

Parenting Education In Europe



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Parenting Education

- Essential part of family life education – developments around the world
- Parenting education and support impacts the quality of childrearing and child wellbeing, and quality of life in general
- Rapid increase of technological advances - development and implementation of parenting education programs
 - Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) methodologies – increase understanding of family functioning, improve data management in social services
- Impact of technology - dramatically brought forward by the societal disruptions due to COVID-19 pandemic



Parenting Education in Europe

- Explicit policies to support parenting and parenting education - to increase financial support and implementation
- 1994 – International Year of the Family- Austria - working group at the federal level – legal base for financial support for parent education
- 2006 European Council's Directive to Promote Positive Parenting
 - encouraged Governments to take direct actions through financial, legislative and programmatic investments to develop family support interventions (e.g., Belgium, Estonia)
 - Estonia – Strategy of Children and Families (2012-2020) – parenting support - implementation Incredible Years (2017)
 - Sweden - National Strategy for Parental Support (2009)
 - Hungary –Child Protection Act –family counseling
 - Belgium - parenting support measures (2006)



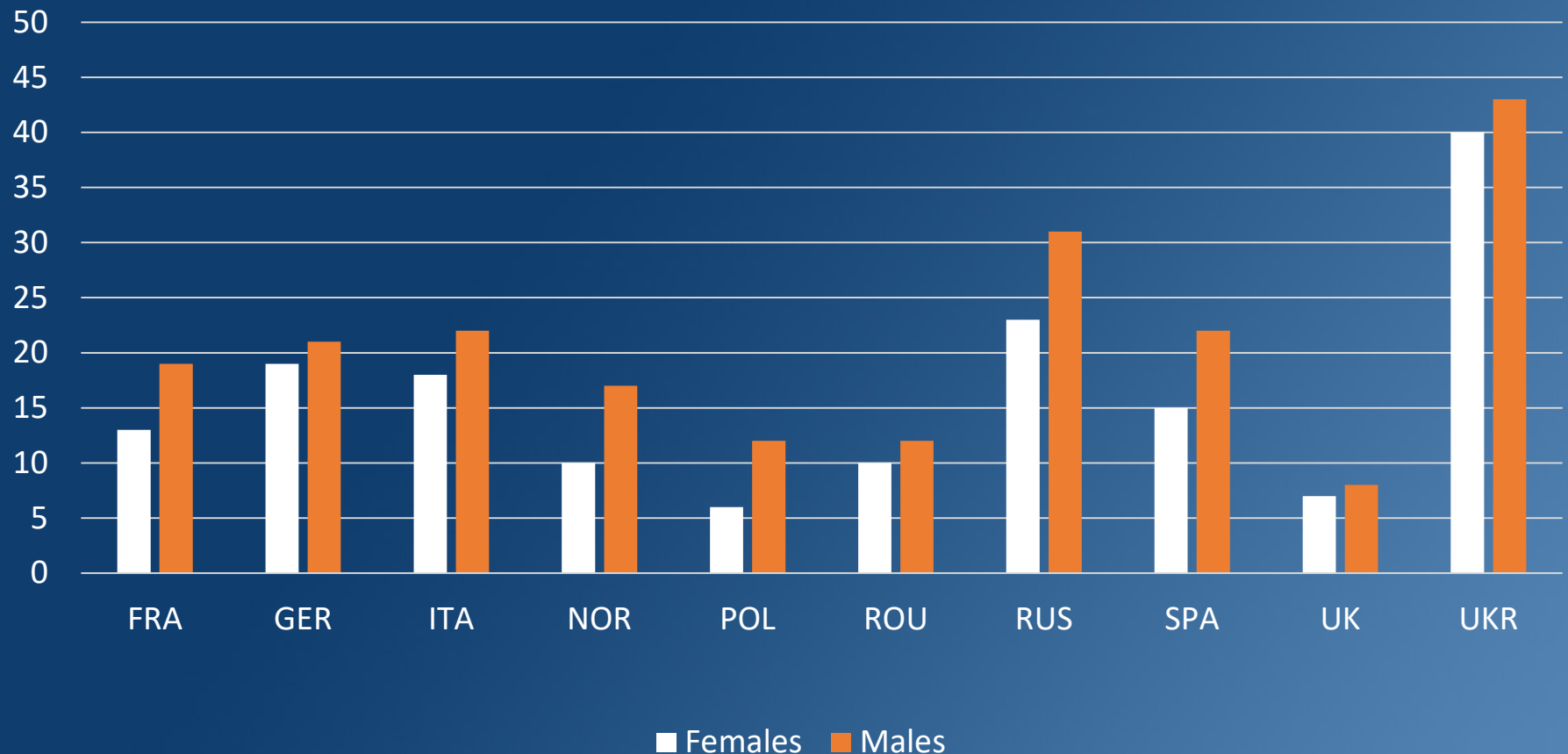
Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

