

Child Abuse in Sport: European Statistics (CASES)

The prevalence and characteristics of interpersonal violence against children (IVAC) within and outside sport in six European countries

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INTRODUCTION

This project was achieved through a collaborative partnership between seven research organisations in six European countries and three sport organisations, led by prof. Mike Hartill, project director, from Edge Hill University in the United Kingdom (UK).





CASES



Partnership

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University Partners



Sport Partners



AIM :

- To develop insights pertinent to strategic efforts to prevent child abuse, exploitation and violence in sport**
- To develop resources for the sport sector that will support sport organizations to safeguard children's welfare**



The research was guided by the following overarching question:

-What is the prevalence of interpersonal violence against children, active in organised sport, inside and outside sport?

Subsidiary questions were also investigated:

- What are the characteristics of ‘victims’?**
- What are the characteristics of ‘perpetrators’?**
- What are the further characteristics of the experience, in relation to: frequency, duration, location, organisational setting disclosure**



METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on a sample of 10,302 people coming in equal shares from the 6 countries who participated in organized sports before the age of 18(from Belgium 2 samples from the Walloon and Flemish regions were selected).

The survey focused particularly on the sport context but also collected comparative data for interpersonal violence and abuse outside of sport.

Study participants were 18-30 years old, so their experiences were recent.

The online questionnaire was used to collect the data. It was administered in all countries by a company Ipsos Mori.



DEFINITIONS

The CASES team chose to use the concept of interpersonal violence against children (IVAC) to include all four types or categories of violence (neglect, psychological, physical, sexual) inflicting pain (CPSU, 2021).

1. Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs. (e.g inadequate: suport, medical care, supervision, equipment, absence from school, unsafe conditions). The neglect can have a long-lasting impact on a child's health or development.

2. Psychological/emotional violence includes acts towards a child that causing, harm to the child's psychological health or mental, spiritual or social development (uumiliations, criticism about appearance, ignored or excluded, verbal aggression, verbal threats about performance, initiation games/rites, ignored or excluded etc)

3.Physical violence results in actual or potential physical harm to a child by a person who is in a position of responsibility, power, or trust, (in the field of sports, a coach or physiotherapist).

Physical violence can also occur from peers.

Physical violence, in addition to known forms(hitting, kicking, shaking, pushing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding), also includes situations in which coaches or the entourage of an athlete encourage the use of drugs or harmful substances to improve performance, or delayed puberty and cases where coaches apply sanctions/punishment through physical exercise, or force playing while injured or at harmful intensity

It also includes “initiation games/rites” .

4. Sexual violence or abuse –is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he/she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to. This may or may not involve physical contact, and it can also occur ‘online’ (WHO ,1999) .

The common characteristics of these different forms are that the behaviours are based on sexuality and the abuse of power and have intimidating or even traumatising effects on victims (Brackenridge, 2001; Ohlert et al, 2018, Rulofs et al., 2019).

In this study sexual violence is differentiated into contact-sexual violence, including sexual behaviours with body-contact(kissing,sexual touching, genital contact,oral sex, penetration, sexual games/initiation rites), and non-contact sexual violence, including verbal, visual or digital/online forms of sexual harassment.



Defining 'Sport'

CASES focused on *organised sport*, define as every *recreational* or *competitive* sporting activity that is: voluntary, takes place within the context of a club or organisation outside the school curriculum, and involves an element of training or instruction by an adult, including sport camps and organised extracurricular sporting activities at school.

Was excluded: physical education, informal or casual sport activities and other informal physical activities.

RESULTS (1)

PREVALENCE OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

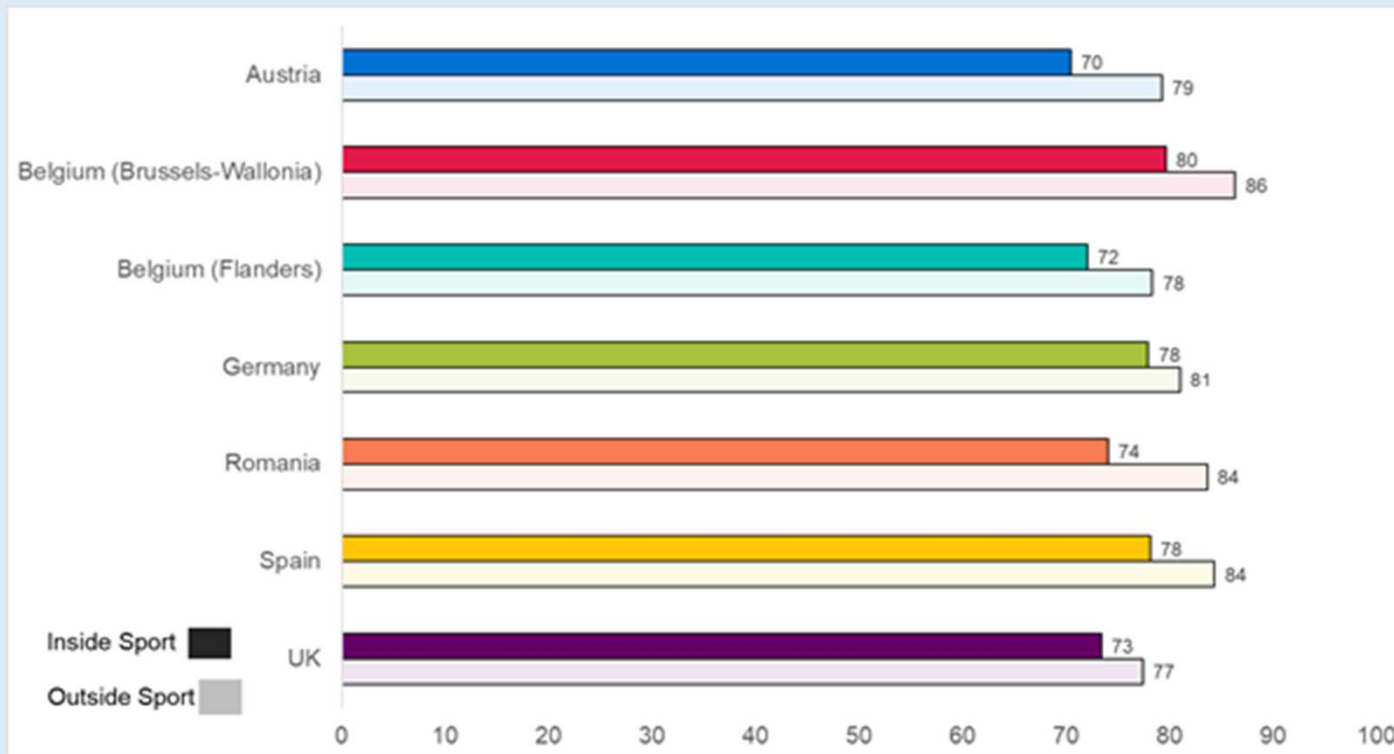
Note:

The prevalence of various forms of abuse will be presented according to three characteristics:

1. in sports and outside the sports context
2. by gender : male, female
3. competition level: recreational, local club, regional, international

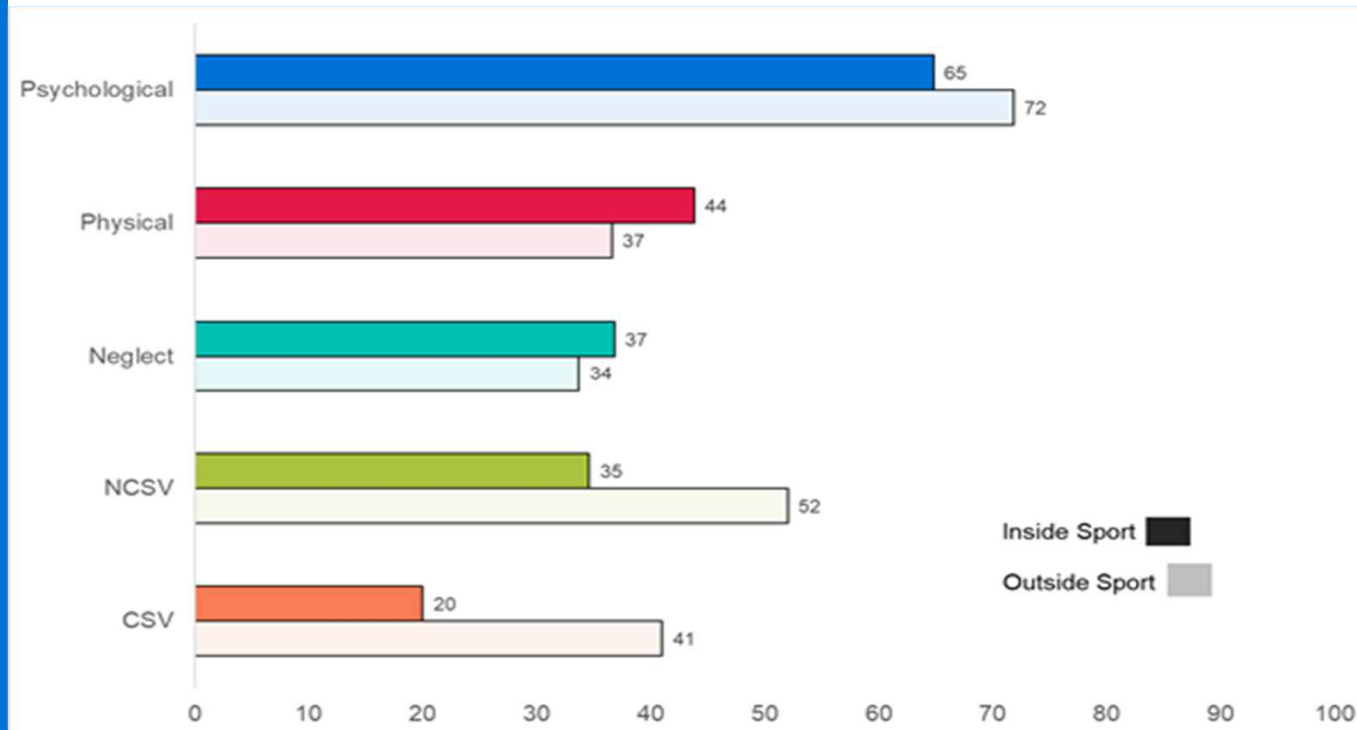
Overall Interpersonal Violence Against Children(IVAC)

Prevalence of overall Interpersonal Violence Against Children %

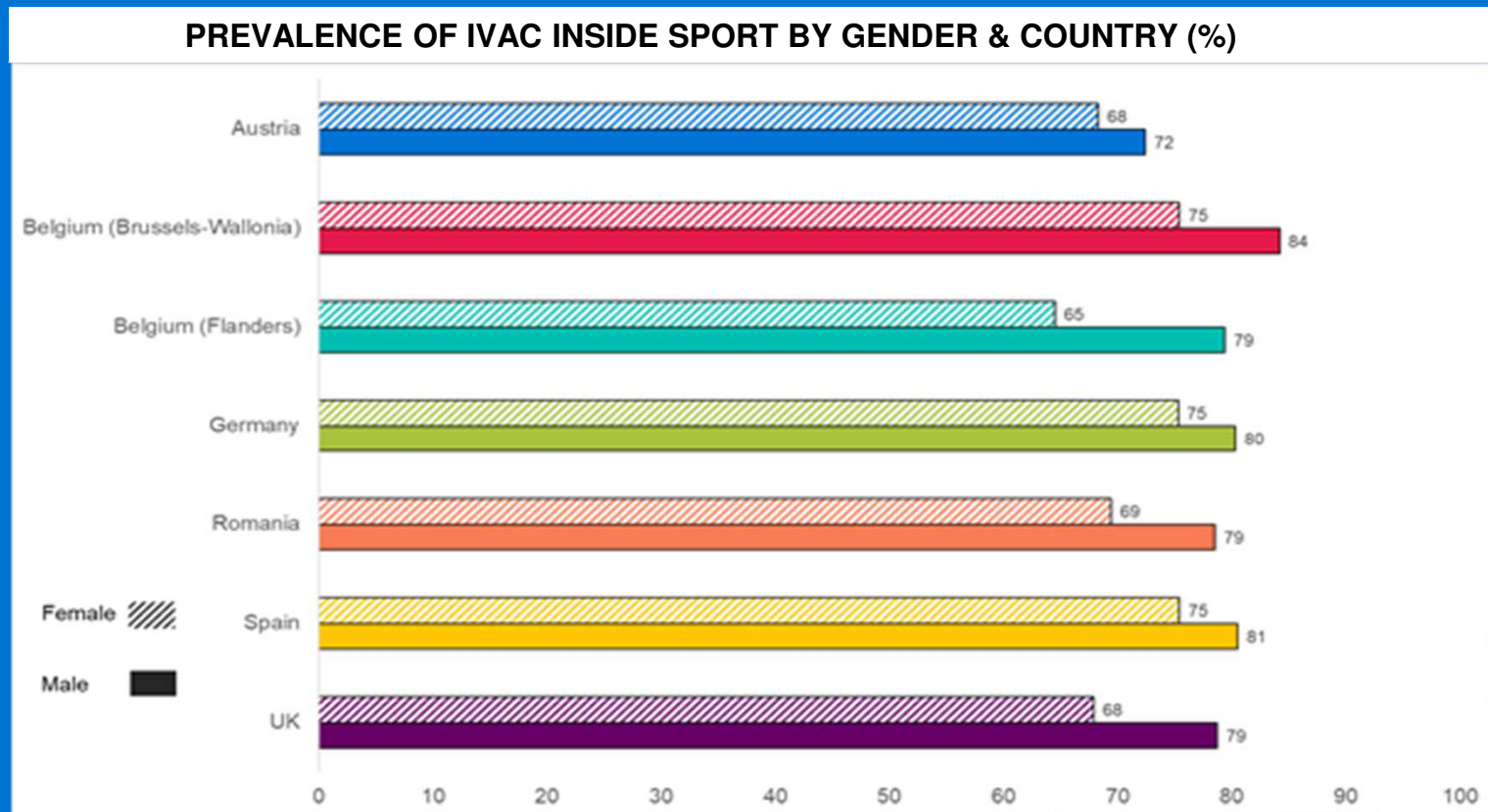


Categories of IVAC inside & outside sport

Prevalence of categories of IVAC inside & outside sport (%)

