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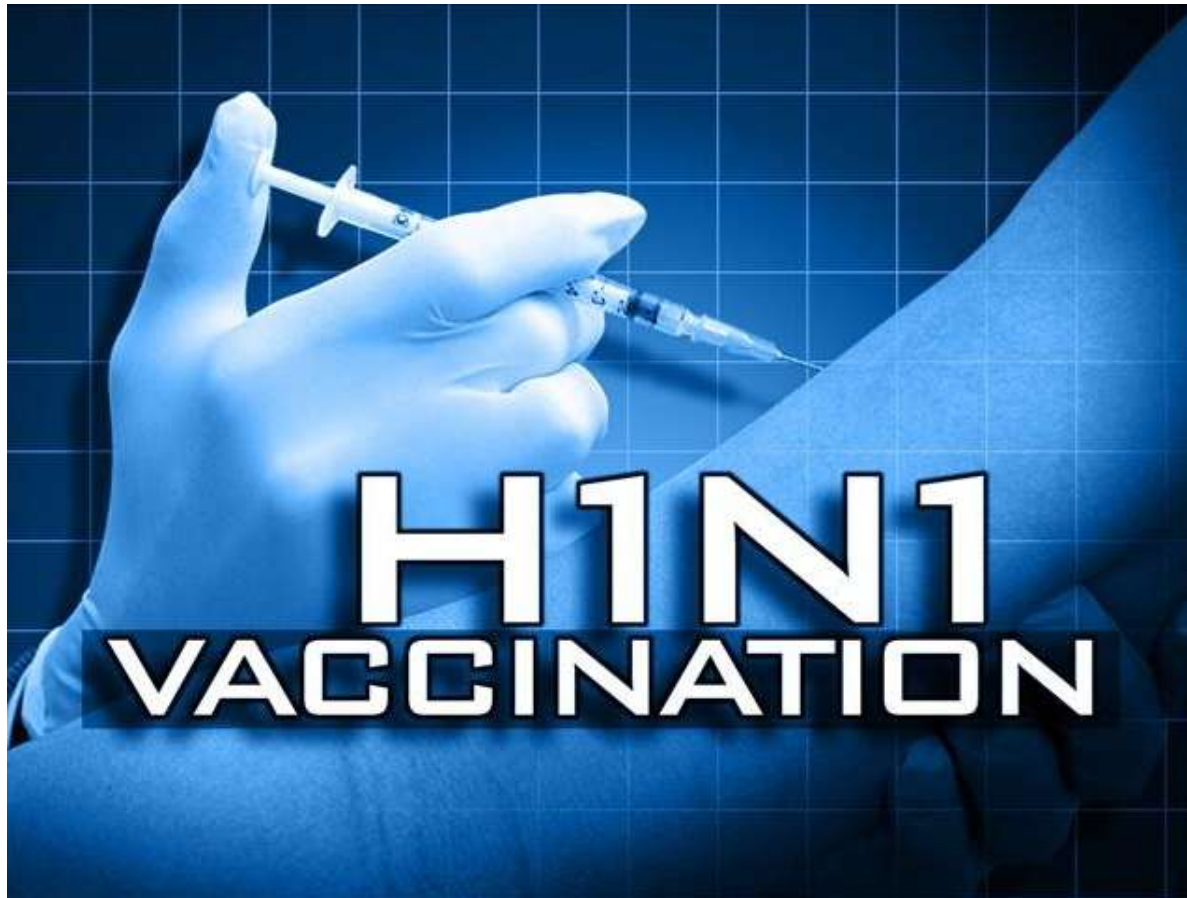
Patients between rights, obligations and autonomy: The example of Health Literacy

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2009: Should I get vaccinated if I am offered the pandemic vaccine?





Der Spiegel 23 2011

Why is Health Literacy important?

The modern health society is characterized by:

- An increasing life and health expectancy
- An expansive health and medical care system
- A rapidly growing private health market
- The prevalence of health as a dominant theme in social and political discourse
- The establishment of health as a major personal goal in life and as a right of citizenship

