

Can pain be helpful as a quality indicator for health care systems ?

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Why is pain important?

➤ Pain is independent of social status, sex or ethnic origin

➤ Pain is present in many disease states

In most medical disciplines pain is more than merely a symptom of disease. In many instances pain should be considered a serious disease also able to influence the outcome of medical and surgical treatment¹

➤ Pain has a very high prevalence

Pain is the most common reason why patients seek medical attention and presents a serious problem for a large proportion of the population²

1 Gerbershagen K. et al.: Pain prevalence and risk distribution among inpatients in a german teaching hospital. Clinical Journal of Pain. 2009; 25 (5):431-437.

2 Coda BA, Bonica JJ. General considerations of acute pain. Loeser JD, Butler SH, Chapman CR, Turk DC, eds. Bonica's Management of Pain. 3rd ed. Philadelphia, Pa: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2001: 222-240.

The prevalence of chronic pain is high



Pain affecting muscles, joints, neck or back lasting >3 months is experienced by ~25% of the European population

The Belgium KCE estimated cost of back pain



- ***"The global cost of € 83.8 million is probably largely underestimated.***
- ***Moreover, based on the published information, this should be considered to be maximum 30 % of the burden of low back pain for society, which brings the rough estimate to € 272 million for the global cost.***
- ***When using however the highest direct cost (€ 164,712,379) and using the assumption that medical costs only represent 10 % of the global burden of low back pain the cost could be as high as €1.6 billion."***

Cost estimation of low back pain in Belgium

Included

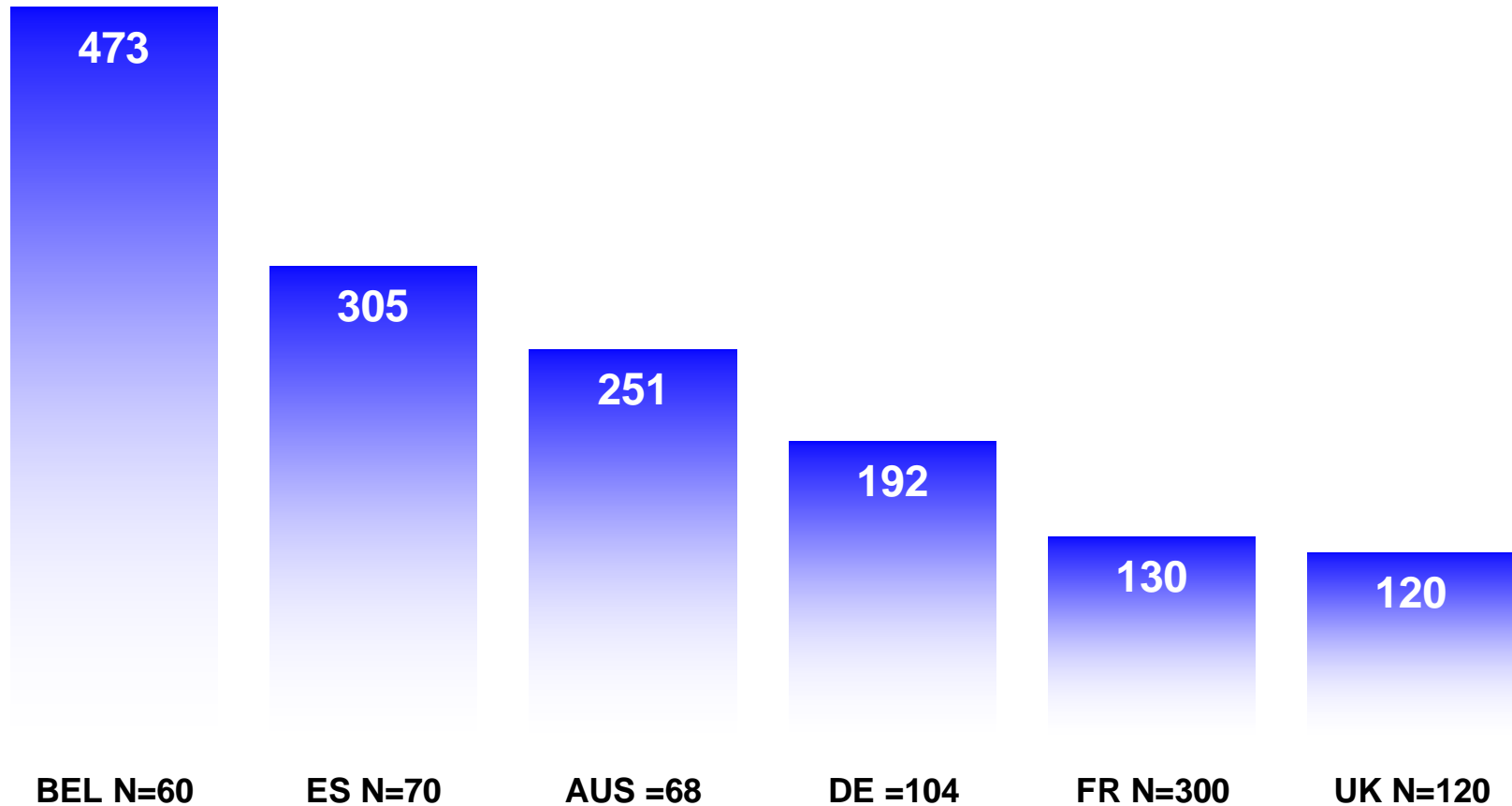
- History taking and follow-up
- Medical imaging
- Pharmacological treatment
- Physiotherapy
- Rehabilitation
- Epidural steroids
- Percutaneous radiofrequency
- Surgery
- Spinal cord stimulation

