



# **The role of health education in improving health in Europe**

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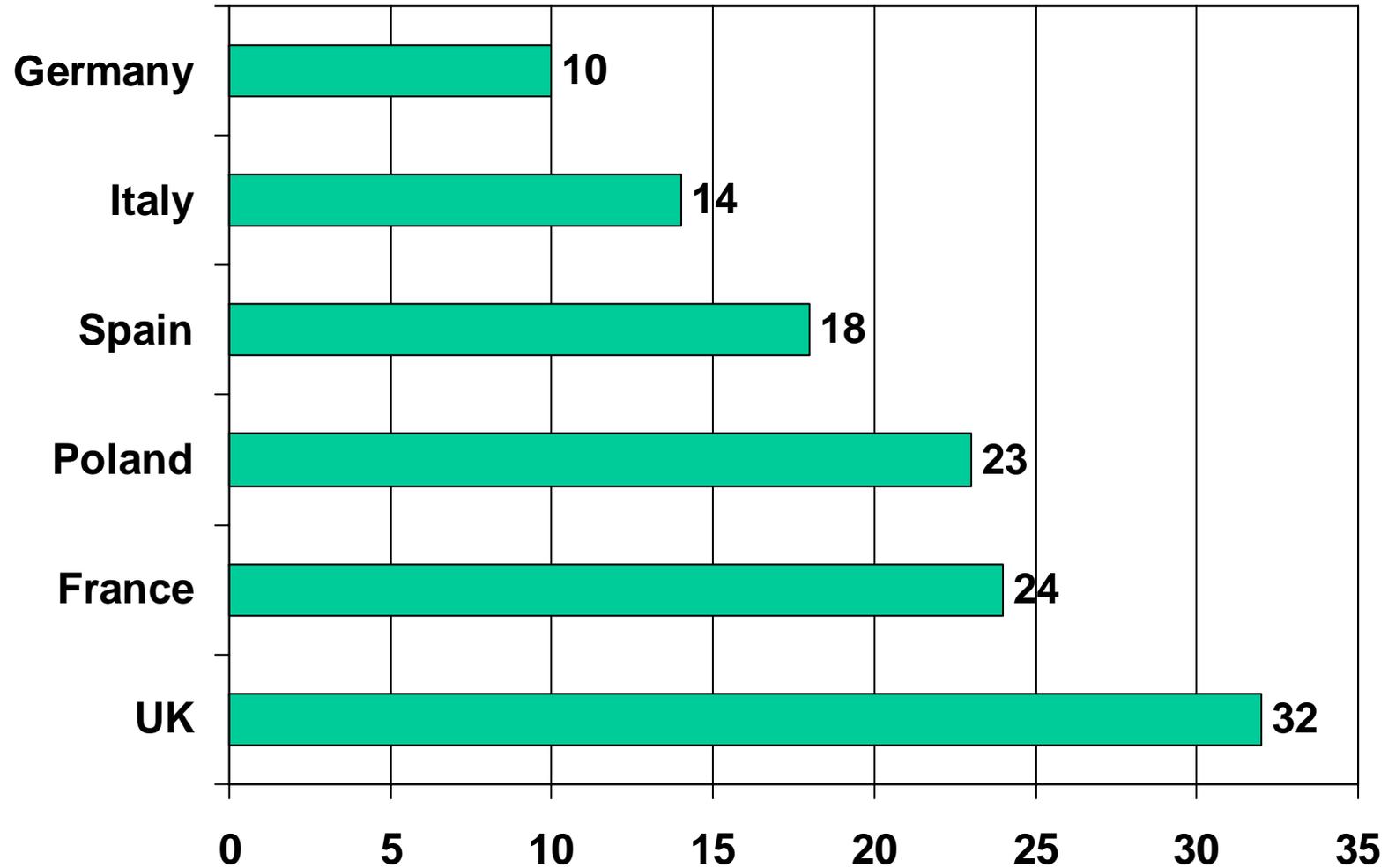


# The role of health education and information (The theory)

- **Raising awareness of**
  - Risk factors (genetics, life style) -> Improved prevention
  - Symptoms, Screening and detection possibilities -> Timely diagnosis
  - Treatment options, medical interventions and care possibilities -> Improved management of chronic conditions and adherence to treatment
  - Ethical issues and legal questions -> Patient rights and patient centred care



