

**NCD**  
SYMPOSIUM

# The State of Noncommunicable Diseases in Kosovo

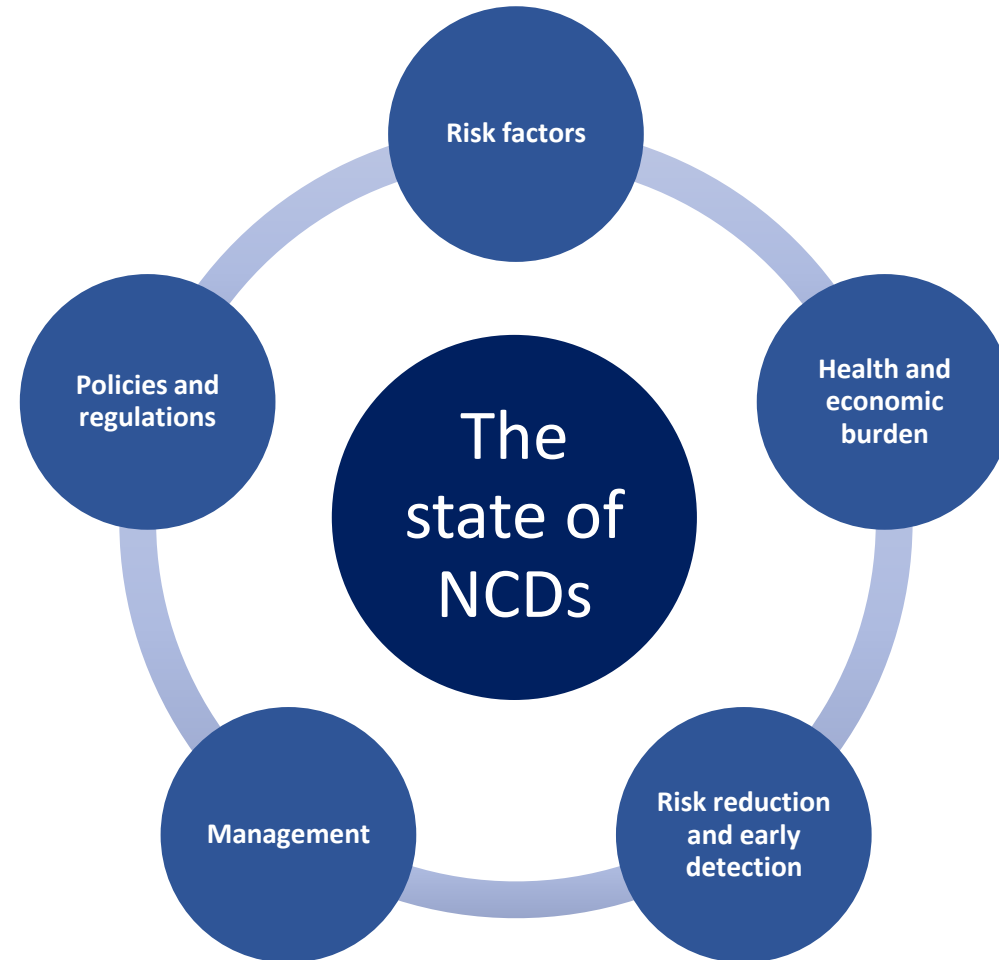
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The World Bank

2023

# A comprehensive look at the state of NCDs in Kosovo

- Review of existing literature
- Secondary data analysis from KAS
- Estimation and projection analyses
- Interviews with key informants

*Limit by available data and should be considered the first attempt to draw a comprehensive picture of NCDs in Kosovo*



A person is using a glucometer to test their blood sugar. One hand holds the device, and the other hand holds a finger. The background is a light blue color with a faint grid pattern. The text "Risk factors" is overlaid in the center.

# Risk factors

# Behavioral risk factors account for the largest share of DALYs in ECA



- Tobacco
- Unhealthy diet
- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol

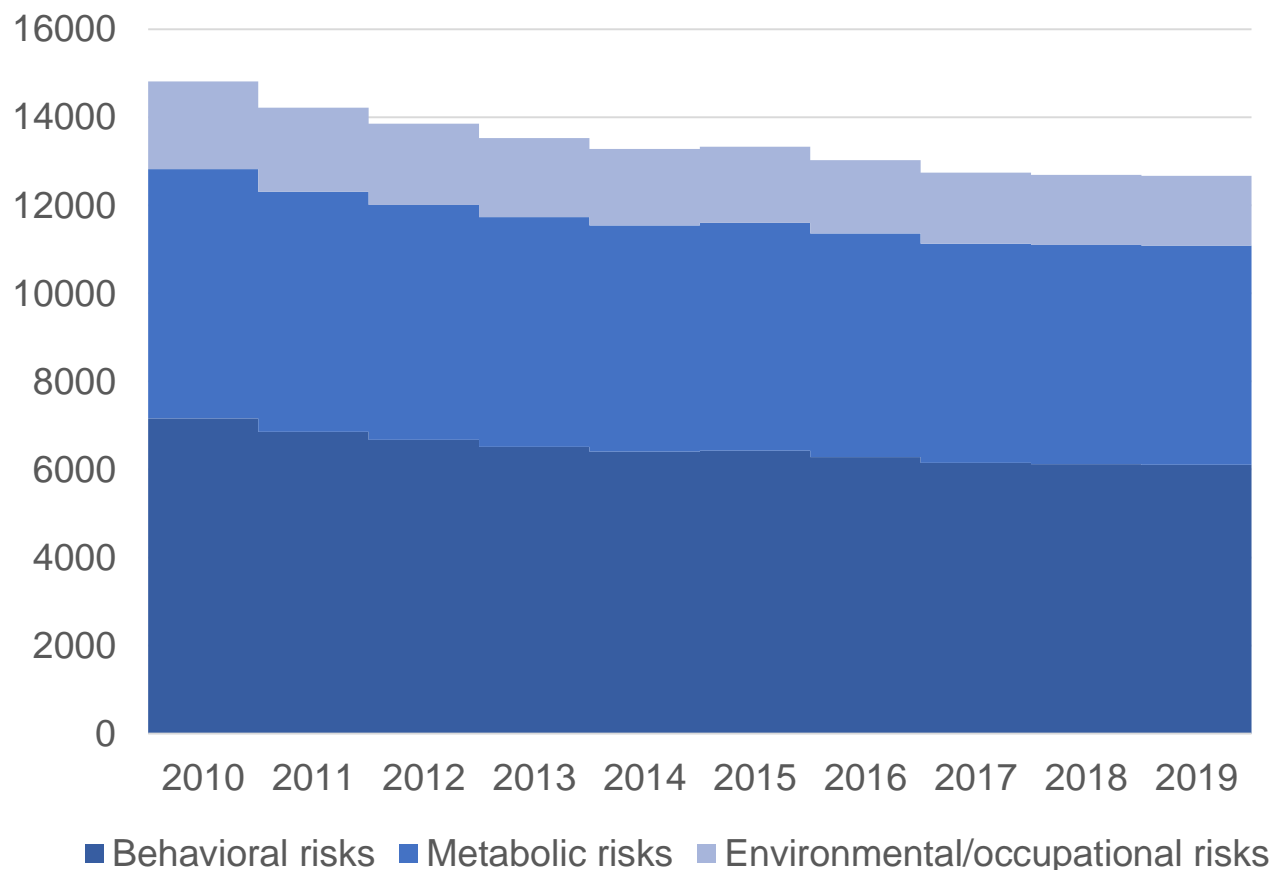


- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- High fasting blood sugar



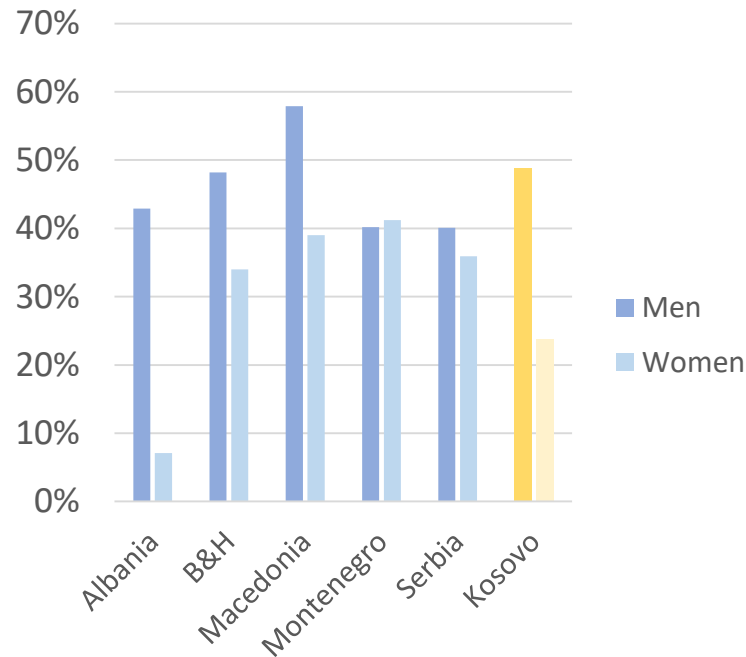
- Air pollution

Age-standardized DALYs per 100,00 population due to risk factors for NCDs in Europe and Central Asia, 2020

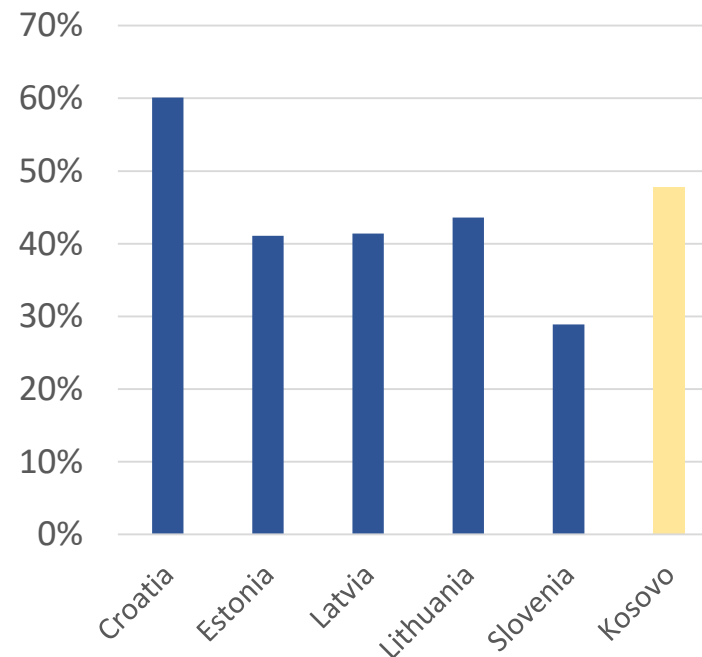


# Some key behavioral risk factors are compared unfavorably with peers and aspirational peers

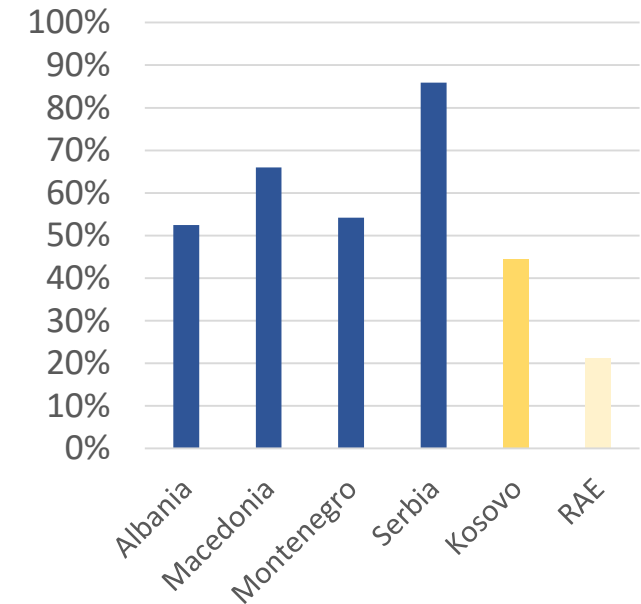
### Smoking prevalence among adults



### Second-hand smoking at home prevalence



### Prevalence of children with a minimum dietary diversity\*



\* The indicator is based on consumption of any amount of food from at least 5 out of the 8 following food groups: 1) breastmilk, 2) grains, roots and tubers, 3) legumes and nuts, 4) dairy products (milk, infant formula, yogurt, cheese), 5) flesh foods (meat, fish, poultry and liver/organ meats), 6) eggs, 7) vitamin-A rich fruits and vegetables, and 8) other fruits and vegetables.

