to better meet the needs of people with disabilities. Table 1 sets out some rules for texts written in easy-to-read language that can be used to communicate with any person with limited reading skills.

"In the Swiss public administration as a whole, the pace of simplified language adoption has accelerated slightly in the wake of the coronavirus crisis."

Guide for writing *easy-to-read* text

Rule		Examples
Writing the text…	use active verbs, not passive keep punctuation simple use positive language split long sentences	active: we wrote the leaflet. passive: the leaflet was written by us . positive: eat less fatty food negative: don't eat too much fat
make sure the sentence describes events in the order that they happen / need to happen.		fill the kettle with water, then switch it on switch the kettle on after filling it with water
Layout and design	use Arial font (at least 14 but no bigger than 16) do not use block capitals, italics or underlining put important information in bold no more than 12 words in a sentence 1 topic per page	How to complain Talk to staff and tell them you want to complain. If you telephone us we will write this down and sent you a letter that says why you have complained. Tell us if you want the letter in easy read.

Table 1 | Sample rules for writing in easy-to-read language
(source: Easy read UK (https://www.easyreaduk.co.uk/making-information-easy-read/)

The research process

To answer the research question, we looked at the use of plain language in Switzerland. We conducted documentary research on Swiss cantons to ascertain how many documents are available, and what type of content has been rewritten in a form of simplified language and by whom (cantonal for communal public administration, or associations). In the initial phase of the research project, only documents available on the Internet were consulted during 2021.

Adoption of plain language in Switzerland

In the Swiss public administration as a whole, the pace of simplified language adoption has accelerated slightly in the wake of the coronavirus crisis, even though it has remained slow in comparison with neighbouring countries such as France. For example, the main information on coronavirus published on the OFSP website is written in easy-to-read language, as is a description of the workings of the Swiss political system available on the Federal Parliament portal.

As regards the cantons, six are currently proactive in terms of adopting forms of simplified language. These are the cantons of Fribourg, Geneva, Berne, Argovie, Lucerne and Saint-Gall, which have published one or more easy-to-read documents on, among other subjects, the protection of adults, accessibility of cantonal services and practical information for new arrivals. However, requests for simplified administrative language are multiplying, in both the political and associative worlds. In French-speaking Swiss cantons, the subject is frequently debated in cantonal legislative bodies, particularly in Geneva, Vaud and Fribourg. Some municipalities have shown the way forward: the city of Berne, for example, has rewritten its entire website, and the municipality of Bourg-en-Lavaux has undertaken similar work. The cultural milieu has also taken steps: Geneva's Ariana museum offers a tour in language that is easy to read and understand.

Faced with the growing diversity of specific needs within the population, the administration is considering adapting public services to these target groups. Our research shows that a growing number of Swiss cantonal administrations are opting for forms of simplified language and that the issue is gathering momentum in the world of politics.

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Reference

OFS. (2006). *Lire et calculer au quotidien. Compétences des adultes en Suisse*. https://www.ibe.uzh.ch /static/all/docs/773-0300.pdf

Personalized medicine in France: is access determined by a patient's place of residence?

Economics of Regulation unit Dr Samuel Kembou

Personalized medicine: an opportunity to improve patient management

Personalized medicine involves using technological tools to determine whether patients are likely to benefit from specific treatments. **Access to personalized medicine thus represents a major issue for the improvement of treatment strategies**. The *Swiss Personalized Health Network* is the Swiss platform for developing infrastructures to facilitate the exchange of health data for research into this issue (OFSP, 2017)[1]. However, work in this area in France is already yielding data from practice. **This is because, for the past two decades, the French government has conducted genetic testing for physicians, who can apply for this service using public test platforms**. In 2006, for example, the Institut National du Cancer funded 28 regional genetics centres for the purpose of facilitating access to molecular profiling of cancer patients. **This context provided a unique opportunity for measuring equity of access to personalized medicine and the main determinants at the level of the various *départements***.

Analysis of spatial data for a population of over 15,000 patients

Between April 2012 and April 2013, a national project gathered data on 15,814 patients diagnosed with advanced non-small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) whose doctors had sent them for a genetic test. Hypothetically, all advanced NSCLC patients should have been identified, since genetic profiling is recommended as part of regular treatment. To determine equity of access, we therefore used a two-stage research process: we first determined access rates adjusted for needs for treatment by patients' département of residence using the so-called small area variation method. Second, we created a regression model at the departmental level to determine the relationship between the adjusted rates and the economic and treatment availability variables.

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[1]   Office Fédéral de la Santé Publique (2017), Évolutions dans le domaine de la médecine axée sur les données; enjeux et tâches pour l'OFSP : Rapport du groupe de travail "Médecine personnalisée" de l'OFSP.