# From symptoms to diagnosis



« Inequalities in dementia care across Europe: An Agenda for change » in International Journal of Clinical Practice, March 2005, Volume 59, Supplement 146



# **Barriers to timely diagnosis - Carers**

- **Lack of recognition of symptoms (70%)**
- **Lack of recognition of severity of symptoms (61%)**
- **Symptoms perceived as normal part of ageing (58%)**
- **Suspected other medical condition (52%)**
- **Denial and fear**

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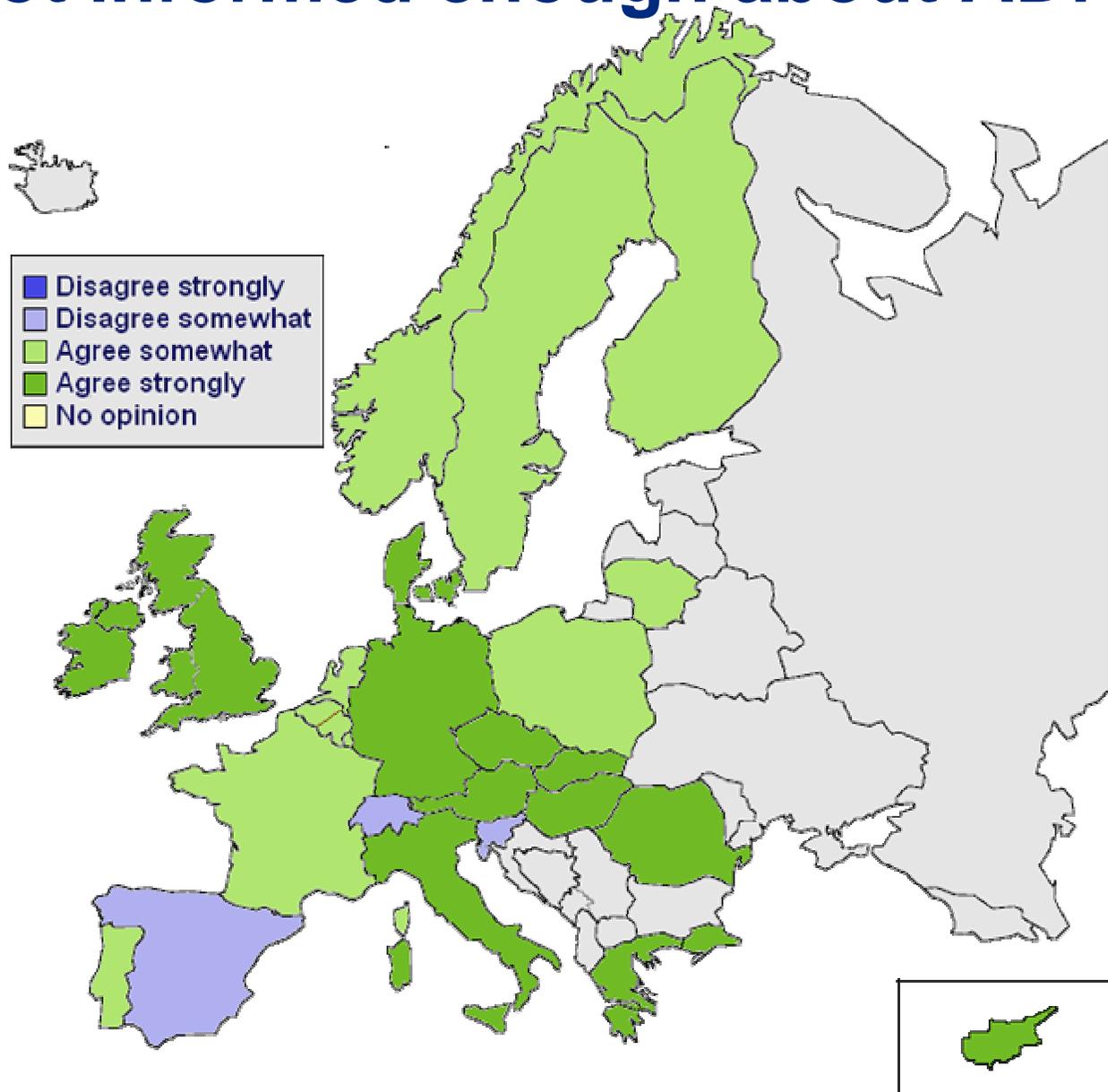