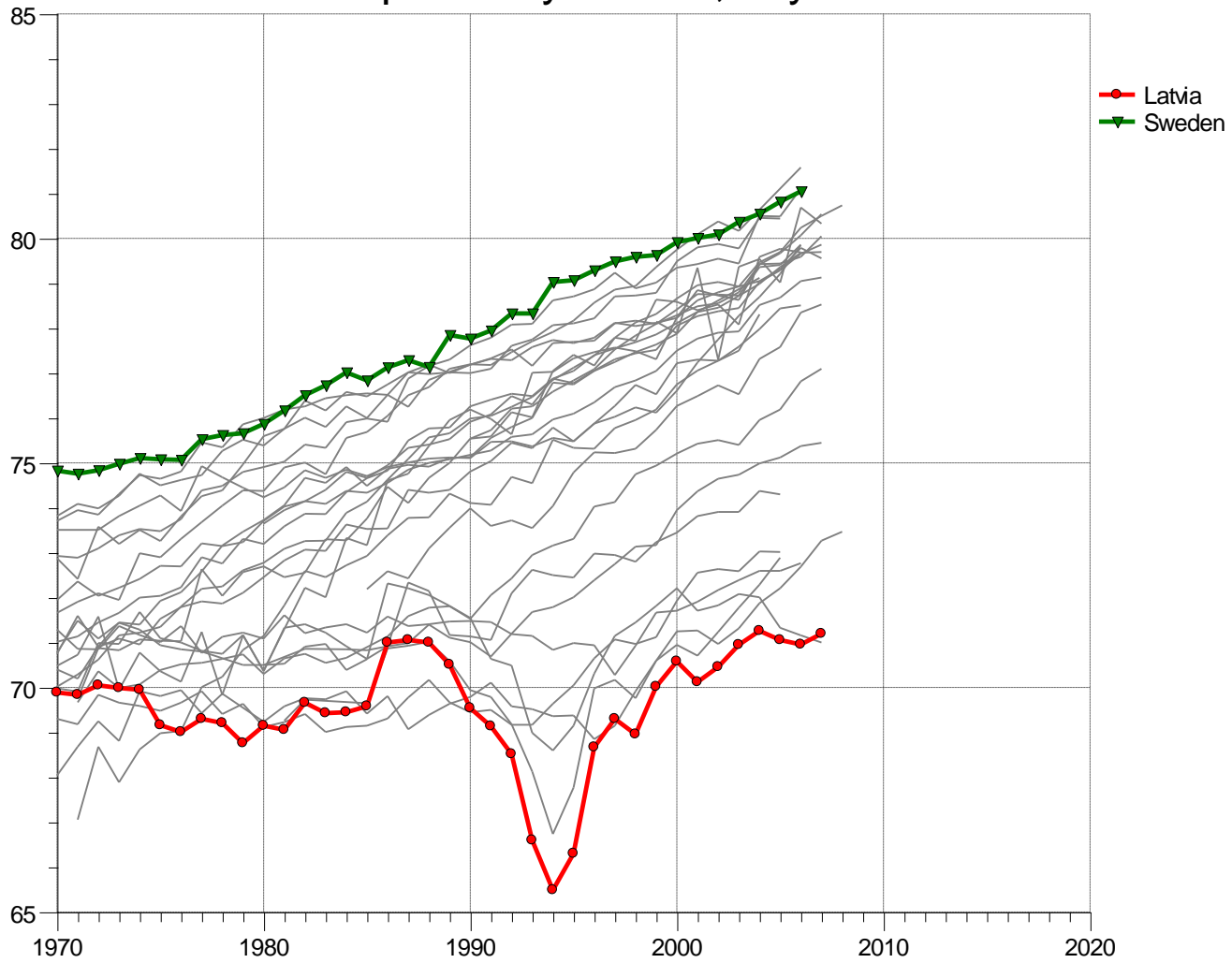
International Encyclopedia of Public Health, First Edition (2008), vol. 3, pp. 204-211

- Health literacy is an essential life skill for individuals
- Health literacy is a public health imperative
- Health literacy is an essential part of social capital
- Health literacy is a critical economic issue

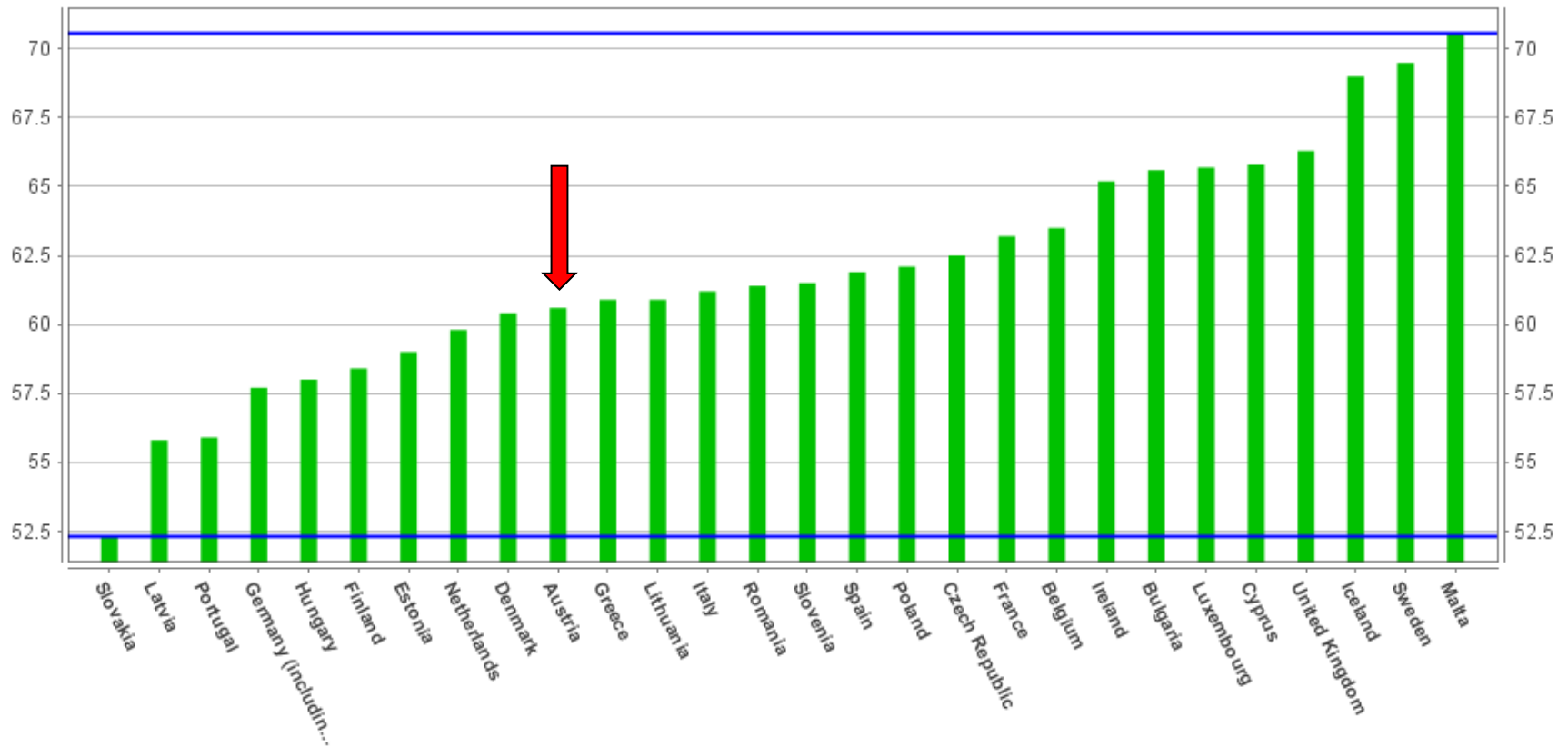
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Why is Health Literacy important for Europe?