## Air pollution is directly linked to premature deaths and morbidity

- It is estimated that 370 premature annual deaths are due to air pollution.
- Air pollution impact on health is translated into a total health cost of up to 352 EUR million per year

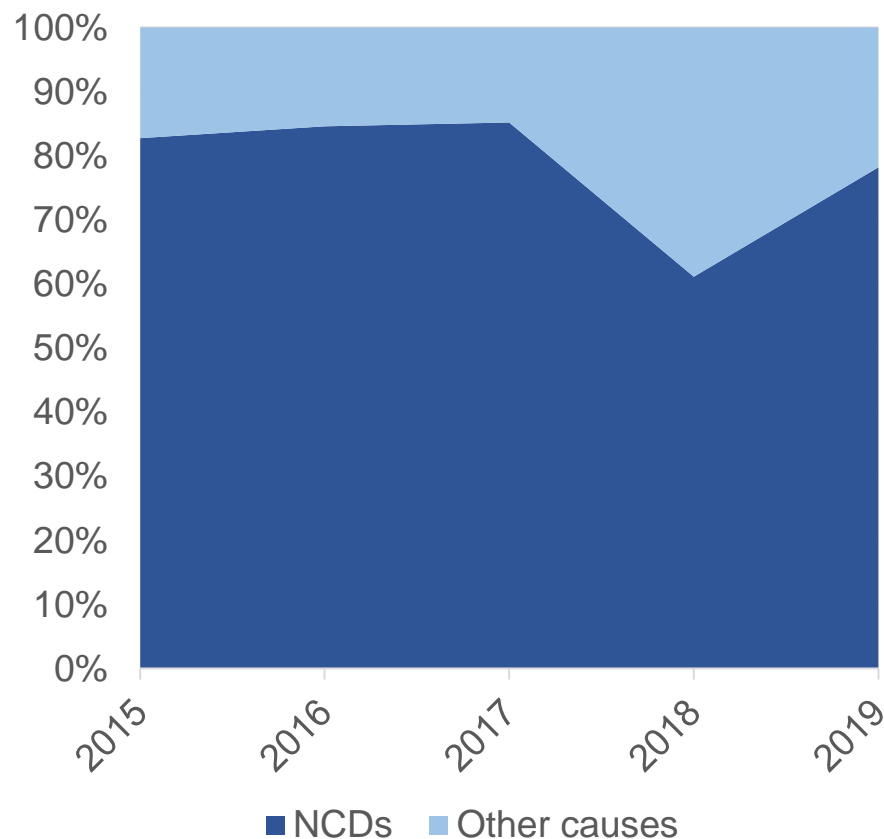




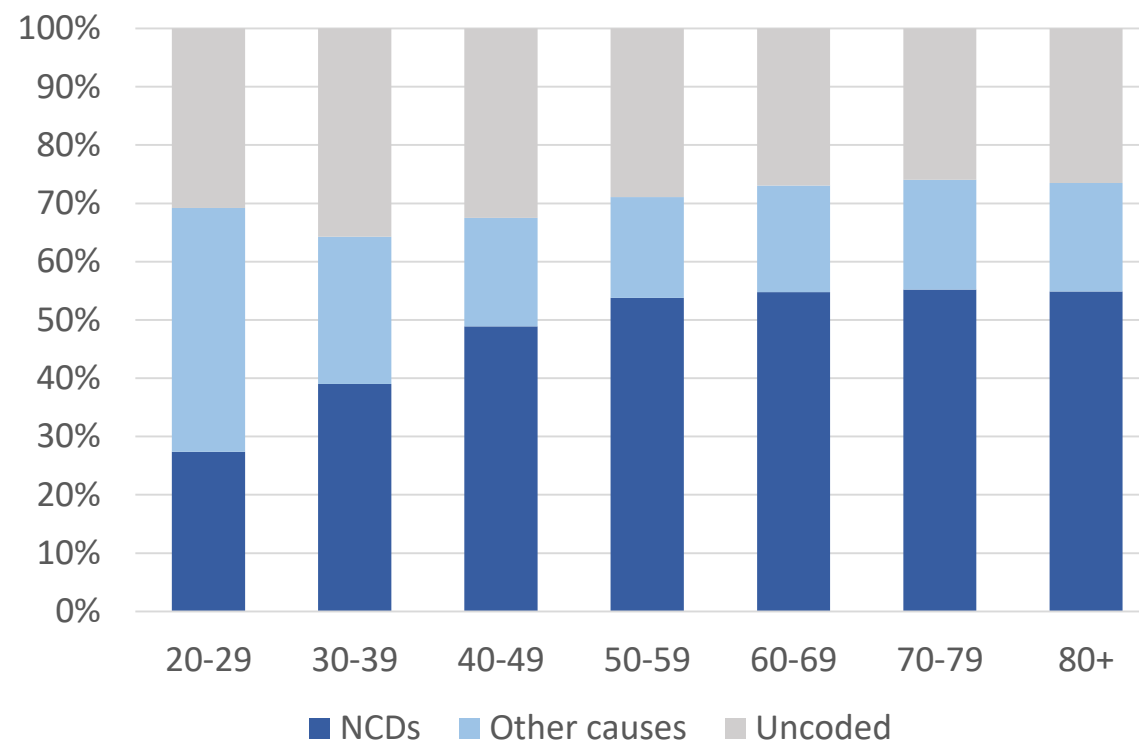
# Health and economic burden

# About 80% of all deaths with known causes are due to NCDs

Main causes of deaths\*