## The way forward (i)

- **Improve health education through disease specific awareness campaigns (targeted at key audiences)**
  - Encourage patients to present earlier
  - Reduce time to diagnosis

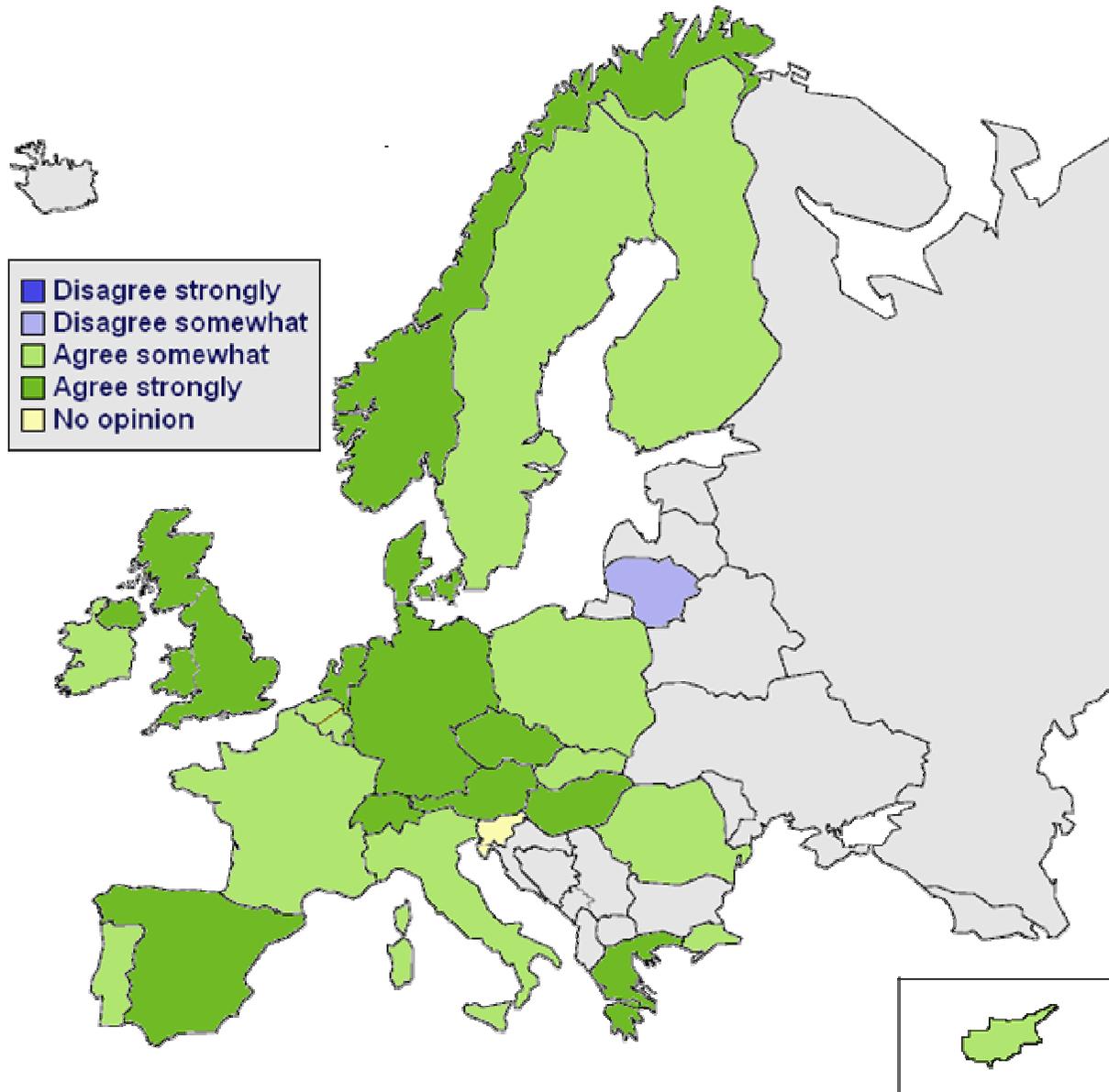


# Primary health care system (GPs) is not informed enough about ADRD





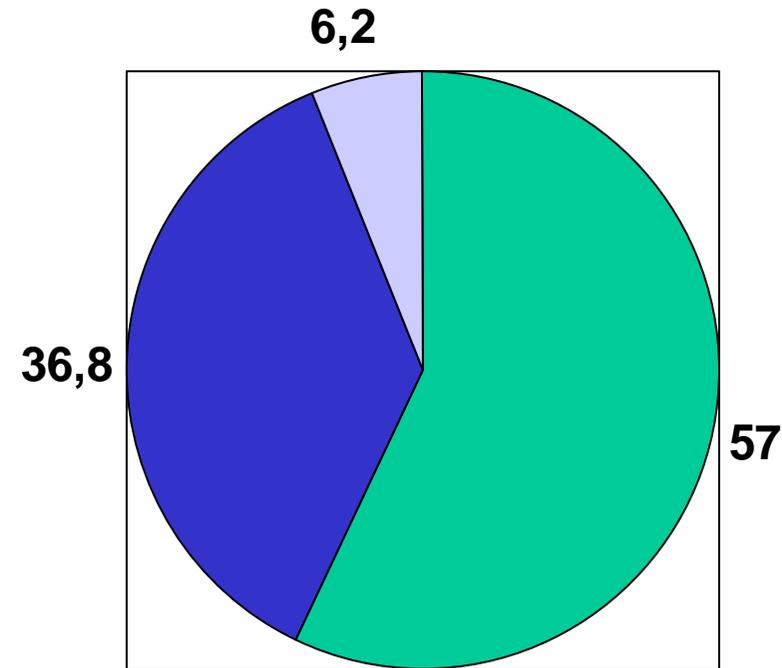