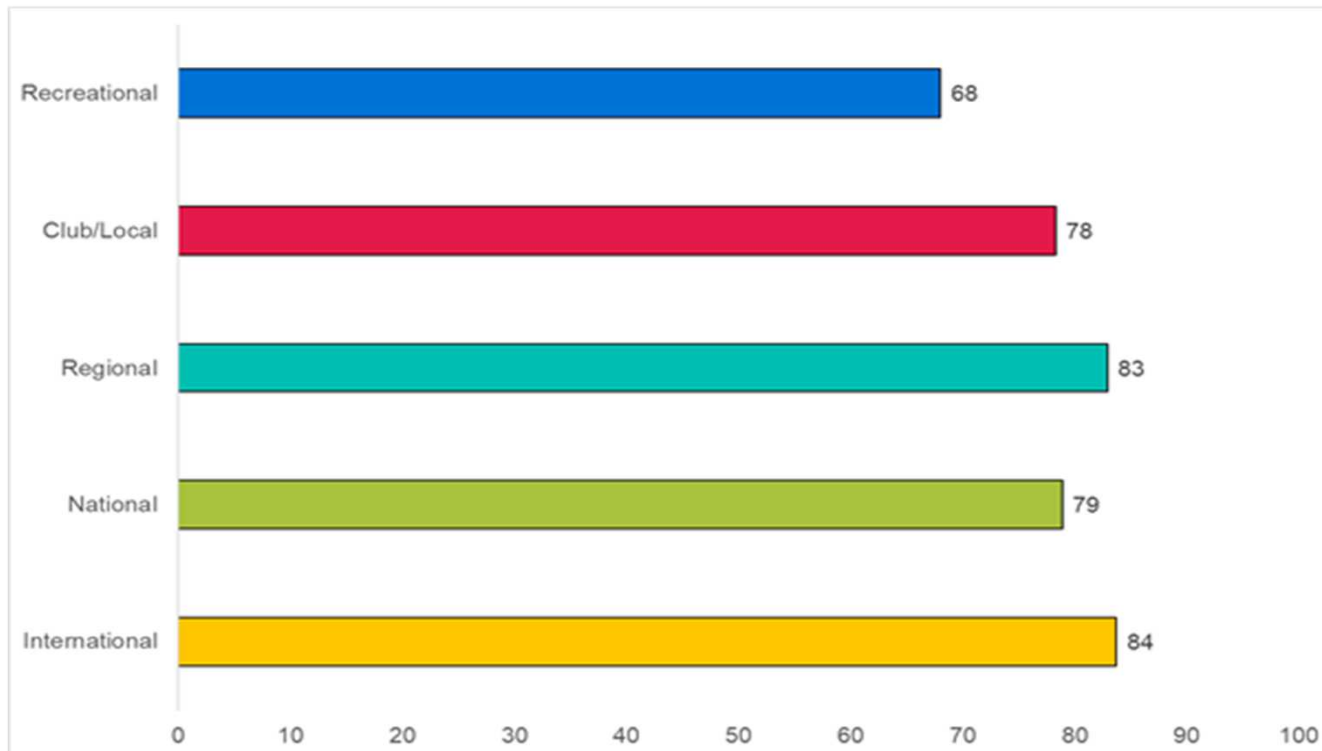


IVAC inside sport by gender & country



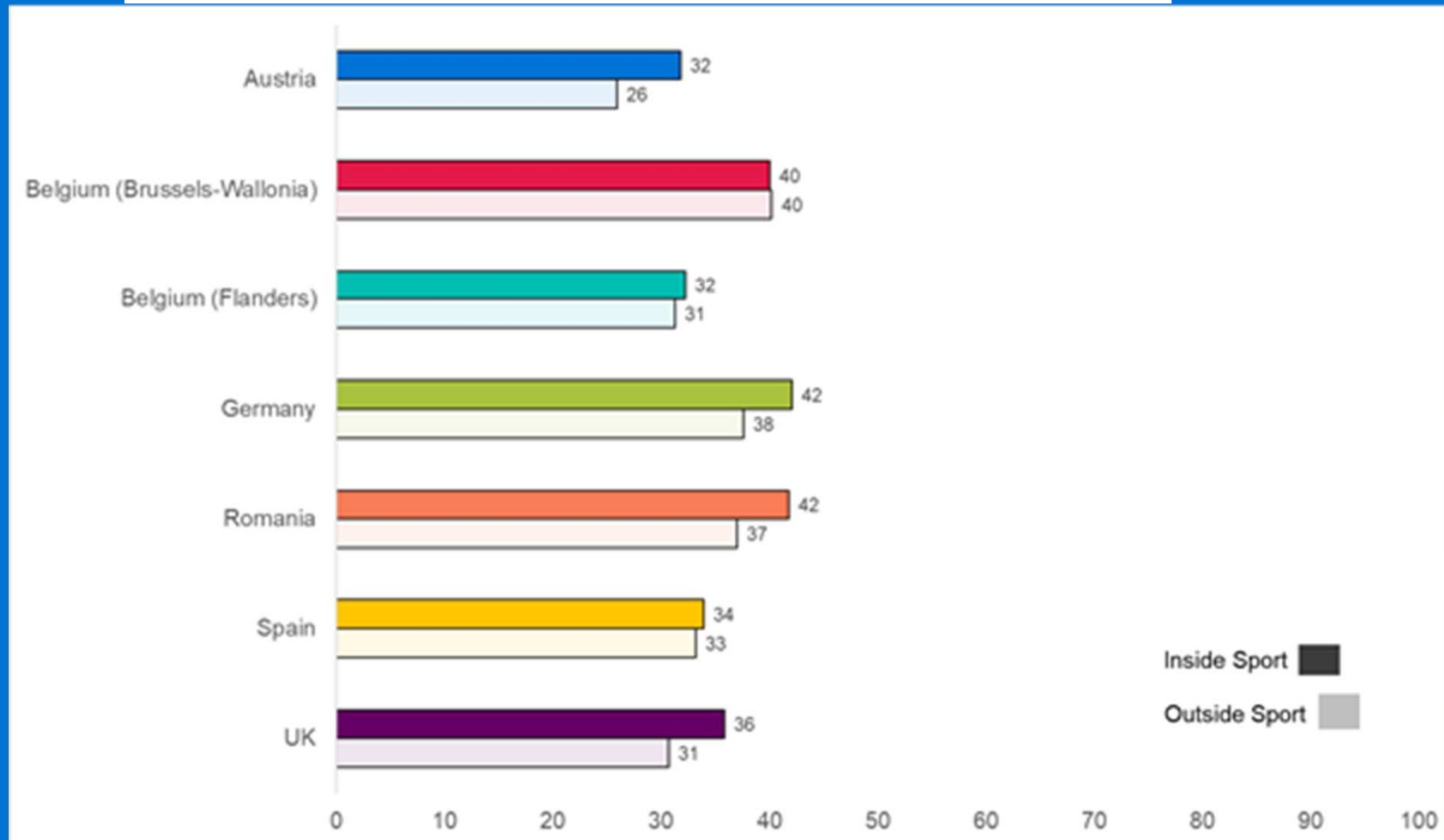
IVAC inside sport by highest level of participation

Prevalence of IVAC inside sport by highest level of participation (%)