Causes of deaths as share of total deaths according to age-groups

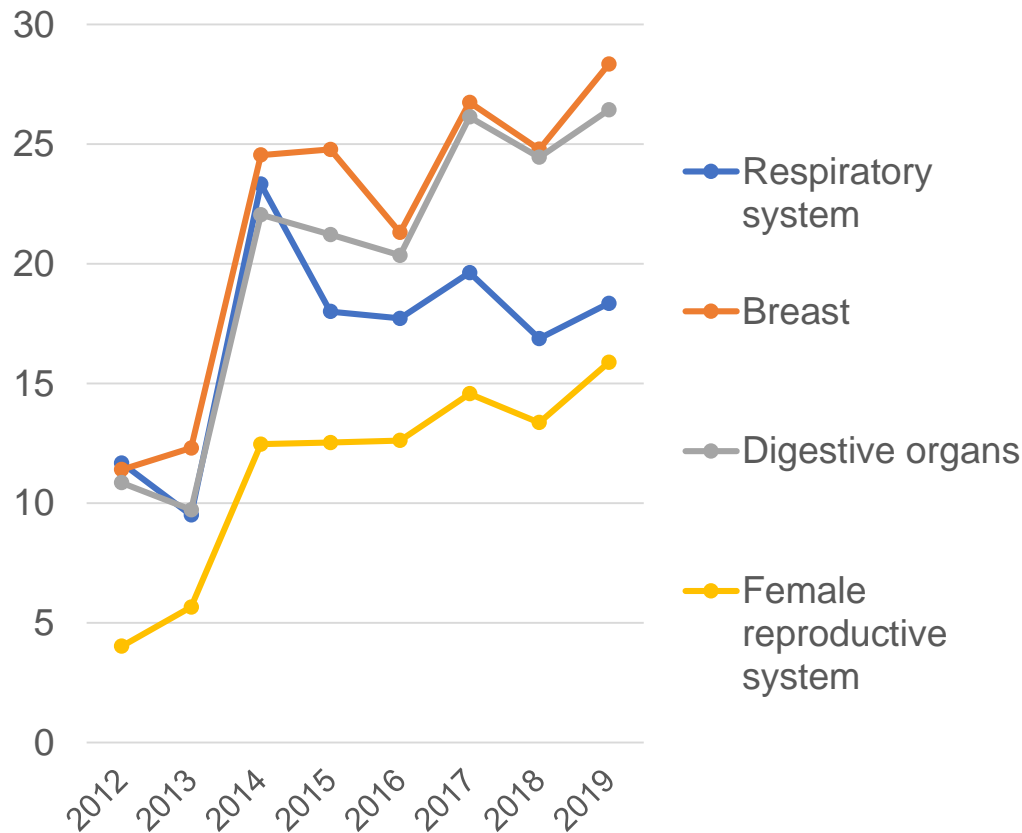


\*Only includes coded deaths

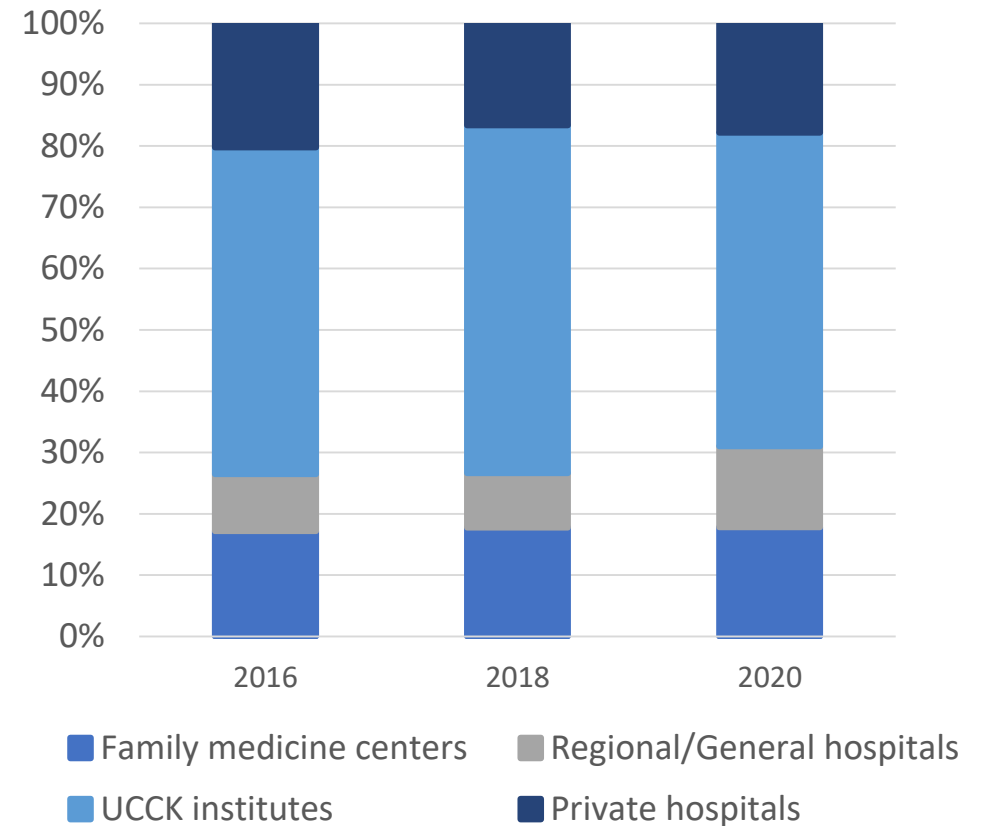


# Reported cases of main cancers increased by 2-4 folds between 2012-2019

Trend of the five main types of cancer per 100,000 population

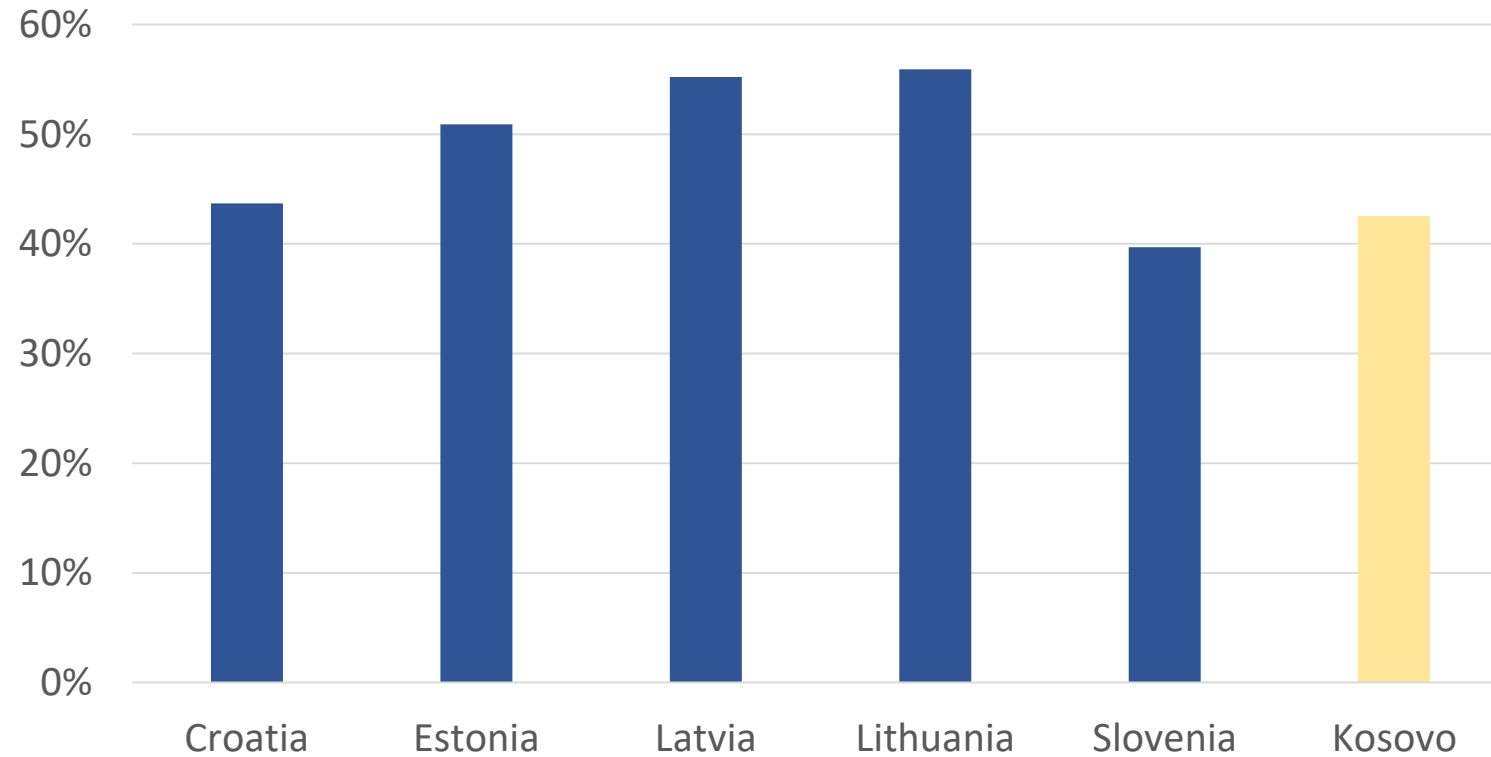


Healthcare institutions where cancers were diagnosed in 2019



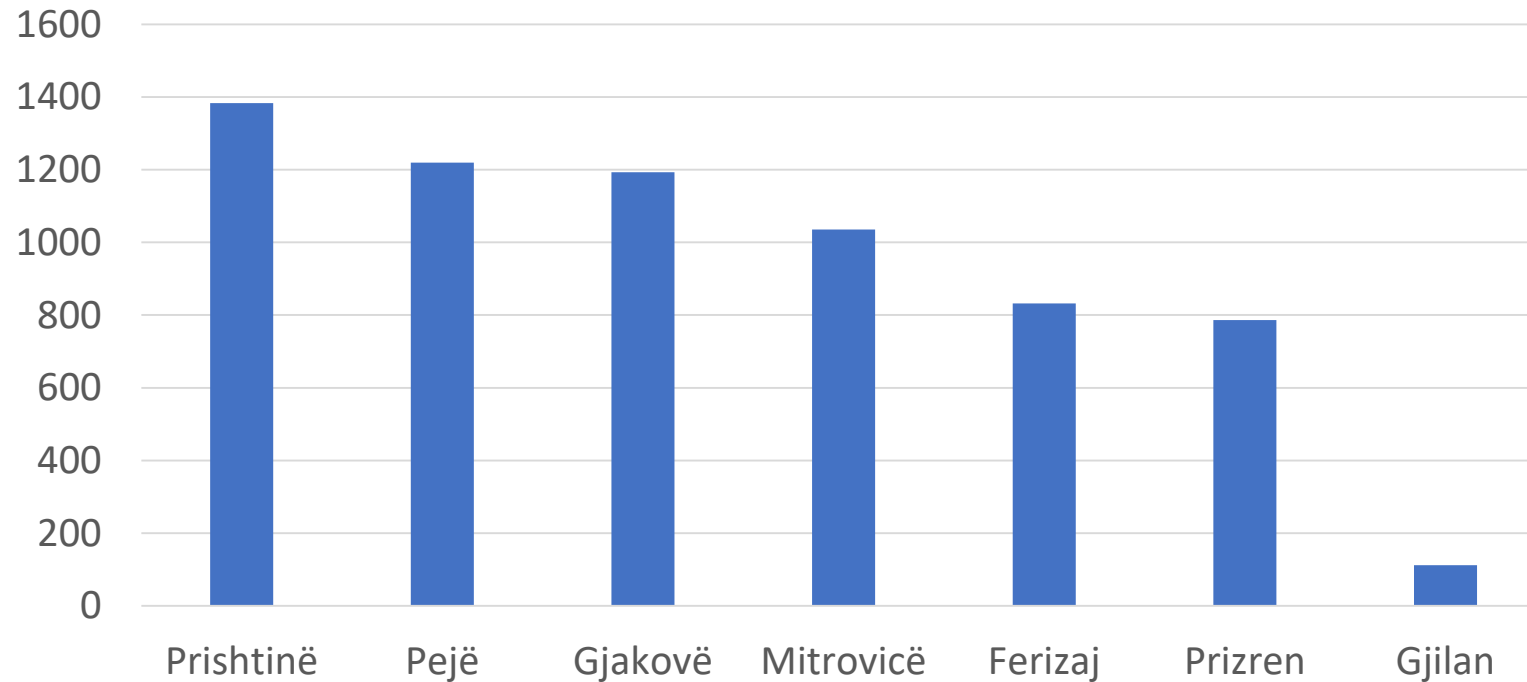
# Death due to CVDs is relatively low compared to aspirational peers

Deaths due to cardiovascular disease as a share of all deaths in 2018



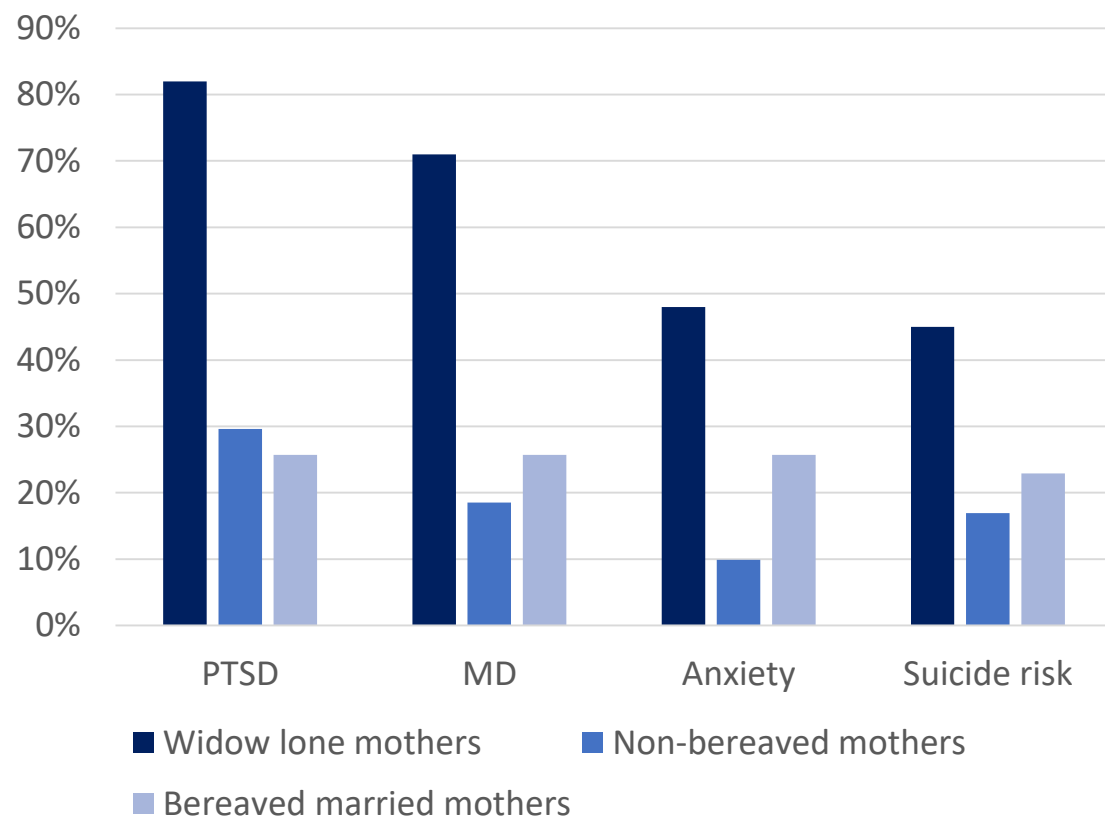
# Variation in number of insulin depended diabetes patients suggesting access and data problems

Prevalence of insulin dependent patients per 100,000 population, 2020



# Significant burden of mental health

Prevalence of mental health disorders among female war survivors.



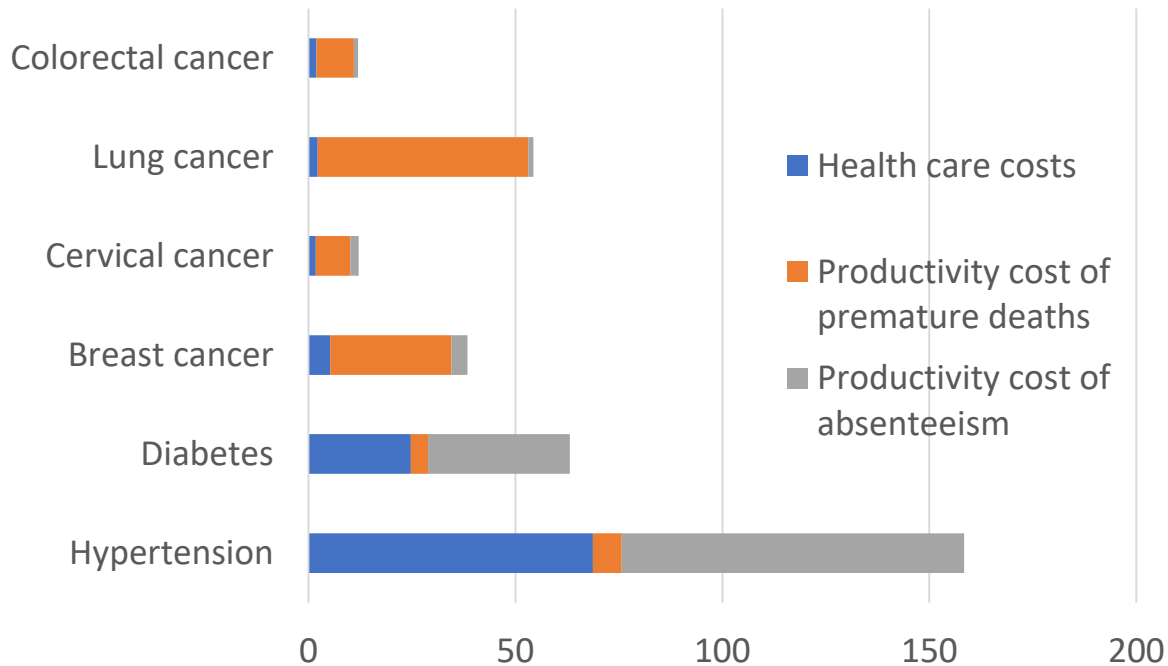
Estimated number of people with post-traumatic stress disorder and major depression among war survivors in Kosovo

Condition	Number of adults (95%CI)
War survivors	915,361
PTSD	242,662 (202,936 – 284,677)
MD	213,374 (169,799 – 260,146)
PTSD + MD	117,909 (84,850 – 145,199)

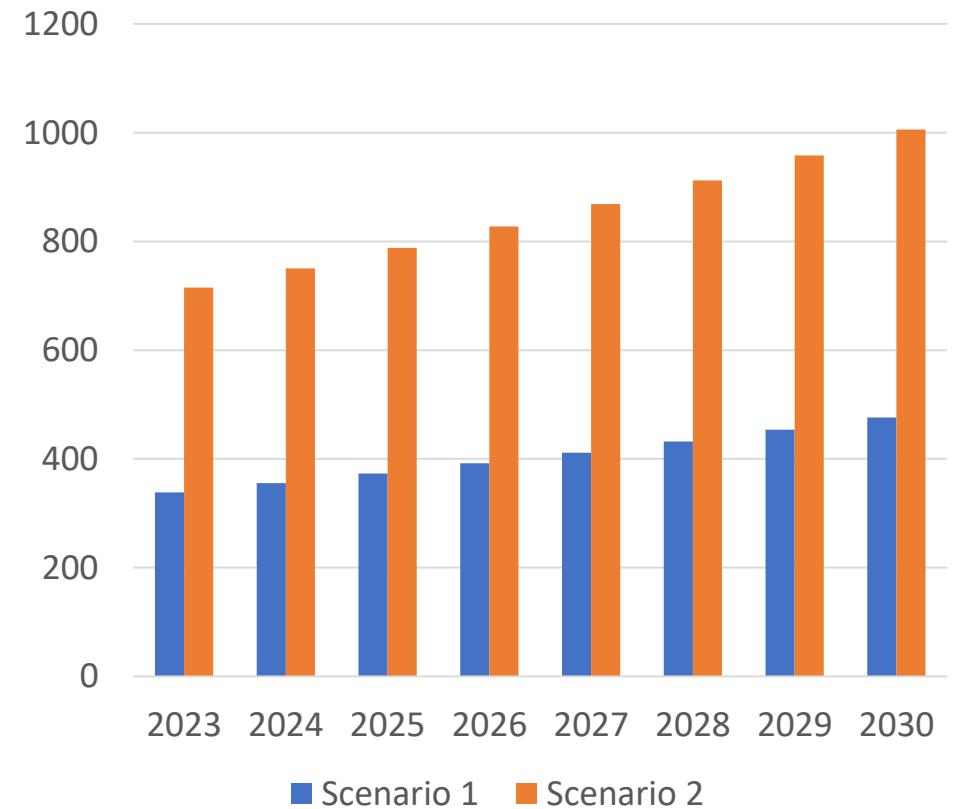
PTSD: post-traumatic stress disorder  
MD: major depression

# Major direct cost to the health system and indirect cost due to lost productivity

**Direct and indirect costs of six main NCDs, 2023 (EUR million) (scenario 1)**



**Estimated economic cost of six main NCDs, 2023-2030 (EUR million)**



*Scenario 1: 100% coverage for all known cases, standard treatment requirements, actual labor force participation*  
*Scenario 2: 100% coverage for all known cases, standard treatment requirements, 100% labor force participation*

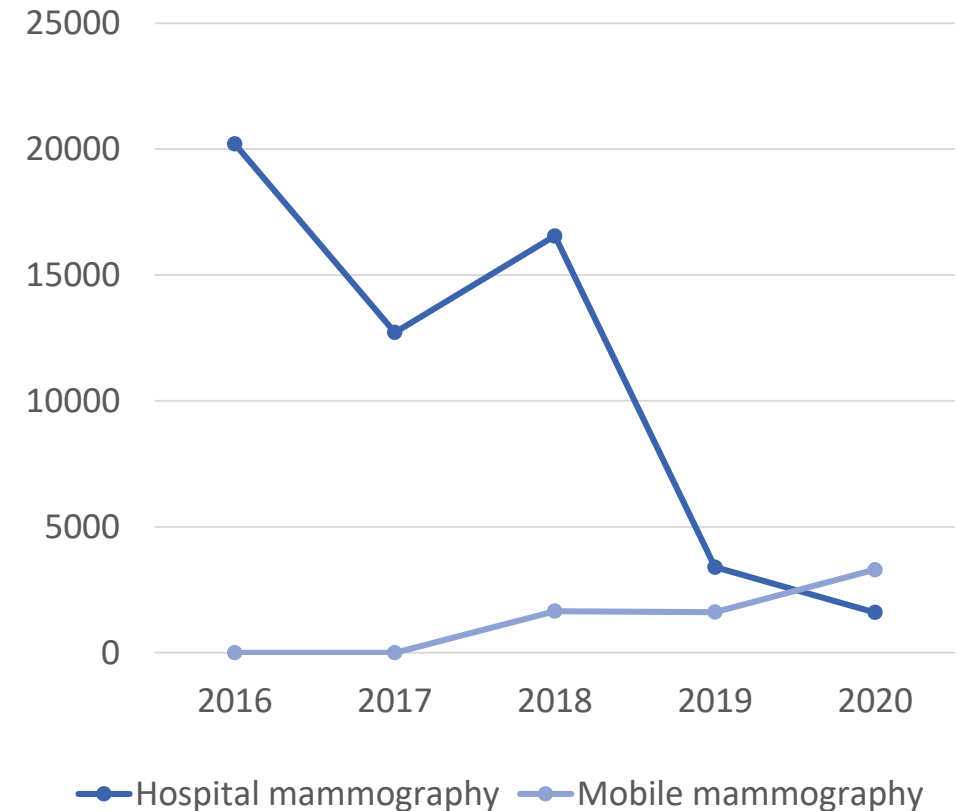


**Risk reduction and  
early detection**

# Very limited cancer screening despite high burden

- Limited breast cancer screening: over 90 percent of women aged 45 or above remain unscreened
- Cervical cancer screening: remains at local/municipal initiatives and only opportunistic. Around 1% of eligible women have been tested
- Nearly all lung cancers are diagnosed at advanced and inoperable stages.

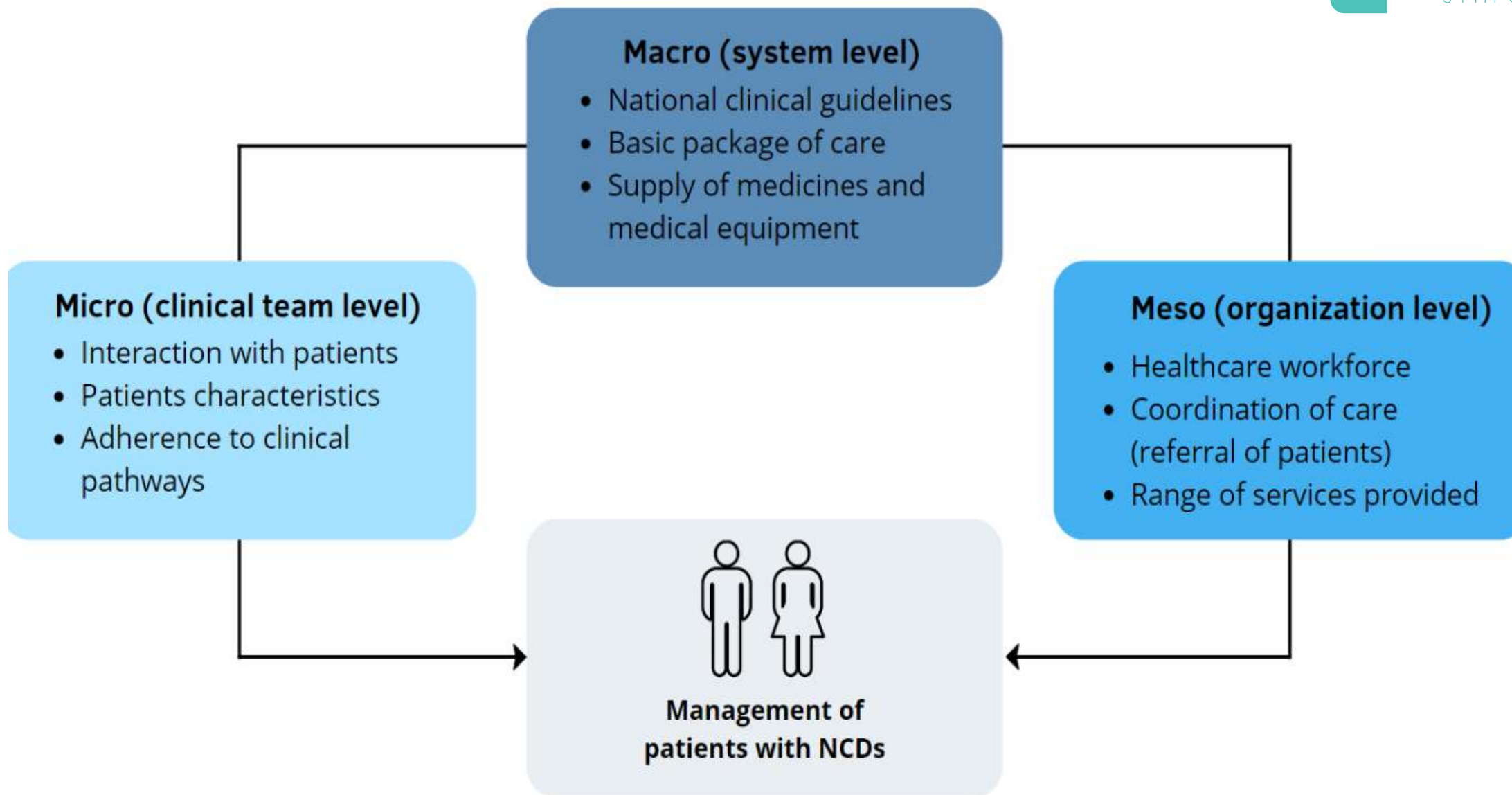
Number of mammographies performed, 2016 - 2020





# Management





## Multiple constraints to effective management of NCDs






- Limited number of national clinical guidelines for NCDs
- Free access to services in the public sector, yet lack of drugs
- Health workforce migration has left the country with one of the lowest workforces in Europe
- Care delivery of NCDs is fragmented, resulting in deficient referral mechanisms and self-referral to tertiary institutions
- Minority ethnic and vulnerable population groups have a more challenging time accessing cancer care
- The adherence to treatment guidelines for diabetes and hypertension is deficient due to limited infrastructure and population awareness

A blue-tinted image featuring a wooden gavel, a stack of books, and a wooden stamp. The gavel is positioned horizontally across the bottom. The books are stacked in the upper left, and the stamp is on the right. The text "Policies and regulations" is centered in white.

# Policies and regulations

# Well-developed policies and regulations on tobacco, implementation remains a constraint




**Status of the policies on tobacco products in Kosovo compared to WHO best-buys**




Regulation	Status	Rationale	Reference
Increase excise taxes and prices on tobacco products		Excise tax on tobacco products is applied but remains below international standards.	Law No. 03/L-112
Implement plain/standardized packaging and/or large graphic health warnings on all tobacco packages		Health warning remarks are present on tobacco products but remain below international standards.	Law No. 02/L-36
Enact and enforce comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship		Advertising, promoting, and sponsorship of tobacco products are banned.	Law No. 02/L-36
Eliminate exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke in all indoor workplaces, public places, and public transport		Smoking in public areas is prohibited; however, law enforcement remains compromised.	Law No. 02/L-36
Implement effective mass media campaigns that educate the public about the harms of smoking/tobacco use and second-hand smoke		Public and private media are obliged to broadcast educational programs on the harmful effects of tobacco.	Law No. 02/L-36

 Present but partially implemented;  present and fully implemented

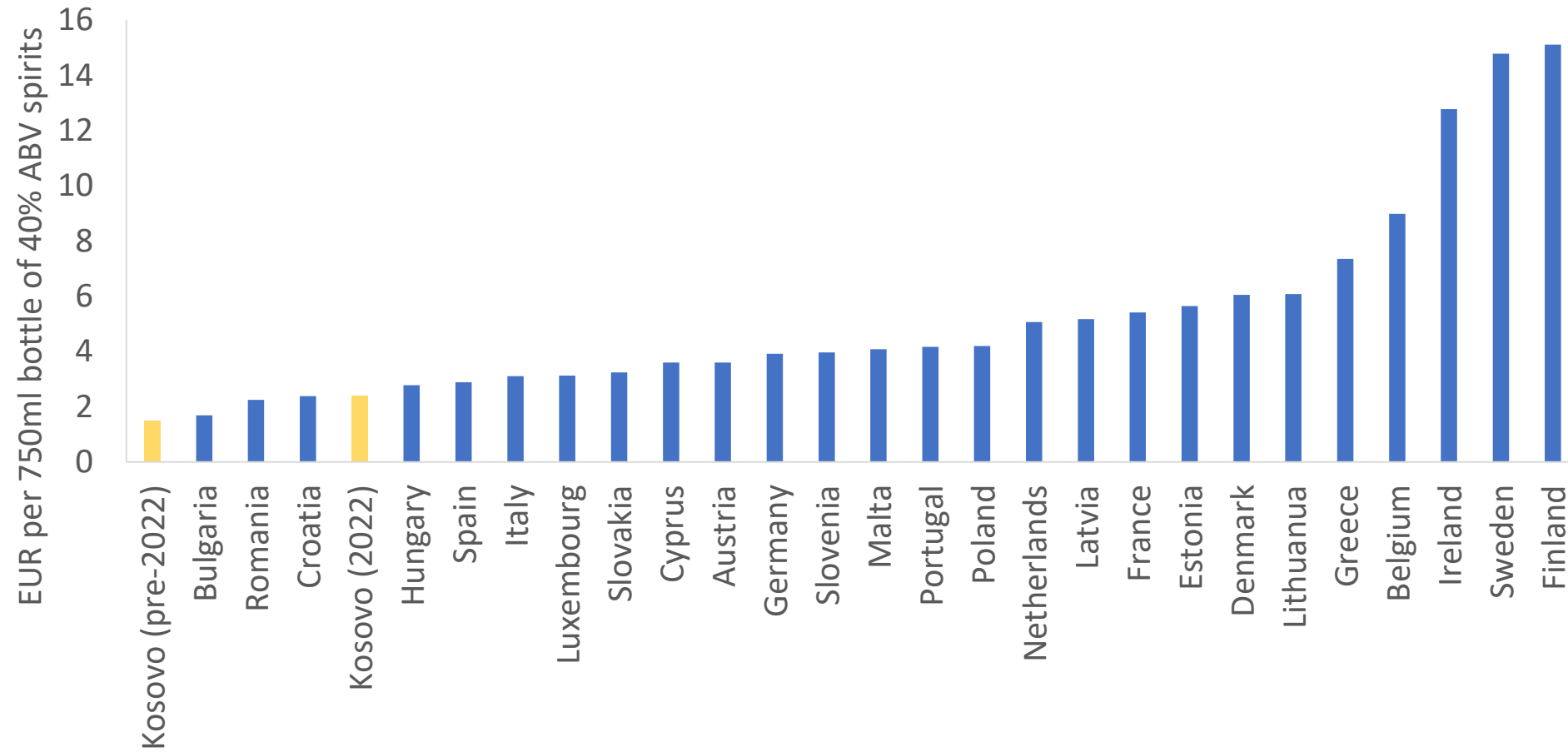
# Policies and regulations on alcohol

## Status of the policies on alcohol products in Kosovo compared to WHO best-buys

Regulation	Status	Rationale	Reference
Increase excise taxes on alcoholic beverages.		Excise taxes on alcoholic beverages are applied but remain considerably low for spirits.	Law No. 03/L-220
Enact and enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on exposure to alcohol advertising (across multiple types of media).		Advertising of alcoholic products is banned from billboards, but there is no evidence of bans from other media types.	RR-110-2782-K.PR
Enact and enforce restrictions on the physical availability of retailed alcohol (via reduced hours of sale).		No evidence of restrictions on the physical availability of retailed alcohol.	NA

 Present but partially implemented;  present and fully implemented,  not implemented

## Excise tax in European Union countries and Kosovo for spirits



# Recommendations and a way forward



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## Short term recommendations

- Implement a rigorous national campaign on the prevention of smoking, particularly among the youth
- Develop condition-specific registries to improve data quality and monitoring of NCDs
- Implement lists of patients at primary care facilities for better prevention and control of NCDs



## Medium term recommendations

- Develop tailored prevention and screening services driven by a national strategy for NCD
- Incorporate the national pilot screening program on breast and cervical cancer throughout the country
- Develop an integrated information system across healthcare institutions to improve care coordination
- Develop standardized clinical protocols for the prevention and treatment of NCDs and build the infrastructure to provide evidence-based care

## Medium term recommendations

- Enhance the monitoring and enforcement of policies to reduce tobacco and alcohol consumption
- Develop strategic planning for human resources for health to improve attraction and retention of healthcare workers
- Build service capacity and increase access to mental health care

## Long term recommendations

- Accelerate the implementation of air quality plans to reduce exposure to harmful concentrations of air pollutants
- Advance health financing reforms to enable adequate resources for the prevention and management of NCDs

Thank you

*For more information, please visit*

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/39935>