# Some GPs do not refer people with memory problems to specialists





# Satisfaction with diagnostic process

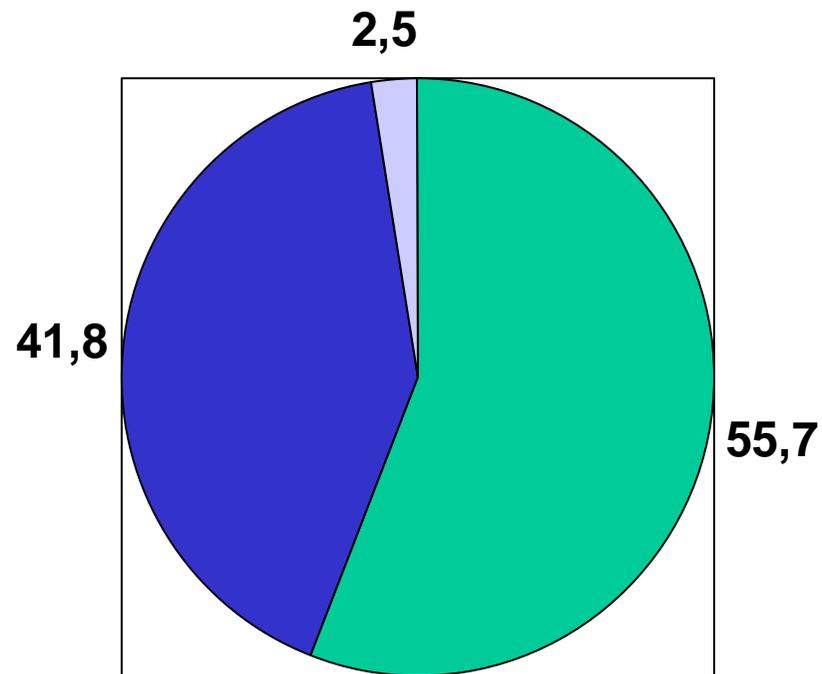
■ Satisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ DK/DA



Alzheimer Europe (2002): European survey on Alzheimer family carers (OPDAL – Optimisation of the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders)