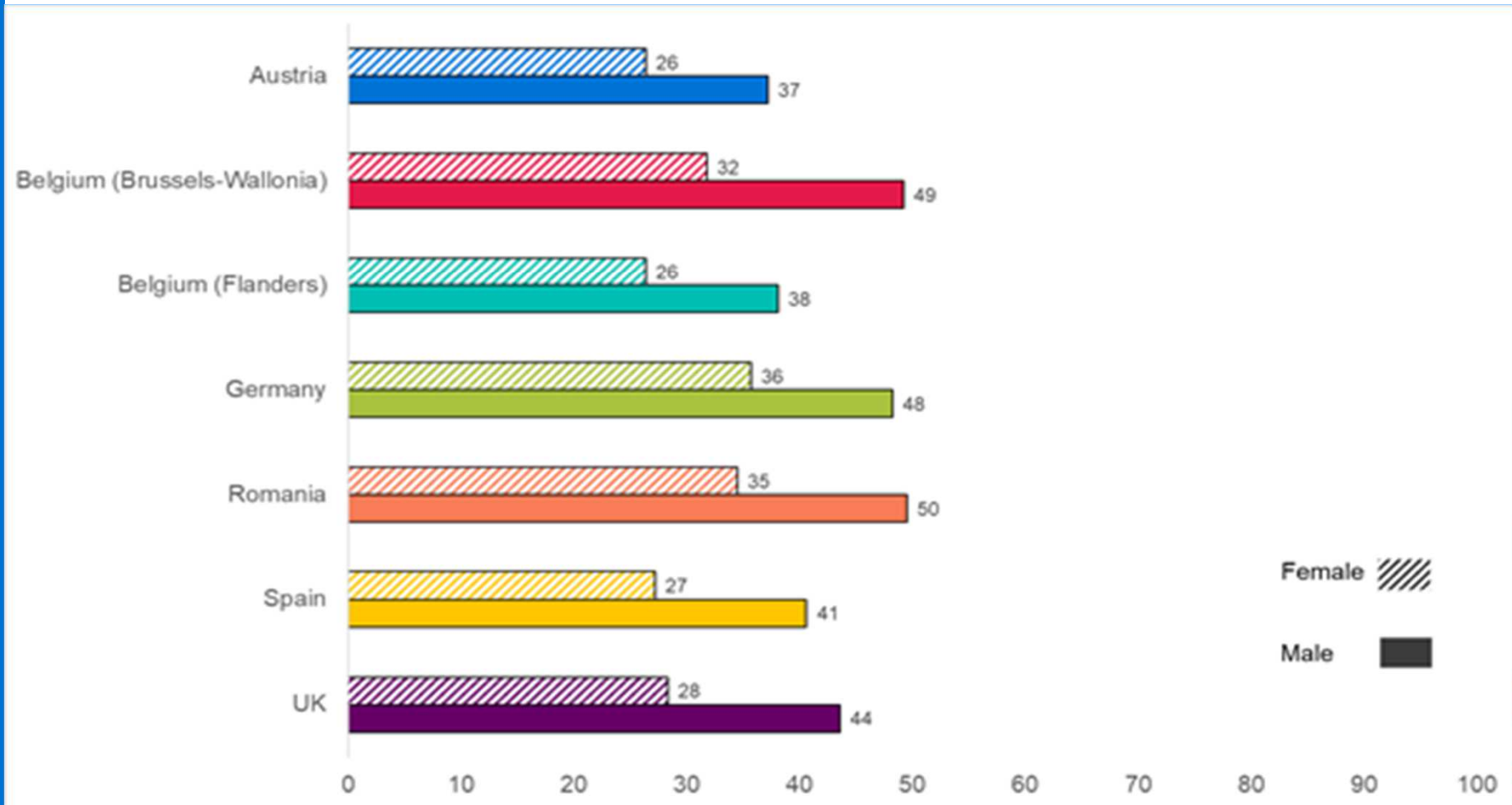
Neglect in and outside sport & country

PREVALENCE OF NEGLECT INSIDE /OUTSIDE SPORT BY COUNTRY %



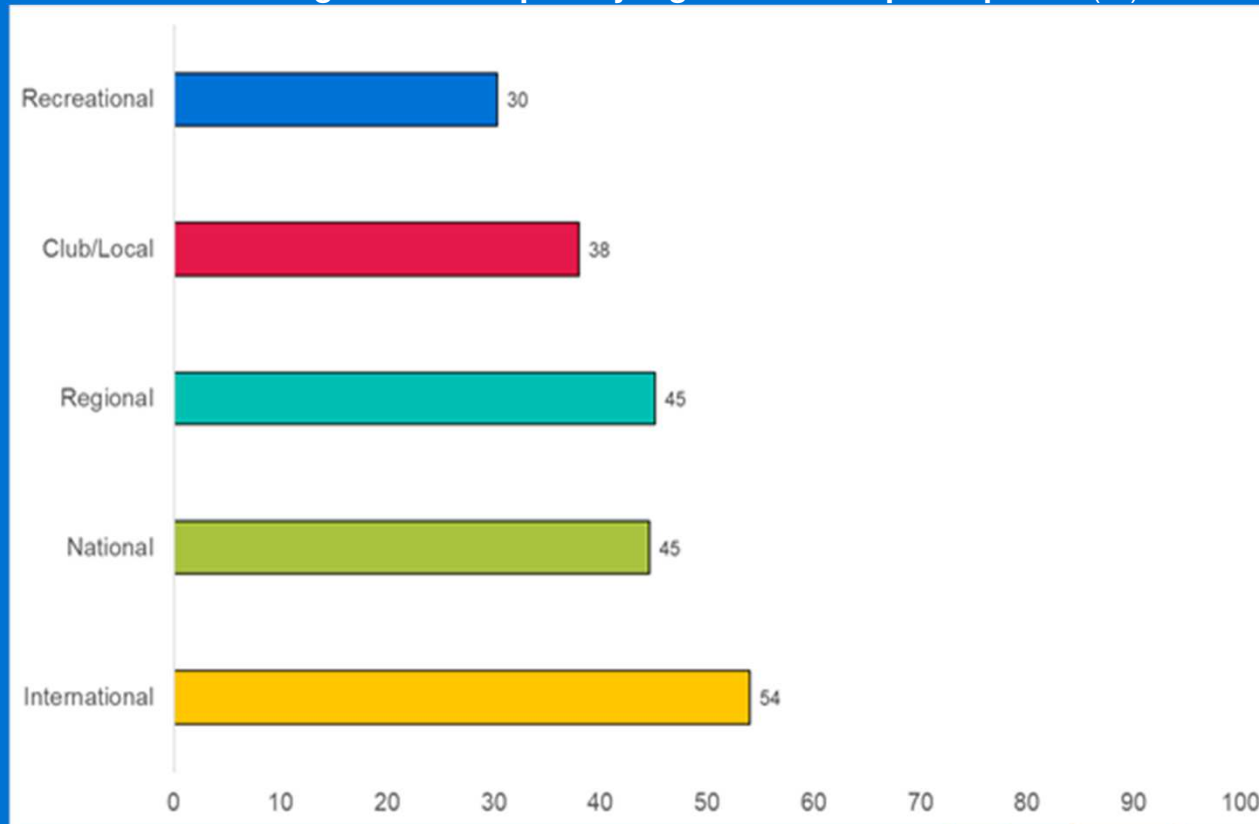
Neglect in sport by gender

PREVALENCE OF NEGLECT INSIDE SPORT BY GENDER%



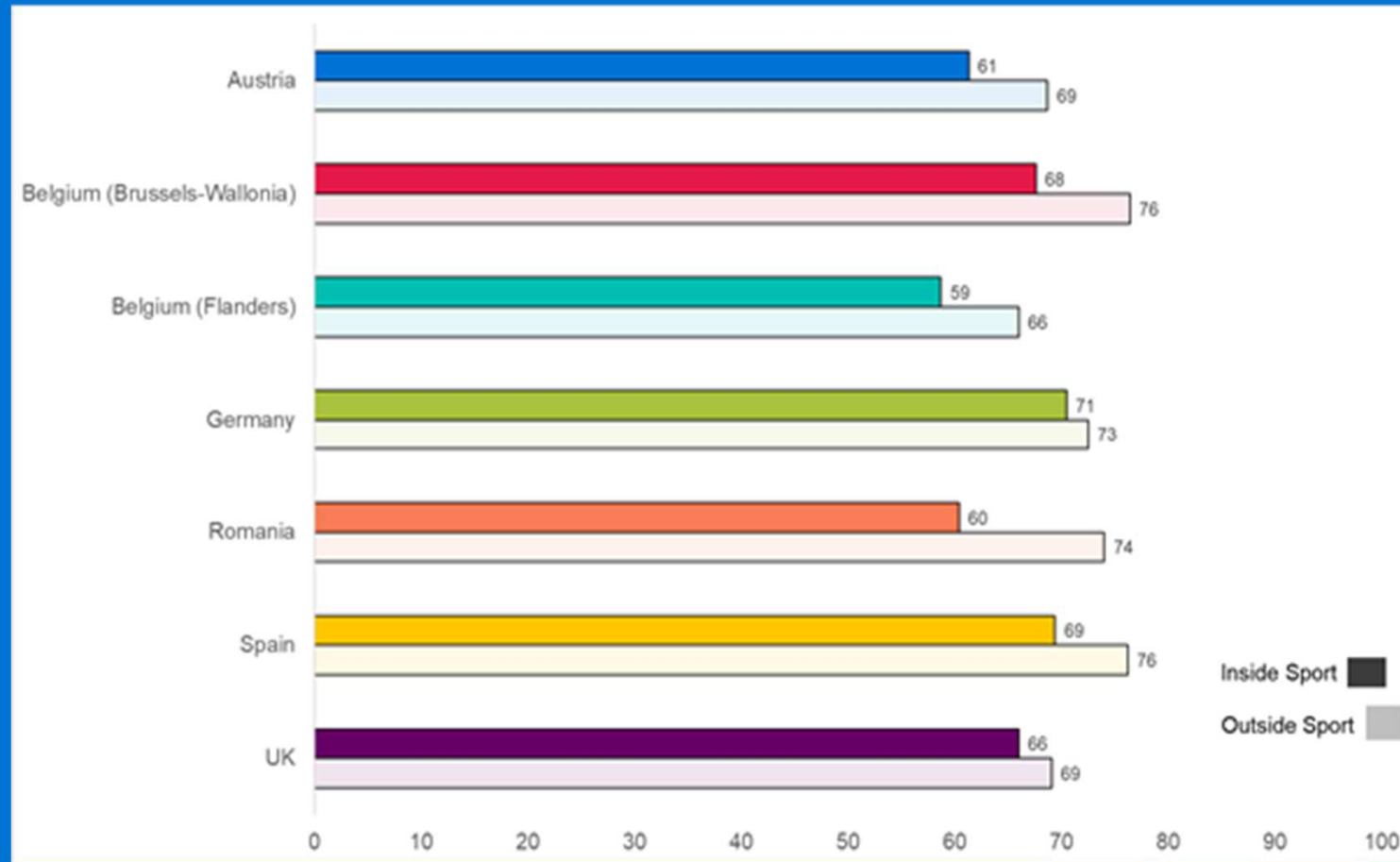
Neglect in sport by level of participation

Prevalence of neglect inside sport by highest level of participation (%)



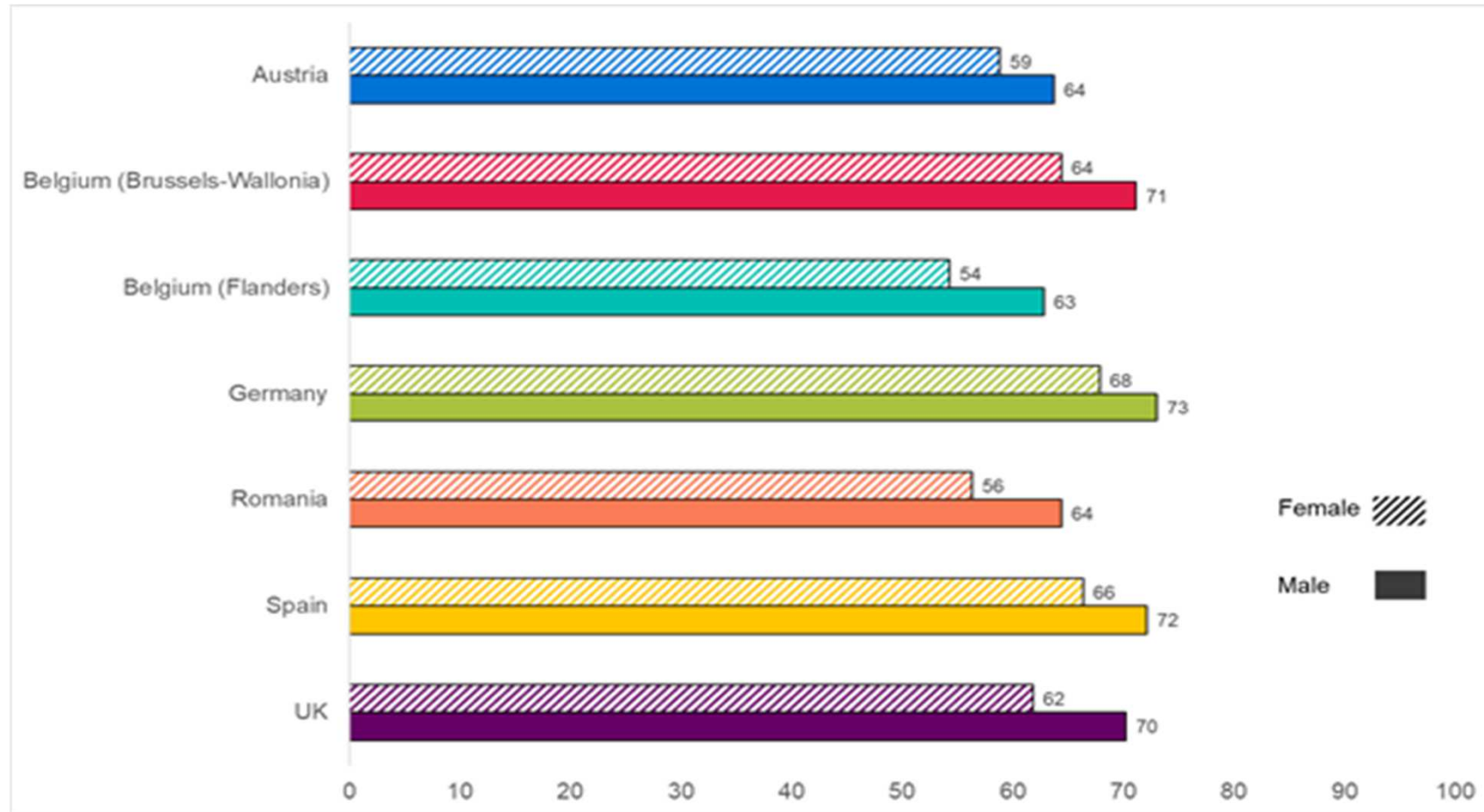
Psychological violence inside /outside sport & country

PREVALENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE BY COUNTRY (%)



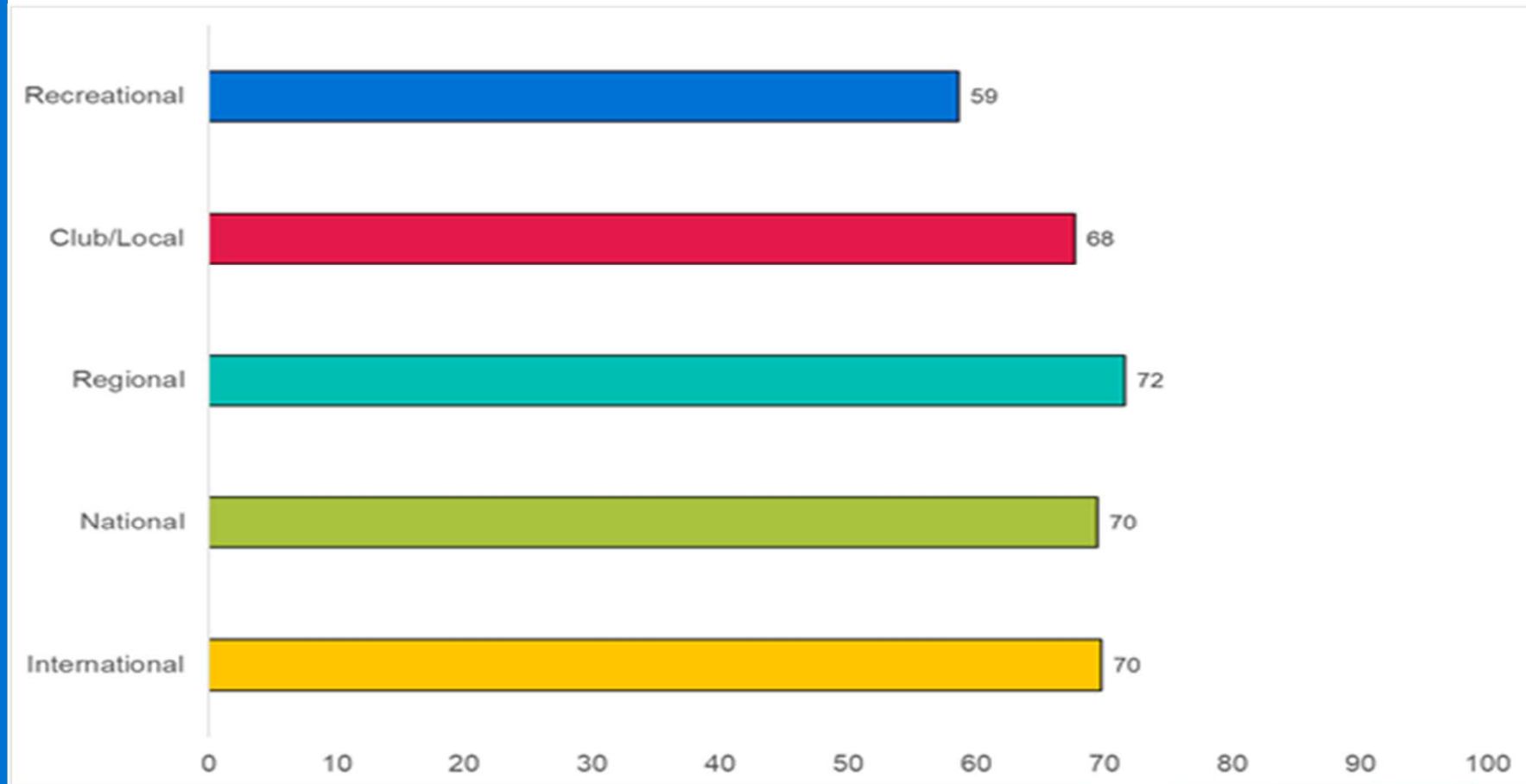
Psychological violence in sport by gender & country

Prevalence of psychological violence inside sport by gender & country (%)



