

# EHMA 2024

Shaping and managing  
innovative health ecosystems

Exploring criteria and perspectives to inform systematic and evidence-based prioritization mechanisms for an oral health care benefits basket in EU countries

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5 - 7 June 2024 - Bucharest, Romania

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#EHMA2024

# Background

- Limited public coverage for oral health (OH) → unmet needs and financial hardship
- The process of prioritization of OH services and populations for public coverage's benefits basket lacks transparency and systematic approaches

# Objectives

- To Identify experts' and general populations' priorities for groups of services and populations for public coverage
- Support policymakers when creating a context-specific, systematic, evidence-based and transparent prioritization mechanism for the OH benefits basket

# Methods

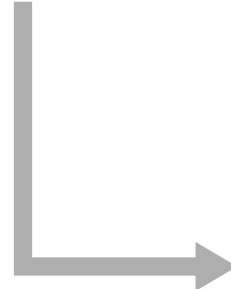
- Qualitative data collected through an open-ended interview guide
- 37 focus group discussions with experts and the general population from eight European countries, Between June and August 2023
- **Content analysis** to assess prioritization preferences: “who should be covered”, “what should be covered” and “what should be covered for whom”
- **Thematic analysis** to explore criteria for shaping an oral health care benefits basket in EU countries

Type of benefit	Services and procedures
Population-wide and self-care prevention measures	Community water fluoridation, salt fluoridation, fluoridated toothpaste, and maintaining oral hygiene
Emergency and urgent oral health care	Infection, swelling, pain, or serious bleeding
Diagnostic and preventive oral services	Early detection, X-rays (bitewing, periapical, full-mouth), Oral cancer screening, Removal of plaque, calculus and stains from the tooth structures, Fluoride application (varnish, gel) Fissure sealant, Oral hygiene, Dietary or smoking cessation advice
Treatments for the most prevalent oral health problems	Most curative and basic restorative services including fillings and root canals, extractions, oral and maxillofacial surgery
Advanced oral health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosthetic or orthodontic services</li> <li>• Major restorative care, including dentures, bridges, inlays/onlays, and crowns</li> </ul>
Cosmetic dental services	Teeth whitening, tooth bonding, Dental veneers

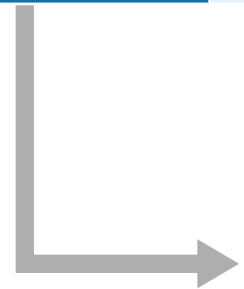
Source: Winkelmann et al (2022) Oral health care in Europe –Health in Transition (HiT) Review 2022

# Results

	General Population	Experts
Number of FGDs	32	5
Number of Participants	202	29



Country	HU	DE	UK	FR	NL	EE	PT	DK
General Population	142	40	14	6	-	-	-	-
Experts	5	-	5	5	7	2	3	2