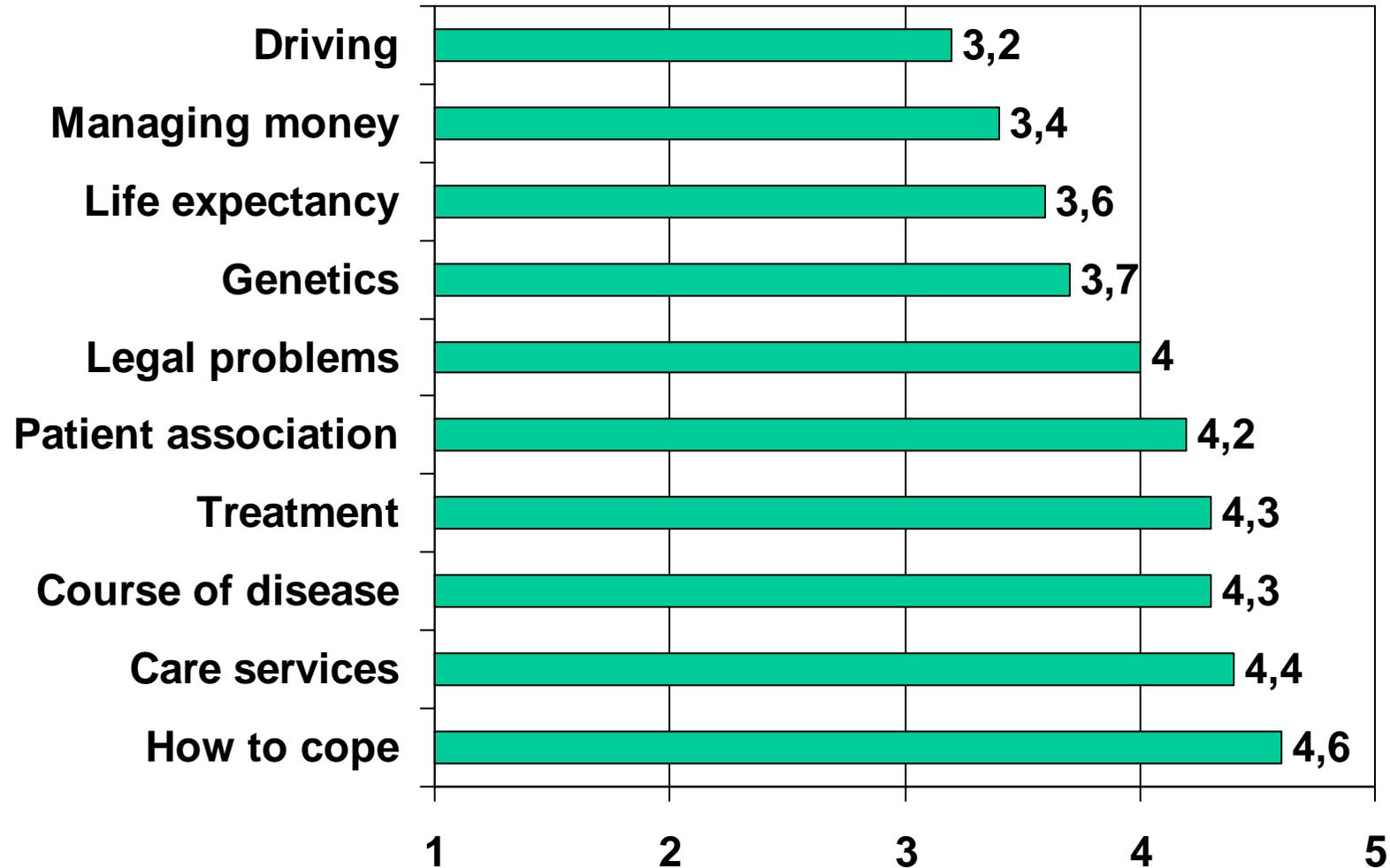
# Information at diagnosis



Alzheimer Europe (2002): European survey on Alzheimer family carers (OPDAL – Optimisation of the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders)



# Information needs



Alzheimer Europe (2002): European survey on Alzheimer family carers (OPDAL – Optimisation of the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders)



## The way forward (ii)

- **Improve training of health professionals**
  - Better communication of relevant information at diagnosis
  - Better referral to specialist medical and support services (including patient associations)



# Reach of Alzheimer associations

	Members	Percentage of people with dementia
Cyprus	500	18.48%
Finland	9,200	15.65%
Luxembourg	634	13.59%
Ireland	2,500	7.89%
Sweden	9,837	7.47%
Switzerland	6,300	7.13%
Norway	3,600	6.23%
France	13,553	1.78%
Italy	5,000	0.63%

Alzheimer Europe (2005): « The Alzheimer movement in Europe » in 2004 Annual Report



# Access to health education and information (In practice)

- **Widening gap between informed patients and others**
  - Access to Internet or not (especially true for diseases affecting elderly people)
  - Knowledge of languages (more information available in English)
  - Possibility of access to specialist services (memory clinics)
  - Ethnic minorities, rural areas
- **Ultimately access to information = access to care, treatment and better health**