Not mentioned are the costs related to:

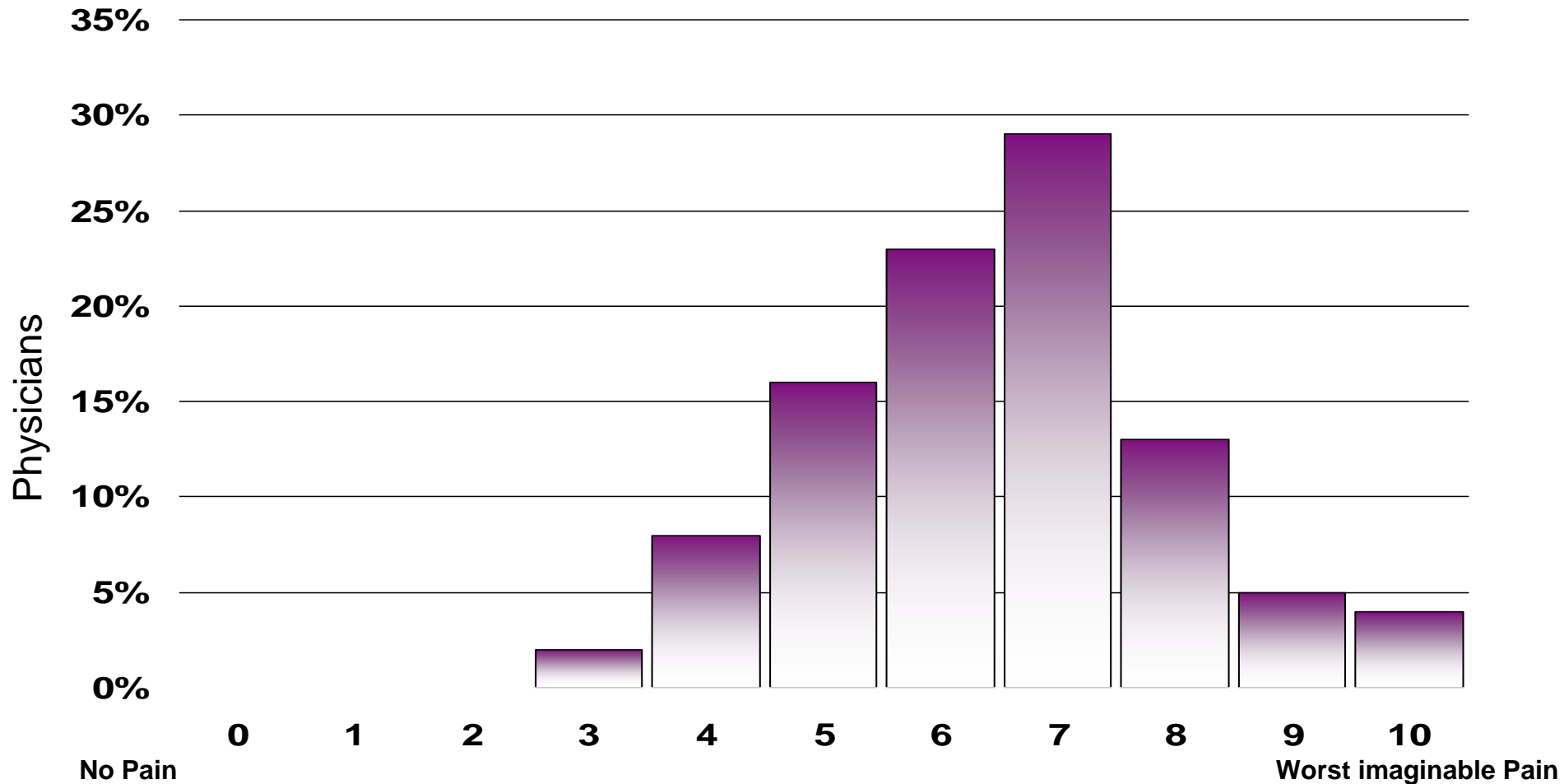
- informal care by relatives (e.g. loss of earnings)
- social care (e.g. costs of home care and respite care)
- absenteeism
- disability claims
- adverse events and therapy discontinuations
- ineffective interventions
- intangibles associated with deterioration in the QOL of patients and families

