



# International Microbiota Observatory

L'Observatoire International  
des Microbiotes

Fourth wave

A large, light gray illustration of a diverse microbiome, featuring various shapes of bacteria and fungi, set against a white background that is slightly offset to the left and top of the slide.

# Methods

## Methods





### 2023 Entrants

-  USA (n=500)
-  Brazil (n=500)
-  Mexico (n=1,000)
-  France (n=1,000)
-  Portugal (n=500)
-  China (n=1,000)

### 2024 Entrants

-  Poland (n=500)
-  Finland (n=500)
-  Vietnam (n=1000)





### 2025 Entrants

-  Germany (n=500)
-  Italy (n=500)

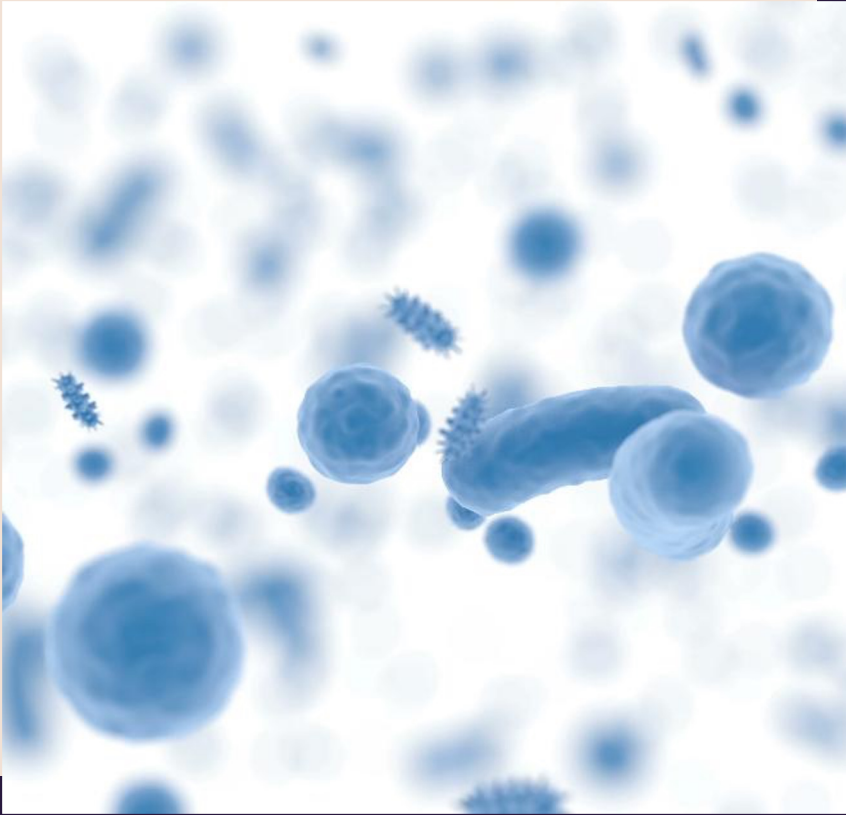
**11**  
countries

**7 500**  
respondents

The International Microbiota Observatory was conducted online in 11 countries from February 3<sup>rd</sup> – March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Representative samples by country are ensured by the quota method applied to the respondent's gender, age, region and occupation.

Throughout the report, all results are presented in %. Statistical significance of sub-populations and with the previous wave are calculated at a confidence level of 95%. To enhance readability, significant differences are highlighted using  green and  orange colors, and evolution by arrows  .

# Focus on the vaginal microbiome

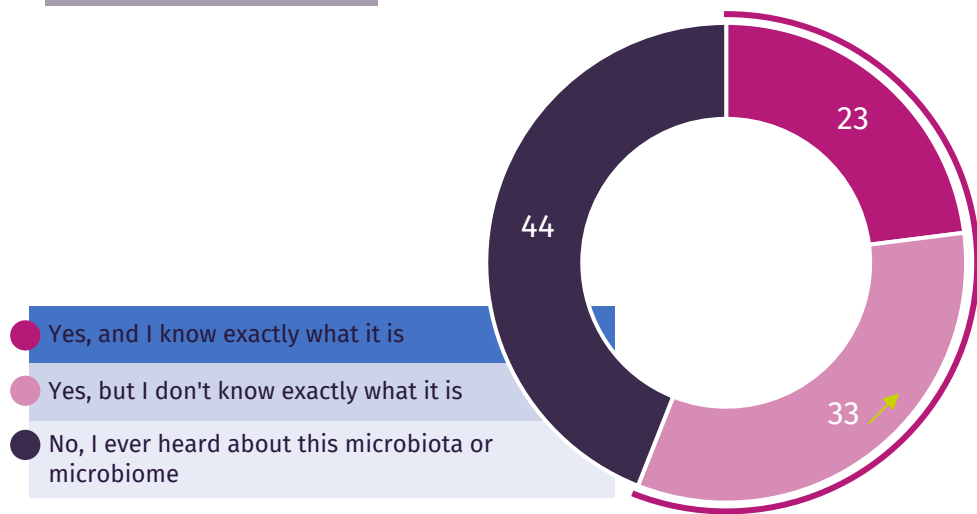


# More than half of women are familiar with vaginal microbiome. However, only a minority know precisely what it is.

Question 3. And more specifically, have you ever heard of the following terms?