Life expectancy at birth, in years

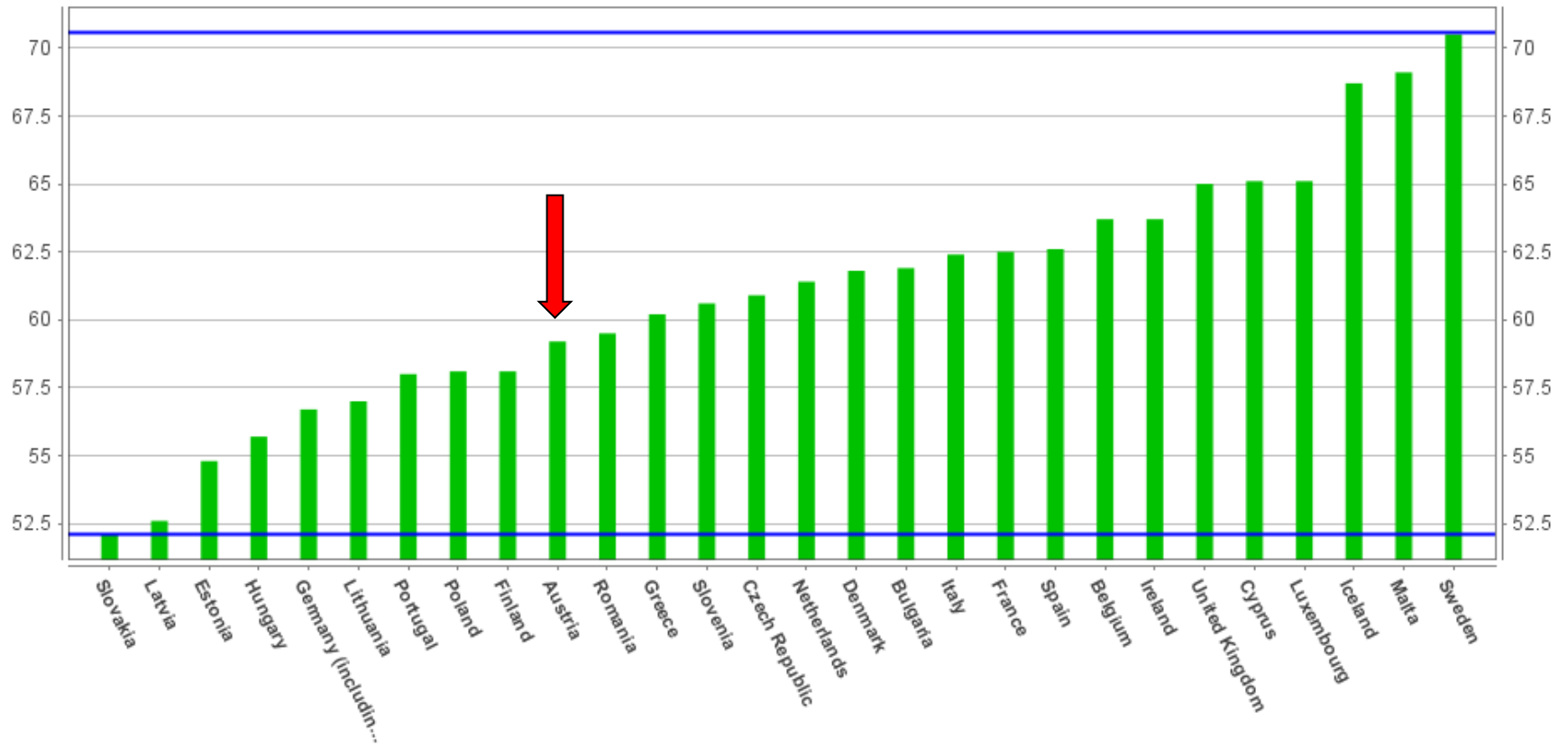


Healthy Life Years at birth **female** 2009 (IT, UK 2008)