Therefore the total costs to society will probably exceed the amount of €1.6 billion by far

Average pain patients seen by general practitioners per month



When is chronic pain severe? There is no common understanding!

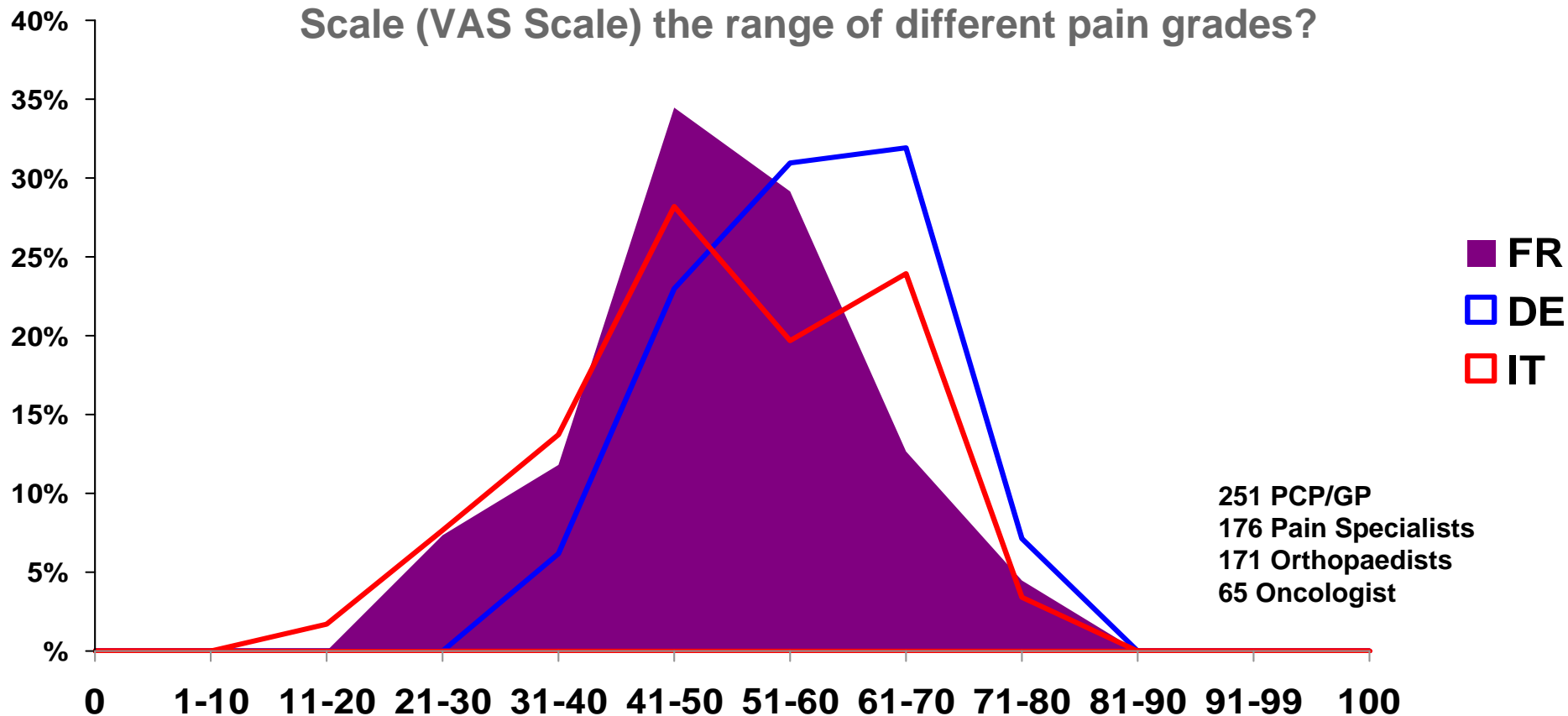


On a 10-Point Numerical Rating Scale from where on do you perceive chronic non-cancer pain to be severe?

N=403