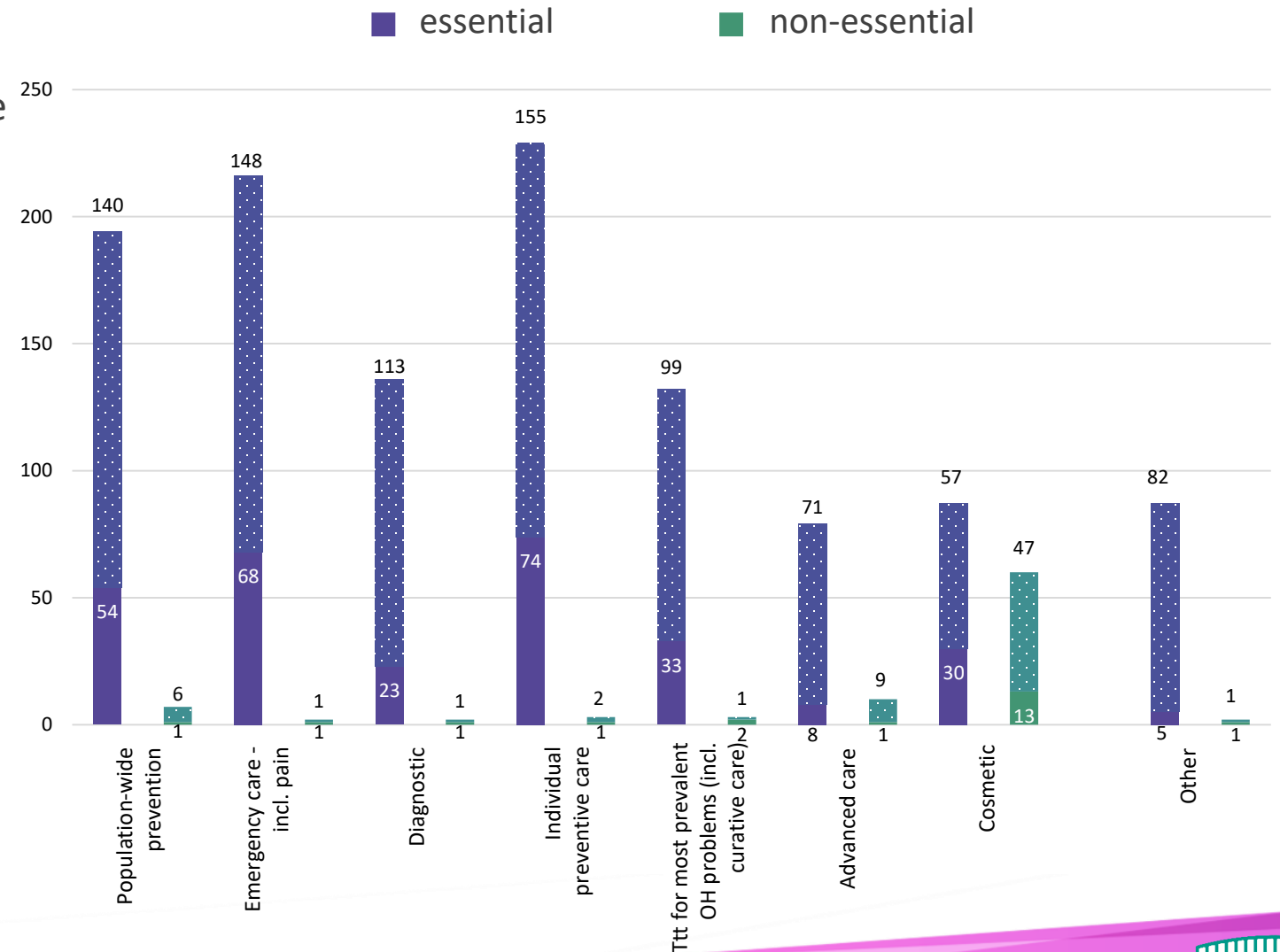
Specialized dentists	Dentists	Oral Health hygienist	Public Health	Health Economist	Health System specialist	Law specialist
2	11	1	5	9	1	4

# Results – What should be covered

- Content analysis codes were divided into three categories: groups of services, population groups, and levels of ‘qualifiers’ ranging from “essential” to “non-essential”