- Data on quality of family relations and parenting - limited
- Collecting systematic, longitudinal family-level data using multiple informants (e.g., mothers, fathers, children) - strongly recommended
- Health Behaviors in School Aged Children Data (WHO Europe, 2014)
 - child wellbeing and parenting practices



Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

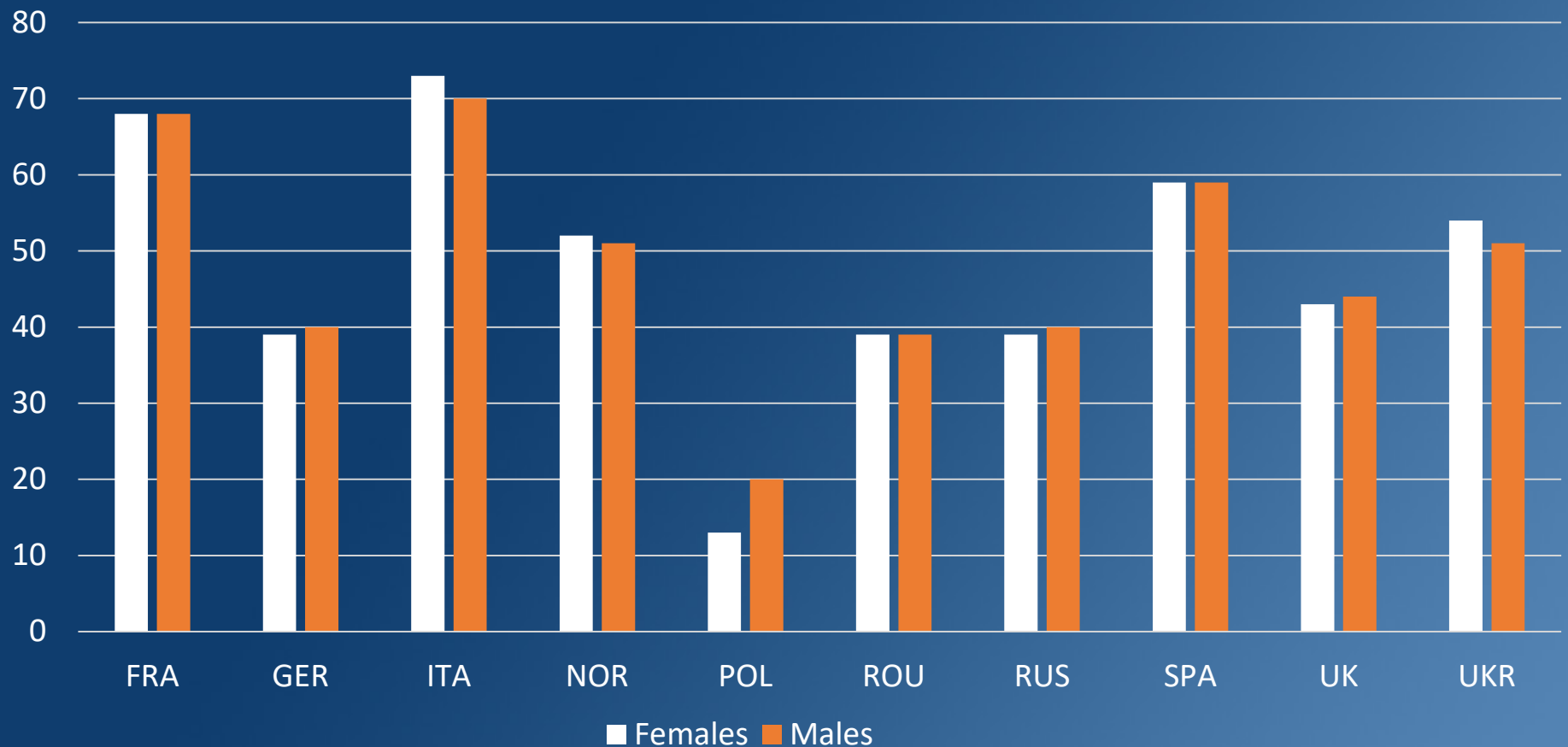
Proportion of Young People Who Have Breakfast with Family Every Day