Amongst physicians in different countries there is a big range of interpretation where severe pain starts

663 physicians were asked:
Where does severe pain start using a 100-point Visual-Analogue-Scale (VAS Scale) the range of different pain grades?

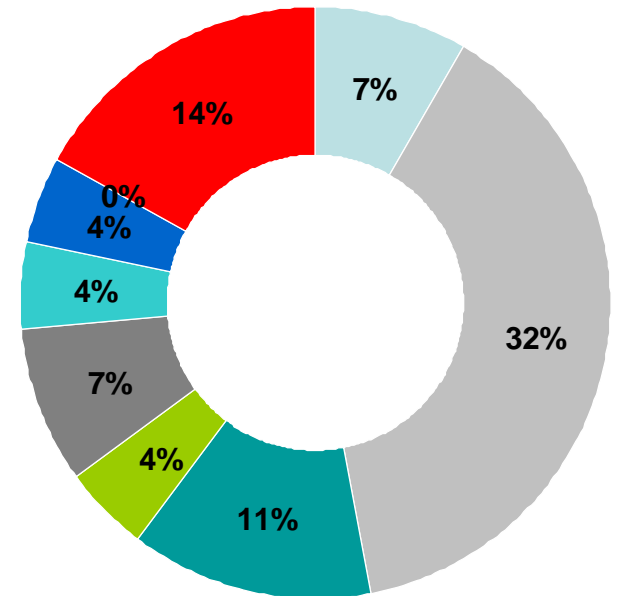
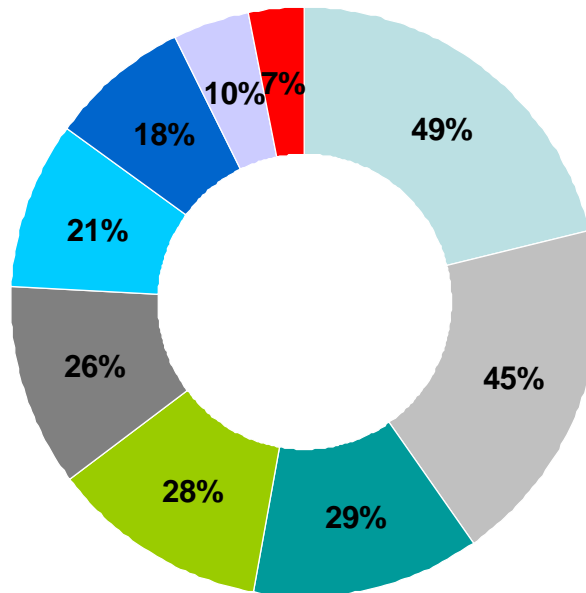


Pharmacological treatment approach for severe chronic low back pain has a wide spectrum