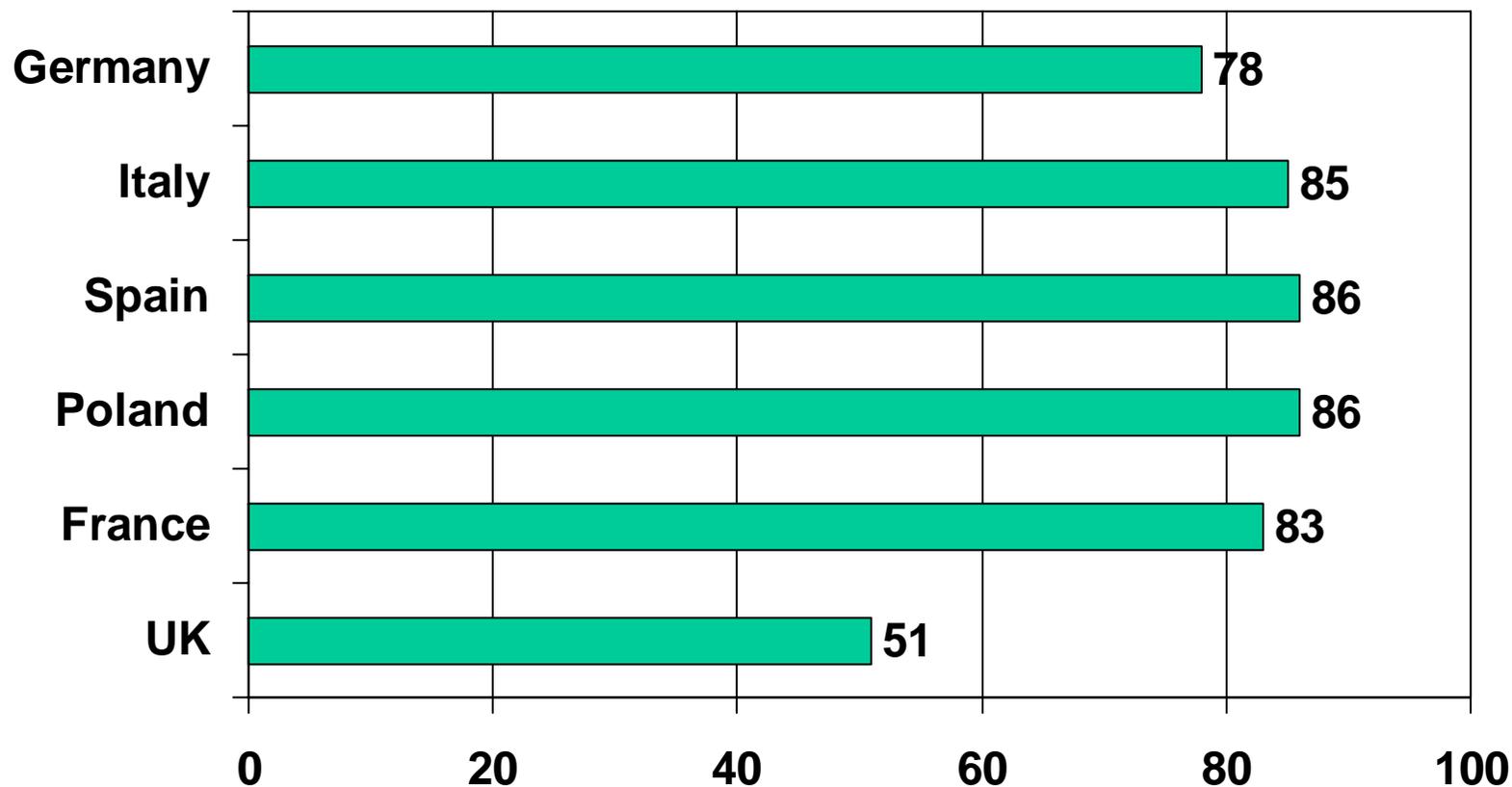


## The way forward (iii)

- **Recognise role of patient and carer associations**
  - Improve information provided to patients
  - Develop better support and counselling for patients
  - Reduce isolation and stress of patients and carers
  - Outreach programmes of patient associations