Data Source: Health behaviors in School Aged Children (WHO Europe, 2014); 15 years old

Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

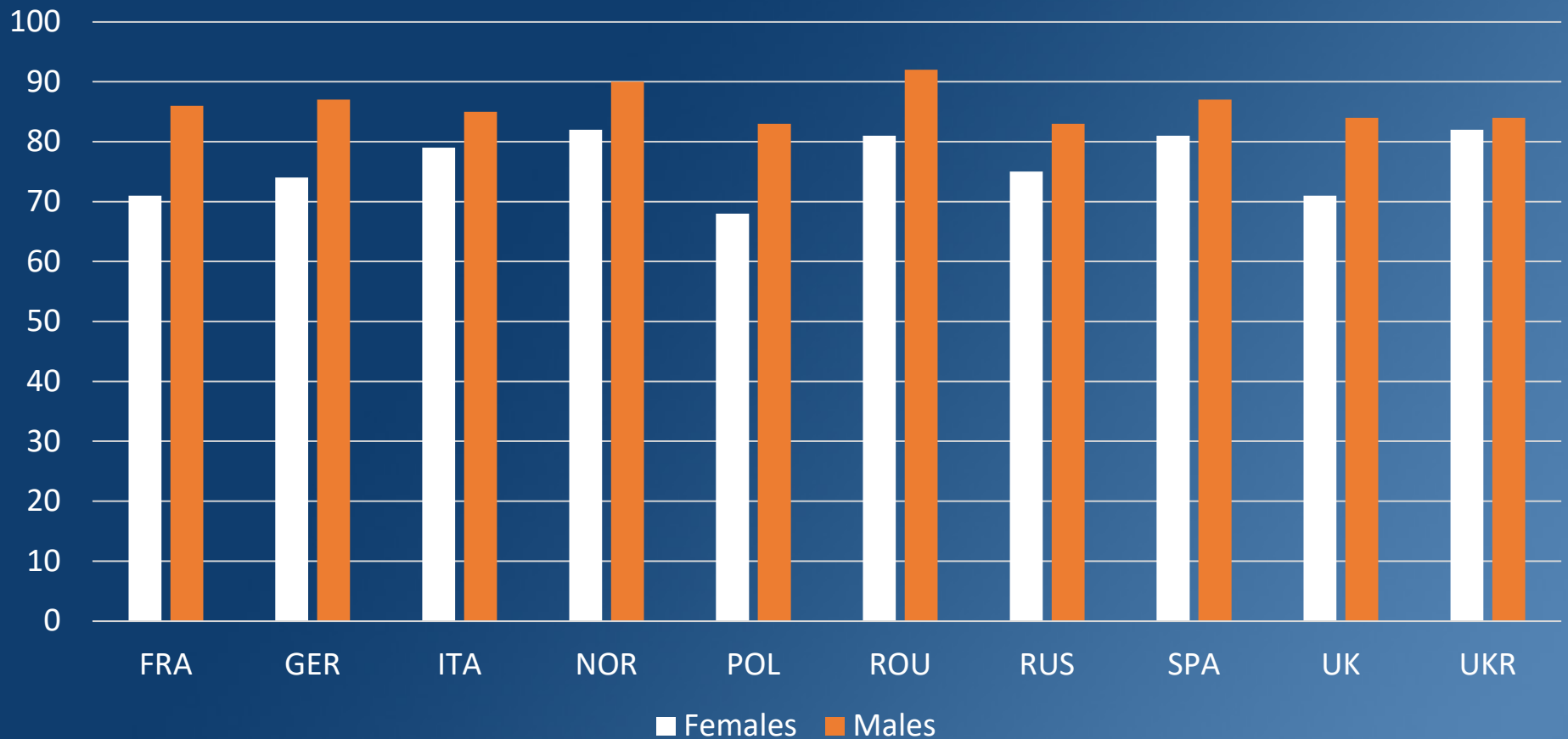
Proportion of Young People Who Have Evening Meals with Family Every Day



Data Source: Health behaviors in School Aged Children (WHO Europe, 2014); 15 years old

Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

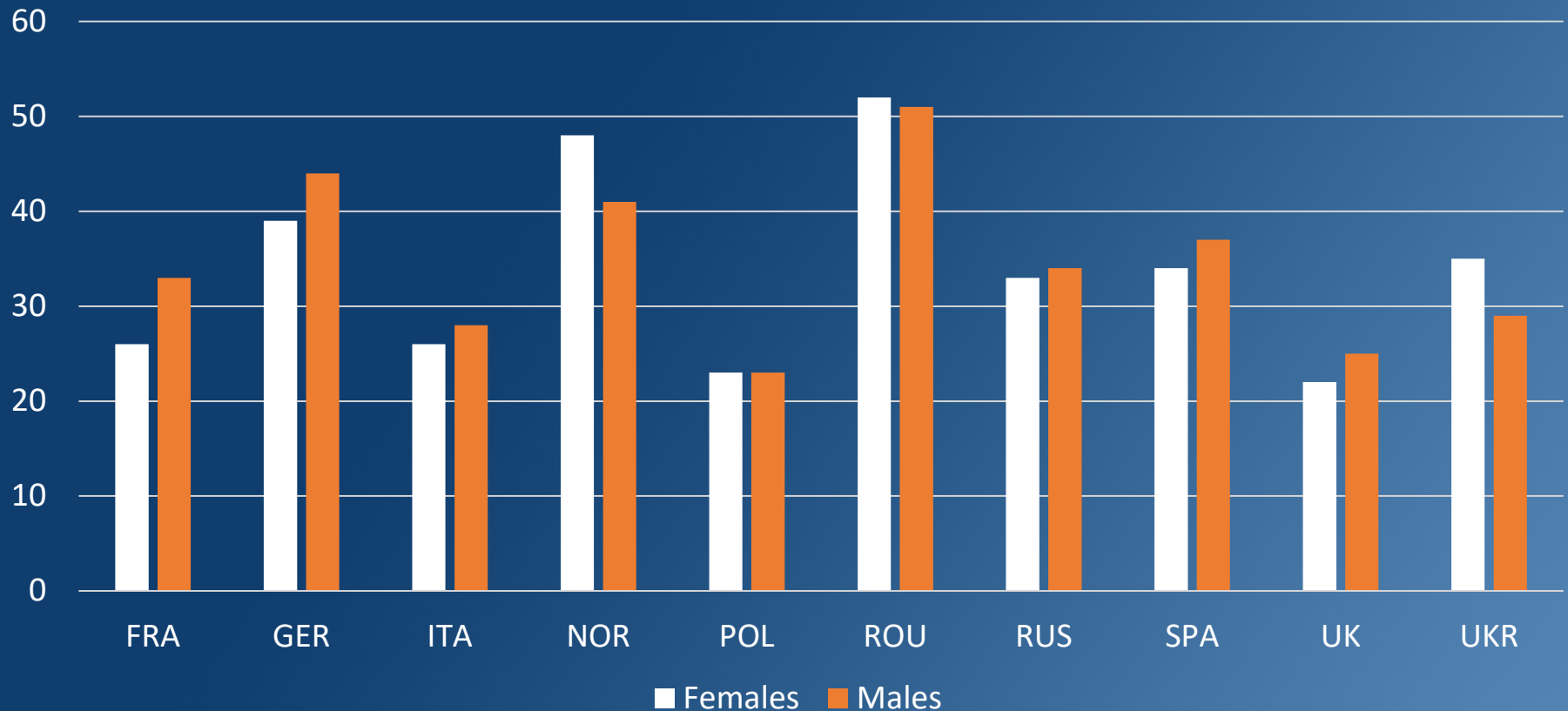
Proportion of Young People Who Report High Life Satisfaction



Data Source: Health behaviors in School Aged Children (WO Europe, 2014); 15 years old

Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

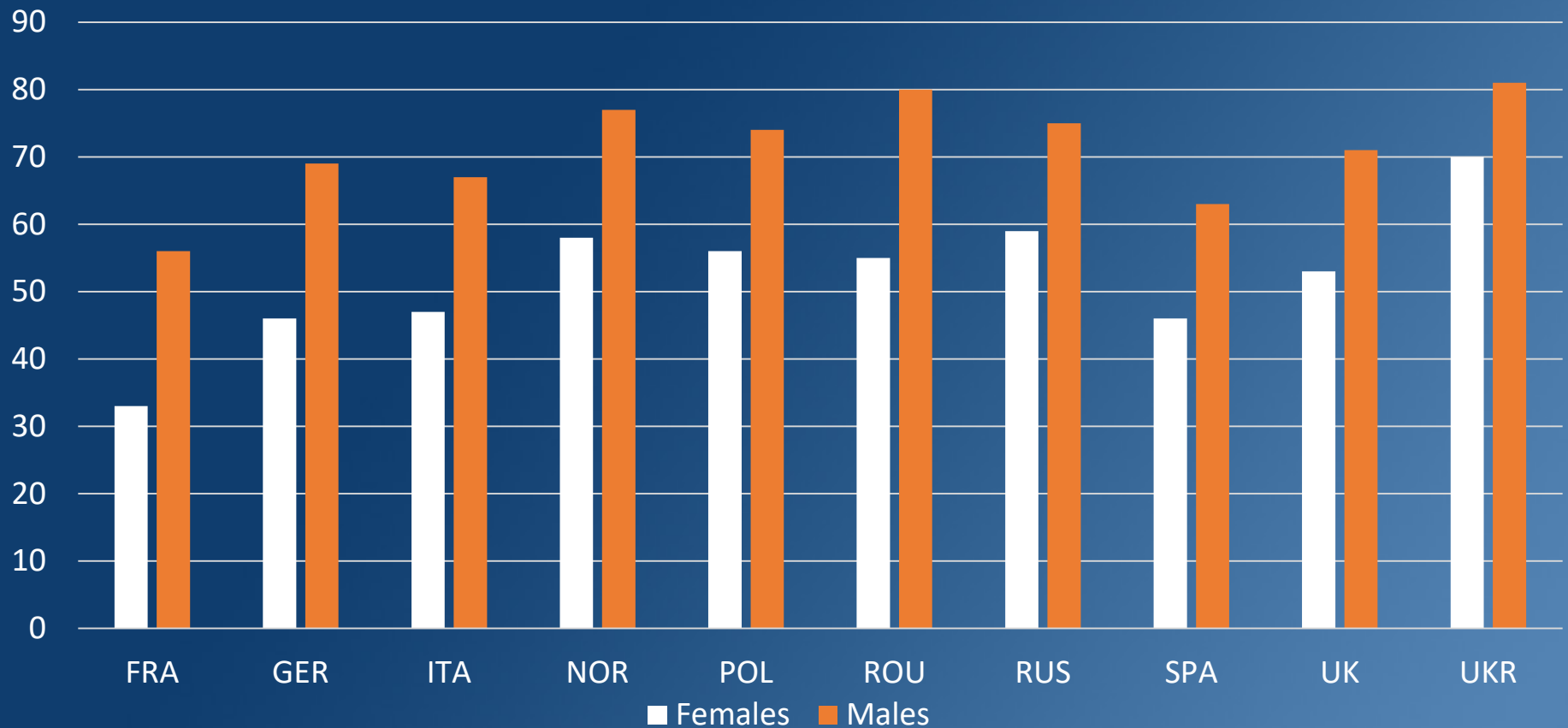
Proportion of Young People Who Report High Quality of Family Communication



Data Source: Health behaviors in School Aged Children (WHO Europe, 2014); 15 years old

Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

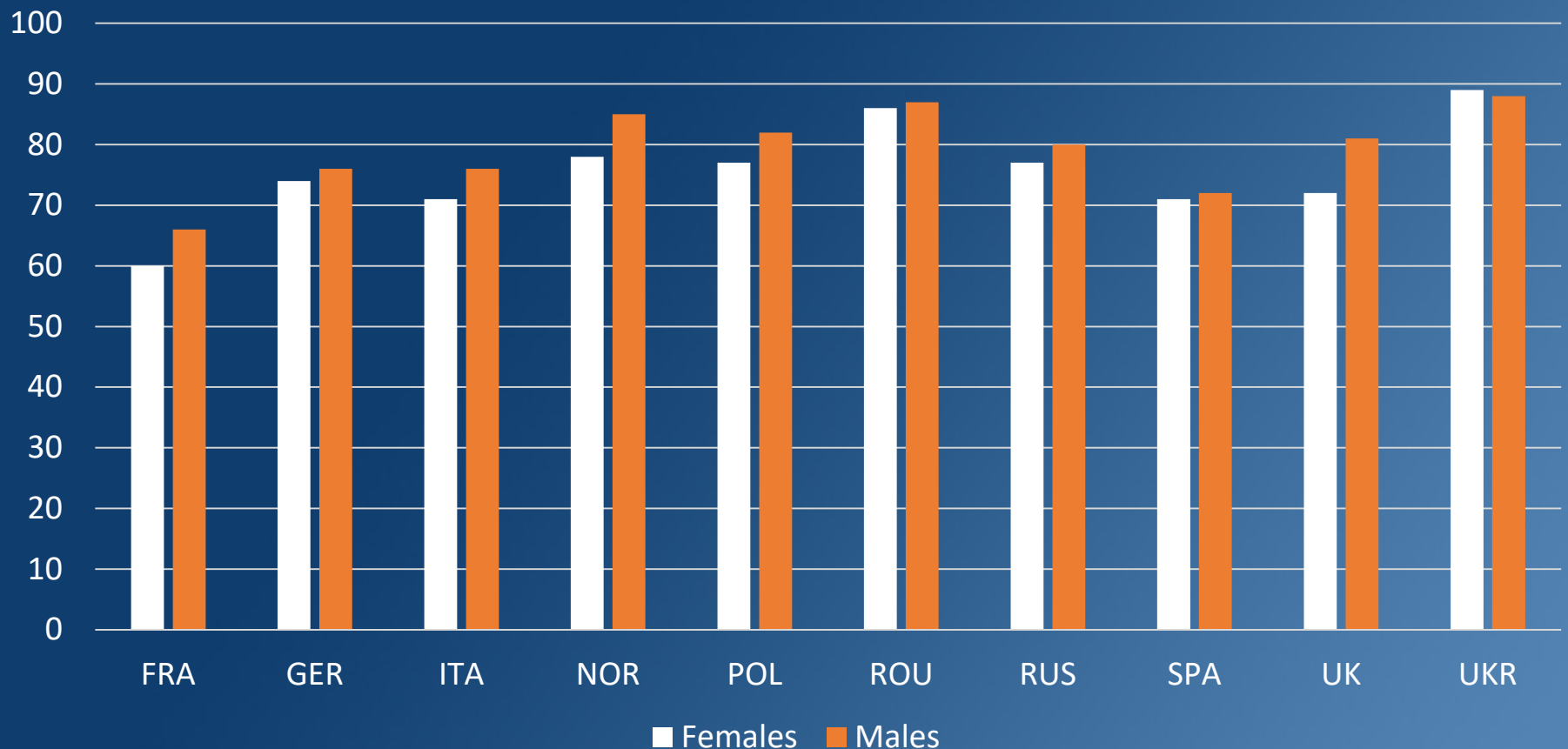
Proportion of Young People Who Find It Easy to Talk to their Fathers



Data Source: Health behaviors in School Aged Children (WO Europe, 2014); 15 years old

Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

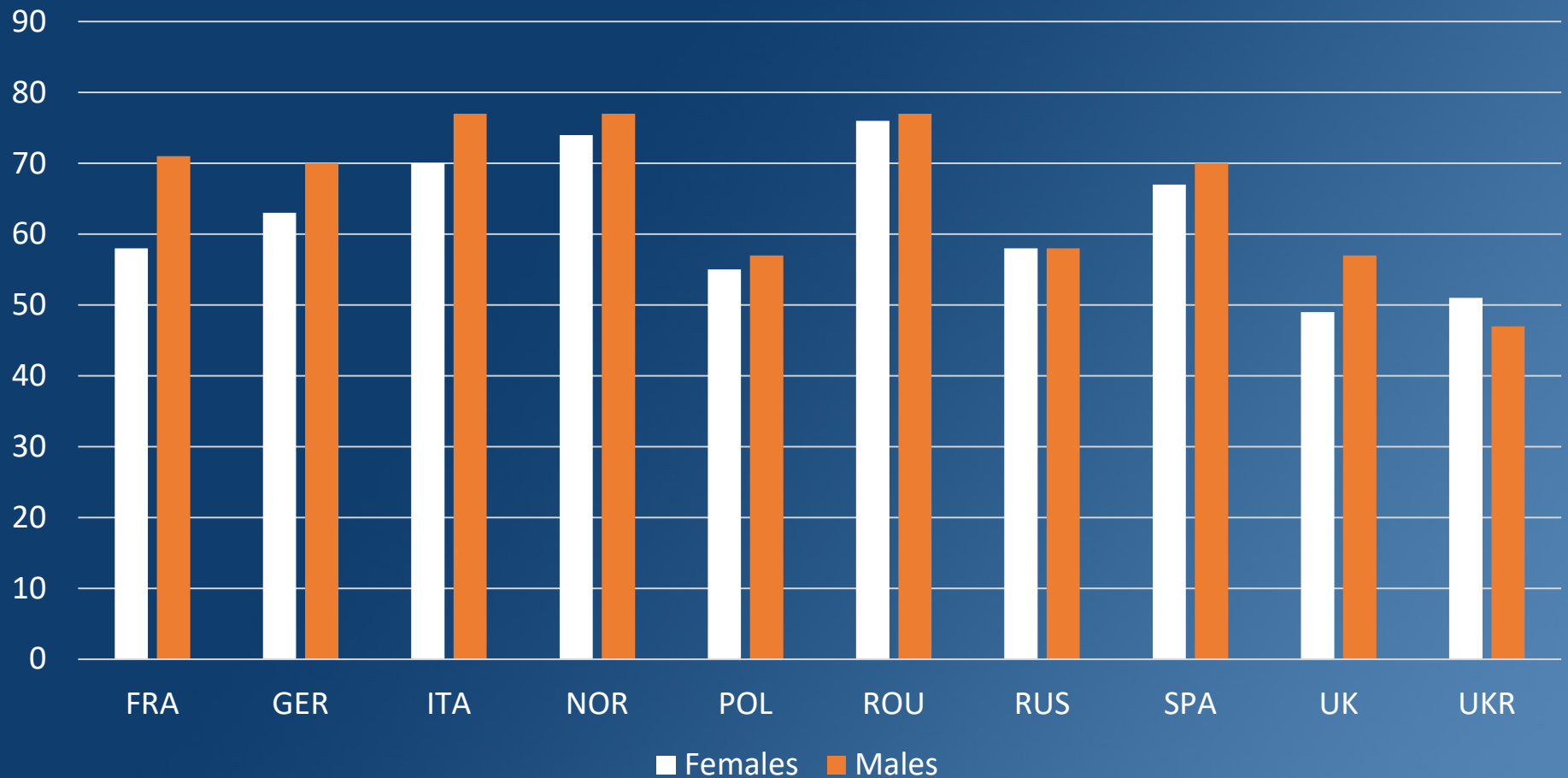
Proportion of Young People Who Find It Easy to Talk to their Mothers