## Consensus:

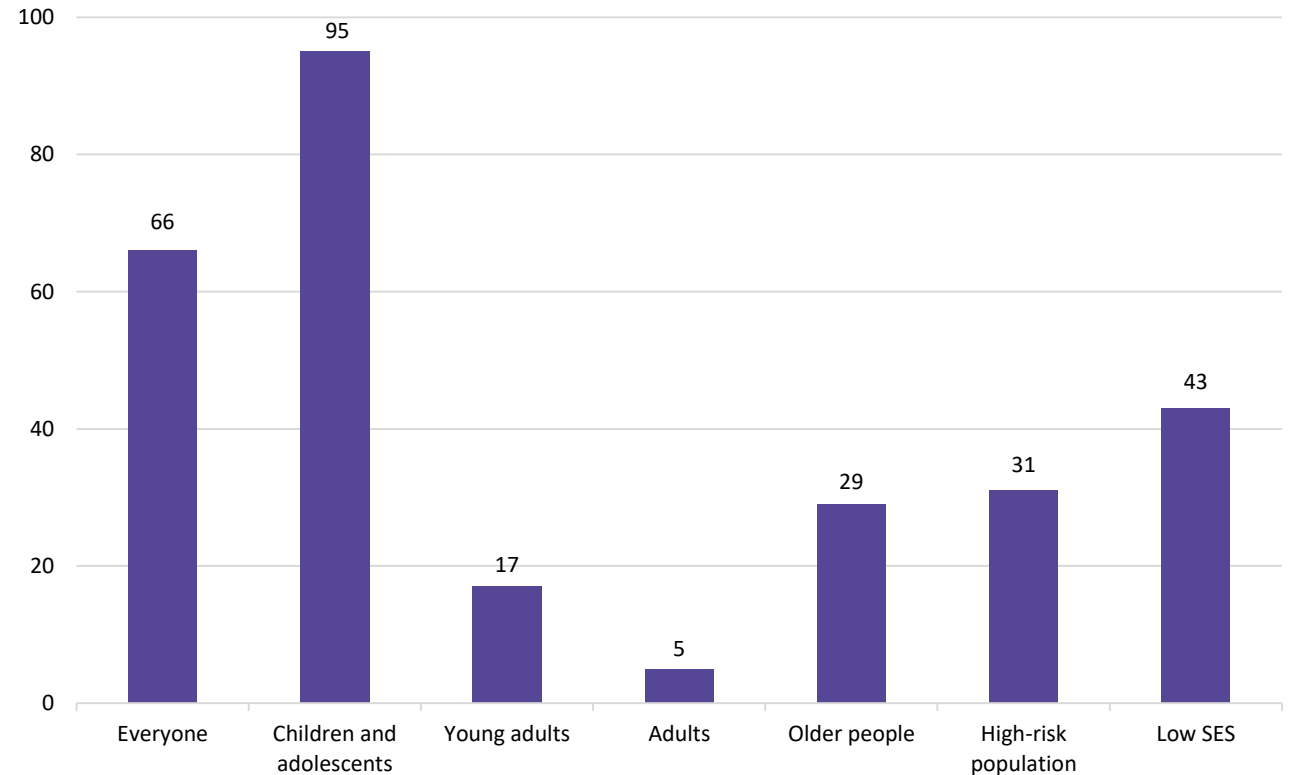
- Preventive and emergency care considered most essential
- Treatment of prevalent OH conditions, diagnostics, and advanced oral services were considered less essential
- No consensus regarding cosmetic



# Results – Who should be covered

## Consensus

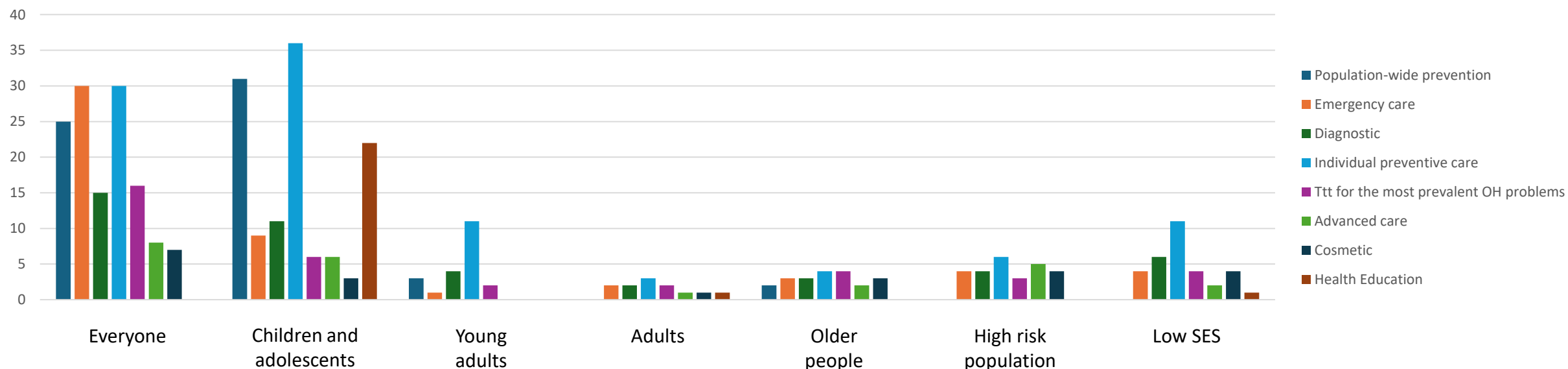
- general coverage for everyone
- coverage for children and adolescents
- Prioritization for low SES and older/high-risk populations
- (Young) adults considered less priority compared to other populations
- No population group was deprioritized