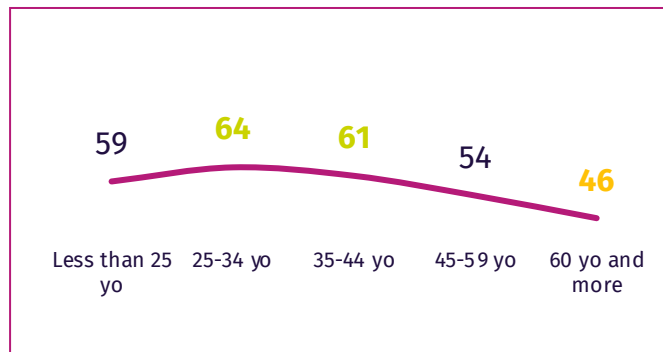
Base: Women (n=3872)

## Vaginal microbiome



**56%** have already heard about vaginal microbiome

+ 2 points vs 2025



# Women remain well informed about key aspects of the vaginal microbiome, even though some aspects show a decline compared to last year's results.

(1/2)

Question 13. For each of the following statements, tell us if you think it is TRUE or FALSE. If you are unsure about your answer, answer I don't really know.

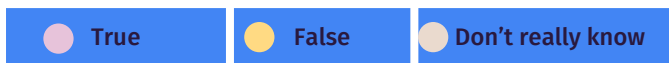
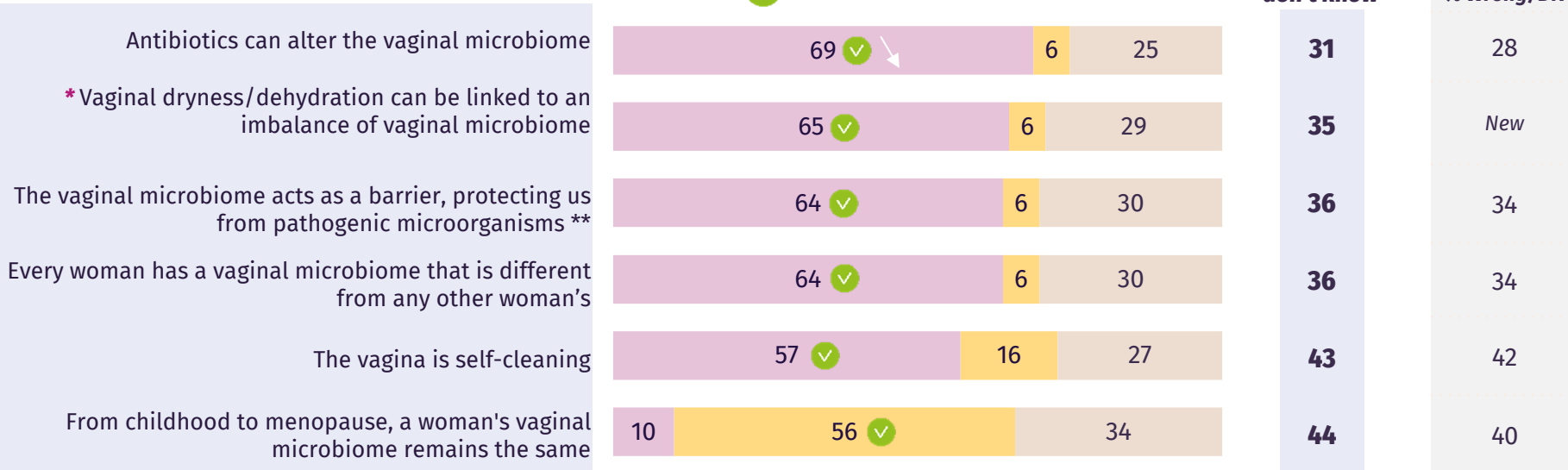
Base: Women (n=3872)

\* **New item**

✓ Good answer

Wrong answers/  
don't know

Reminder  
2025  
% Wrong/DK



\*\* For this item, the following definition was provided: a pathogenic organism is an organism which is capable of causing diseases in a host

# Moreover, women are less aware of how the gut microbiome, mode of delivery, and oestro-progestative pills affect the vaginal microbiome.

(2/2)

Question 13. For each of the following statements, tell us if you think it is TRUE or FALSE. If you are unsure about your answer, answer I don't really know.

Base: Women (n=3872)

\* **New item**

✓ Good answer

Wrong answers/  
don't know

Reminder  
2025  
% Wrong/DK

\* The use of probiotics is helpful in case of bacterial vaginosis, candidiasis, cystitis

56 ✓

6

38

44

New

Smoking has no consequences on the vaginal microbiome

12

50 ✓ ↘

38

50

45

Gut microbiome influences vaginal microbiome

45 ✓

10

45

55

55

Mode of delivery (vaginally or cesarean section) could have an impact on the newborn's gut microbiome