Data Source: Health behaviors in School Aged Children (WO Europe, 2014); 15 years old

Parenting Practices and Children's Wellbeing

Proportion of Young People Who Report High Family Support



Data Source: Health behaviors in School Aged Children (WO Europe, 2014); 15 years old

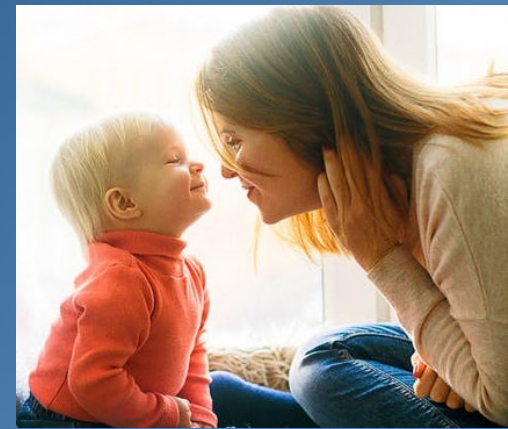
Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- *Evidence-Based Parenting Support (EBP)* programs - among the most successful interventions supporting positive parenting for promoting wellbeing of children, parents and communities (Sander, 2019)
 - Emergence of population-based approach to increase reach of intervention, flexible delivery modalities (e.g., online), and strategies to enhance cultural relevance and acceptability of programs
 - New interventions required for the most vulnerable parents confronted with poverty, trauma, addictions, violence, or mental health problems



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- *Incredible Years*
- Focus on parent-child relationship and developing parenting skills (Webster-Stratton, & Hancock, 1998)
 - group-based strategy for children up to 12 years
 - Meta-analysis (RCTs) in Europe - reduction in child conduct problems, improved parental communication and use of discipline (Gardner et. al., 2019)
- Used successfully in Sweden (Axberg et.al., 2007) , UK (Hutchings, et. al. 2007); Portugal (Webster-Stratton, et al. 2012); Estonia (Kasvandik, 2017);
- Nationwide in Norway (WHO, 2013)- RCTs - reduced child conduct problems, harsh discipline, increased positive parenting
- Implemented in Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Russia (www.incredibleyears.com)



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- *Positive Parenting Program (Triple –P)* (Australia)
- Multilevel parenting support strategy - reduce children's behavioral and emotional problems
- Several levels of intervention of increasing strength - population universal multimedia campaigns to intensive parent training and family intervention programs for children at risk for severe behavioral problems (individual face-to-face, group)
- Adopted in Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, and UK (WHO, 2013)