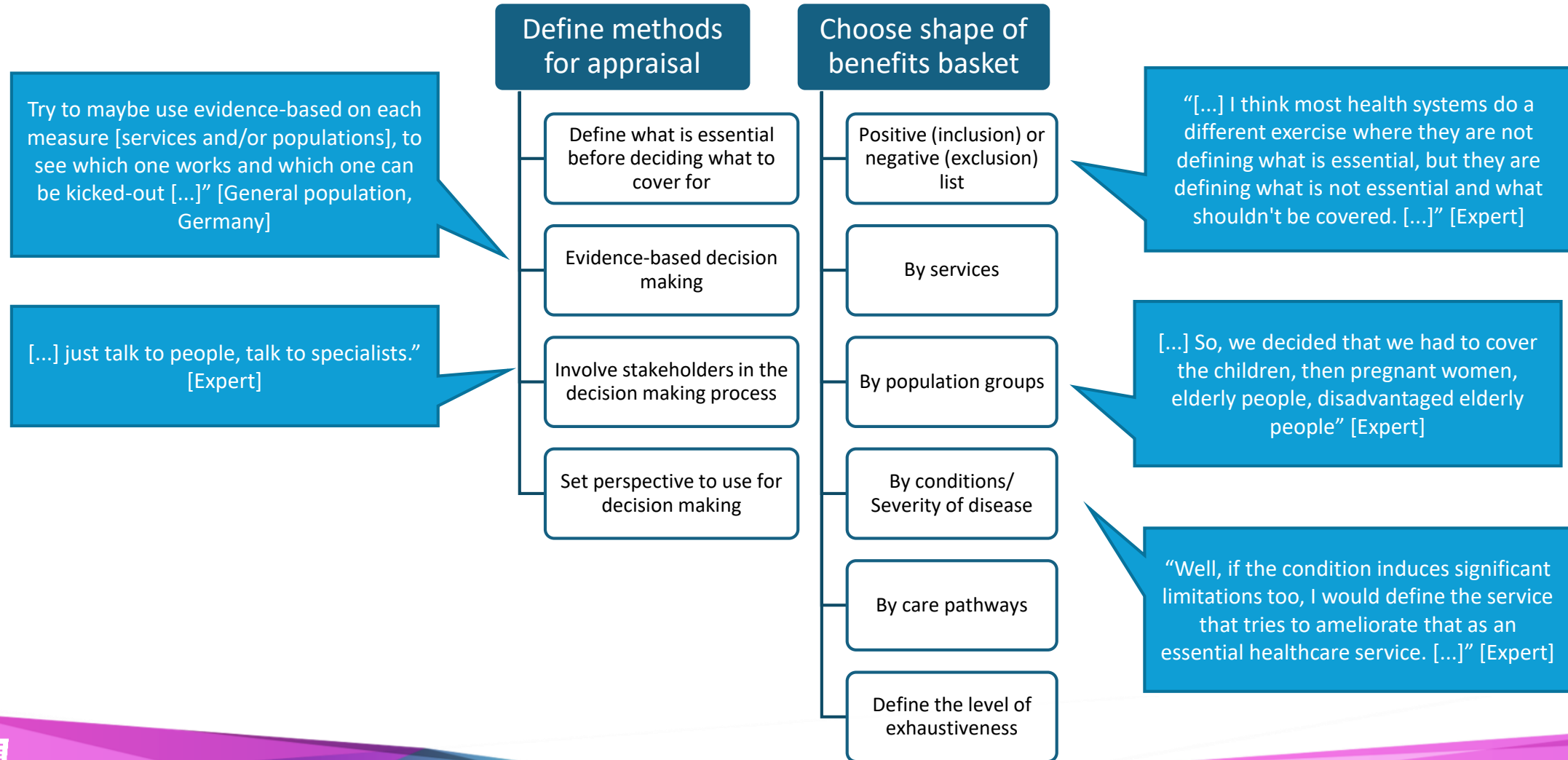


# Results – Prioritization of services and populations

- Consensus: everyone must be covered, especially for prevention and emergency care
- Preventive services and health education most essential for children and adolescents



# Considerations to define OH coverage





# Discussion

- The decision-making process should be evidence-based and involve various stakeholders
- Benefits baskets can vary from positive to negative lists of services, conditions, and/or population groups
- Consensus on prioritizing preventive measures and emergency care, especially for children
- No service or population were deprioritized
- Debate over the importance of cosmetic services



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# Thank you very much

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