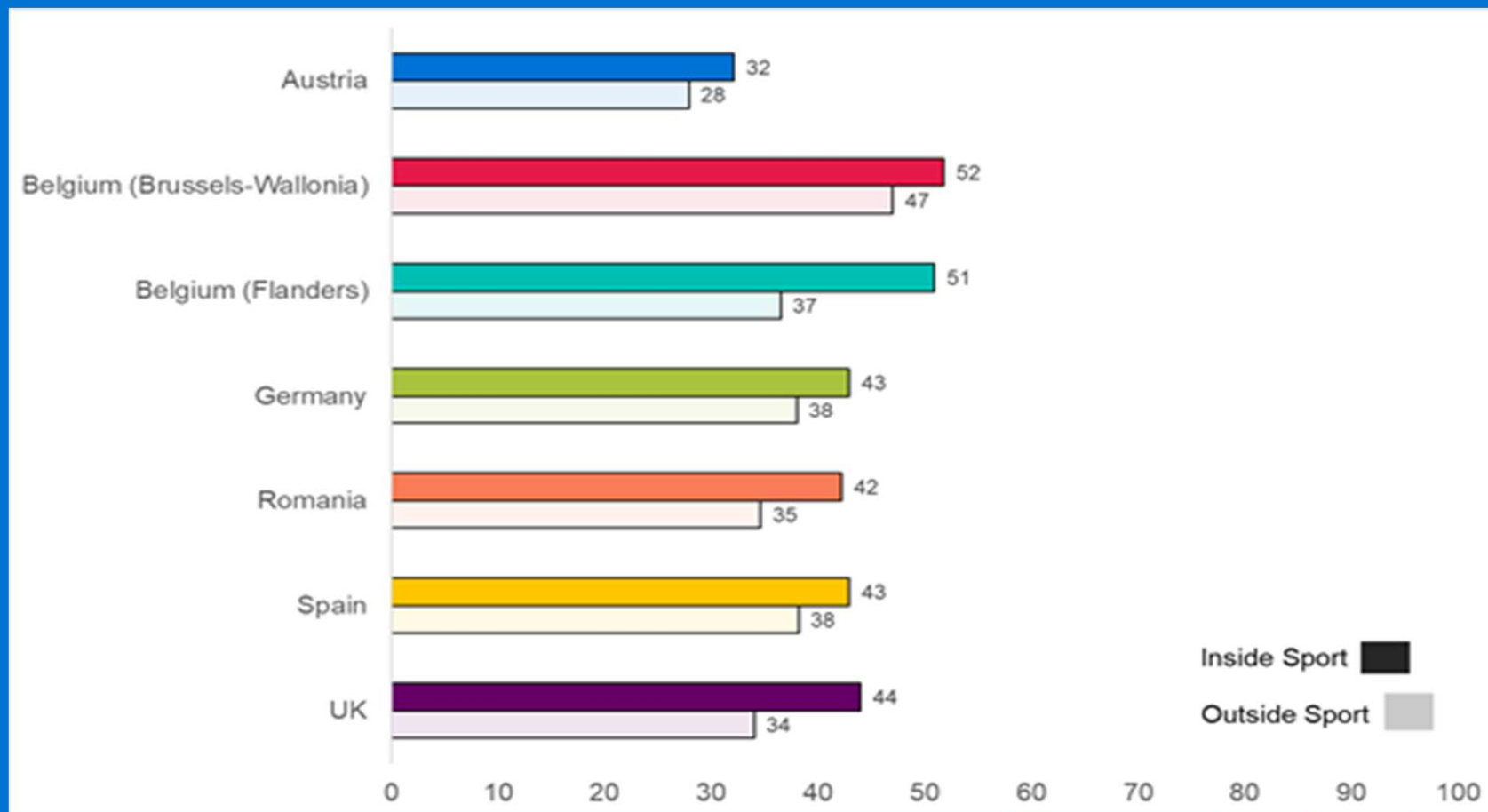
Psychological violence in sport by level of participation

PREVALENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE INSIDE SPORT BY LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION (%)



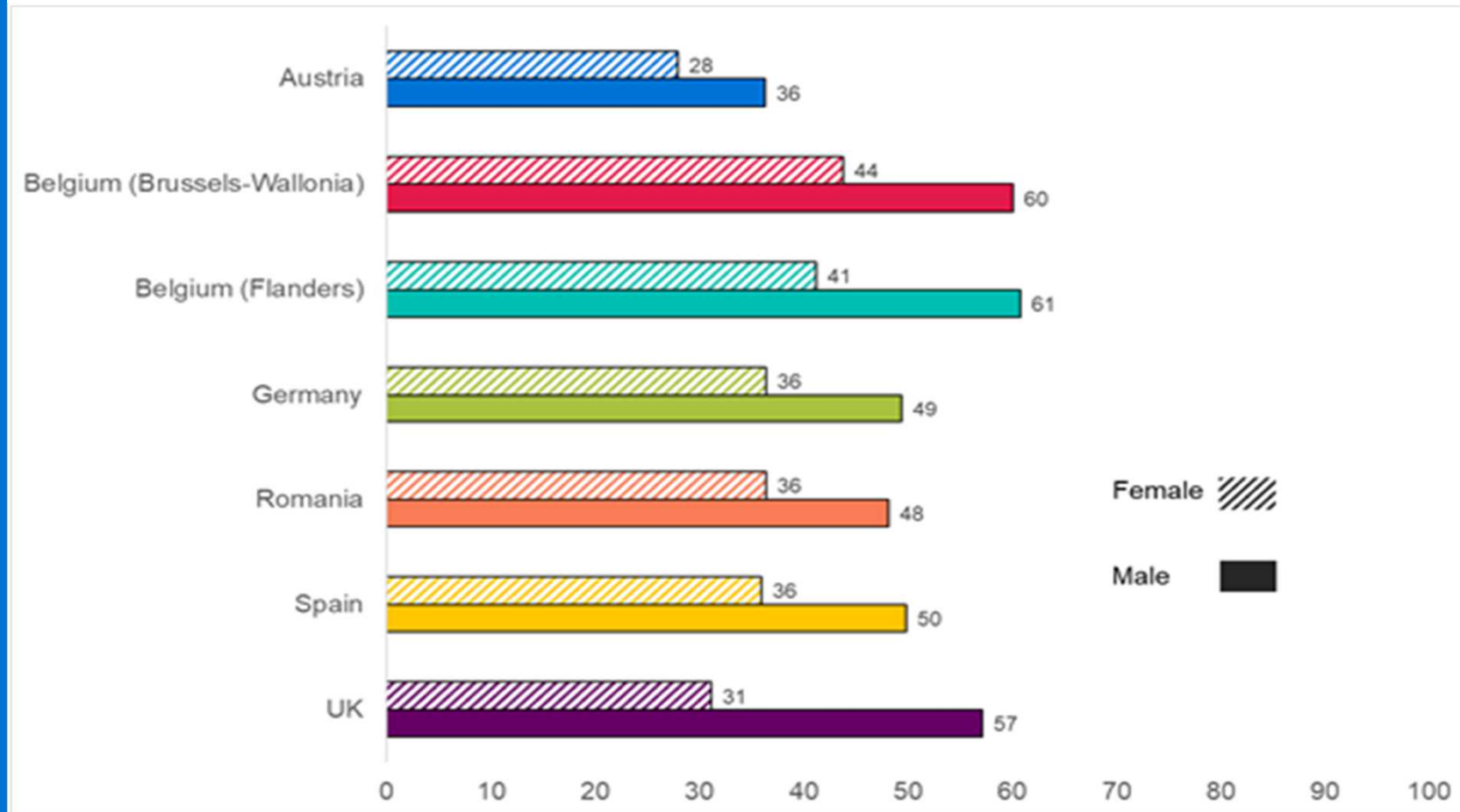
Physical Violence inside /outside sport & country

Prevalence of physical violence by country (%)



Physical violence inside sport by gender & country

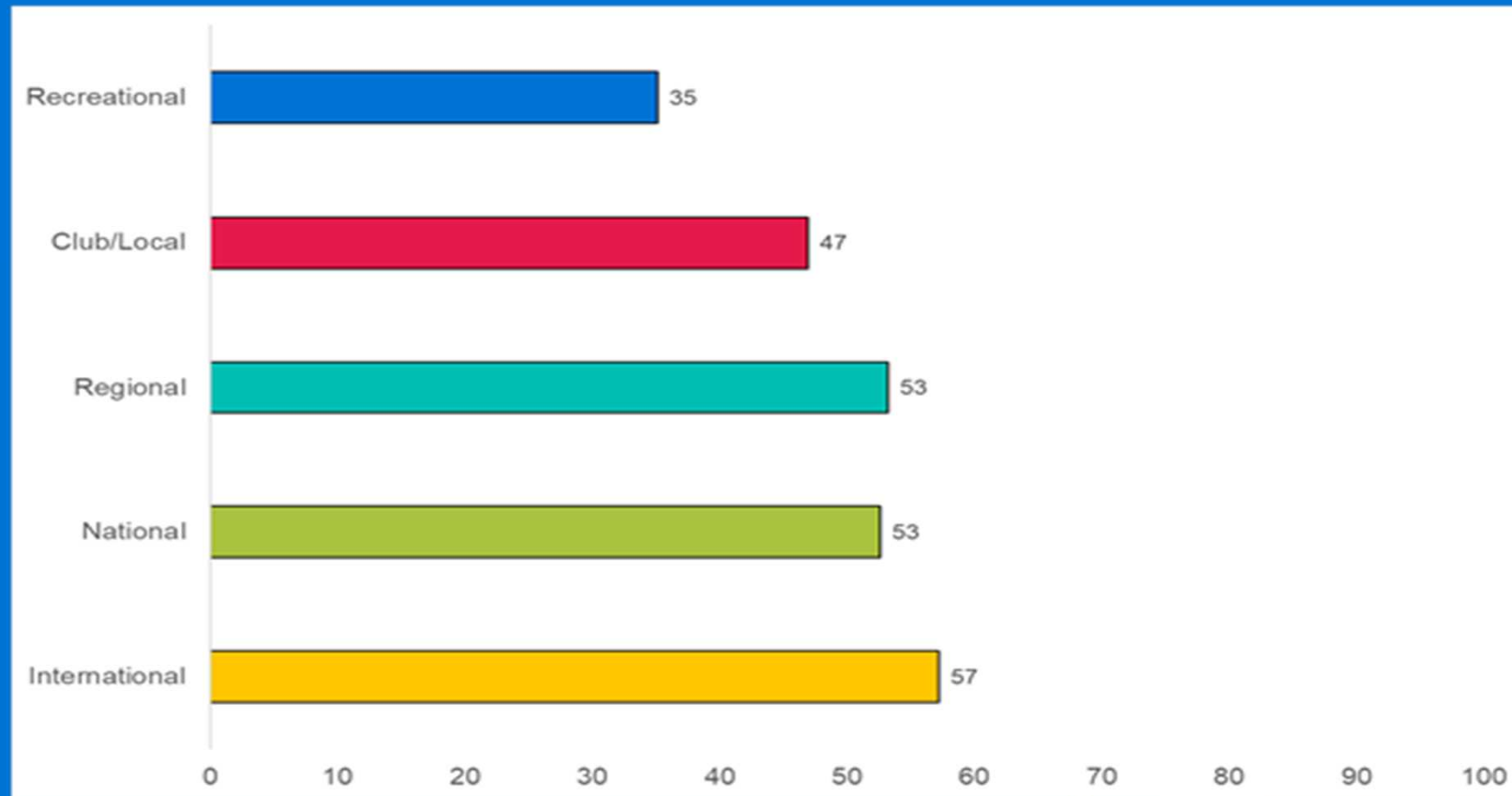
Prevalence of physical violence inside sport by gender & country (%)





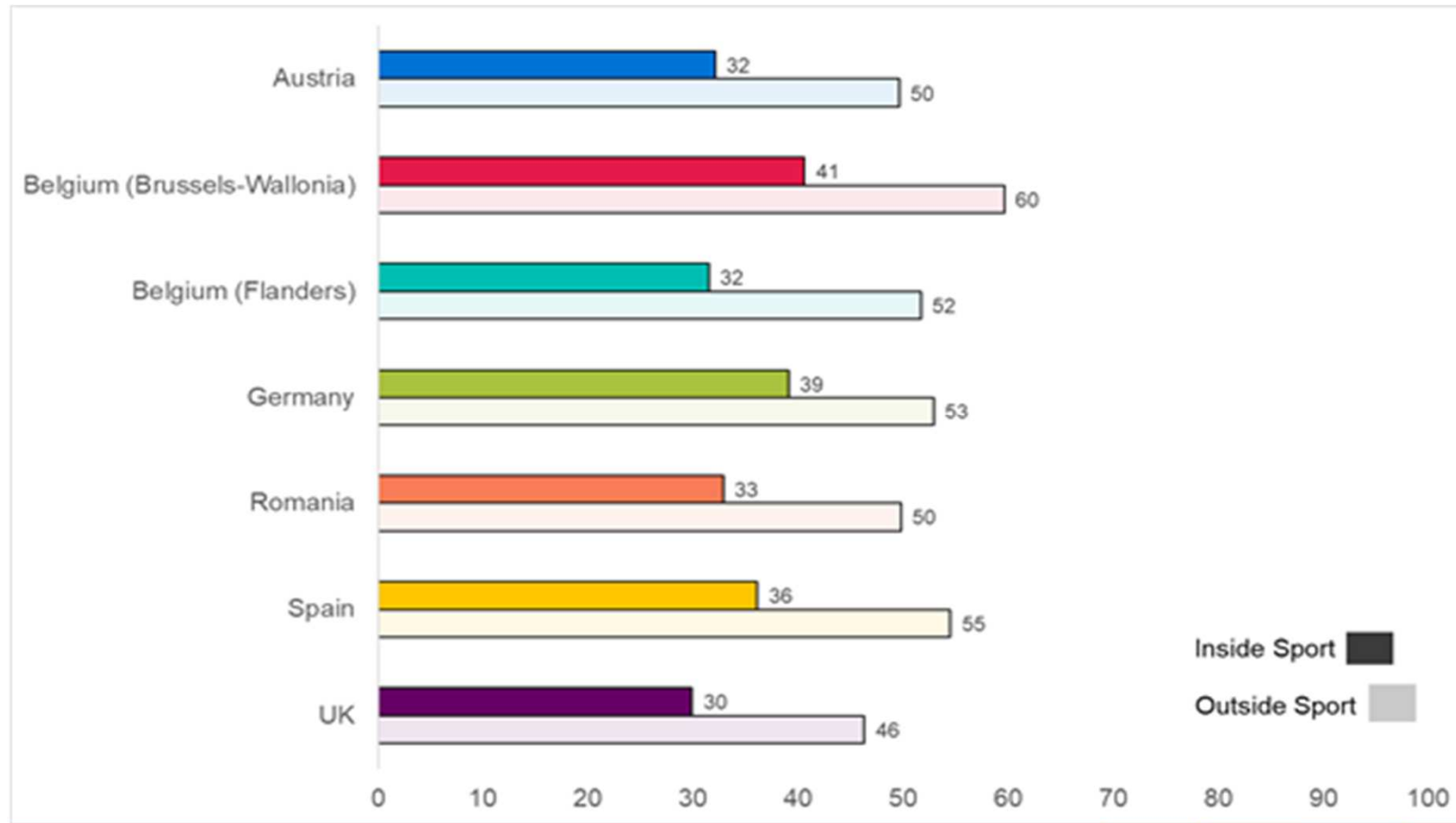
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE INSIDE SPORT BY LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE INSIDE SPORT BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION (%)