37 ✓ ↘

13

50

63

59

Oestro-progestative pills could protect the vaginal microbiome

21 ✓

15

64

79

78

True

False

Don't really know

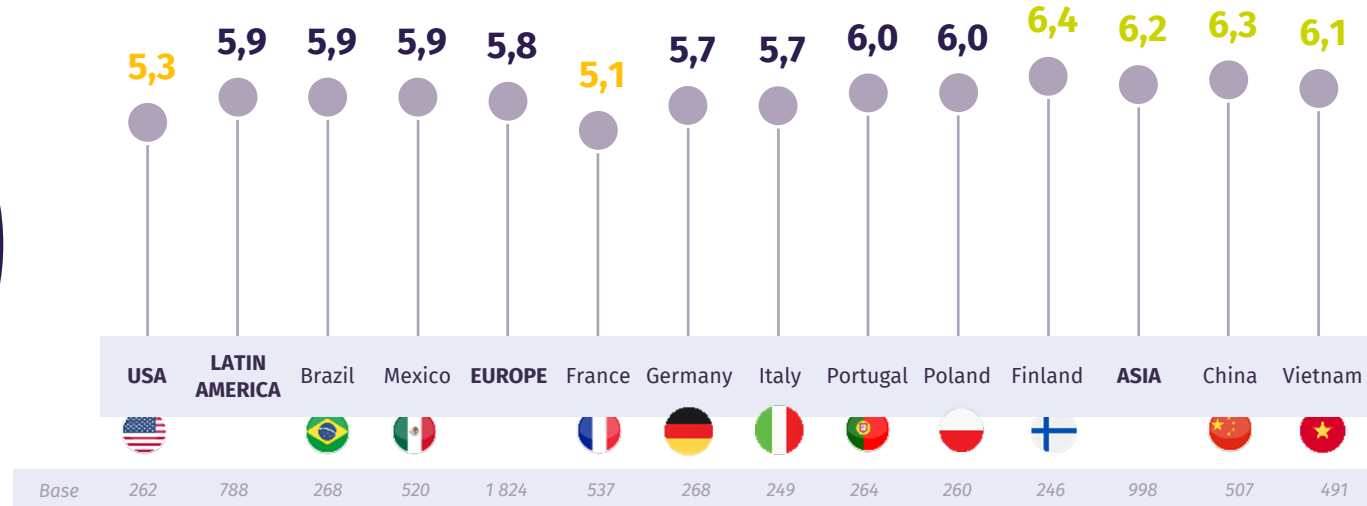
# French and American women are the least informed about vaginal microbiome.

Question 13. For each of the following statements, tell us if you think it is TRUE or FALSE. If you are unsure about your answer, answer I don't really know.

Base: Women (n=3872)



Number of good responses on average

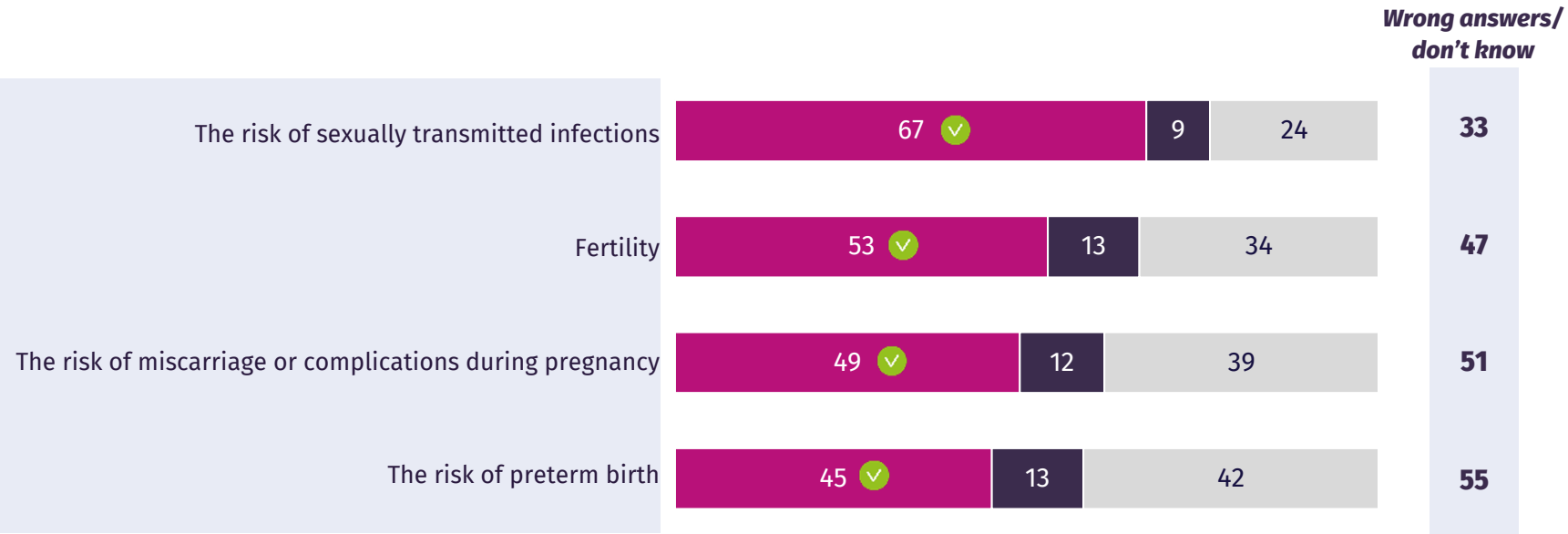


- Significant differences vs total - superior
- Significant differences vs total - inferior

# Women's knowledge about the impacts of an imbalanced vaginal microbiome is moderate, with STIs being the only exception.

Question 7V4. Do you think that imbalances in the vaginal microbiome can have an impact on: **New question**

Base: Women (n=3872)