Inequity of access to genetic testing varies depending on the *département* of residence

The genetic testing rate at the national level is 47%, which was the expected result. However, rates vary significantly from one *département* to another, as shown in Figure 1 (left-hand side). The lowest "tester" conducted three times fewer tests than the highest.

Moreover, the results suggest that there is a statistically significant relationship between genetic screening rates and per-capita rates of general practitioners, radiation therapists (positive correlation) and surgeons (negative correlation), which might suggest that these professionals make different therapeutic choices. Similarly, on average, lower genetic testing rates are associated with higher rates of poverty. We document the relationship between poverty rates and testing rates using indicators of spatial association, which measure the correlation between two spatial variables (on the right on Figure 1). We identified four combinations of especially relevant relationships, based on the level of poverty (High or Low) and the testing rate (High or Low). Five *départements* combined low rates of poverty with relatively high test rates (Low-High), whereas five other

Age 20 - 99

○ (23.75 - 37.35)
  (37.56 - 42.65)
  (42.80 - 49.21)
  (49.53 - 56.31)
  (57.09 - 77.32)
● Sum

Poverty rate
- Testing rate

● Not significant (74)
● High-High (3)
  Low-Low (6)
  Low-High (5)
  High-Low (5)
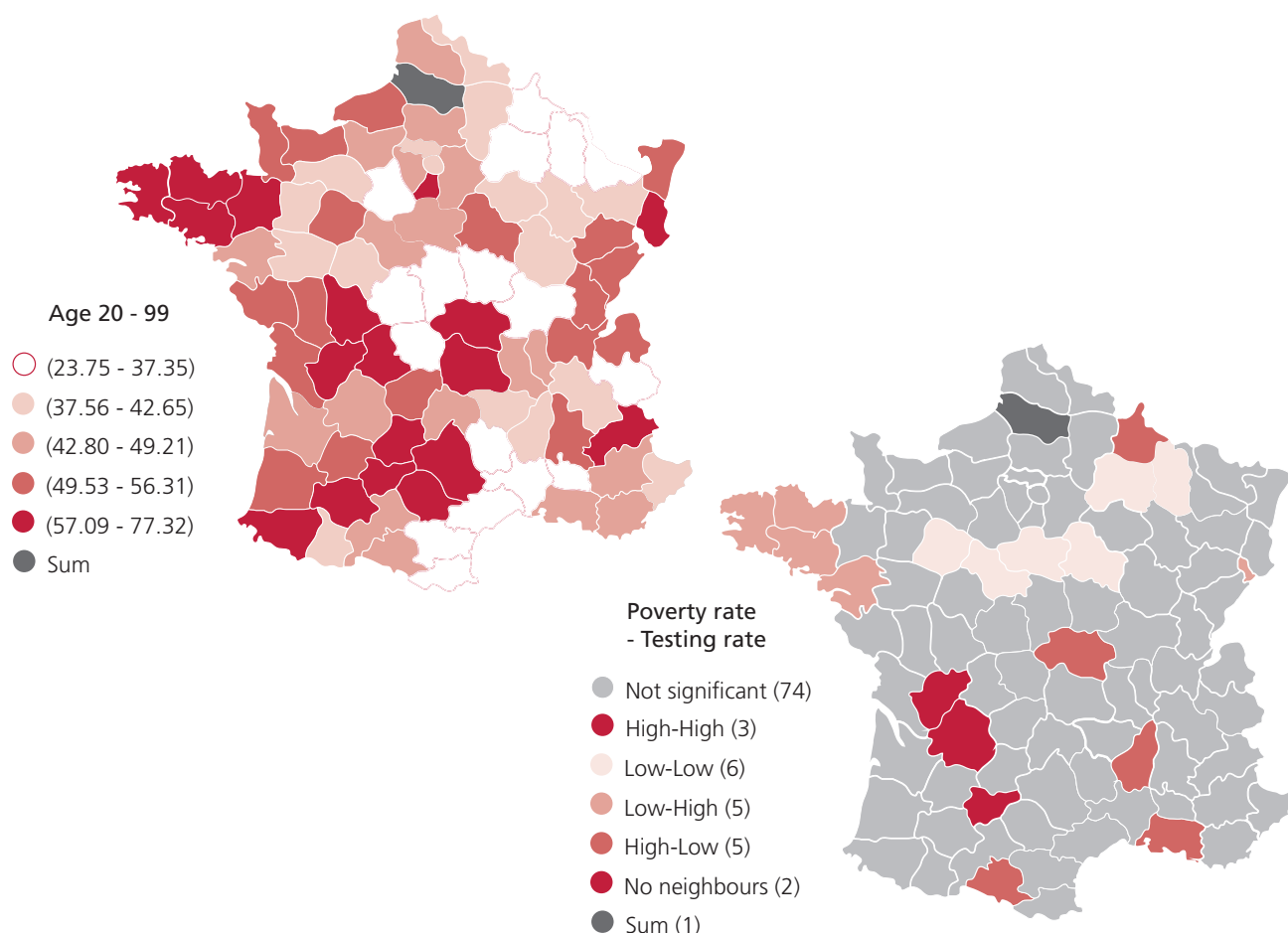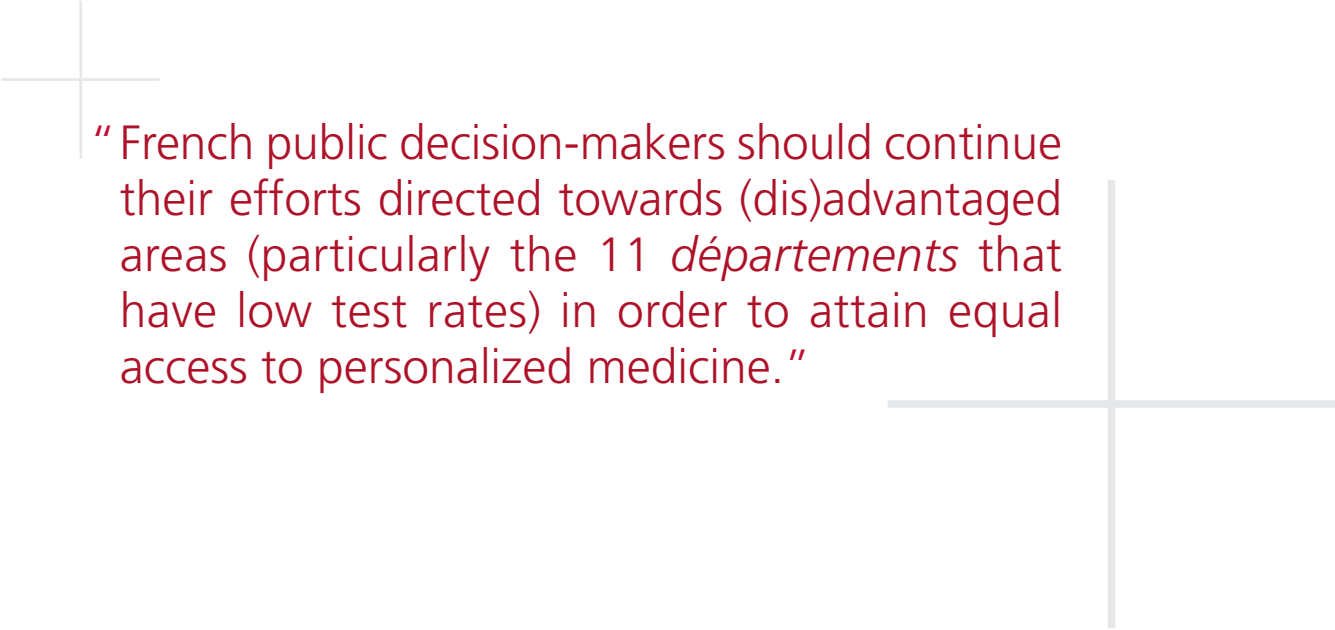● No neighbours (2)
● Sum (1)