93% combination therapy
104 different combinations mentioned

7% monotherapy

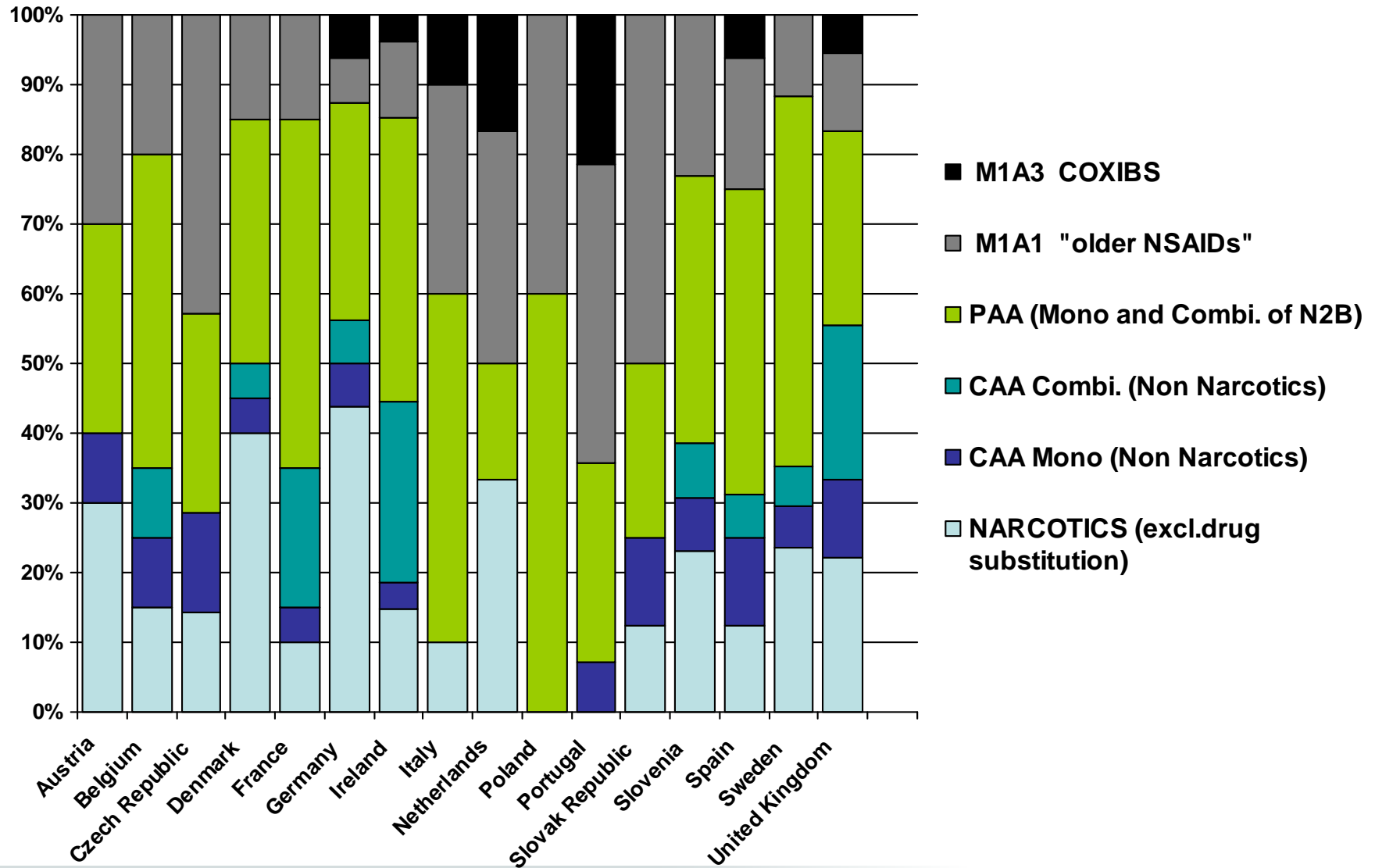
- Antidepressants
- NSAIDS
- Paracetamol
- Fixed Combinations Weak Opioids
- Classical Weak Opioids
- Classical Strong Oral Opioids
- Classical Strong Transdermal Opioids
- Topical Analgesics
- Fixed Combinations Strong Opioids