Yes  No  I don't know

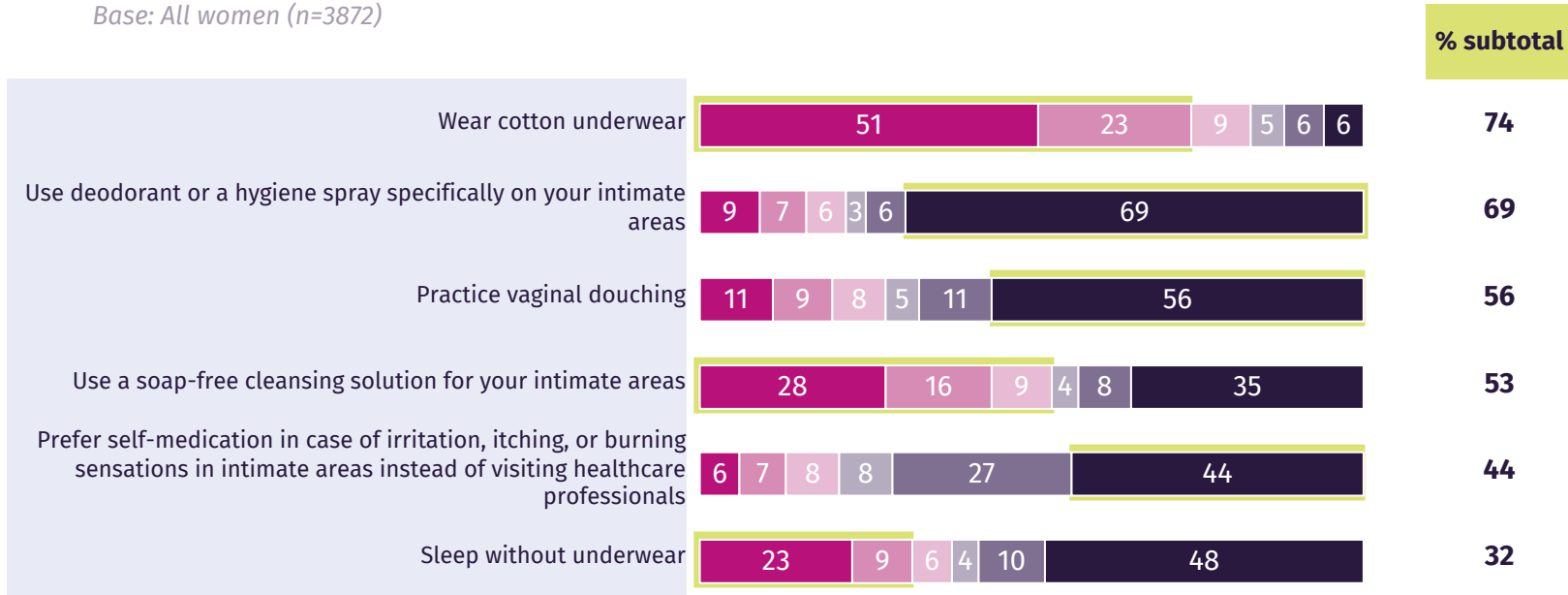
✓ Good answer

# Many women don't adopt protective behaviors for their vaginal microbiome, such as avoiding vaginal douching or avoiding self-medication.

Question 11V4. How often do you include the following in your daily life? **New question**

Question 12V4. Regarding your intimate hygiene practices, which of the following behaviors do you perform? **New question**

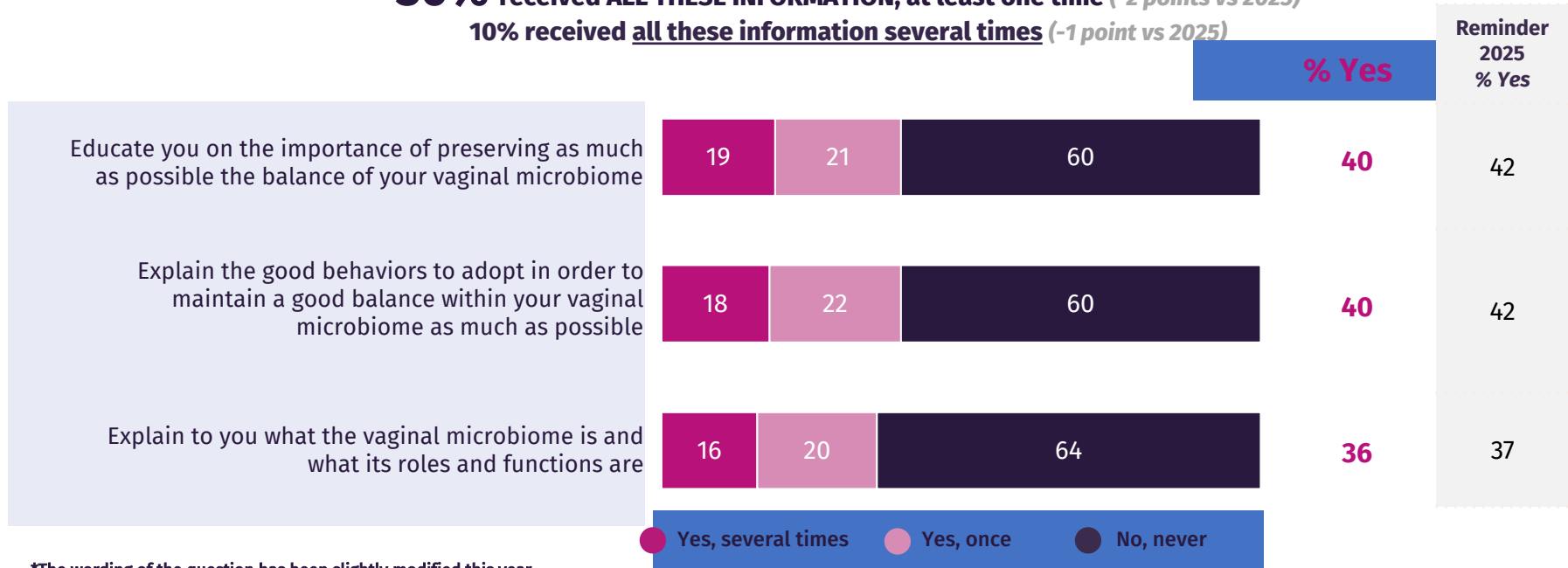
Base: All women (n=3872)



# Information given by healthcare professionals about vaginal microbiome is showing no improvement this year.

Question 14. Have healthcare professionals talked to you about the following? \*  
Base: Women (n=3872)

**30%** received **ALL THESE INFORMATION**, at least one time (-2 points vs 2025)  
**10%** received all these information several times (-1 point vs 2025)



\*The wording of the question has been slightly modified this year

# Topics about intimate health related to the vaginal microbiome are far from common during medical consultations with healthcare professionals.