Figure 1 | Left: Departmental quintiles of adjusted rates of genetic testing for NSCLC patients in France aged between 20 and 99. Right: Bivariate Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA) between poverty rate and genetic test rates.

" French public decision-makers should continue their efforts directed towards (dis)advantaged areas (particularly the 11 *départements* that have low test rates) in order to attain equal access to personalized medicine. "

départements combined high poverty rates with low test rates (High-Low). On the other hand, six *départements* combined a low poverty rate with a low test rate (Low-Low), and lastly, three *départements* had high poverty rates but high test rates (High-High). French public decision-makers should therefore continue their efforts directed towards (dis)advantaged areas (particularly the 11 *départements* that have low test rates) in order to attain equitable access to personalized medicine. **Lastly, medical practice recommendations could result in improved access in *départements* that have a high density of surgeons**.

Reference

Kembou Nzale S, Weeks WB, Ouafik L, Rouquette I, Beau-Faller M, Lemoine A, Bringuier PP, Le Coroller Soriano AG, Barlesi F, Ventelou B. Inequity in access to personalized medicine in France: Evidences from analysis of geo variations in the access to molecular profiling among advanced non-small-cell lung cancer patients: Results from the IFCT Biomarkers France Study. *PLoS One*. 2020 Jul 1;15(7):e0234387. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0234387. PMID: 32609781; PMCID: PMC7329126.

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