Creating Enabling Environments for Health, Independence and Ageing in Dignity

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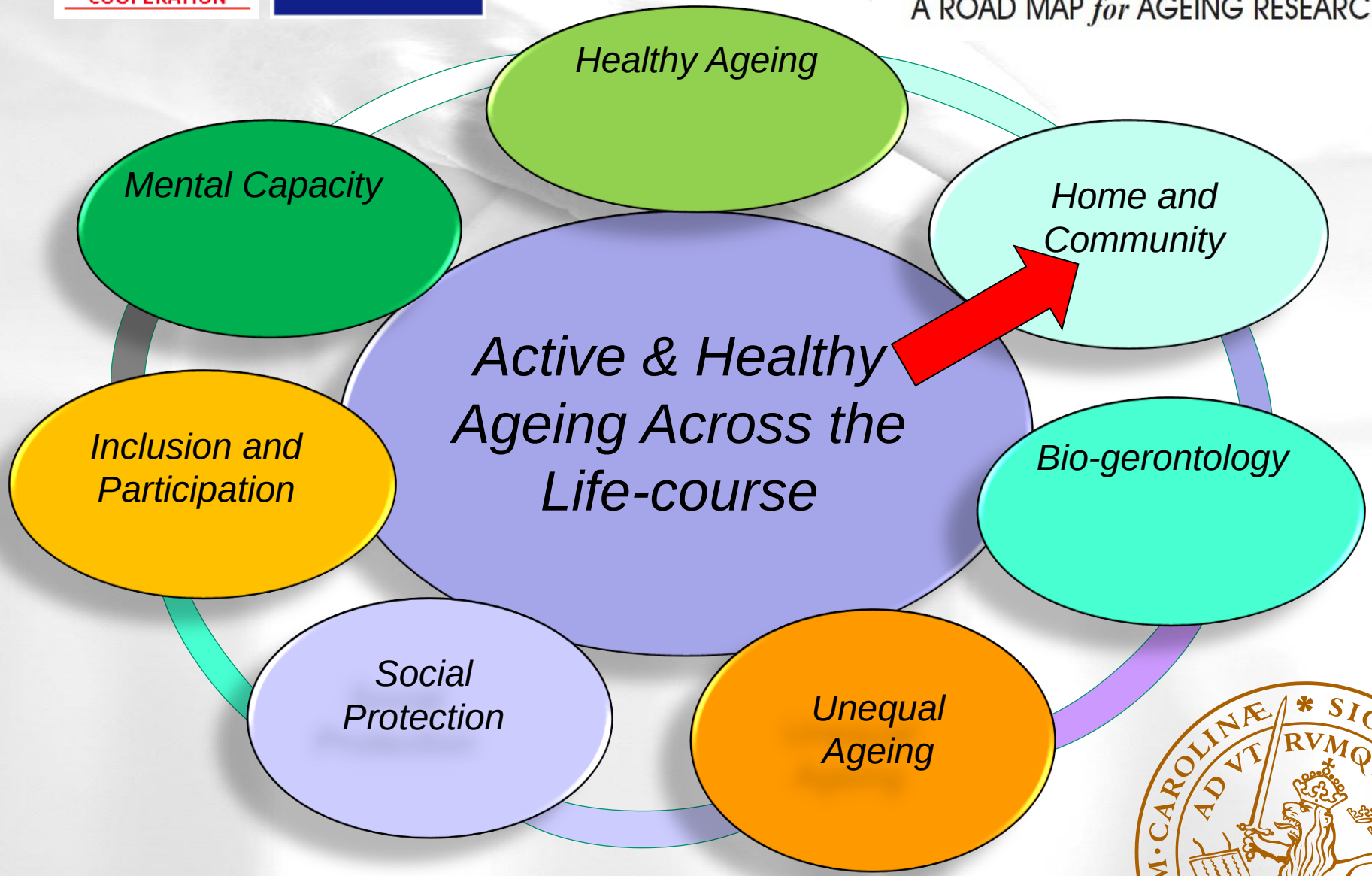
P

COOPERATION

FUTURAGE

A ROAD MAP *for* AGEING RESEARCH



The Person-Environment Interaction

- Traditional focus on the ageing individual and population – less so on environments and person-environment interactions
- Combinations of functional limitations as related to environmental barriers result in accessibility problems
- The societal infrastructure must be accessible and enable activity and participation
- More attention to differences among EU member states is crucial

Population Diversity

- People along the process of ageing (old/very old people, but also younger cohorts)
- Persons ageing with a disability
- Third and Fourth Age = non-chronological but functional age definitions
- Demography differences across Europe

Environment Diversity

Arenas where older people primarily perform their everyday activities

- **Physical Dimensions**

  Housing, neighbourhoods, public facilities, and traffic & roads in the local community

- **Social Dimensions**
- **Cultural Dimensions**

Assistive devices intertwined with the person- environment-activity interplay

Aspects of Housing

Objective

Housing standard

Physical environmental barriers

Accessibility

Perceived (subjective)

Housing Satisfaction

Usability

Meaning of Home

Housing Control

Quantitative Studies on Home & Health

- *Accessibility problems (P-E fit) are important for health – not environmental barriers per se*
- ***Objective aspects of housing seems to be more important among those with higher functional capacity – perceived aspects more important among those with lower***
- *Living in more accessible housing is related to perceiving home as more meaningful and useful, less attribution of control to external factors, higher independence in daily activities, and life satisfaction*
- ***Not only housing accessibility, but also feeling in control over one's housing situation, is important for independence in daily activities***

Qualitative Studies on Home & Health

The importance of home – for meaning, for daily activity, for independence, etc.