Question 8V4. And more specifically, have healthcare professionals talked to you about the following? **New question**

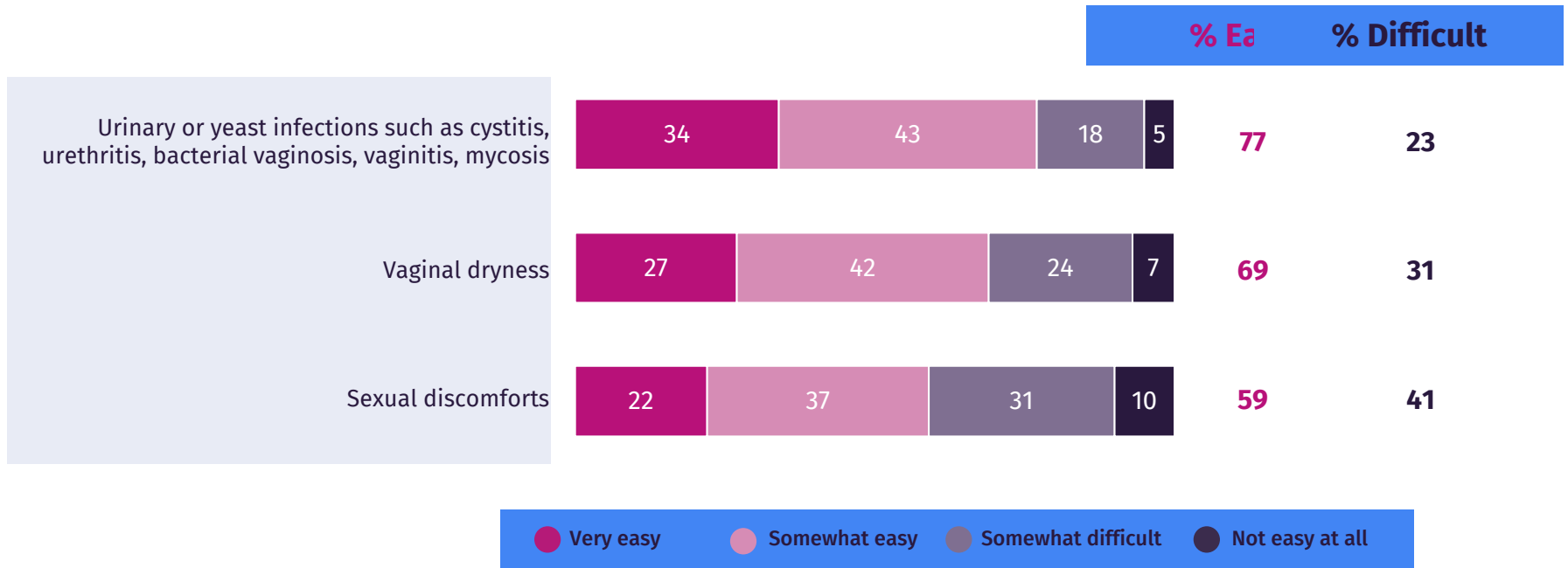
Base: Women (n=3872)

**25%** of women report that healthcare professionals discussed all these topics



# Discussing intimate health concerns can be challenging for a minority of women, yet it still represents a significant portion of them.

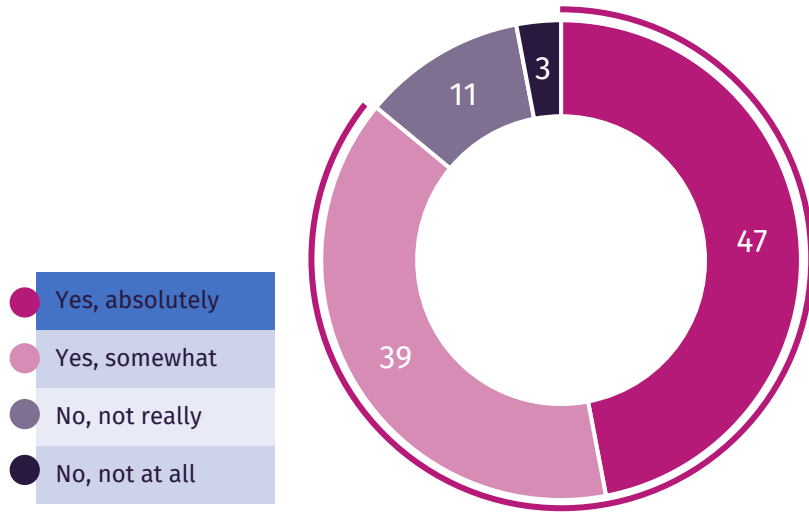
Question 9V4. How easily do you talk, or would you talk, about the following intimate health concerns with healthcare professionals? **New question**  
 Base: Women (n=3872)



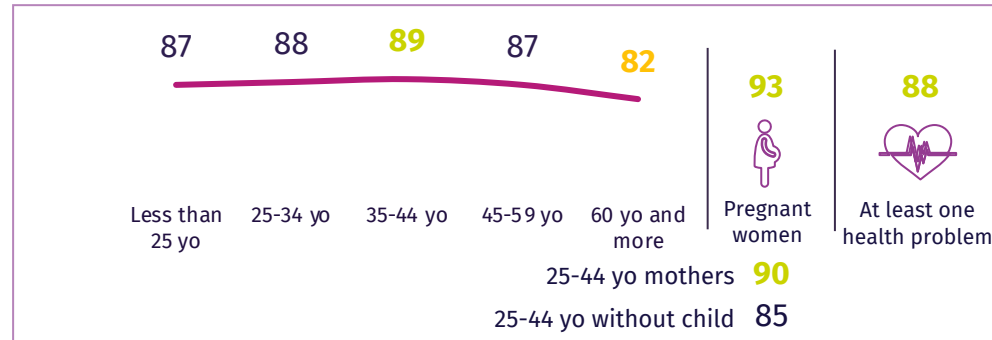
# Women signal a strong need for more information about the vaginal microbiome and its related health impacts.