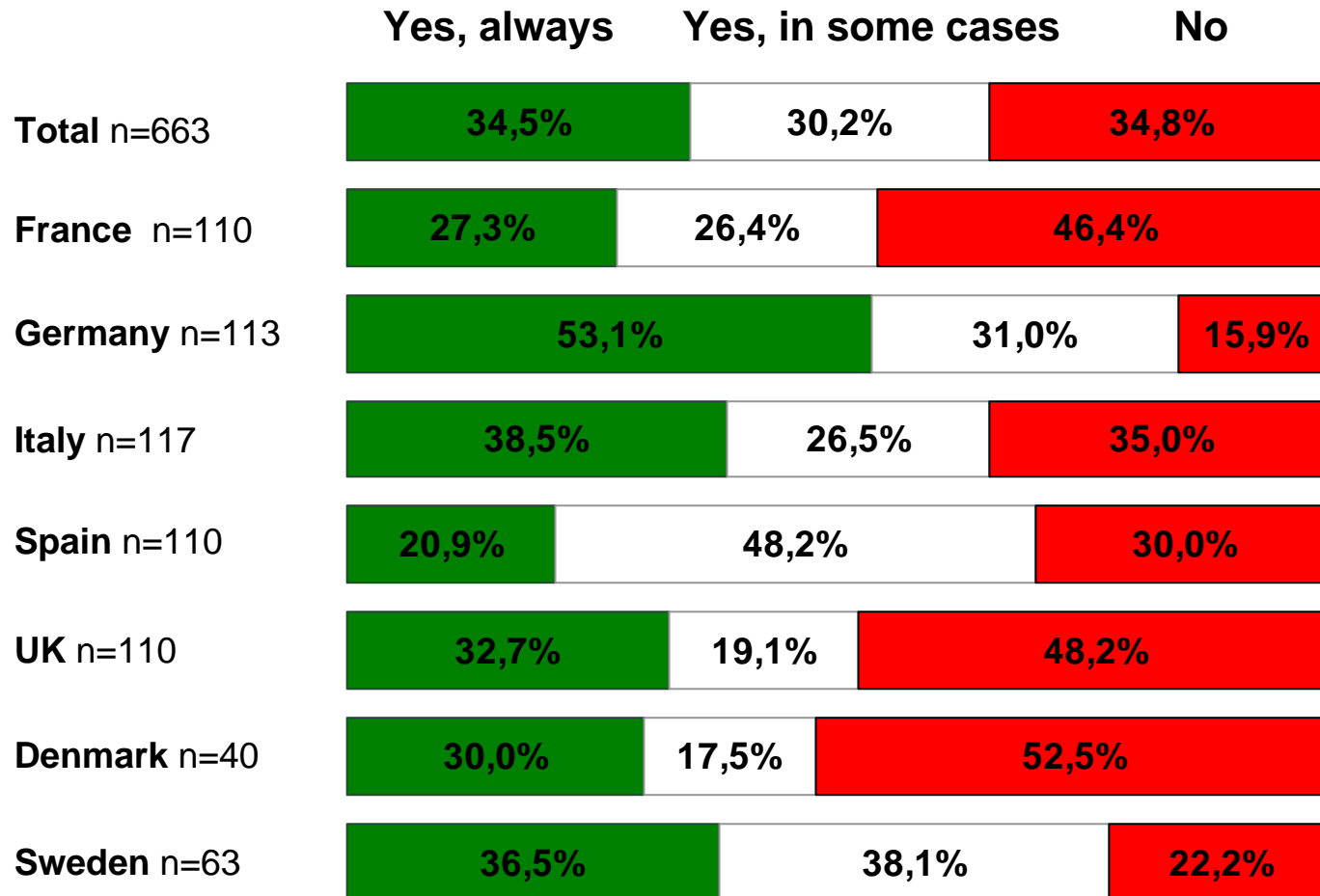
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What is your main pharmacological approach for treating your severe chronic low back pain patients? Please choose the combination you most commonly use

Prescription behaviour differs between countries



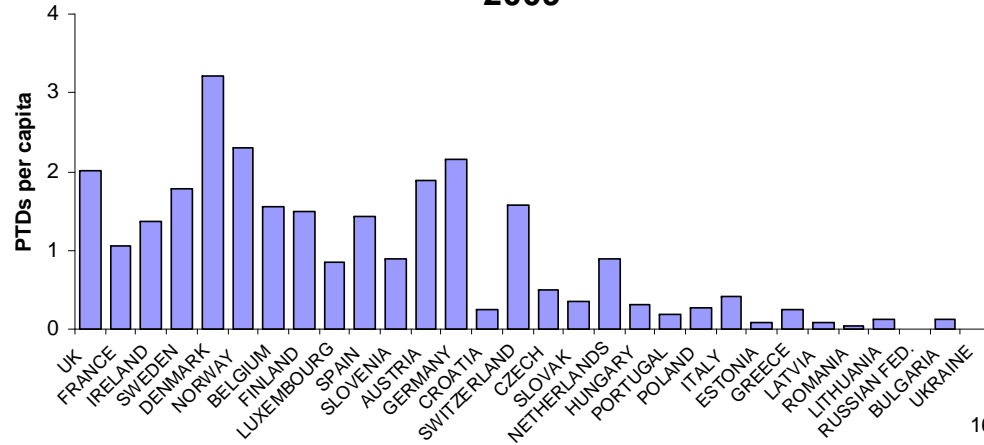
The impact of guidelines differs from country to country