Eurostat 2011

Healthy Life Years at birth male 2009 (IT, UK 2008)



Eurostat 2011

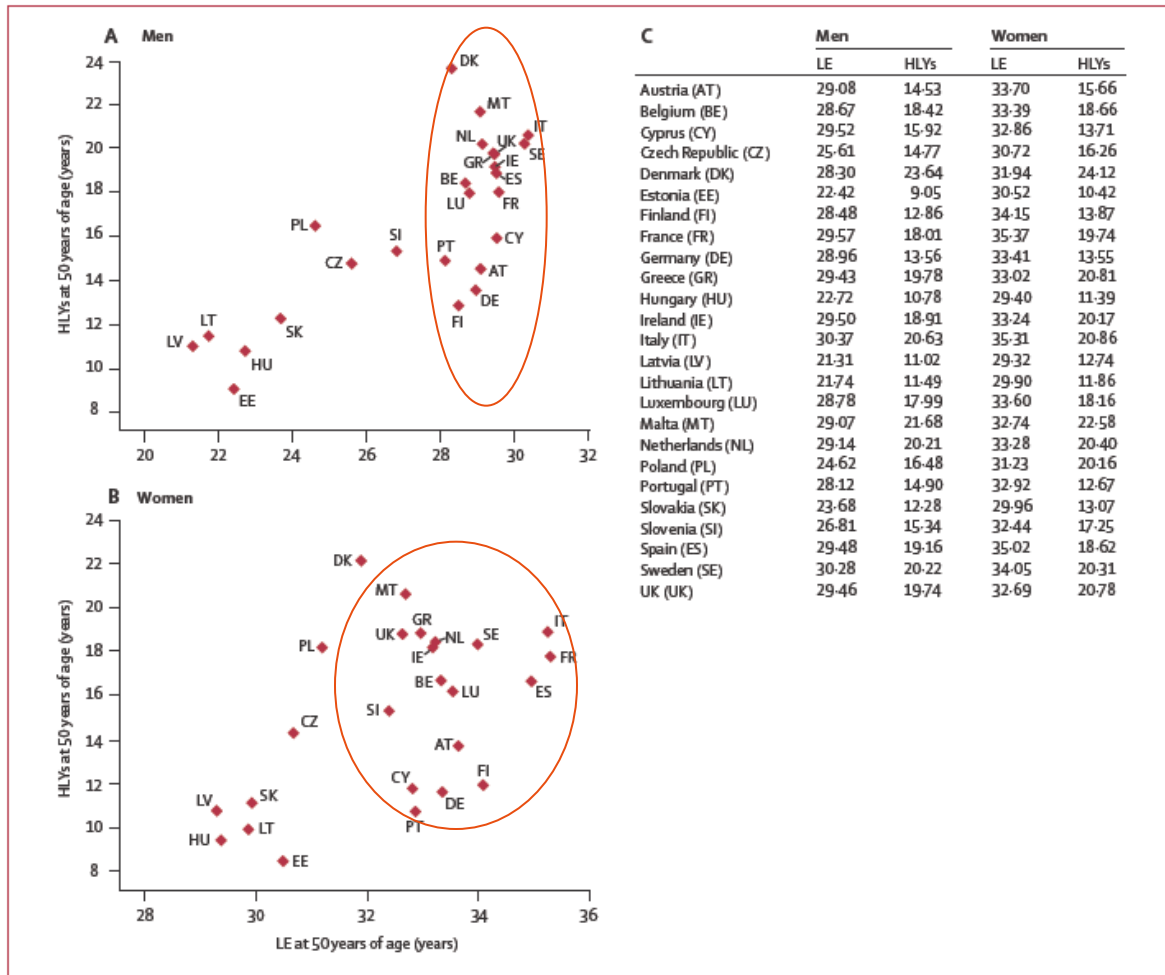


Figure 1: Life expectancy (LE) and healthy life years (HLYs) at 50 years of age for all EU countries
HLYs=healthy life years. LE=life expectancy. (A) and (B) show scatter graphs for men and women, respectively. (C) Data for scatter graphs.

Jagger C et al. **Inequalities in healthy life years in the 25 countries of the European Union in 2005: a cross-national meta-regression analysis.** Lancet 2008;372:2124-31

Definitions of Health Literacy

WHO 1998: The cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health.

Institute of Medicine 2004: The individual's capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