Differences for older people e.g. between welfare states and developing countries

Increased understanding of how people reason as concerns interventions in the home

Assistive technology is integrated with daily activities, in the home

Home has neighbourhood dimensions, too – outdoor mobility is important

“Let’s Go for a Walk!”

Pedestrian environments

Increased accessibility/usability and safety/security for older people after implementation of measures in the outdoor environment

User involvement (older people)
Municipality, authorities, organisations involved
Implementation and Evaluation

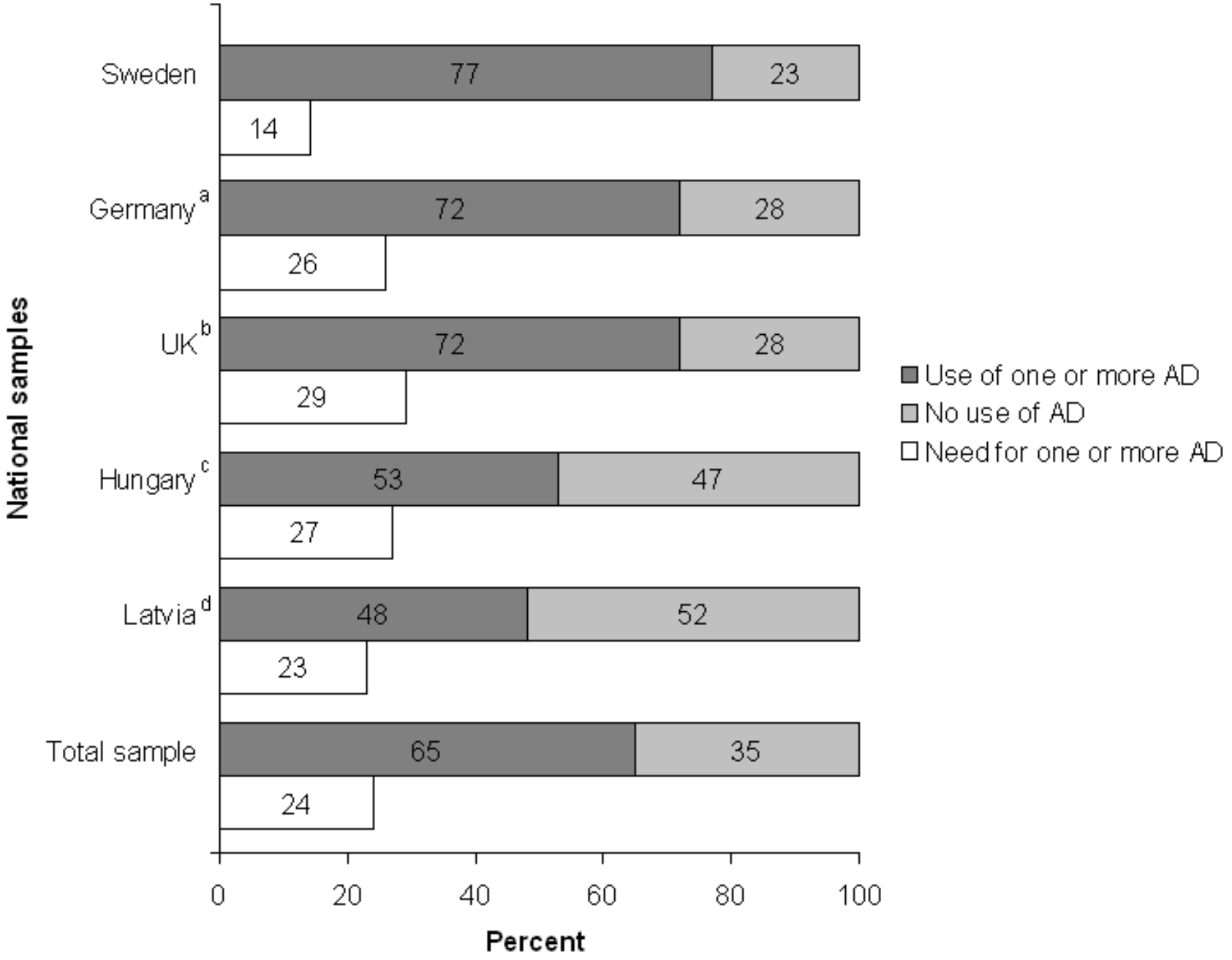
Increased usability; less experienced problems
Measures appreciated, in particular by rollator users
Increased safety; less experienced risks
Still - no mobility increase; 4 years older

Assistive Devices

Products available for people with functional limitations or/and disabilities, not any technical equipment or product designed for the general population

Are used to:

- compensate for environmental demands, and for disability and functional decline
- enable the person to stay independent and maintain engagement in meaningful activities and social participation, e.g. to reduce difficulties and limitations in everyday activities


Sweden
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Germany[a]
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26
UK[b]
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29
Hungary[c]
53
47
27
Latvia[d]
48
52
23
Total sample
65
35
24
National samples
0
20
40
60
80
100
Percent
Use of one or more AD
No use of AD
Need for one or more AD

Complexity
Impact on activity & participation
Changes over time
Combinations of devices
Adaptation of physical environment
Adaptation of task performance

“I wouldn´t manage very well without the rollator, I´m sure of that. I must have……the rollator is absolutely essential for me, I can use it for a lot of things, not just walking. ”

Summary

- More attention to health promotion and prevention based on a better understanding of person-environment dynamics
- Knowledge and actions going beyond housing and health care concerns
- Focus on the role of local neighborhoods
- Mobility is a key factor to activity, participation and health
- Remember that more people will live longer with chronic diseases – ageing with disability is a challenge for the future
- More attention to European cross-national diversity

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