Question 15. And would you like the healthcare professional monitoring your gynecological health to tell you more about the importance of your vaginal microbiome and its impact on your health?

Base: Women (n=3872)



**86%** would like to have more information about the importance of the vaginal microbiome and its impact on health  
+ 1 point vs 2025



● Significant differences vs total - superior ● Significant differences vs total - inferior

A large, light-colored rectangular area on the left side of the slide, containing a dense, abstract pattern of grey, branching, and elongated shapes that resemble a complex network or a microscopic view of microbial structures.

## Creation of a scoring

# Construction of the hygiene habits scoring

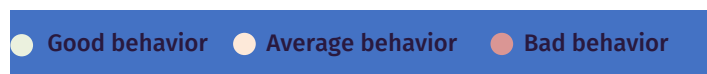
Question 10V4. Do you smoke?

Question 11V4. How often do you include the following in your daily life?

Question 12V4. Regarding your intimate hygiene practices, which of the following behaviors do you perform?

Base: All respondents

## New questions



**SMOKE** Smoke

1. Yes, I currently smoke	2. I used to smoke but quit	3. No, I've never smoked
23	25	52

	1. Daily	2. Several times a week	3. Weekly	4. Monthly	5. Less than monthly	6. Never
<b>HYGIENE</b> Practice vaginal douching (*)	11	9	8	5	11	56
Prefer self-medication in case of irritation, itching, or burning sensations in intimate areas instead of visiting healthcare professionals	6	8	9	9	26	42
Wash your body two or more times a day	30	21	12	5	11	21
Use a soap-free cleansing solution for your intimate areas (*)	28	16	9	4	8	35
Use deodorant or a hygiene spray specifically on your intimate areas (*)	9	7	6	3	6	69
Sleep without underwear (*)	23	9	6	4	10	48
Wear cotton underwear (*)	51	23	9	5	6	6

(\*) women only

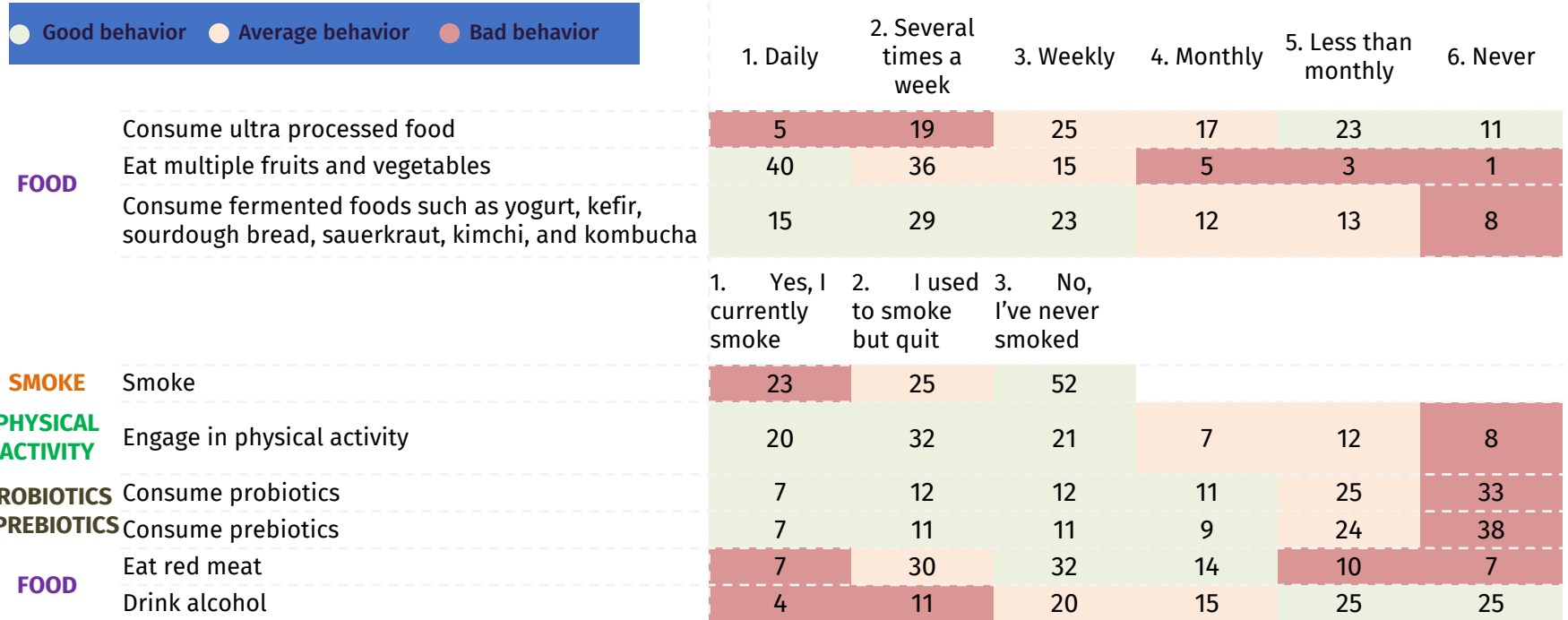
# Construction of the dietary habits scoring

Question 10V4. Do you smoke?