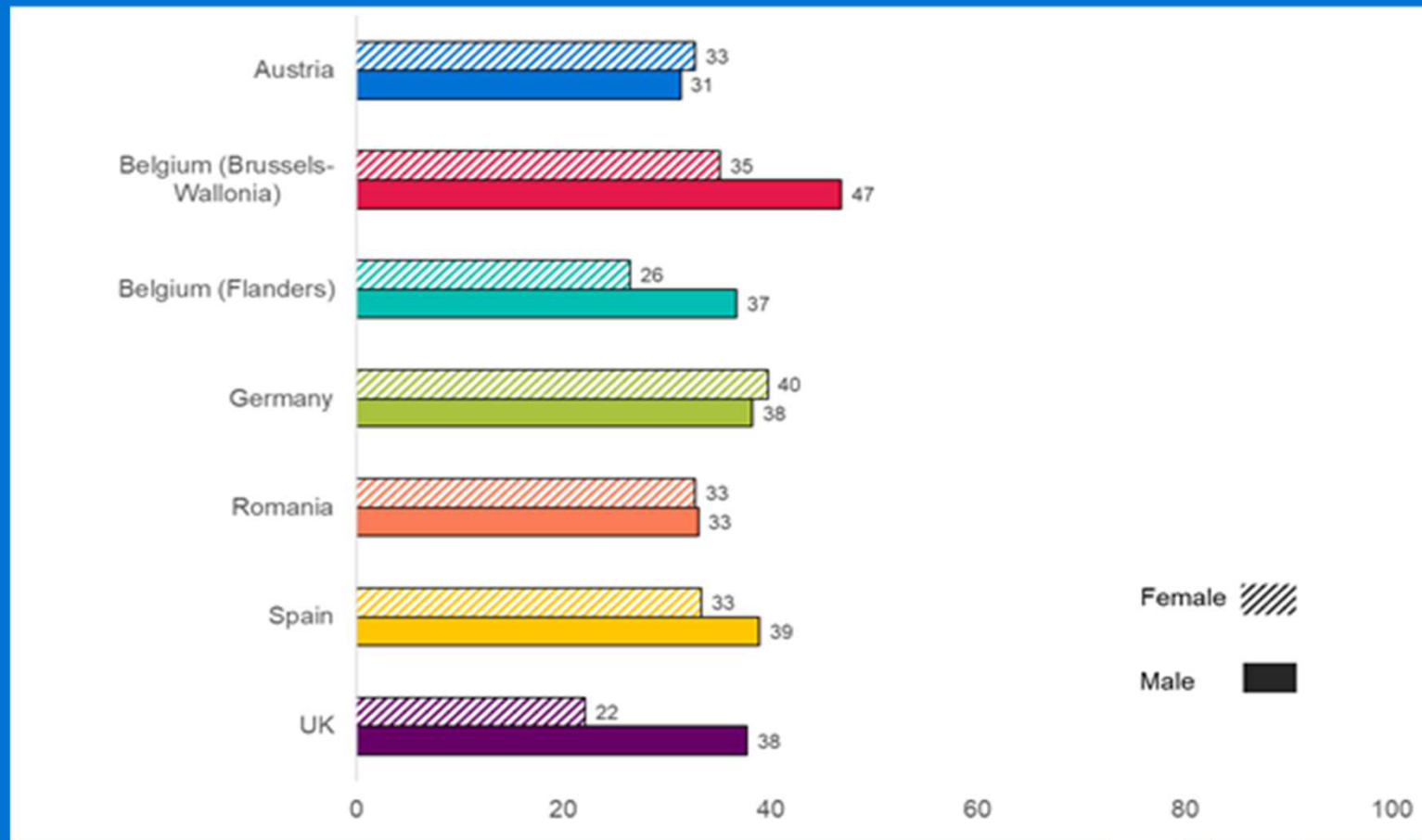
Non-Contact Sexual Violence (NCSV) by country

Prevalence of non-contact sexual violence (NCSV) by country (%)



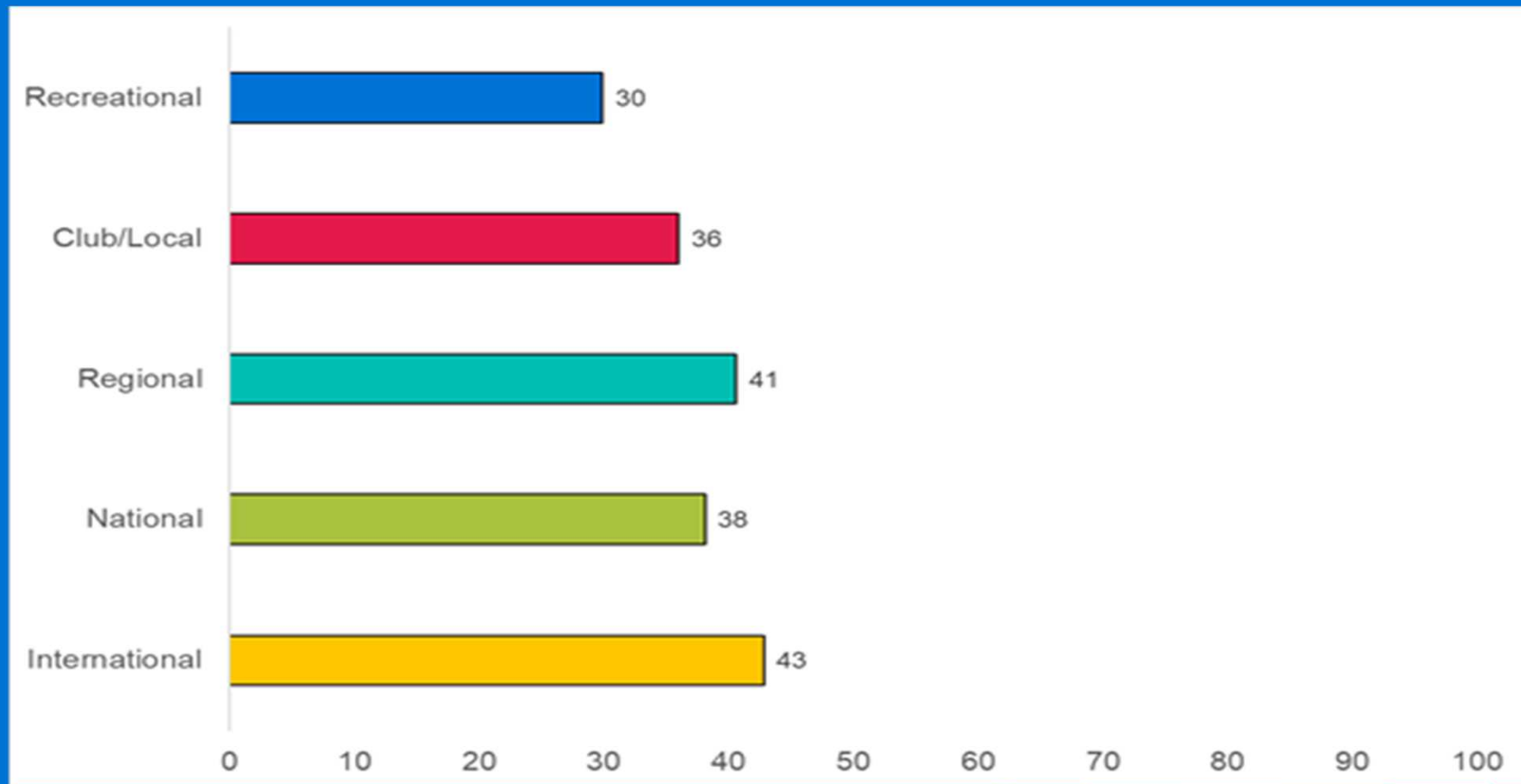
Non-contact sexual violence (NCSV) inside sport by gender & country

Prevalence of non-contact sexual violence (NCSV) inside sport by gender & country (%)



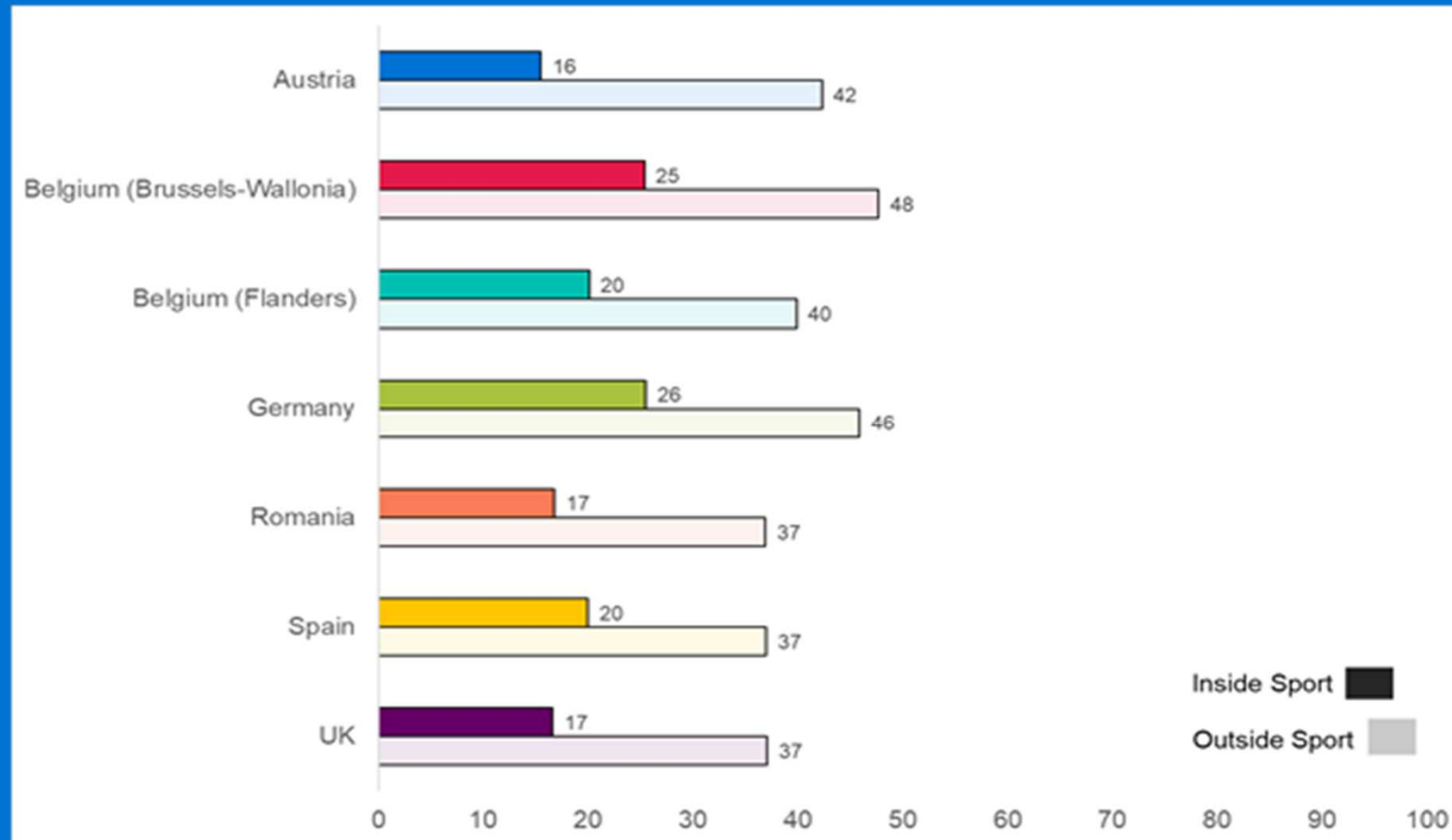
Non-contact sexual violence (NCSV) inside sport by level of participation

Prevalence of non-contact sexual violence (NCSV) inside sport by level of participation (%)



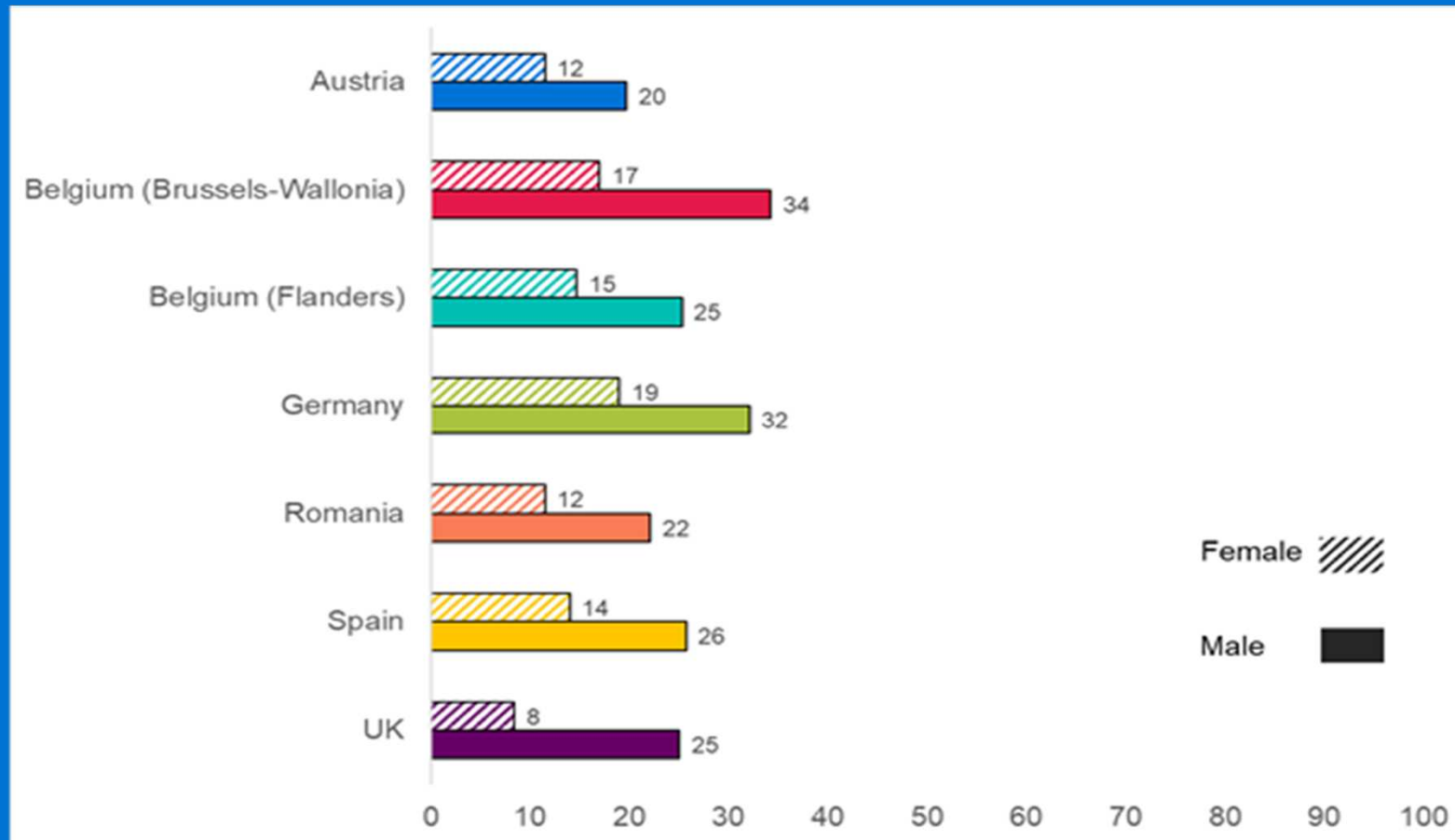
Contact Sexual Violence (CSV)

Prevalence of contact sexual violence (CSV) by country (%)



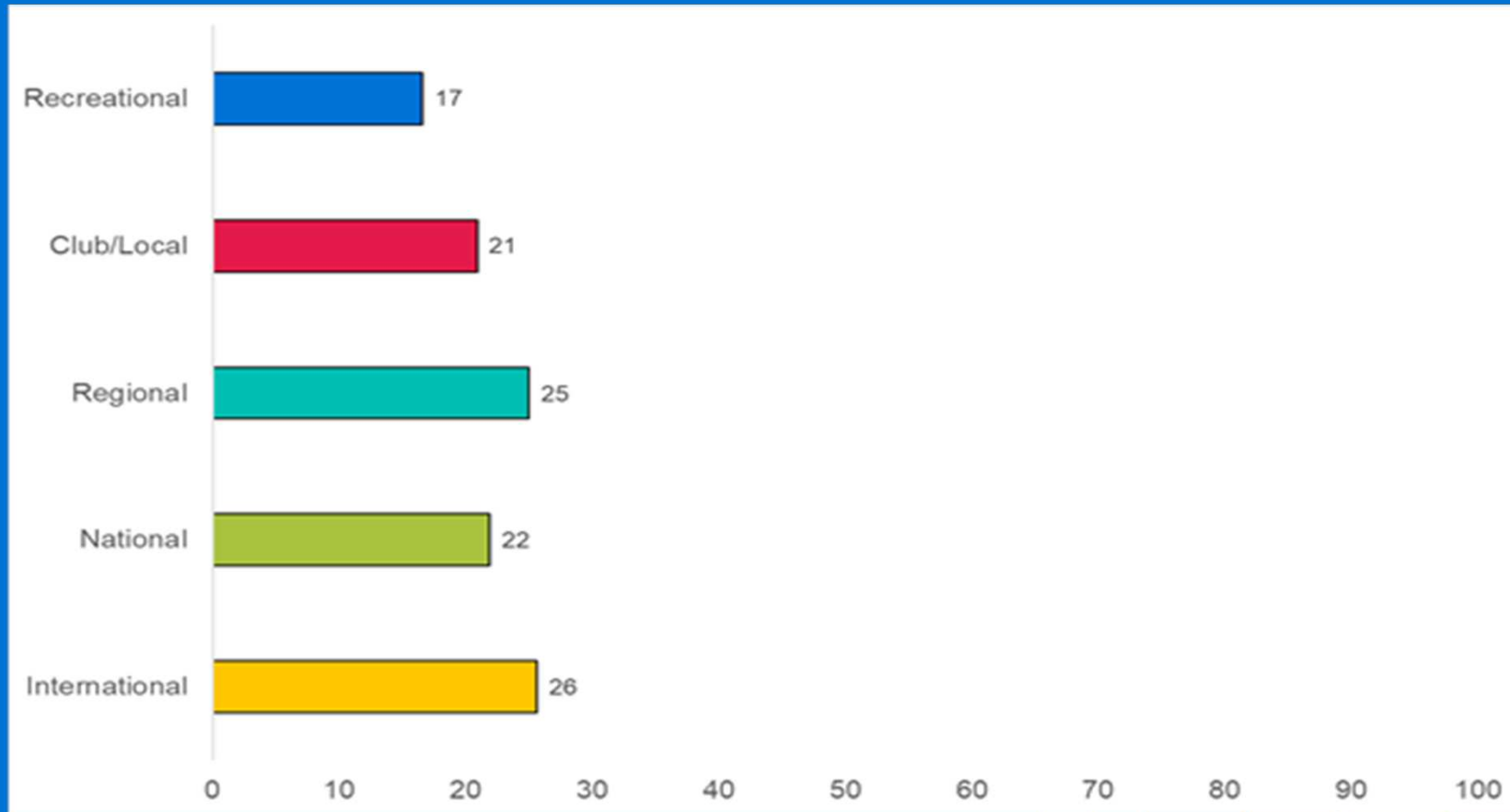
CONTACT SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CSV) INSIDE SPORT BY GENDER & COUNTRY

PREVALENCE OF CONTACT SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CSV) INSIDE SPORT BY GENDER & COUNTRY (%)



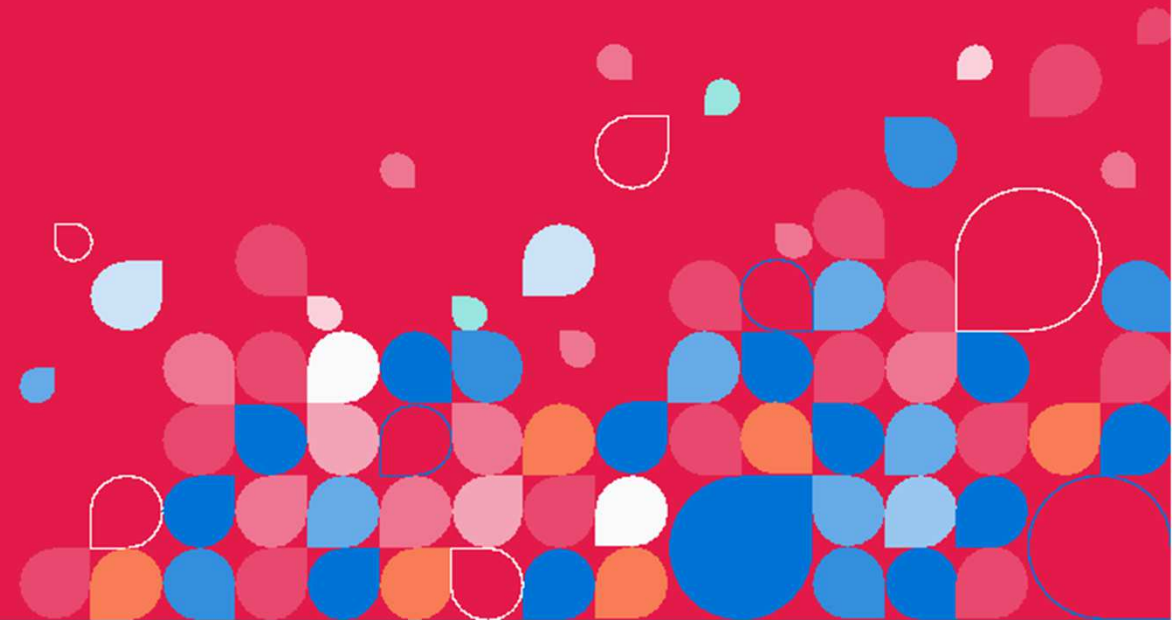
Contact sexual violence (CSV) inside sport by level of participation

Prevalence of contact sexual violence (CSV) inside sport by highest level of participation (%)

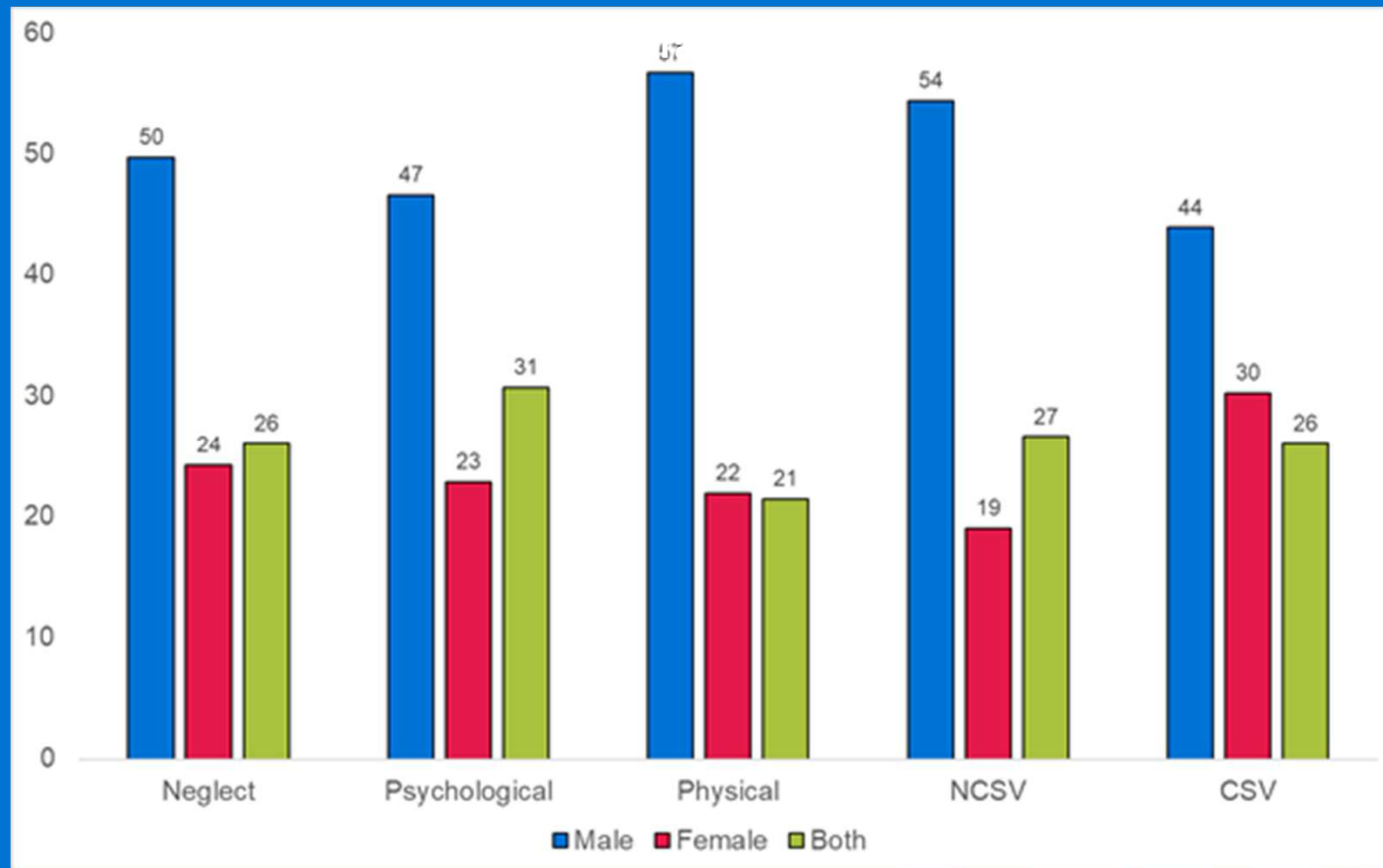


RESULTS (2)

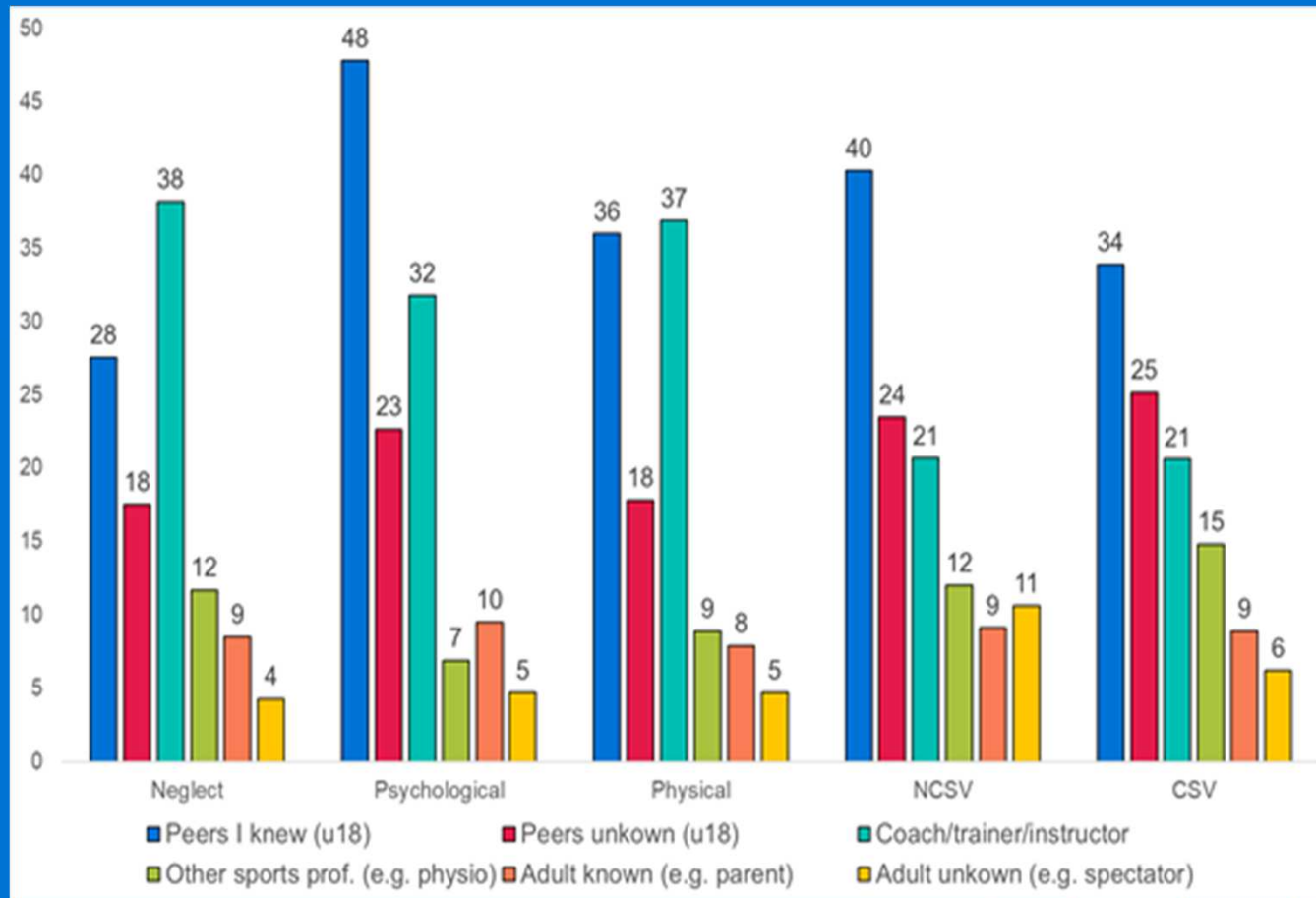
Characteristics of perpetrators, context of experience, disclosure



Gender of 'perpetrators'



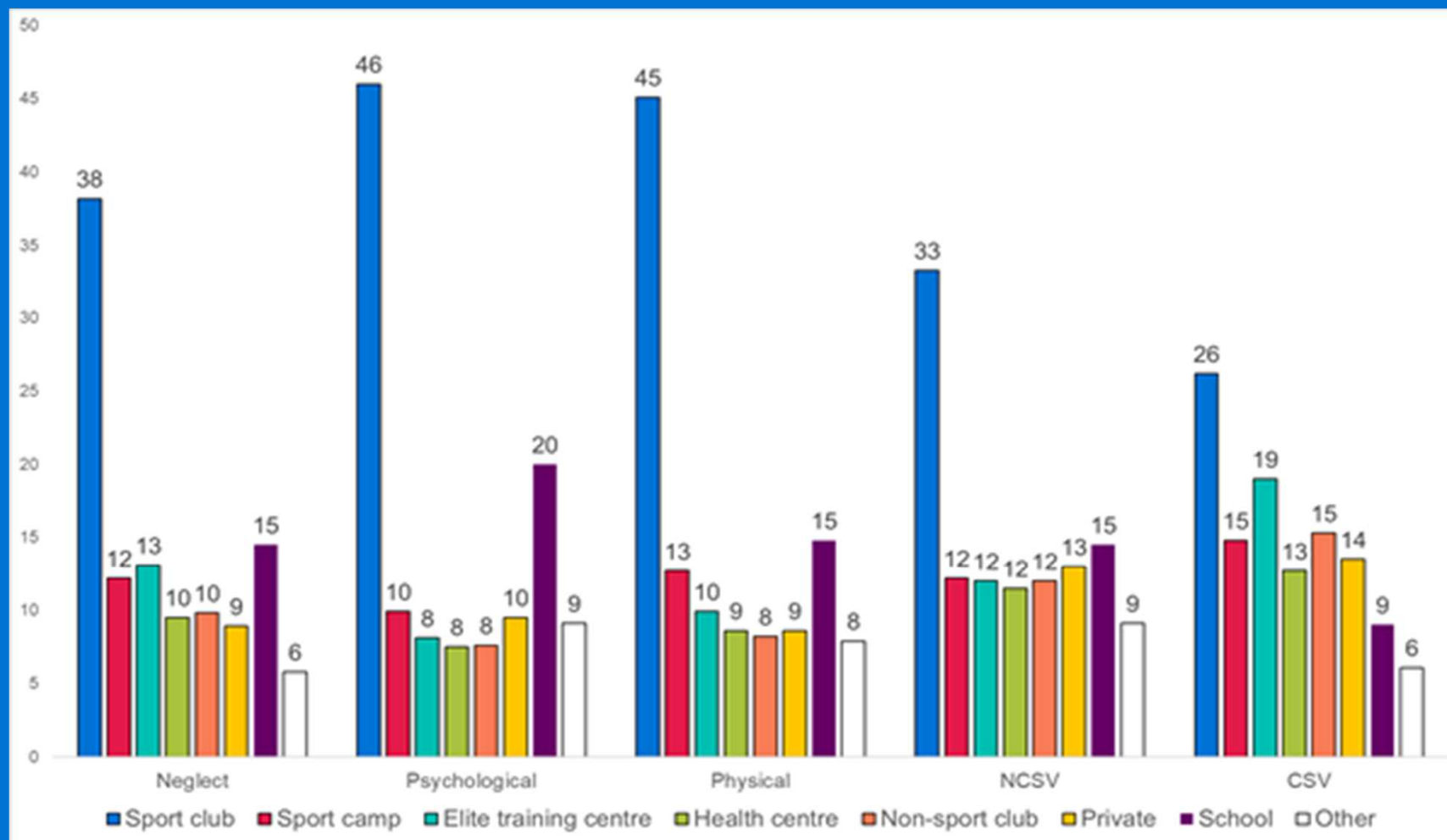
Role/Position of Perpetrator





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Context and location of IVAC experience

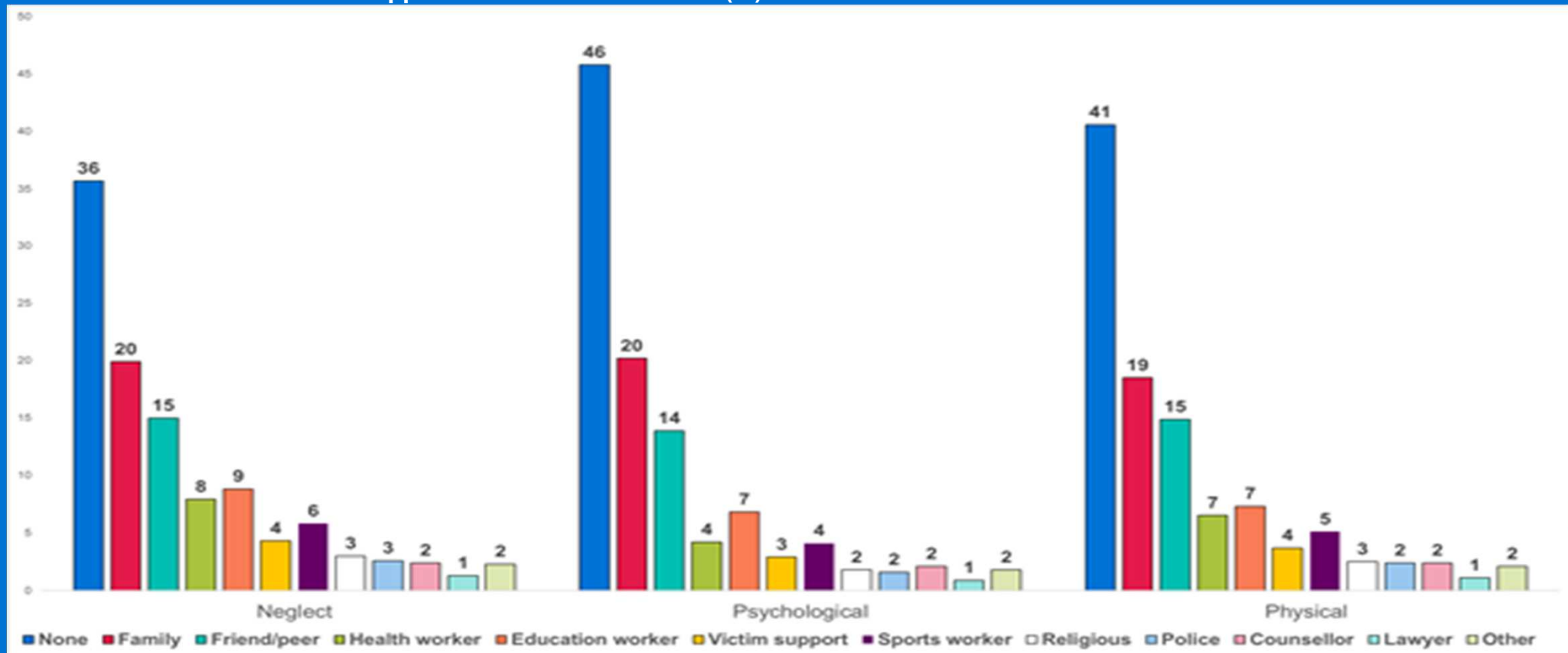




CASES

DISCLOSURE & SUPPORT, NON-SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Prevalence of disclosure & support – non-sexual violence (%)