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- *GenerationPMTO* (Parent Management Training –Oregon)
- Social learning model- professionals working with parents to reduce coercive parenting behaviors and increase positive practices
 - group, individual families served at home, in agencies, web-based
- Implemented nationwide in Norway (1999)
 - top-down approach at the government level combined with a bottom-up initiative from practitioners seeking effective strategies
 - Sustained fidelity (Forgatch, & DeGarmo, 2011)
- Successfully implemented in Iceland, Denmark and Netherlands (Sigmarisdóttir et al., 2019)



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- *Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)*
- Based on attachment theory - increase mother sensitivity and examining the impact of prior experiences on maternal attachment, increase social support, targeting vulnerable mothers (WHO, 2013)
- Group-based parenting class
- STEP's efficacy in Lithuania - program increased parental knowledge on parenting, and decreased the negative perceptions of child's behavior



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- *Parenting for Life Long Health (PLH)*
- Includes well-established parenting programs to prevent violence in low resource settings
- 12-session group-based parenting intervention
 - collaborative social learning behavioral change strategies to encourage parents to reduce harsh discipline, use positive parenting behavior
 - discussions, role play, and home activity assignments
- Adapted for different regions - including Eastern Europe
 - Czech Republic, Montenegro
 - Being examined in Macedonia Moldova, Romania to implement cost-effective parenting interventions



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- *Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)*
- Psychoeducation, increasing parenting skills, social support and stress management for low income first time parents in their homes
- RCTs in Europe - positive results: Netherlands, Germany; no evidence of positive impact in UK; currently in Bulgaria (WHO, 2018)
- Implementation in Netherlands - improved home environments, fewer child protection services
- Visiting maternal and child health services in Europe – opportunity for parent education components





Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- Local parenting programs (Molinuevo, 2013):
- Health or school related family partnerships
 - Slovenia –health home visitations
 - Italy, Latvia, Czech Republic – parents/school partnerships
 - Netherlands – “community schools” –parenting support
 - Lithuania – Child day care (since 2002) parental education for disadvantaged parents
- Family Counseling / Guidance Centers
 - France, Germany, Austria – Family Counseling Centers
 - Cyprus – Family Guidance Centers – workshops on parental communication
 - Ireland – “Community mothers program” (since 1980s)
 - Bulgaria – counseling through Child Protection Units



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- Studies of RCTs - transferred and homegrown parenting interventions did not differ in their effectiveness across programs and regions
- Selection of interventions should be based on their evidence base
- Professionals implementing parenting education - certifications
- Assessment - conducted regularly to ensure sustained program fidelity
- Effectiveness of the national policies and programs - preserved as they are translated to local levels; appropriate training and resources - provided
- Collaborations between the central and regional governments



Parenting Education Initiatives and Programs

- Corporal punishment – detrimental, widely criticized practice
- *Inspire: Seven Strategies for ending Violence against children* – evidenced-based strategies (WHO, UNICEF, CDC, 2016)
 - implementation and enforcement of laws, parent and caregiver support services
- *Global report 2019: Progress towards ending corporal punishment of children* (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2019)
 - 58 countries prohibit all corporal punishment of children (at home, at school, day care, alternative care); 12% of children protected; 132 ban corporal punishment at school
- Although some countries include in their Family Code or Criminal code articles – on protection of children from harm and abuse, the absence of explicit prohibition might not effectively prohibit it

Corporal Punishment Legislation in Europe

Prohibited everywhere	Country
1979	Sweden
1983	Finland
1987	Norway
1989	Austria
1994	Cyprus
1998	Latvia
1999	Croatia
2000	Bulgaria, Germany
2003	Iceland
2004	Romania, Ukraine
2005	Hungary
2006	Greece
2007	Netherlands, Portugal, Spain
2008	Moldova, Luxembourg, Lichtenstein
2010	Albania, Poland
2013	North Macedonia
2014	Estonia, Malta, San Marino
2015	Andorra, Ireland
2016	Denmark, Montenegro
2017	Lithuania
2019	France, Kosovo



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Parenting education programs should address a variety of parenting practices, including child-parent communication, support, spending quality time together (e.g., sharing meals)
- Policies and legislations should be strengthened in banning corporal punishment in all areas
- Effectiveness of the programs should guide the choice for program transfer and adoption; staff has to be trained and certified
- National policies must be translated to local levels without decreasing their effectiveness, through collaborations between the central and local governments, and other stakeholders (academia, NGOs)



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Effective parenting policies and systematic communication strategies should be developed to inform the general public and thus contribute to their implementation
- Collection of systematic, longitudinal family-level data using multiple informants (e.g., mothers, fathers, children) is strongly recommended so that comprehensive statistical analysis could be conducted and the process of change examined
- Thank you!