

SUNSCREEN AND BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE: INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Cumulative sun exposure and sunburn during childhood are the main causes of most skin cancers. Indeed, 50-80% of cumulative exposure occurs during early childhood. Any information that would improve adherence to the WHO recommendation using sunscreen and limiting sun exposure during the hours of greatest risk]. To know and describe the behavior of children in relation to the use of sunscreen.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

As grandparents play a major role in the care of small children, the survey was conducted via the Internet among national samples of parents of children aged 12 or under or grandparents who care for their grandchildren for at least 2 weeks during the summer holidays. To take into account the summer period, the survey was conducted from the end of August in the 5 countries of the Northern Hemisphere: France, Germany, Spain, Italy and the United States.

RESULTS

The behavior of 6,190 children was studied; 92% were exposed to the sun in some way, and 74% were exposed between 11 and 17 o'clock. Thirty-two percent were protected only during intense sun exposure. Of them, 99.7% used at least one means of protection, 76% were protected from the sun by a hat or cap, 63.7% were protected by sunglasses, and 94.6% were protected by sun cream. In 86.8%, the product was a special child product. Only 17.9% received an application every 2 hours on sunny days and only 10% on days when the sun was hidden by clouds.

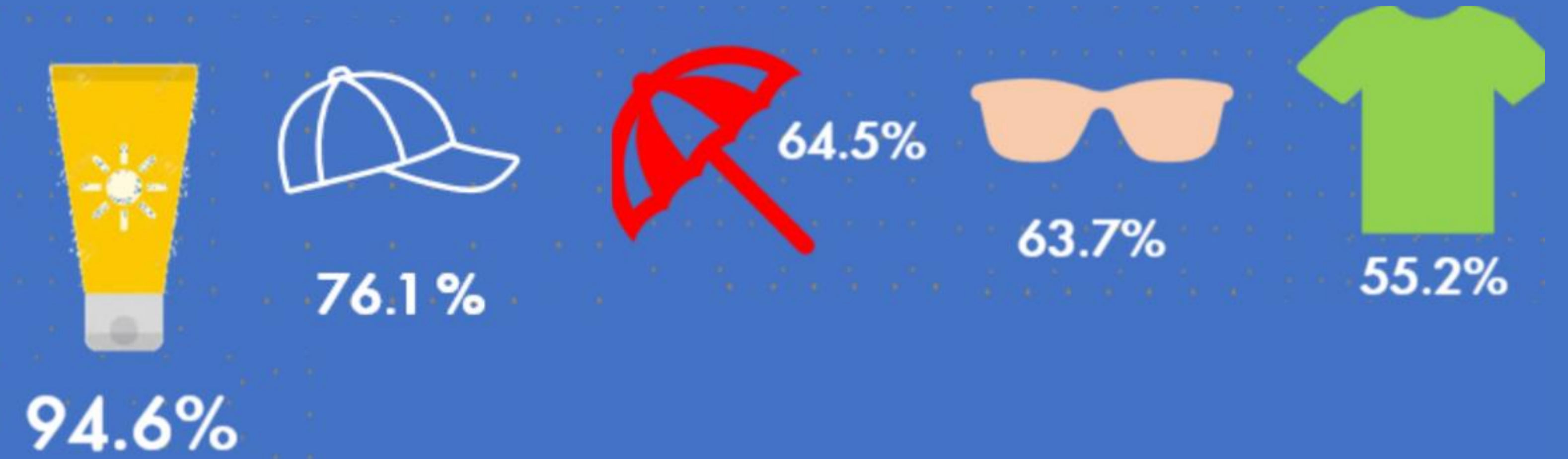
In 47% of cases, the child expressed the wish to apply sun cream alone [49% for children over 6 years old]. The trend is observed in all countries [41% in France or Italy, 45.6% in Germany, 51.6% in Spain and 54% in the USA].

In 70% of cases, they understood the importance of applying sun protection [from 63% in Italy to 75% in France].