Question 11V4. How often do you include the following in your daily life?

Base: All respondents

New questions



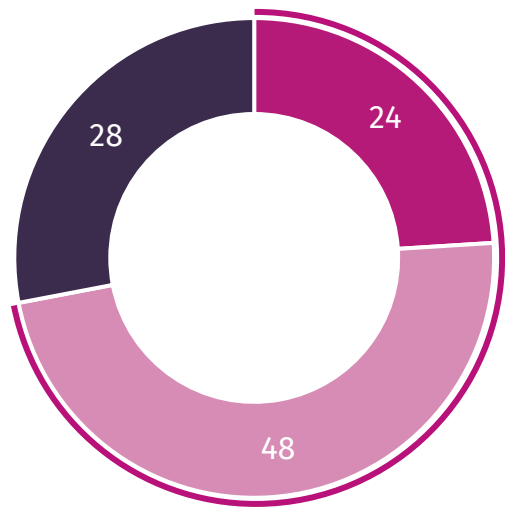


## A growing awareness of diverse microbiome locations

# In 2026, awareness of the microbiome remains steady, with more than 7 in 10 respondents familiar with the term. However, only a quarter know exactly what it is.

Question 2. Have you ever heard of the "microbiome"?

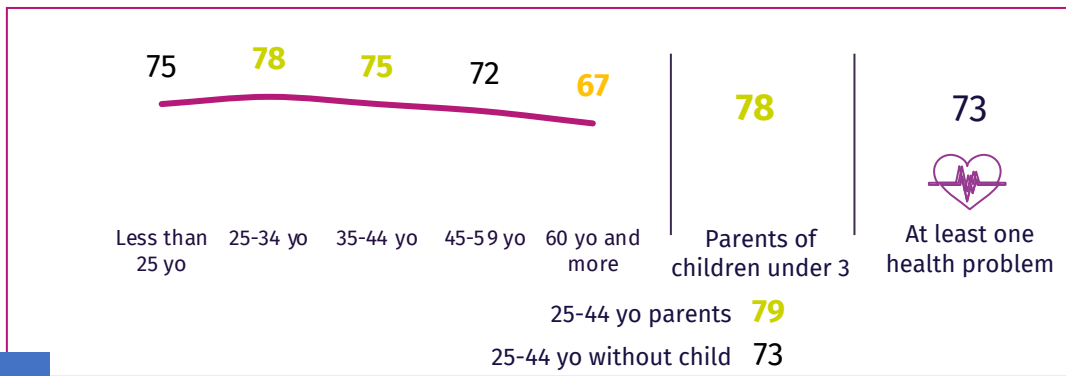
Base: All respondents



- Yes, and I know exactly what it is
- Yes, but I don't know exactly what it is
- No, I never heard about it

**72%** have already heard about the term microbiome

+1 point vs 2025



● Significant differences vs total - superior ● Significant differences vs total - inferior

# Awareness of the microbiome has increased each year, especially in the USA, Brazil, Finland, and Mexico.



Question 2. Have you ever heard of the "microbiome"?