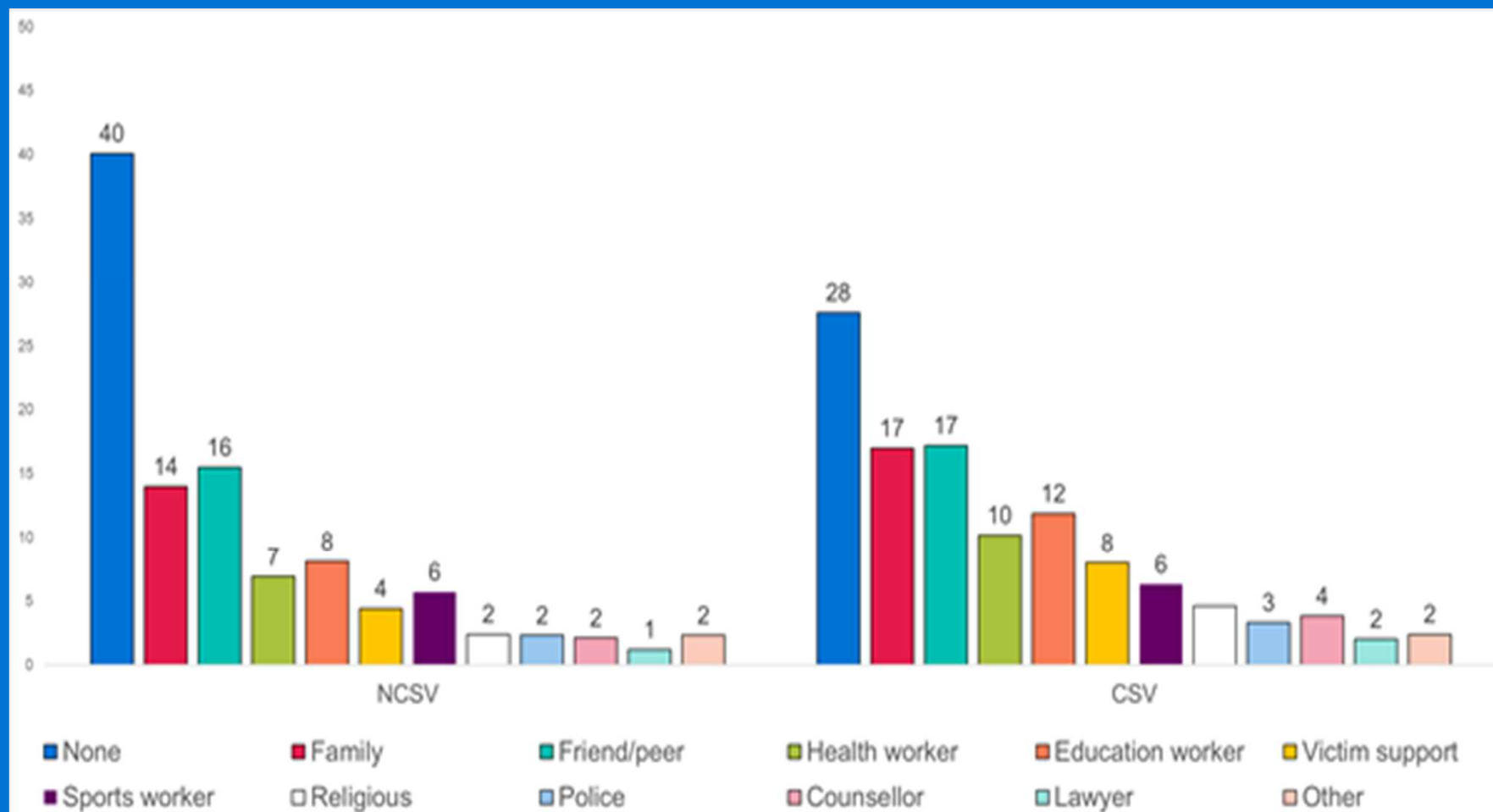




CASES

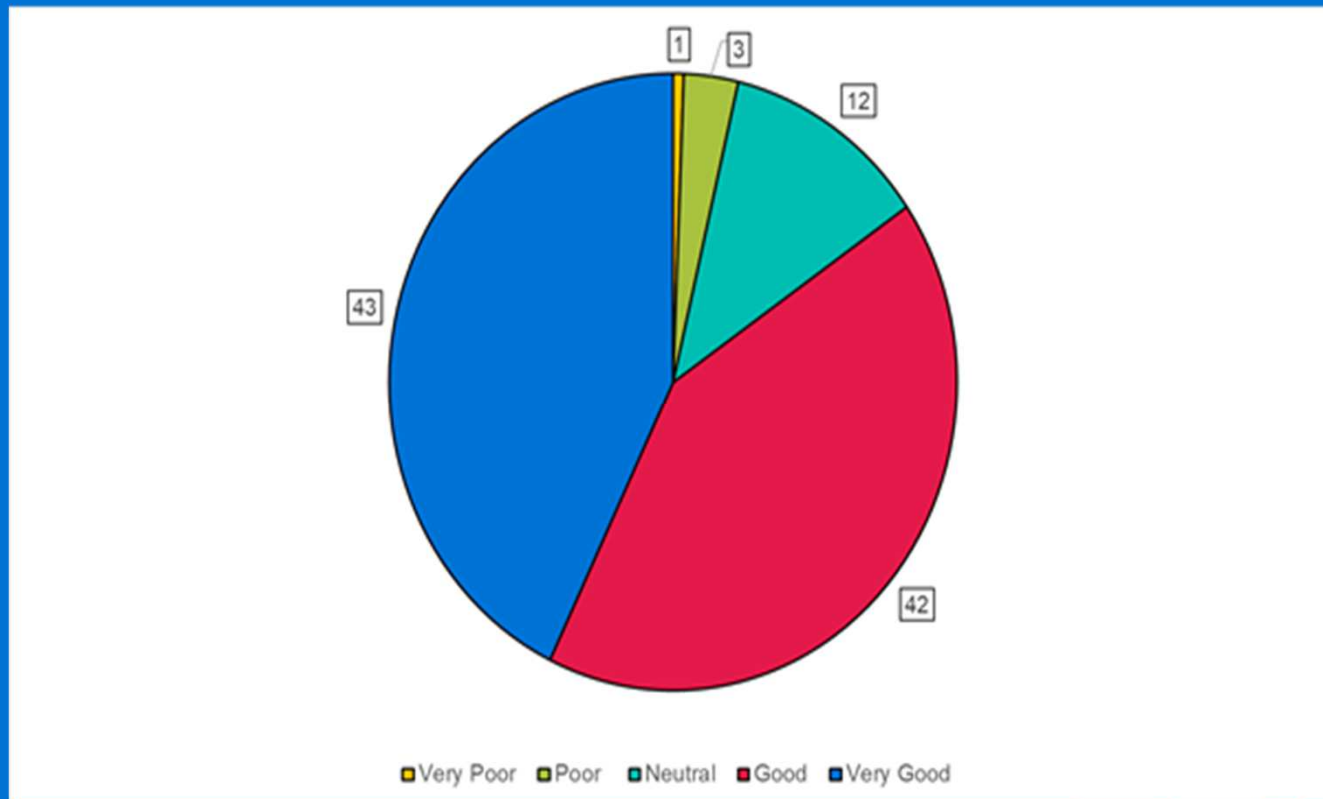
DISCLOSURE & SUPPORT – SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PREVALENCE OF DISCLOSURE & SUPPORT – SEXUAL VIOLENCE (%)

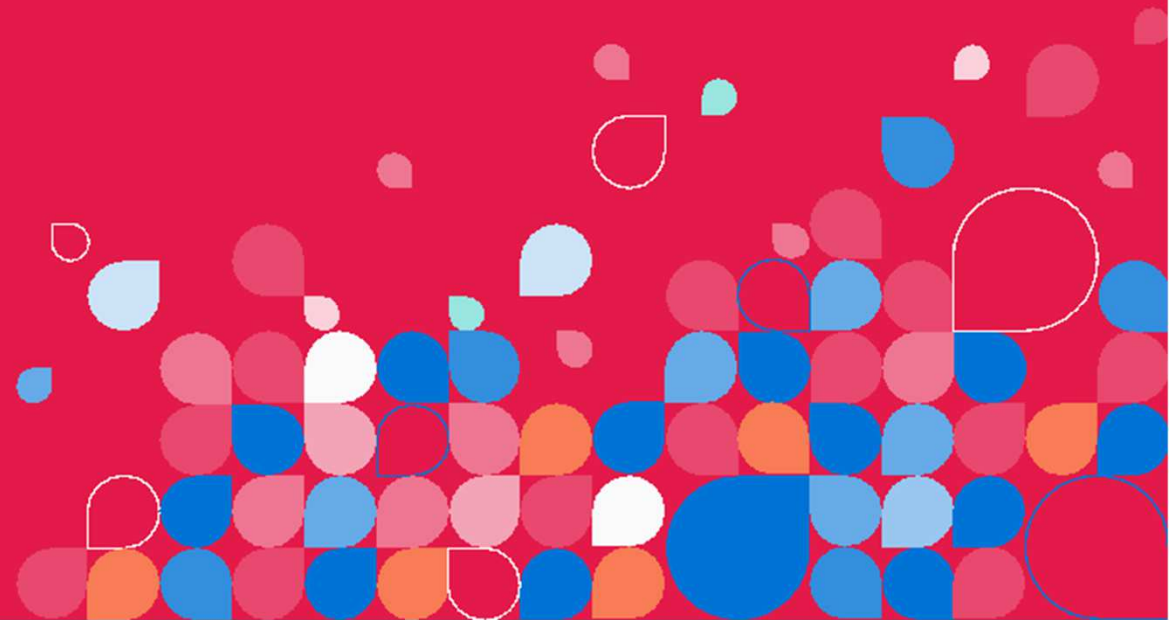


Overall experience in sport (%)

Rating overall experience in sport (%)

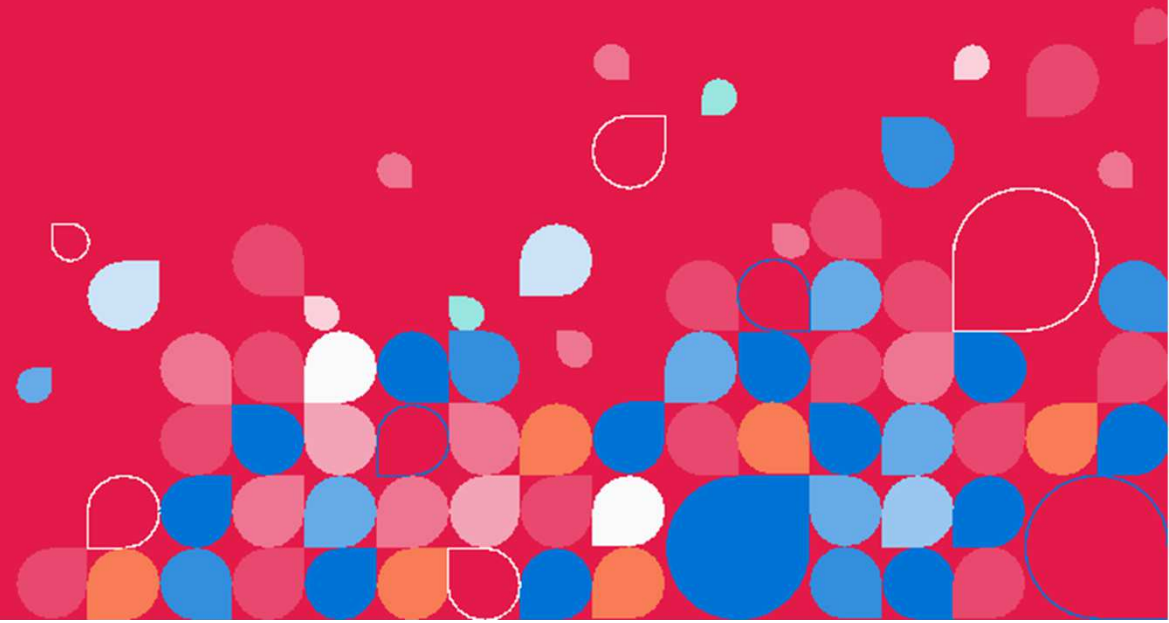


KEY FINDINGS



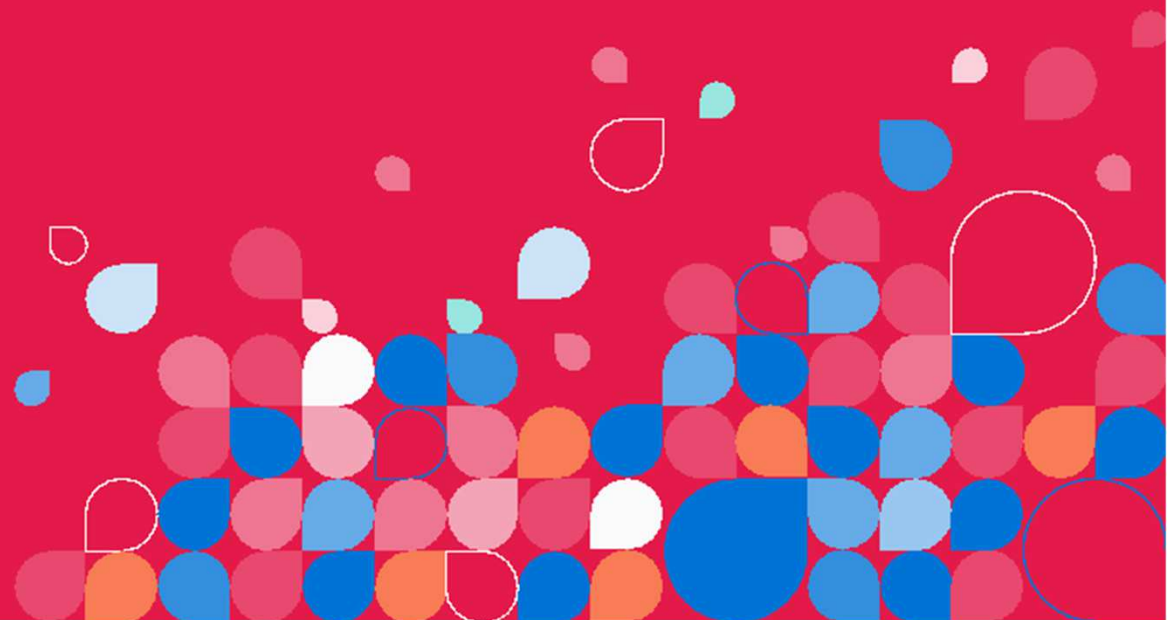
- IVAC is a widespread phenomenon in sports.
- The most common experience of IVAC in sports was psychological.
- The prevalence of any form IVAC in sports is higher in boys than in girls.
- The prevalence of IVAC is the lowest in recreational sports compared to those internationally.
- The IVAC occurs in all organizational contexts, but most often in the sports club.
- The perpetrators of sports is predominantly a man, but not exclusively. The prevalence of women perpetrators was 22-30%.
- IVAC is committed by both adults(coaches, sport personelle) and colleagues/peers.
- Most respondents rarely discloses the worst experiences. The few cases of disclosures were made to a family member or friend, so outside the sporting context.

Conclusions



- ❑ Interpersonal violence against children in sports are widespread.
- ❑ Sport may not provide children with a protective, positive and healthy environment.
- ❑ Addressing child abuse in sport requires cultural change.
- ❑ The strategy to address child abuse in sport must be based on independent and sound scientific evidence.

Recomandation





Government departments or ministries responsible for sport should:

Ensure general policies and strategies on child protection and 'safeguarding' include and apply to sport.

Incorporate systematic, longitudinal research on prevalence of interpersonal violence against children in sport into national strategies and action plans for sport.

Provide an independent body or agency where those affected by interpersonal violence in sport can report their experiences and receive help and support.

Ensure national agencies or federations are supported and appropriately resourced to introduce and/or increase efforts to raise awareness of and prevent interpersonal violence in sport.

Ensure prevention efforts extend to the local level (e.g. voluntary sports clubs) and are not limited to 'umbrella' sports federations.



National and federal bodies should

Acknowledge all forms of interpersonal violence against children inside sport.

Introduce measures to prevent interpersonal violence in sport and ensure children's rights are incorporated into all levels of organisational structures in sport.

Ensure strategic policy is informed by evidence on prevalence rates of interpersonal violence against children.

Evaluate and improve the efficacy of prevention measures through longitudinal assessment of interpersonal violence against children in sport



Prevention strategies should:

Include compulsory training across all categories of interpersonal violence against children, including peer violence, for those with responsibility for children in sport.

Establish sport-specific and independent contact points for support, advice, complaints and reports (e.g. a helpline).

Acknowledge the important role that sports personnel have in recognising interpersonal violence, receiving and handling disclosures, and the support they need to carry out these roles safely and effectively.

Address interpersonal violence against children at all levels of sport (from recreational grassroot to competitive and elite sport) and be sensitive to the potential for heightened risk in competitive sport.



Training and education should:

Convey that interpersonal violence against children can occur in different forms and that some forms (e.g. peer violence, psychological violence) are more prevalent than others.

Convey that the risk for interpersonal violence against children might increase as the child moves beyond recreational sport.

Recognize that interpersonal violence against children is a significant problem for both males and females and that boys and men may be particularly underrepresented in official reports.

Recognise that children participating in sport may have experienced interpersonal violence in other contexts not only in sport

Recognise that interpersonal violence in sport does not stop at age 18.

THANK YOU !