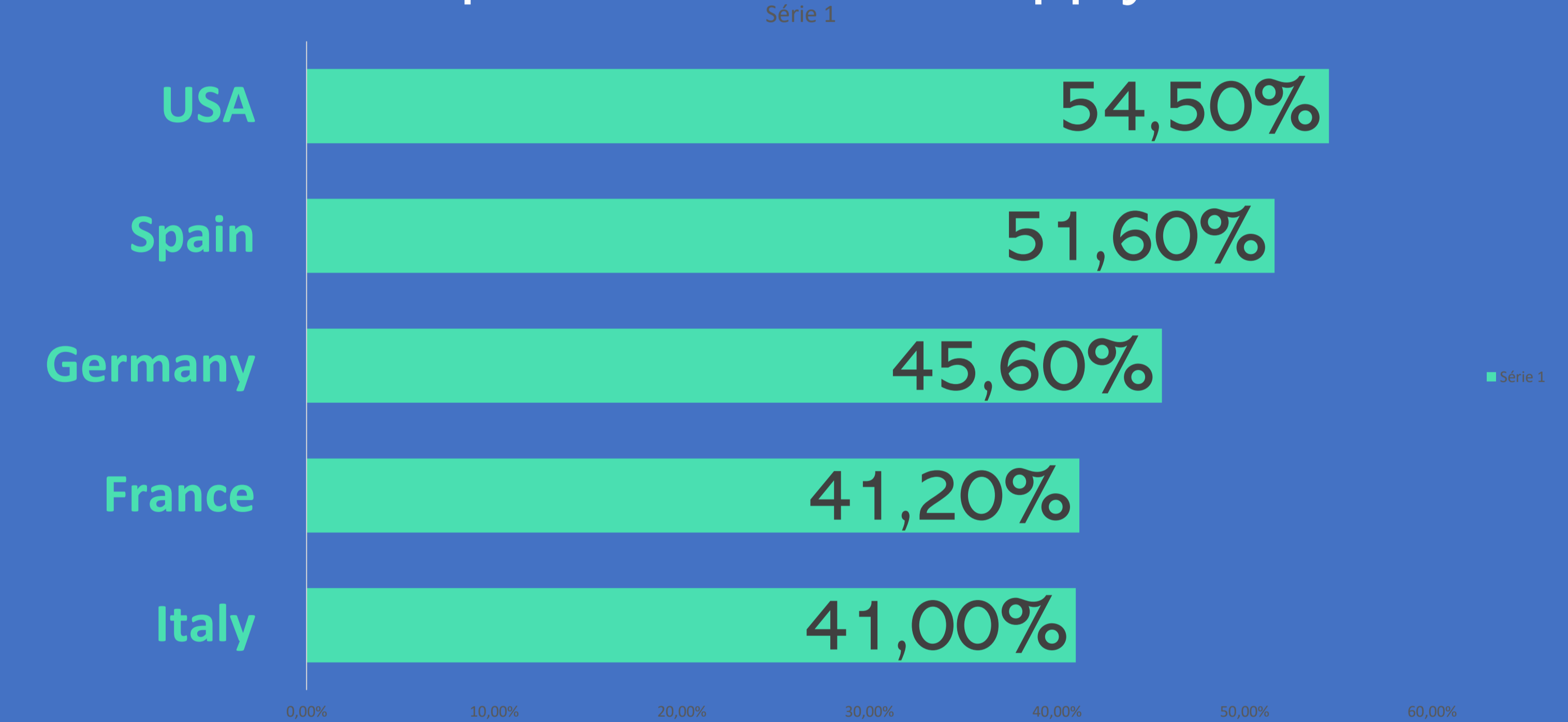
56% thought the product smelled good, 41% thought it was pleasant, 9% thought it smelled bad and 8% thought it was itchy.

DISCUSSION

For more than 30 years, health authorities have been conducting annual sun prevention campaigns, but we note that many do not comply with them. The fact that one out of two children expresses the wish to apply the cream and that 2/3 seem to have understood the importance of this gesture offers the possibility to have hope that it may be easier to convince the new generation. Future public health programs should take this into account.



% of child express the wish to apply sun cream



% of child understood the importance of applying sun protection