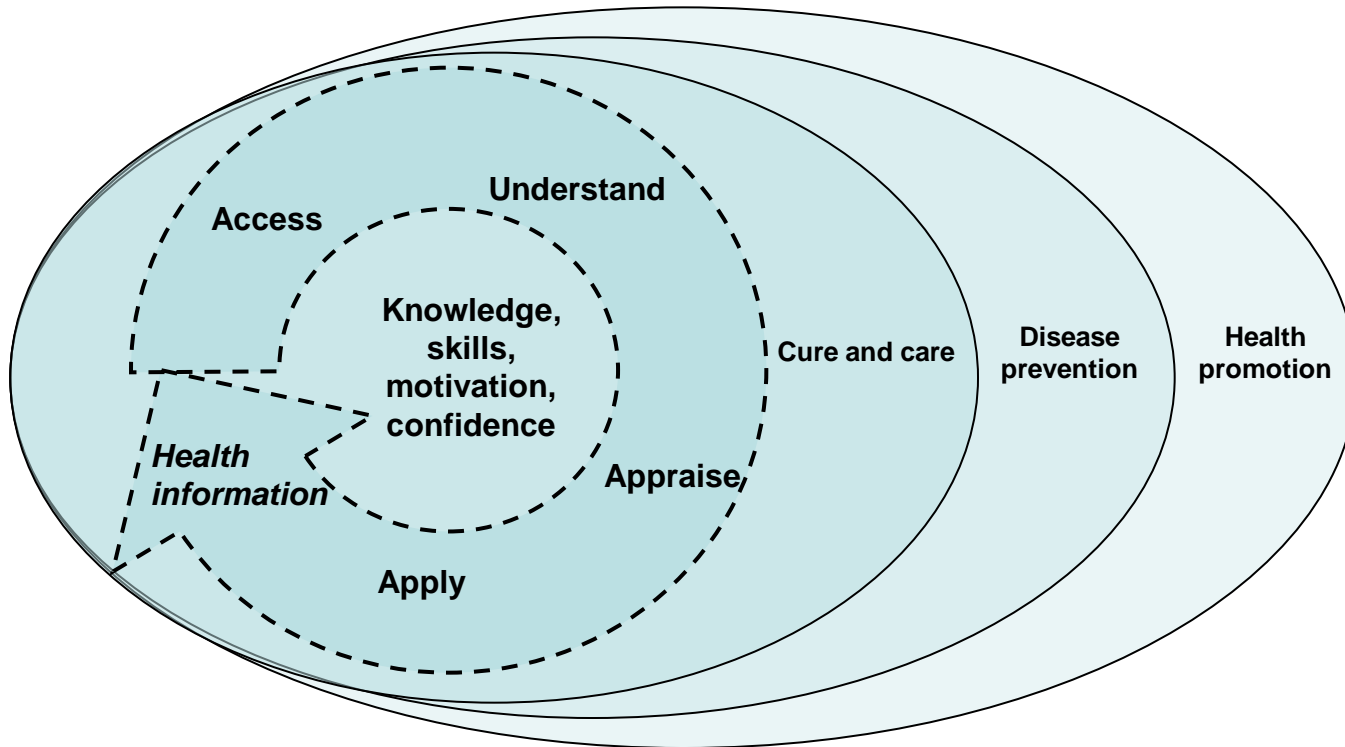
Kickbusch et al. 2005: The ability to make sound health decision(s) in the context of everyday life – at home, in the community, at the workplace, the healthcare system, the market place and the political arena.

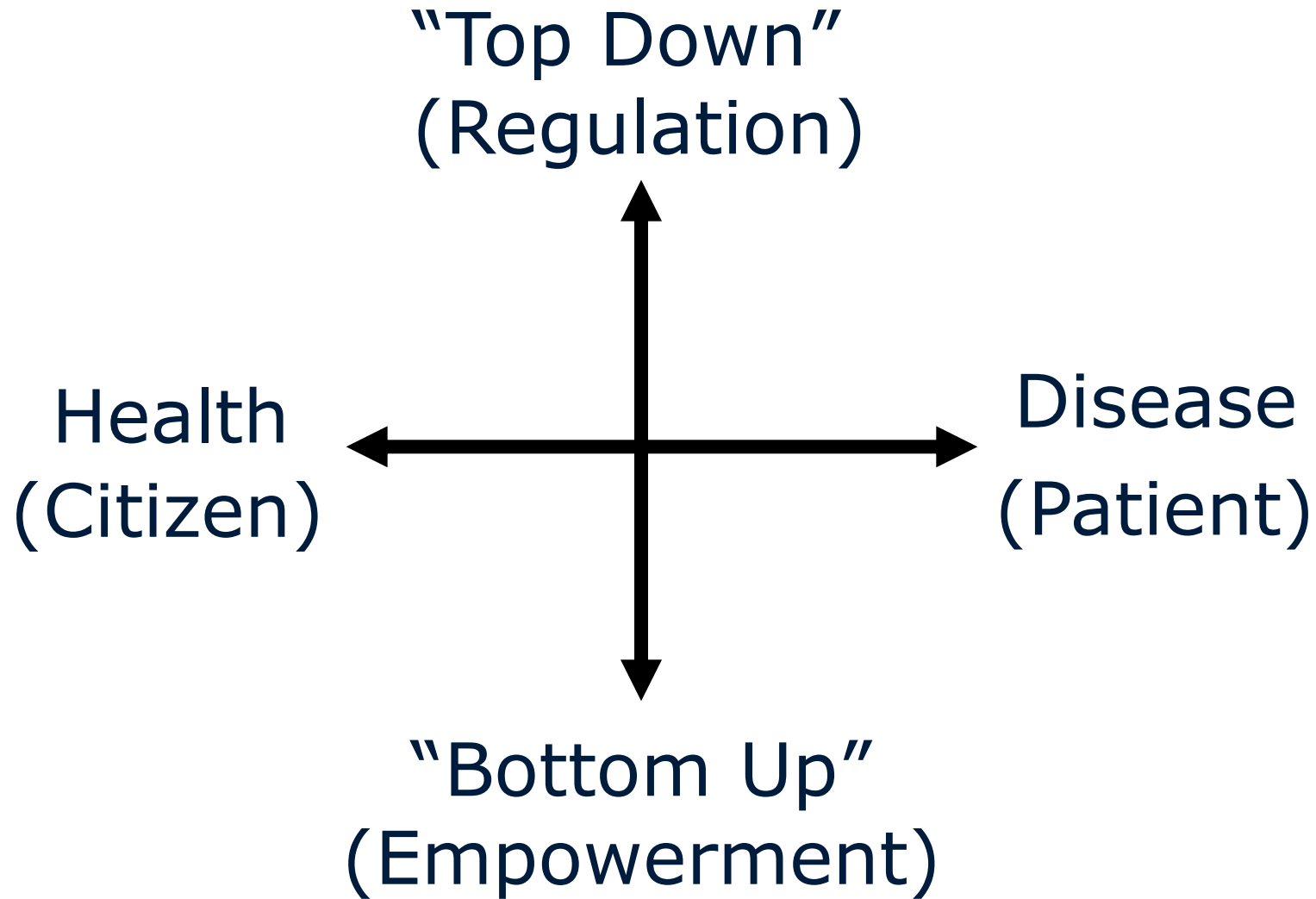
Sørensen et al. 2011: Health literacy entails people's capacities, skills, knowledge, motivation and confidence to access, understand, appraise and apply health information to form judgments and take decisions in everyday life in terms of healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion to improve quality of life during the life course.

HLS • EU

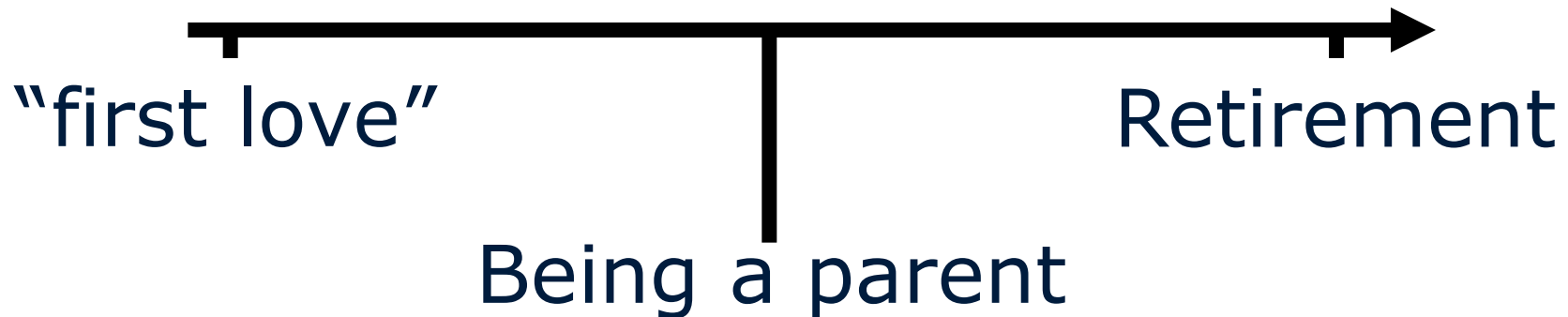


Health literacy in a nutshell





Health Literacy has a life course Perspective: "Life Long Learning" (LLL)



(different "windows of opportunity" for interventions)

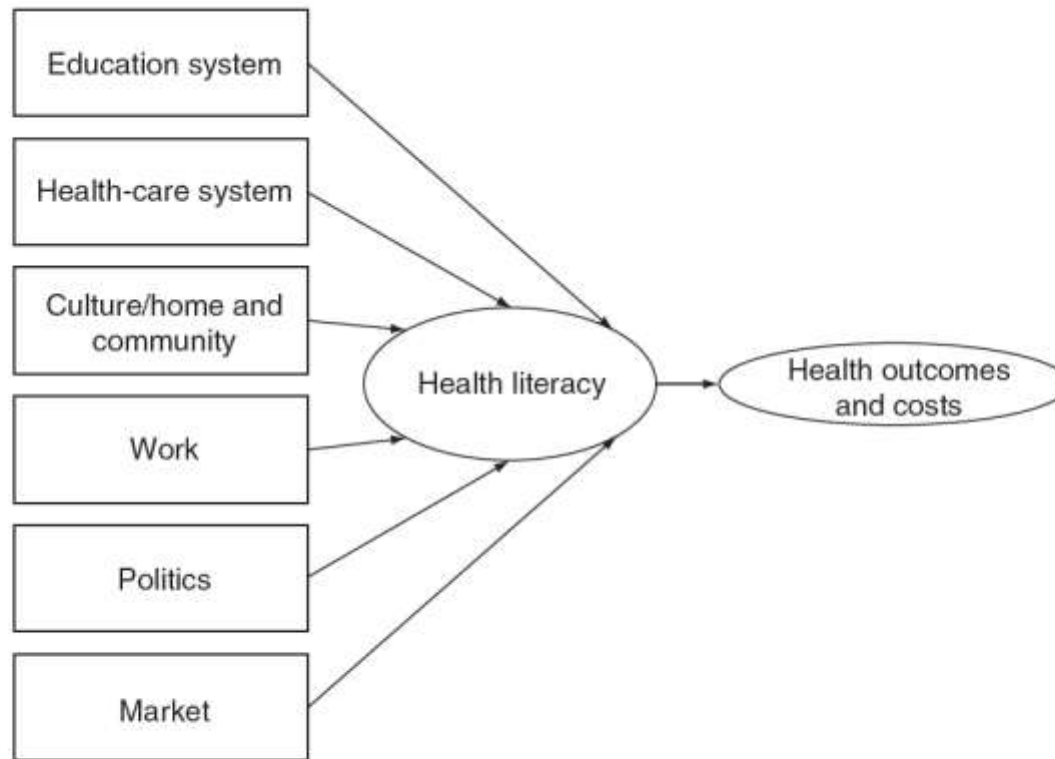


Figure 6 Health literacy improvement. Adapted from Institute of Medicine (2003) *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Science. Reprinted with the permission from the National Academies Press, Copyright 2004, National Academy of Sciences.

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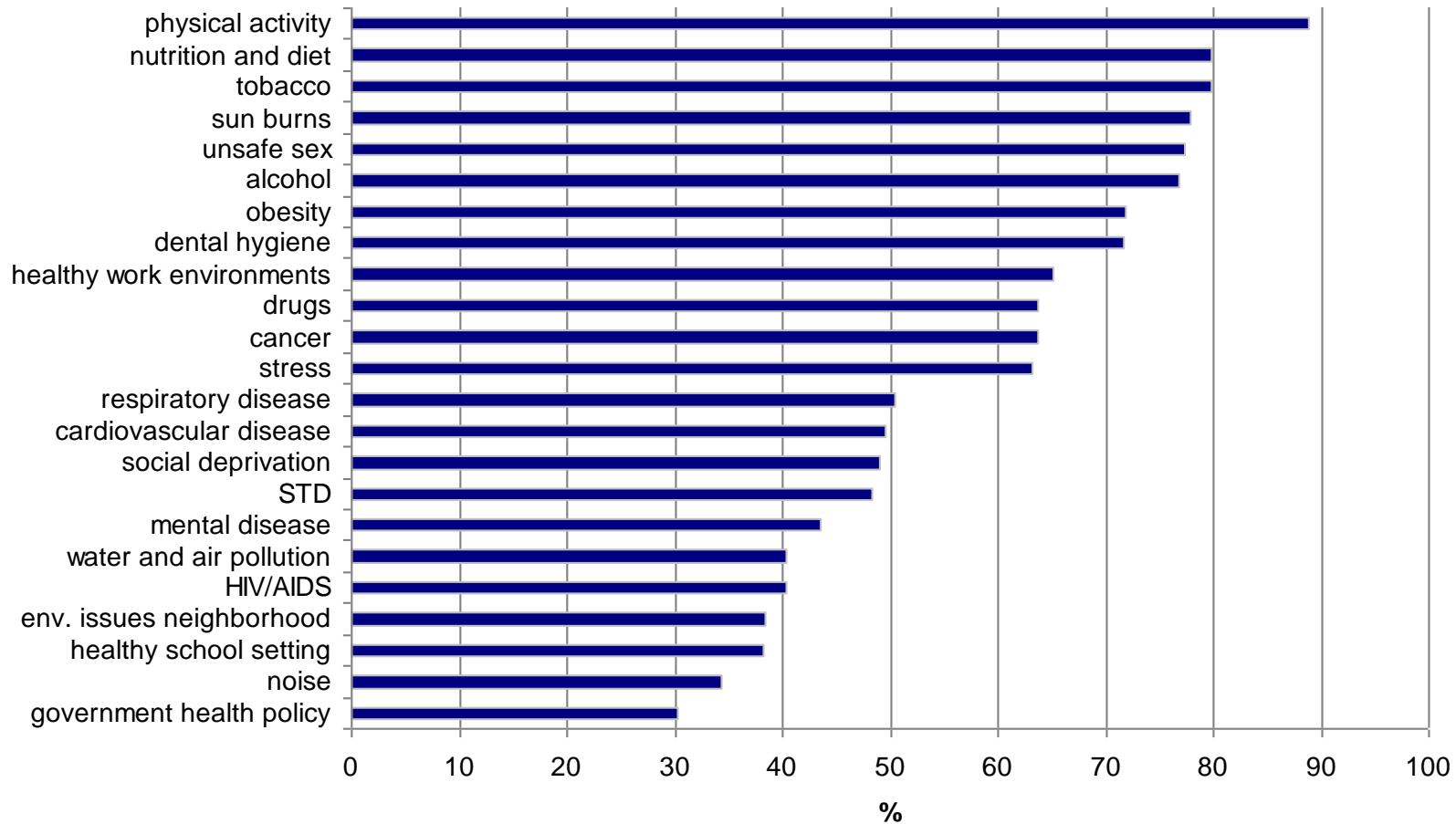
Economic impact of inadequate levels of health literacy

- It is a major source of economic inefficiency in the U.S. healthcare system.
- Costs are estimated to range from \$106-\$238 billion annually

Vernon JA, Trujilo A, Rosenbaum S, DeBuono BA. Low health literacy: implications for national health policy. University of Connecticut School of Business. 2007

Accessing or obtaining information...

How well informed about... (very well/fairly well)



(Results of the HLS-EU Pre-Test)

Understanding information...

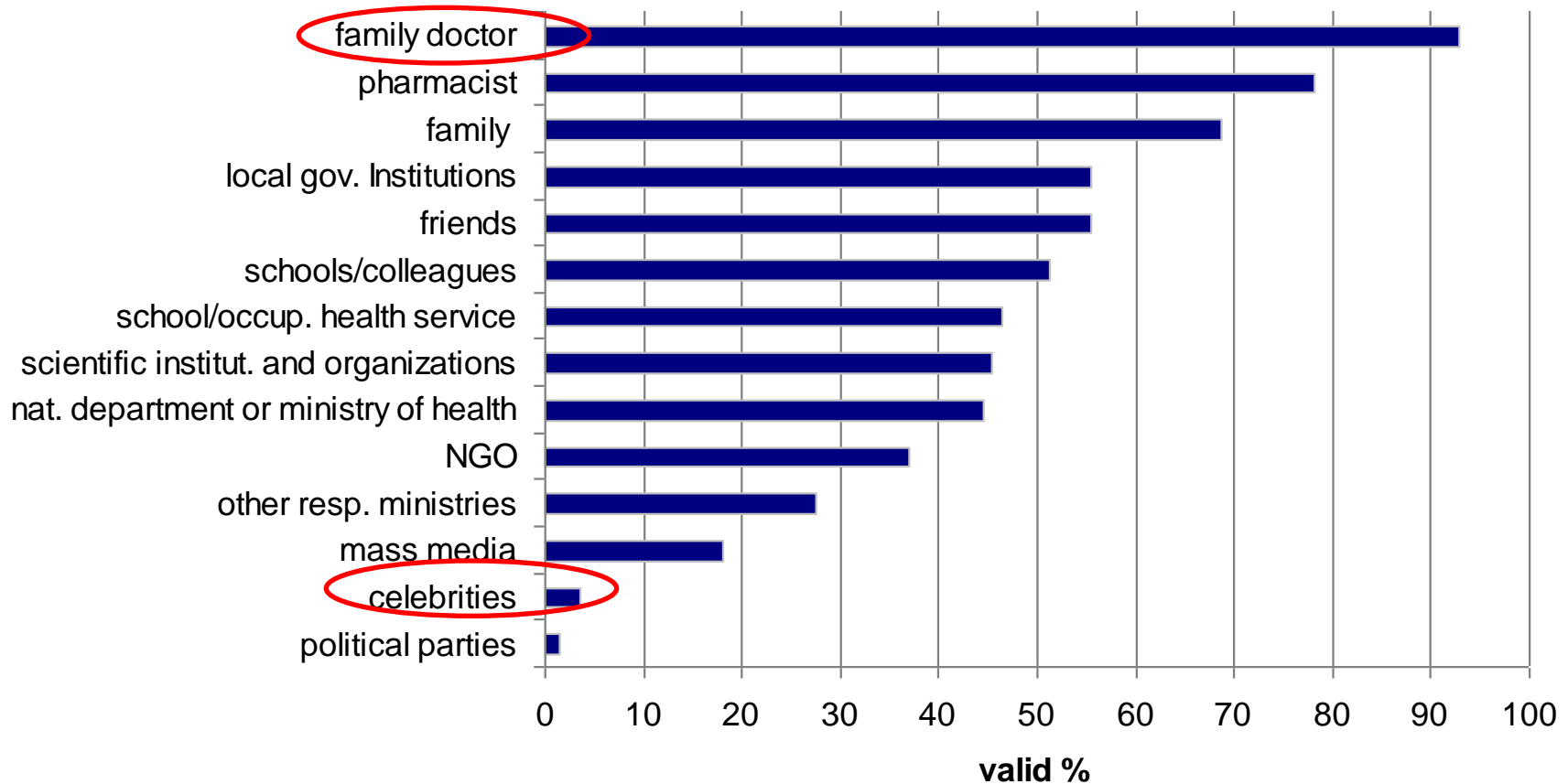
Understanding information...

- Leaflets of medications are understood easily/very easy by 68% (n=66)
- 12% have difficulties/great difficulties (n=12)
- 89% find the information from the doctor easy or very easy to understand (n=88)

(Results of the HLS-EU Pre-Test)

Appraising information...

How reliable do you think health information from ... is? (reliable/very reliable)



(Results of the HLS-EU Pre-Test)

Applying information...

Medicine label

- Identification of the sentence that indicates how often medication should be administered:
 - Correct 83% (n=82)
 - Wrong/no answer 7% (n=17)
- How much Tempra syrop is recommended for a child (10 years, 50 pounds)?
 - Correct 64% (n=63)
 - Wrong/no answer **36%** (n=36)
- Identification of correct medication according to a chart for a child (11 years, 85 pounds)
 - Correct 22% (n=22)
 - Wrong/no answer **76%** (n=76)

(Results of the HLS-EU Pre-Test)

Conclusions

- Qualitative aspects
 - Differences between younger and older generations
 - Ability to access, understand, appraise and apply information is related to life events
 - Confidence in terms of managing own health and navigating the system;
lower trust in authorities as health advisors

(Results of the HLS-EU Pre-Test)

Health literacy as a reciprocal responsibility

- You can educate people to have more resources and by that advance their health literacy

and

- You can make the task/role/situation/context they have to cope with less demanding

Solutions:

Increase Health Literacy

Decrease Complexity

2010: The Human Genome at 10 – what does it mean to me?





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