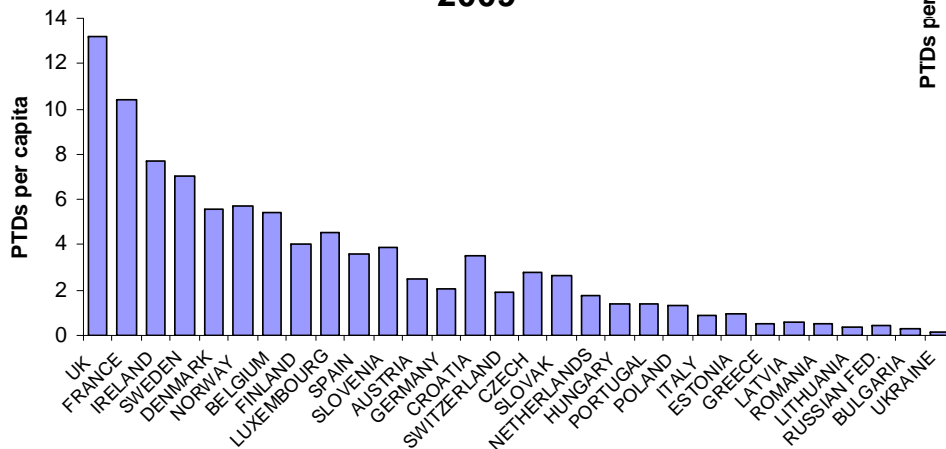
Do you use guidelines or standards to determine the pain treatment for patients suffering from?

There is a very big difference in patient treatment days for opioids in the EU

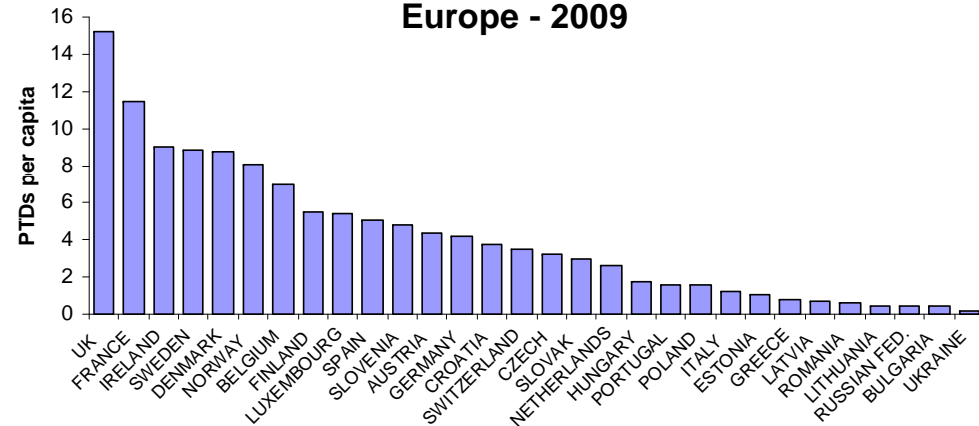
Strong opioides - PTDs per capita in Europe - 2009



Weak opioides* - PTDs per capita in Europe - 2009



Central Acting Analgesics - PTDs per capita in Europe - 2009



Can pain be helpful as a quality indicator for health care systems?

- The number of patients affected by pain is very significant.
- The economic and social burden of chronic severe pain is derived from inherent direct costs and indirect costs. The global cost of pain is probably largely underestimated.
- Looking at the available data we find a very heterogeneous situation across Europe in the management of pain.
- This indicates for the health care systems that best practice in prevention and management of pain are sparsely shared over Europe.
- Because of its high prevalence and impact on patients and society, pain should be recognized as a significant health care quality indicator.
- Improved knowledge on the societal impact of pain will help us to define measures to improve the clinical and economical burden of pain.
- The definition of clear health care indicators measuring pain in the population will support the implementation of a best practice approach to improve care.

THANKS A LOT FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION