

A European Strategy for



Child and Adolescent Health and Development Vivian Barnekow Rasmussen



WHO European Region

The health situation – a part of the
picture



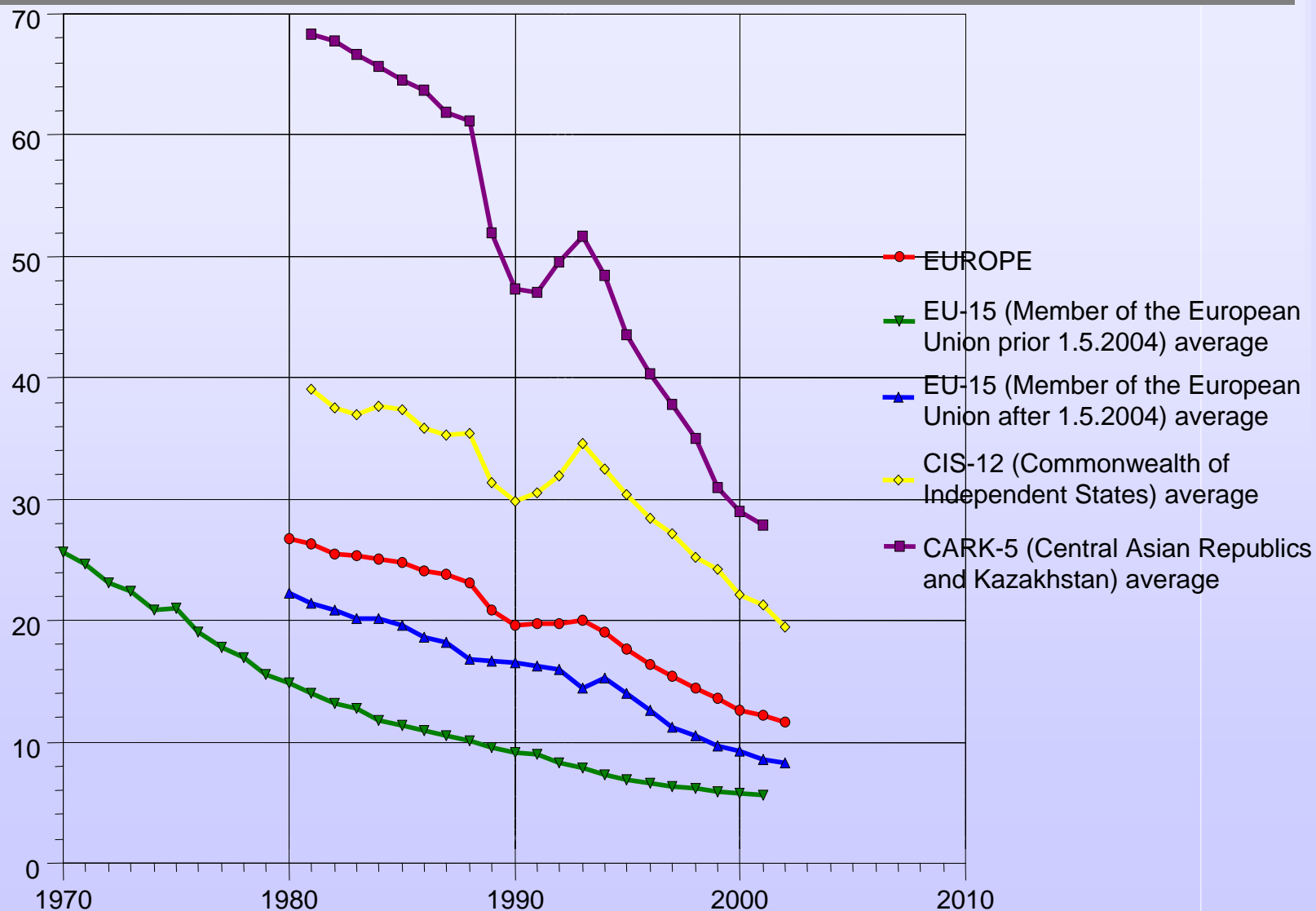
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Why Children and Adolescents?

- A moral and legal obligation to protect and promote the rights of children
- The establishment of a healthier society in future years, with all consequential social and community benefits
- An investment in early stages of life has life-long impact - affecting economic development and sustainability

Under-five mortality

Differences across the WHO European Region



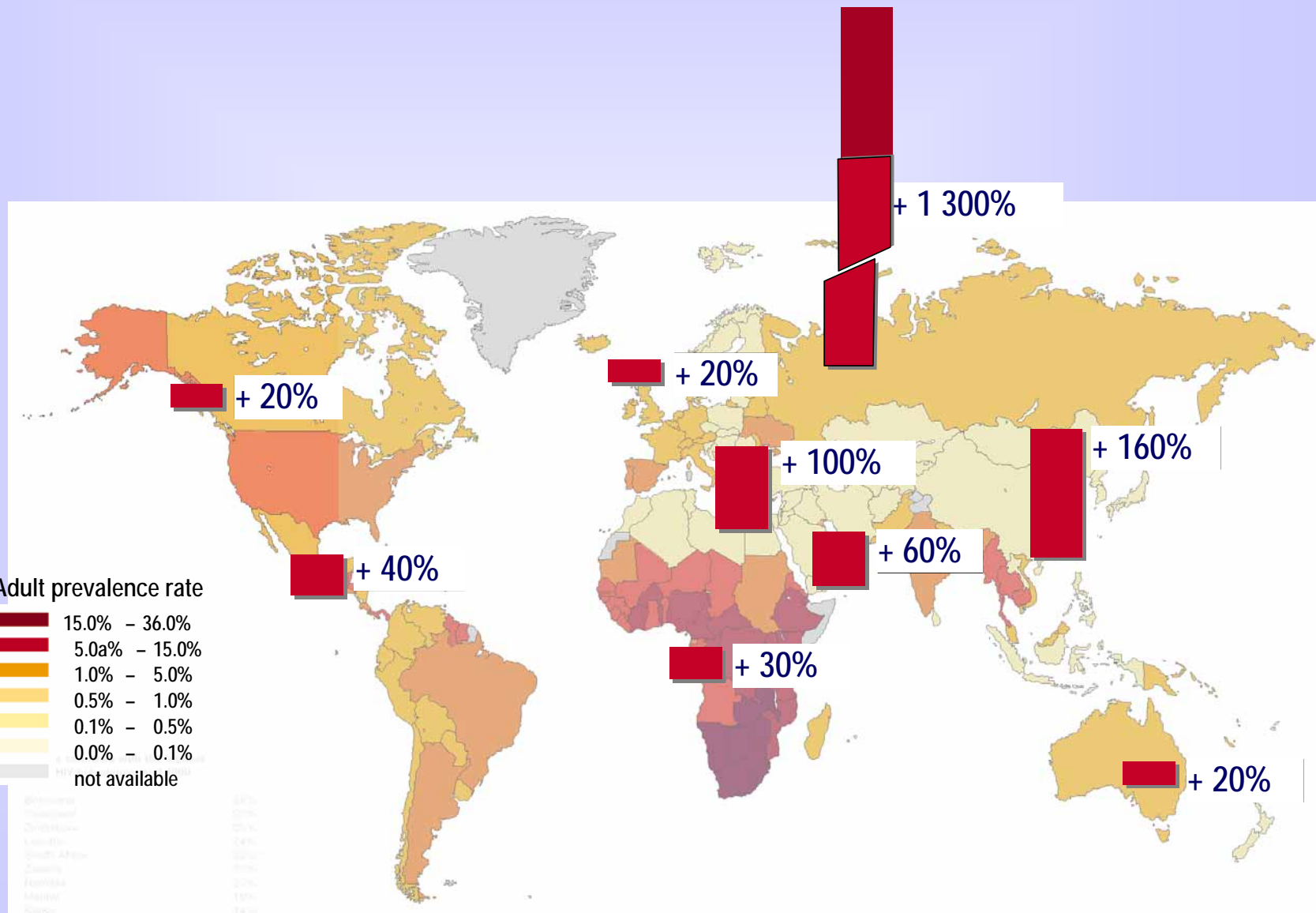
Child and adolescent health – emerging issues

- HIV/AIDS
- Obesity
- Mental health

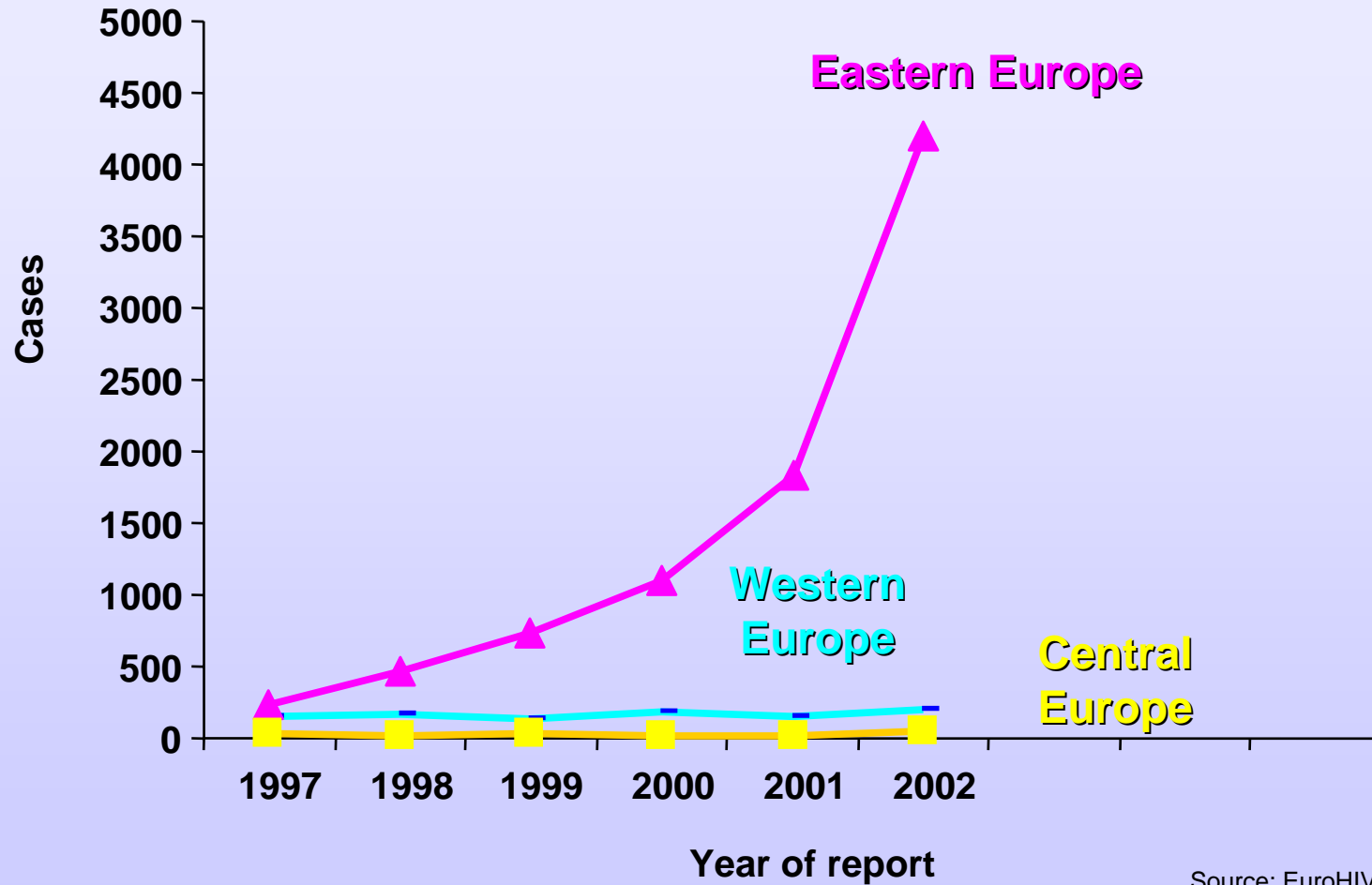


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HIV: current prevalence and recent changes 1996–2001



HIV infections newly diagnosed in children, 1997–2002 – Europe



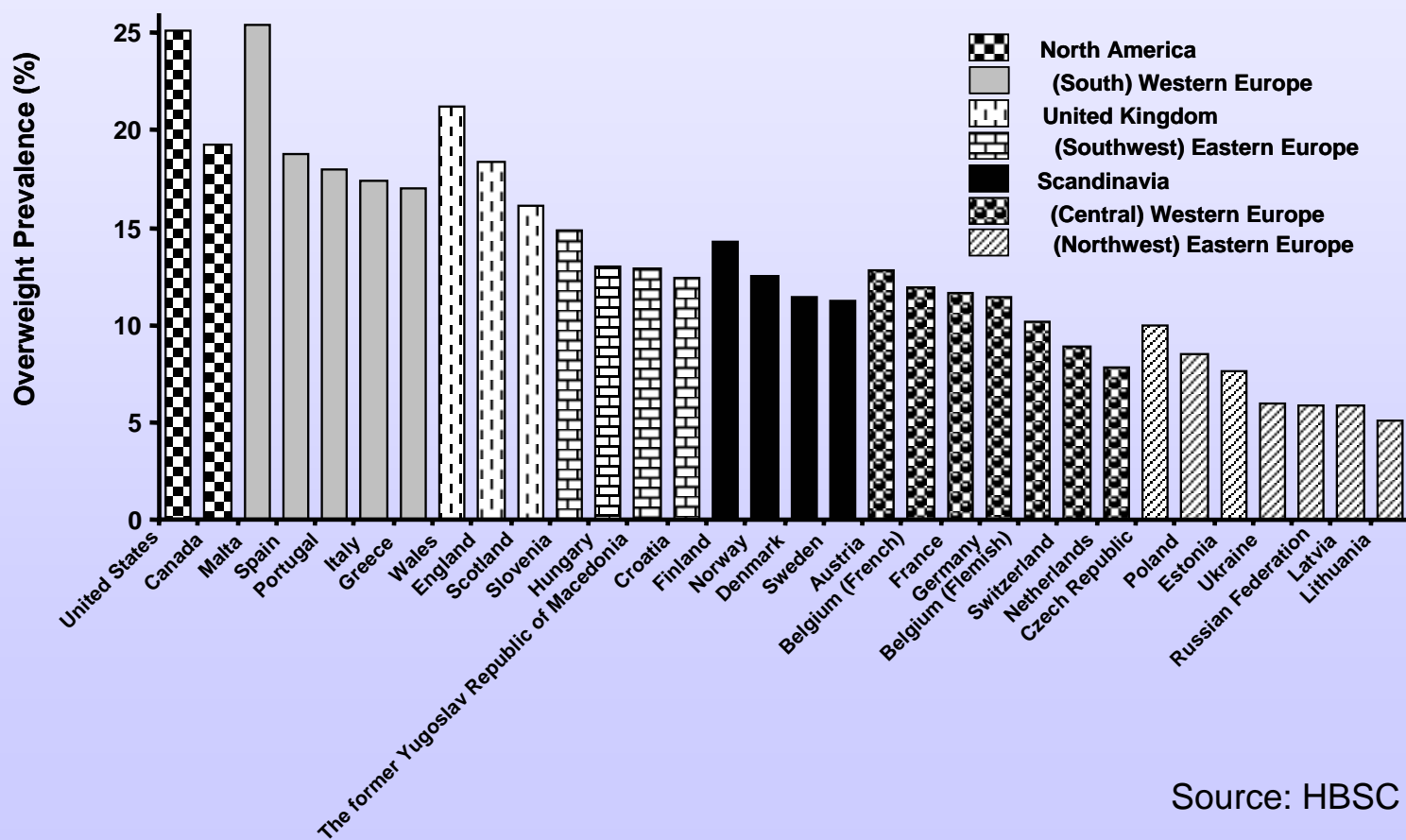
Source: EuroHIV

Child and adolescent health – emerging issues

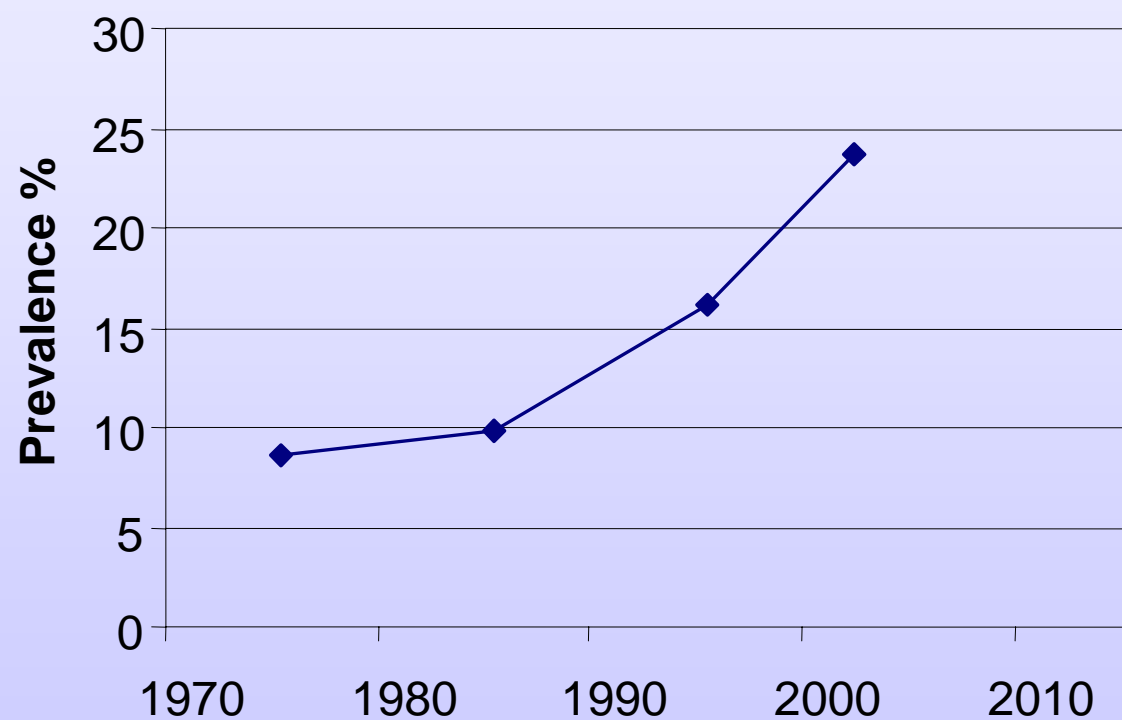
- HIV/AIDS
- Obesity
- Mental health

Prevalence of overweight children

in 31 countries grouped by region



Increasing prevalence of overweight children in Europe



IOTF estimates.



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Three emerging issues

- HIV/AIDS
- Obesity
- Mental health

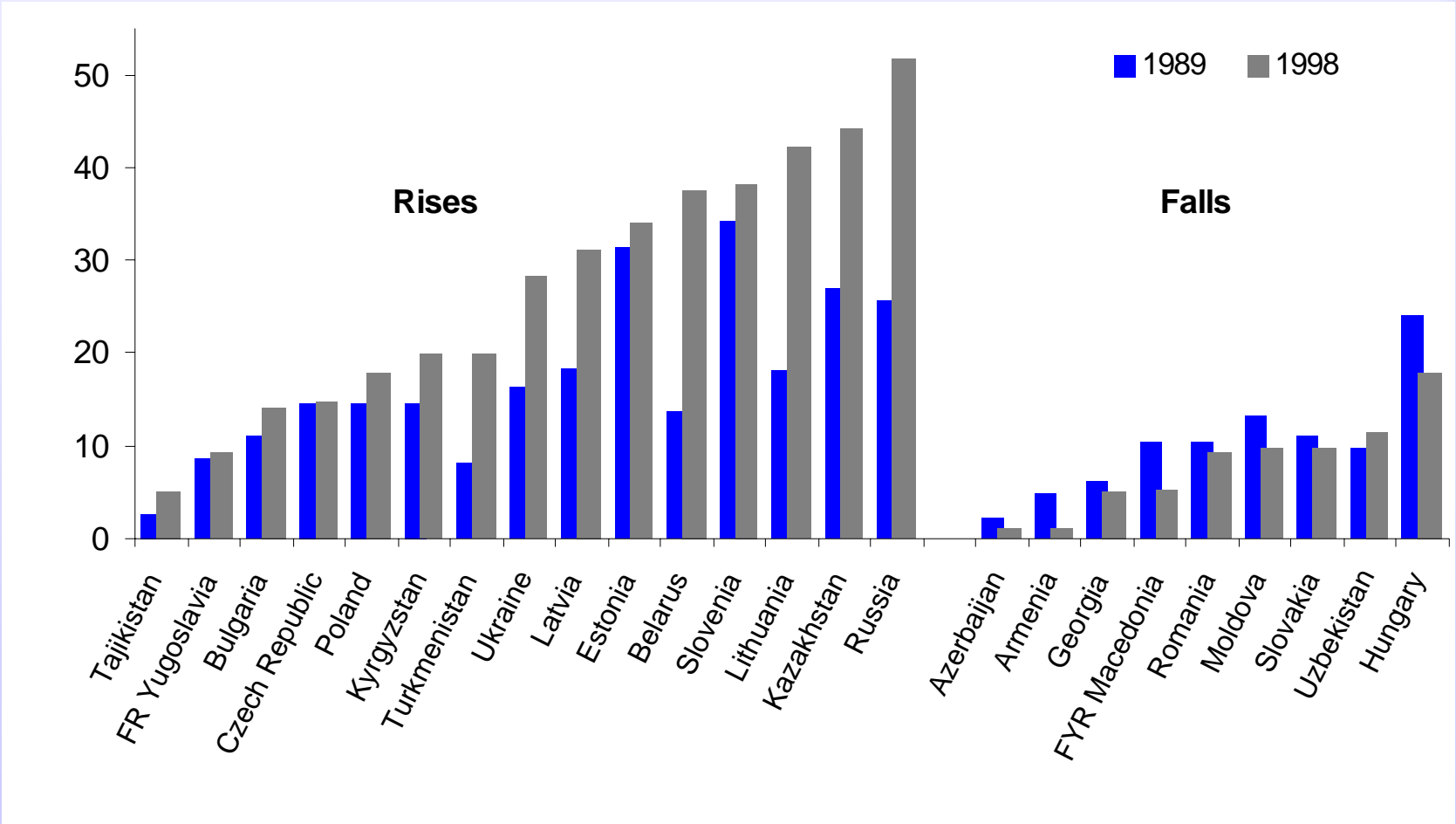
Youth and depression

- 4% of 12-17 year olds and 9% of 19 year olds suffer from depression
- Depression is also associated with youth suicide which is the third leading cause of death in young people



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Youth suicide in CEE/CIS, 1989-1998



Striking inequalities

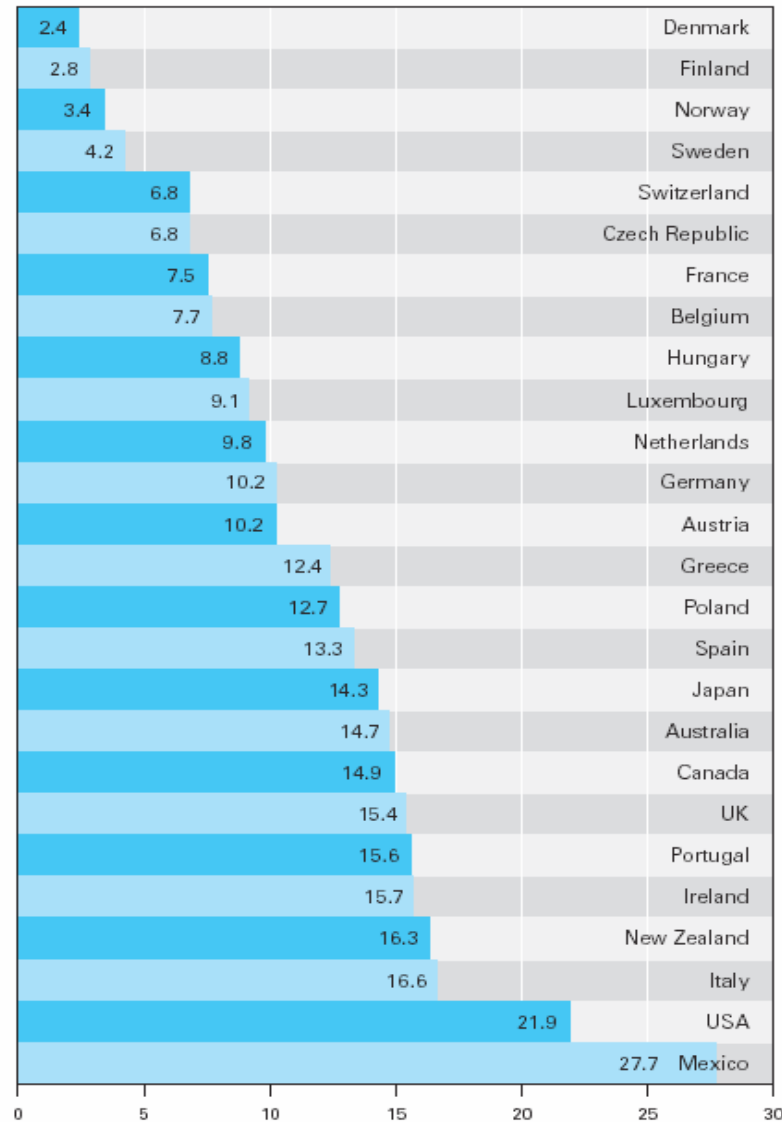
- Over ten-fold difference in infant and child mortality rates
- Inequalities growing within countries
- Over-representation of women and children among the poor



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Family
and
Community
Health

Relative poverty



Percent of children living below national poverty lines



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The European strategy for child and adolescent health and development

Family
and
Community
Health

What is the strategy and what is it not?

It is NOT:

- One size fits all
- Prescriptive
- A set of pre-decided regional targets
- A theoretical recommendation

It IS:

- A framework to develop own policies and programmes
- Policy options based on best evidence
- Impetus to set own national targets and indicators
- Linked to implementation

The goal

To enable children and adolescents in Europe to reach their full potential for health and development and to reduce the burden of avoidable disease and mortality



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Three strategy objectives

1. Provide a framework for evidence-based review and improvement of national policies and programmes for child and adolescent health and development from a life-course perspective



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1. A framework for evidence-based review and improvement of national policies and programmes for child and adolescent health and development from a life-course perspective
2. Promote multisectoral action to address the main health issues regarding child and adolescent health
3. Identify the role of the health sector in development and coordination of policies and service delivery to meet the needs of children and adolescents

How can policy makers use the strategy?

- ✓ Gives practical help to formulate national strategies
- ✓ Gives evidence based answers
- ✓ Enables decision-makers to build necessary capacity
- ✓ Goes beyond the health sector
- ✓ Identifies most important factors in developing national strategy in accompanying toolkit

Four guiding principles

- Life-course approach – from prenatal life to adolescence
- Equity – account explicitly for the needs of the most disadvantaged
- Intersectoral action
- Participation of the public and young people

Seven priority areas for action

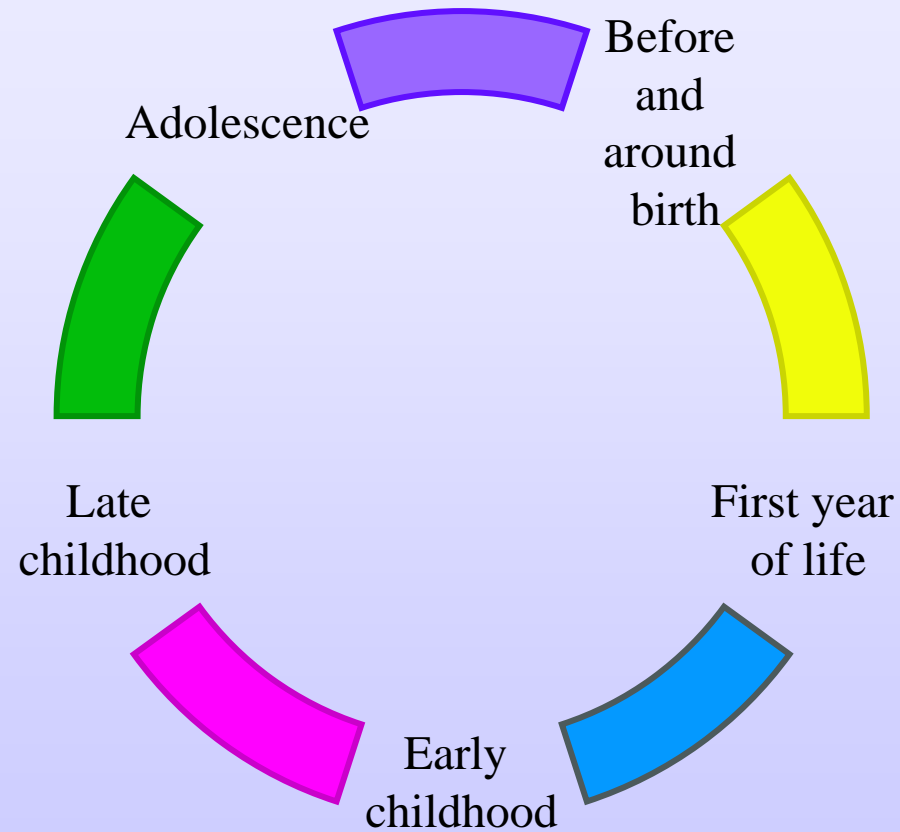
1. Mothers and neonates
2. Nutrition
3. Communicable diseases
4. Injuries and violence
5. Physical environment
6. Adolescent health
7. Psychosocial development and mental health



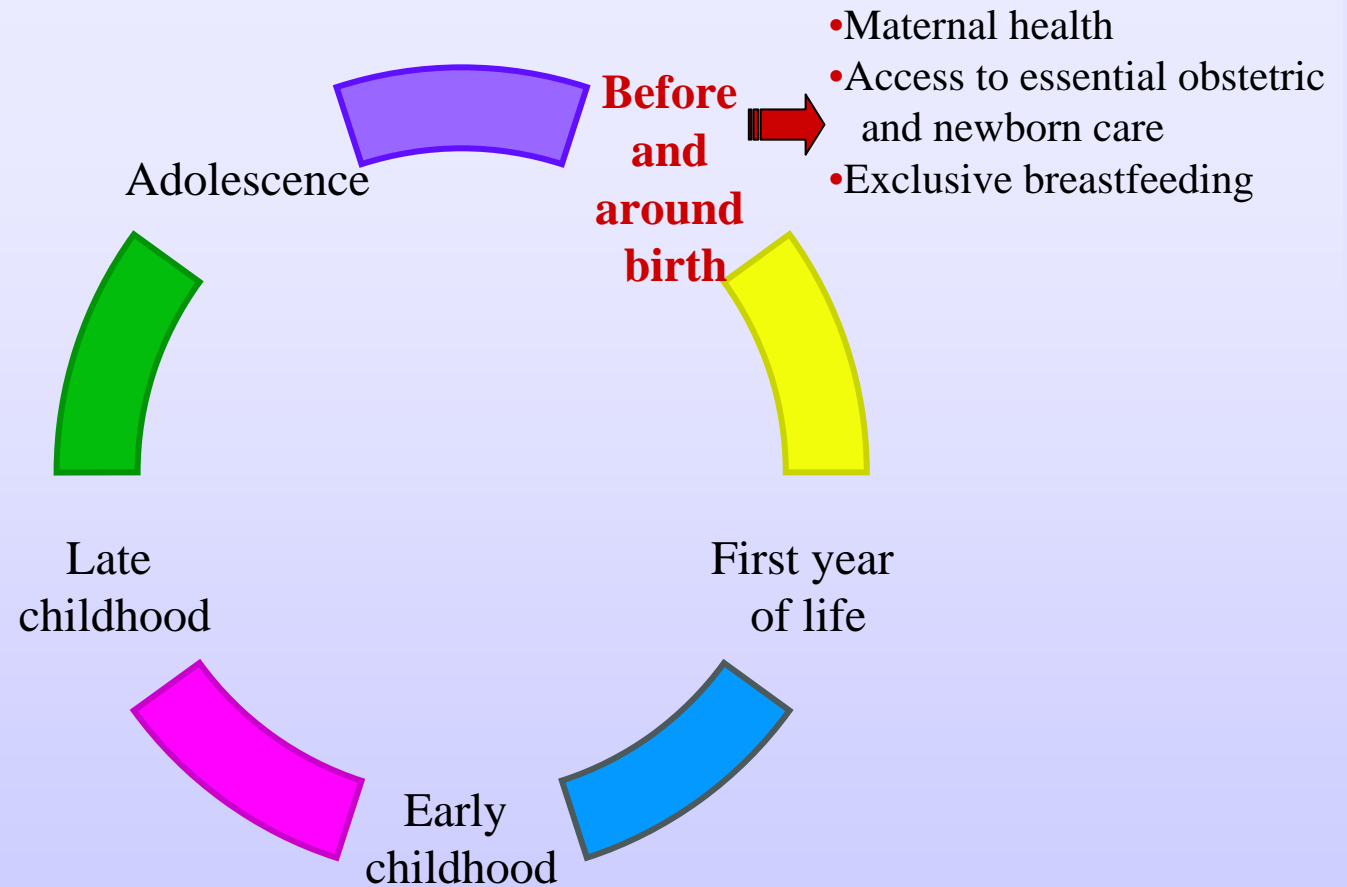


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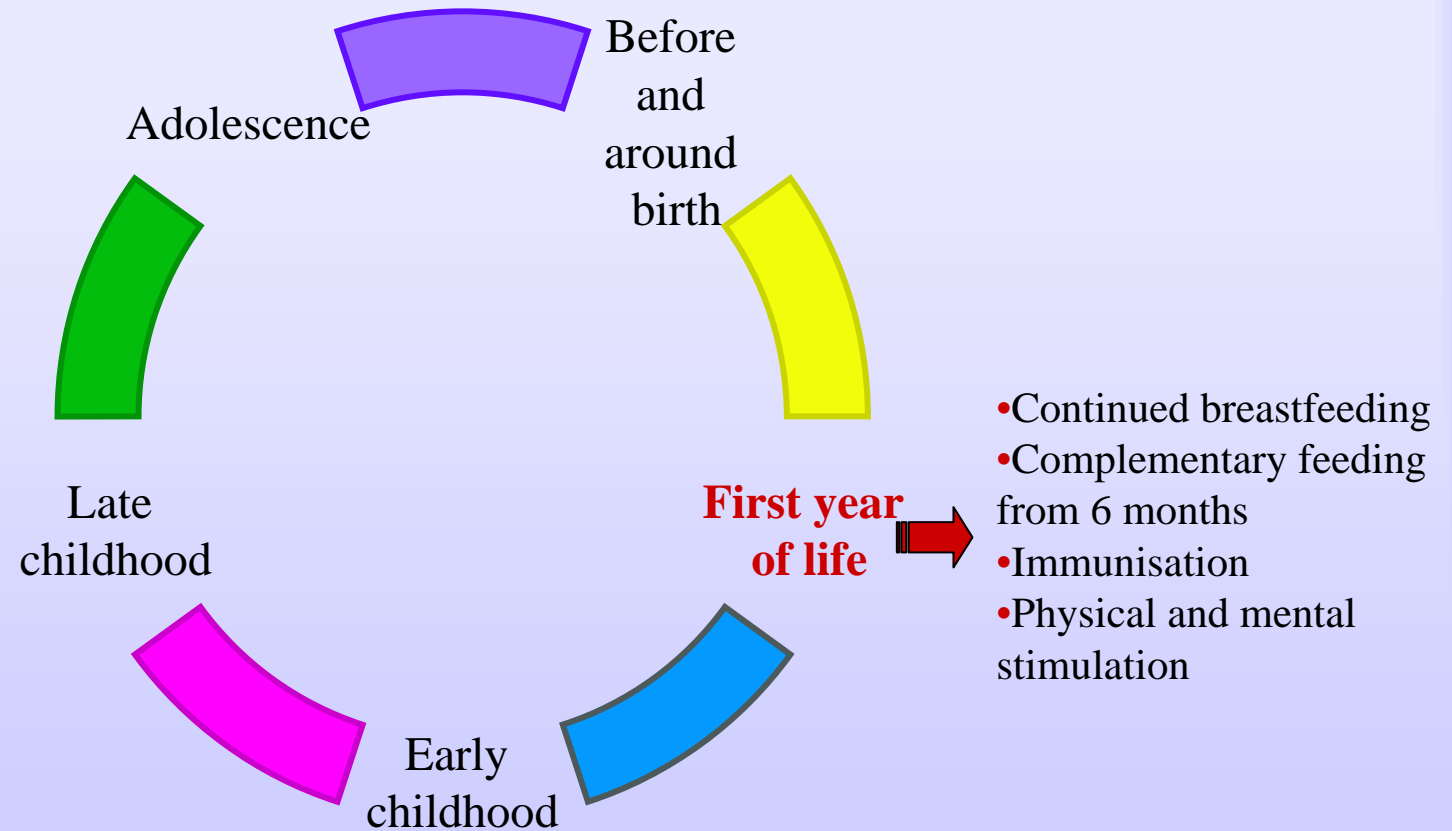
Key issues through the life-course



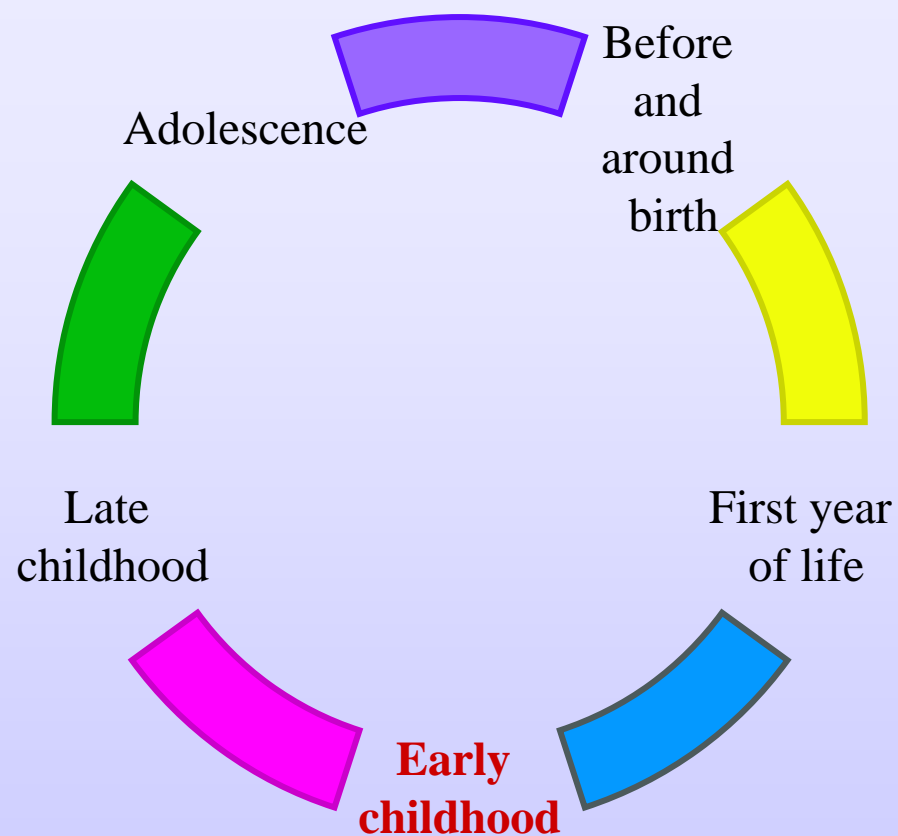
Key issues through the life-course - examples



Key issues through the life-course - examples

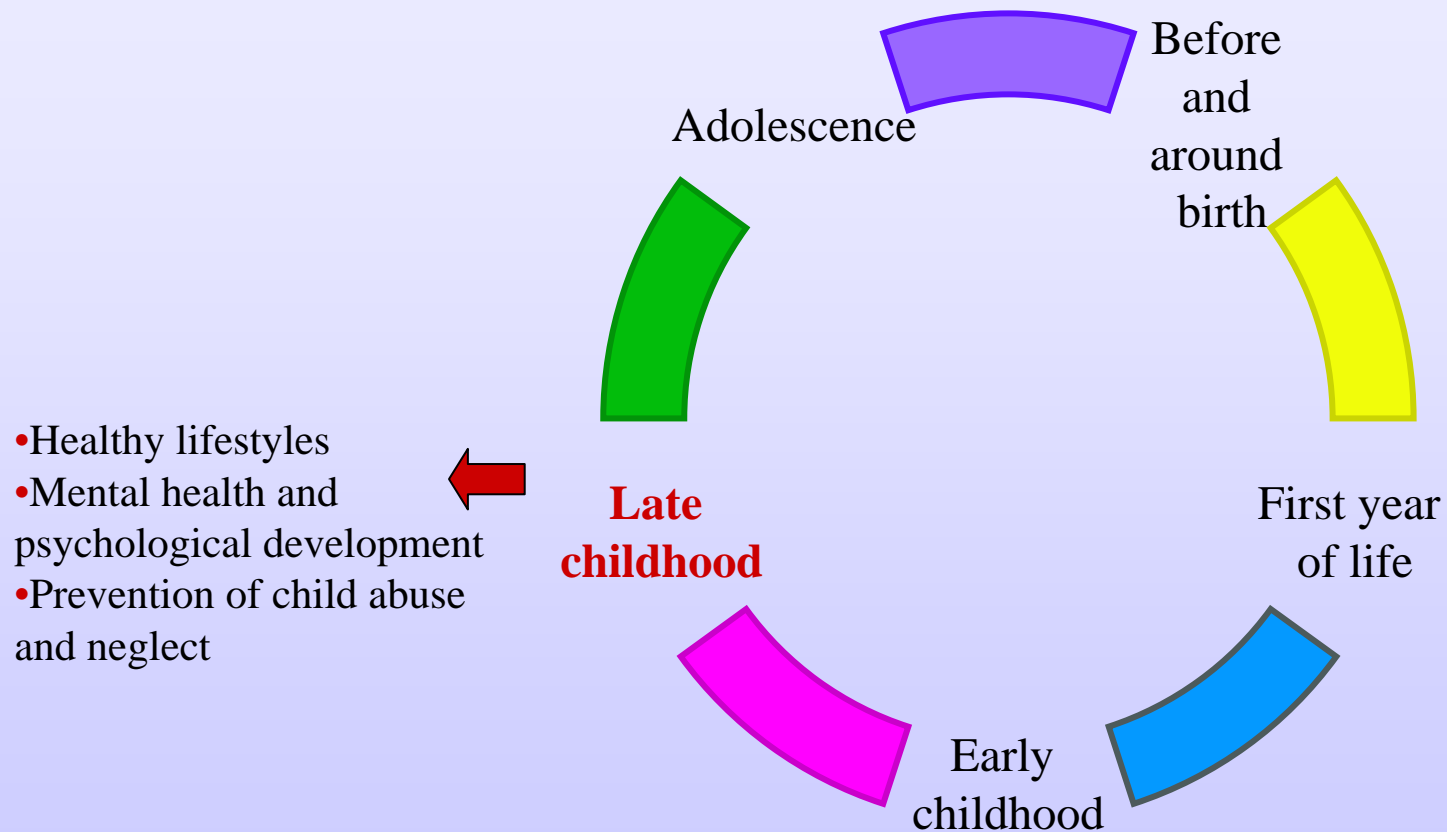


Key issues through the life-course - examples



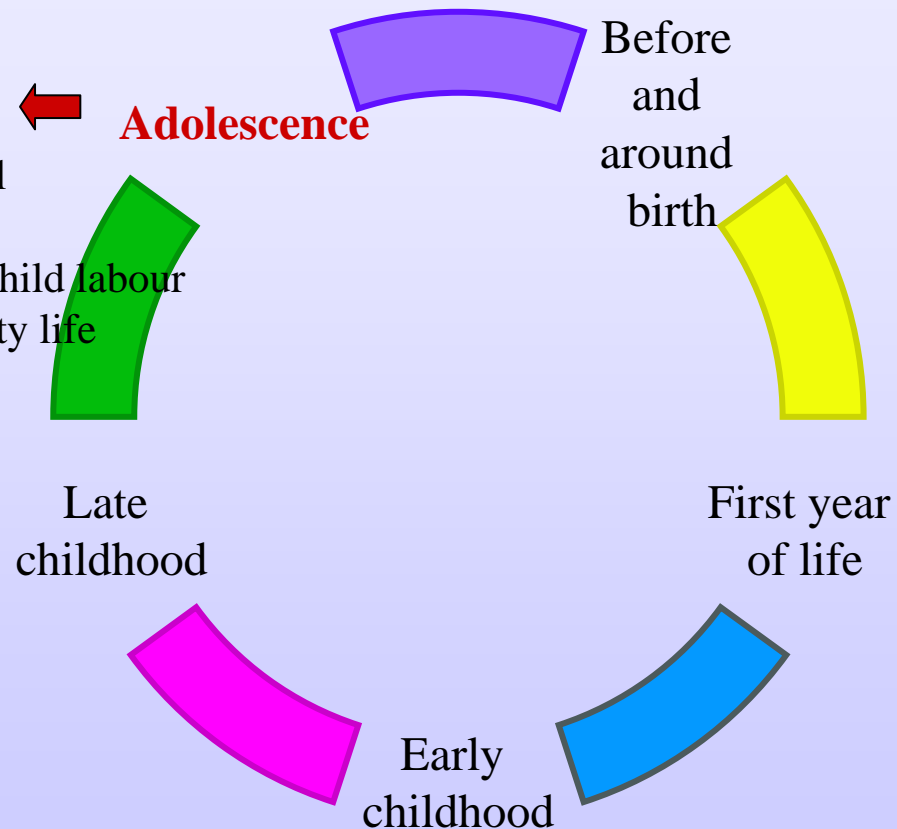
- Stimulation through communication and play
- Nutrition
- Detection of developmental and learning difficulties
- Prevention of communicable diseases

Key issues through the life-course - examples



Key issues through the life-course - examples

- Healthy lifestyles
- Prevention of risk behaviour
- Prevention of substance misuse
- Youth friendly services
- Mental health and psychological development
- Prevention of exploitation and child labour
- Social interaction and community life



Adolescent health issues

Lifestyles:

- Up to 67% of 15 year-olds have been drunk on at least two occasions
- 1 in 4 deaths among adolescents in the Region is attributed to alcohol
- The average age of first use of injecting drugs is between 16 and 19 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and falling
- 60-70% of young people have tried cigarettes by age 15
- The Health Behaviour in School Age Children (HBSC) study shows a clear correlation between socio-economic status and diet

Adolescent health issues

Sexual and Reproductive Health:

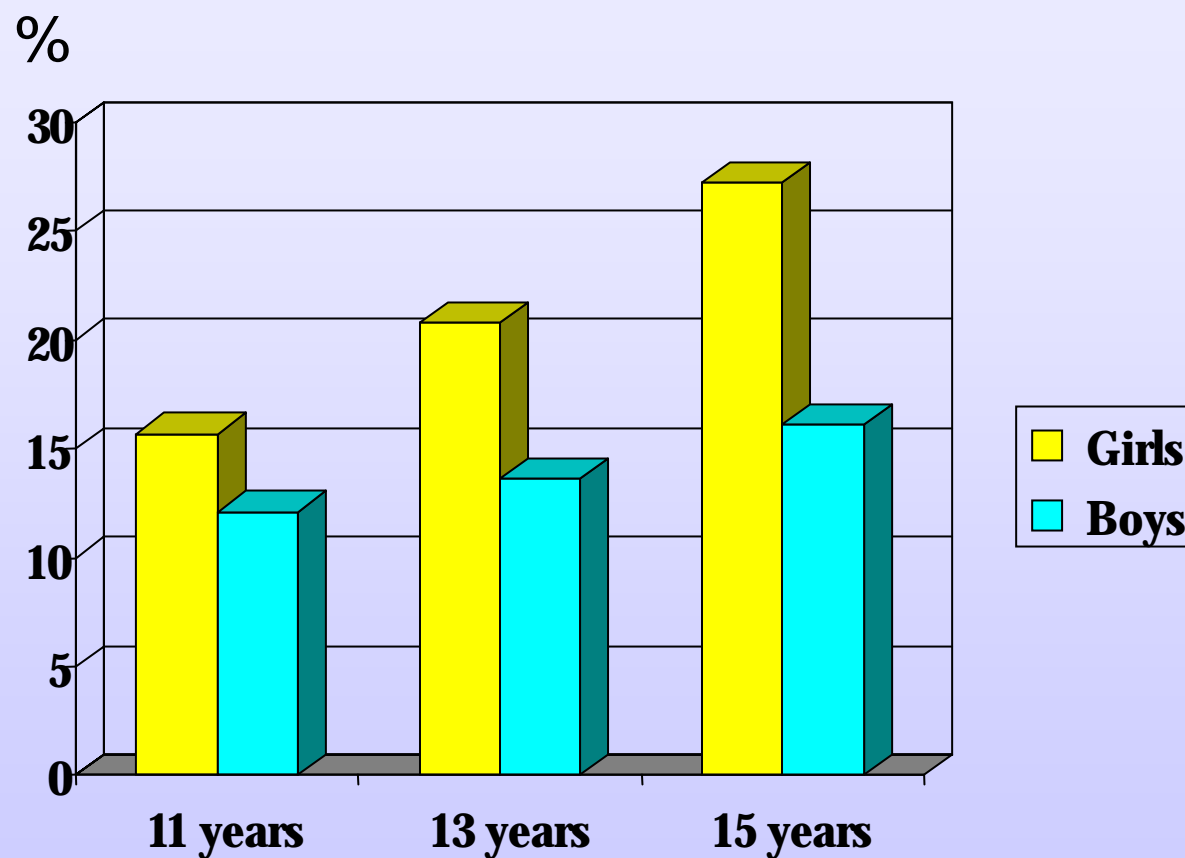
- Teenage pregnancy rates (15-19) are up to 50 per 1000 in Western Europe
- 84% of new HIV cases in Eastern Europe are under 30 years of age
- HIV infection rates in pregnant women rose from .005 to 17 per 10,000 in only four years in one Member State. HIV does not respect national boundaries!

Adolescent health issues

Behavioural factors:

- There has been a noticeable rise in mental health disorders among young people in Western Europe. Five of the ten leading causes of disability are mental disorders
- Suicide is increasing in many parts of Europe, particularly among young men
- 60% of children in Europe and Central Asia say they face violent or aggressive behaviour at home
- Accidents are the leading cause of death among adolescents in the European Region

Young people rating their health as fair or poor



Source: HBSC

The strategy includes a toolkit for implementation available to policy-makers

- An assessment tool
- An action tool
- An information tool

A toolkit for implementation



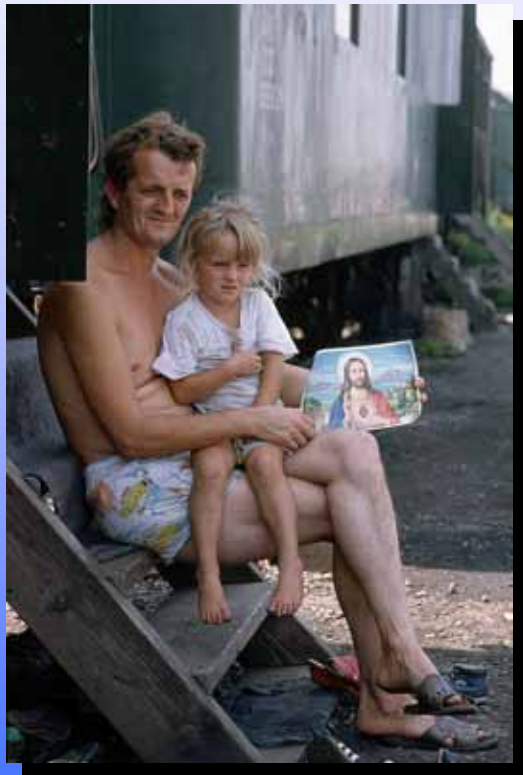


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A multi-sectoral approach

Sector	Possible contributions
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Fiscal policy – taxation and subsidies•Redistribution of government resources
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum development•School environment•Provision of extra-curricular child-friendly services•Role modelling•Food provision
Education (universities and colleges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum development•Student environment•Research strategy
Social welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Psycho-social support•Targeted benefits•Housing standards•Home safety
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Standards for the built environment•Town and city planning•Water and sanitation regulations
Agriculture and the Food Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Primary production•Food standards and composition•Food fortification and supplementation•Marketing•Pricing policy•Consumer education
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Road design•Vehicle specifications•Safety legislation

The challenges - strategy development and implementation



- Promote equity
- Strengthen information for decision making
- Stimulate concerted action and collaboration across sectors
- Ensure participation of young people, families and communities

Public health authorities should ensure:

- Adoption of comprehensive child and adolescent health strategy
- Clear arrangements for engaging other sectors
- Child and adolescent health is an explicit aspect of performance and review mechanisms for health sector
- An equity audit
- Consultation of public and young people in drawing up strategy





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The role of WHO

Support to Member States in;

- reviewing and developing comprehensive child and adolescent health policies and strategies
- capacity building for and support to implementation of child and adolescent health strategies and integrated intervention packages at national and regional levels
- development and provision of standards and guidelines for child and adolescent health policies, strategies, interventions and services
- technical support in surveillance, monitoring and evaluation
- development of intersectoral collaboration and structures



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Thank you!

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