# Access to treatment

Percentage of carers reporting that doctors recommended treatment at diagnosis

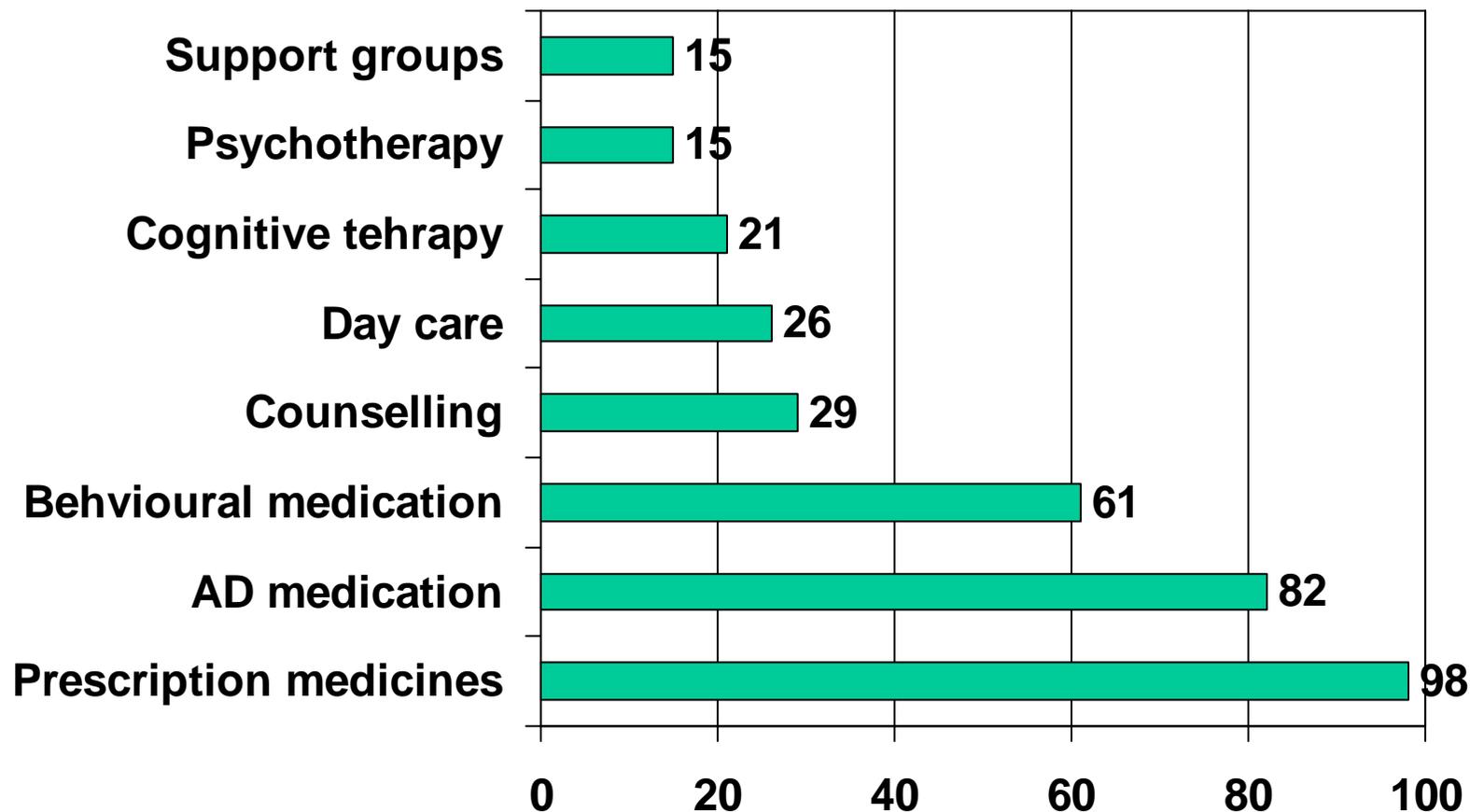


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# Access to treatment

## Recommended treatment



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# The cost to society?

- Direct cost to healthcare budgets for reimbursed drugs
- Prevention of possible conditions (high cholesterol, hyper-tension, osteoporosis)
- Cure / Management / Improved quality of life for people suffering from conditions, as well as their families and carers – Price?
- Possible decrease in other healthcare costs – Fewer/NO hospitalisations, acute or emergency surgery
- Impact on other budgets – Increased productivity (loss of work days), delayed institutionalisation for people with Alzheimer's



# Conclusions

- **Information to patients should be diversified and strengthened to allow more patients to become informed patients**
- **Informed patients should be encouraged, not feared**
- **Informed patients are an asset to the healthcare system and society**
- **Budgets for health, NOT just healthy budgets**