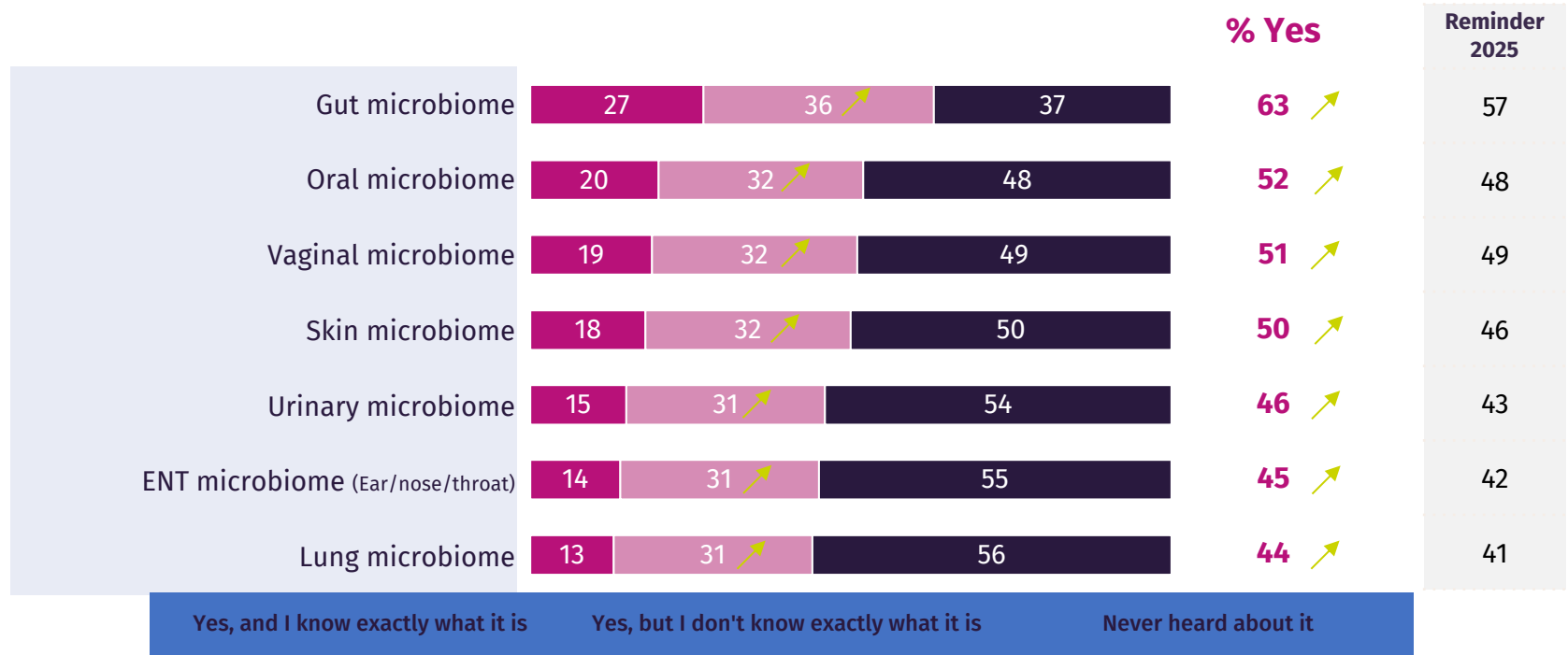
Base: All respondents

Subtotal "Yes"		2023	2024	2025	2026	
<b>CONSTANT SCOPE</b>		<b>63</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>+9 points</b> since 2023
	<b>USA</b>	53	62	63	<b>67</b>	<b>+14 points</b> since 2023
	<b>Brazil</b>	62	66	73	<b>70</b>	<b>+8 points</b> since 2023
	<b>Mexico</b>	66	71	72	<b>74</b>	<b>+8 points</b> since 2023
	<b>France</b>	81	85	88	<b>86</b>	<b>+5 points</b> since 2023
	<b>Portugal</b>	61	62	62	<b>66</b>	<b>+5 points</b> since 2023
	<b>China</b>	57	76	69	<b>68</b>	<b>+11 points</b> since 2023
	Germany	-	-	63	<b>68</b>	<b>+5 points</b> since 2025
	Italy	-	-	78	<b>77</b>	
	Poland	-	75	74	<b>74</b>	
	Finland	-	41	46	<b>52</b>	<b>+11 points</b> since 2024
	Vietnam	-	92	94	<b>93</b>	

# Awareness of each microbiome has significantly increased compared to last year. The gut microbiome stands out as the most well-known.

Question 3. And more specifically, have you ever heard of the following terms?

Base: All respondents



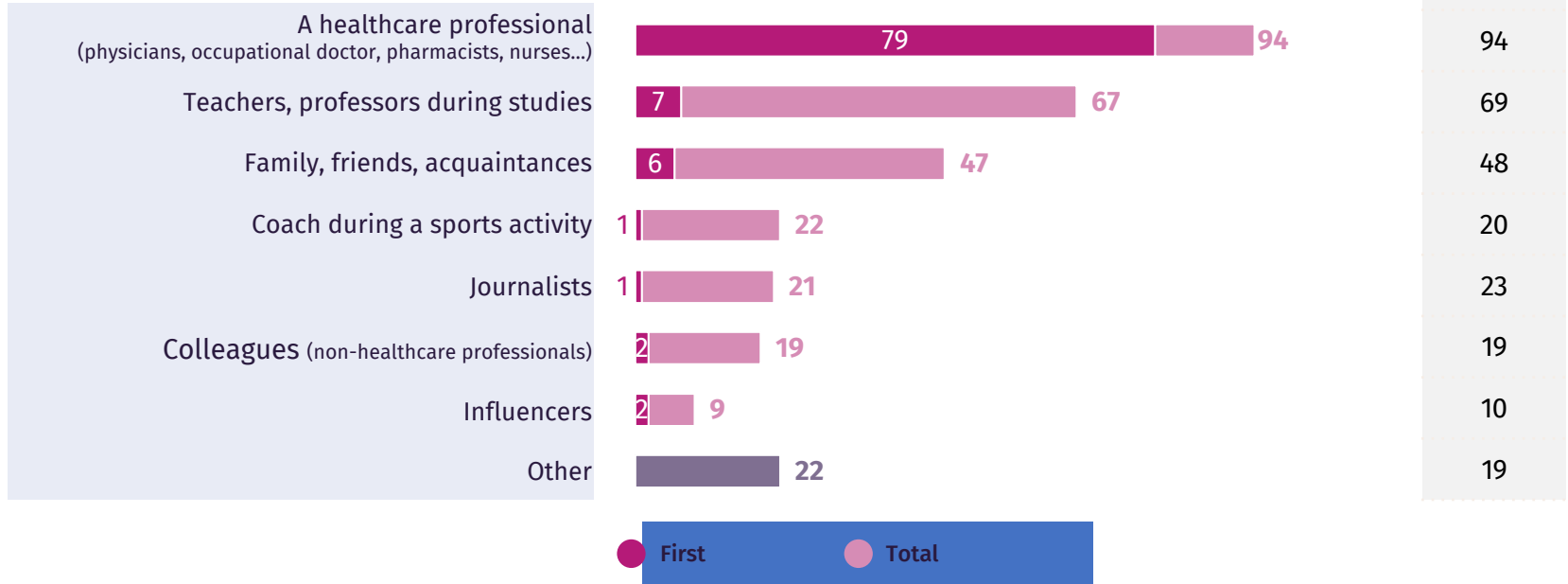


**Yet, the information  
received from  
healthcare  
professionals shows  
signs of decline.**

**2**

# Healthcare professionals continue to be the leading source of relevant and trustworthy information about the microbiome

Question 2V2. For relevant and trustworthy information about microbiome, who would you trust the most?  
 Select the sources you would trust the most: 1st, 2nd, 3rd  
 Base: All respondents



# While the information provided by healthcare professionals remains limited, with fewer respondents receiving education from them this year...

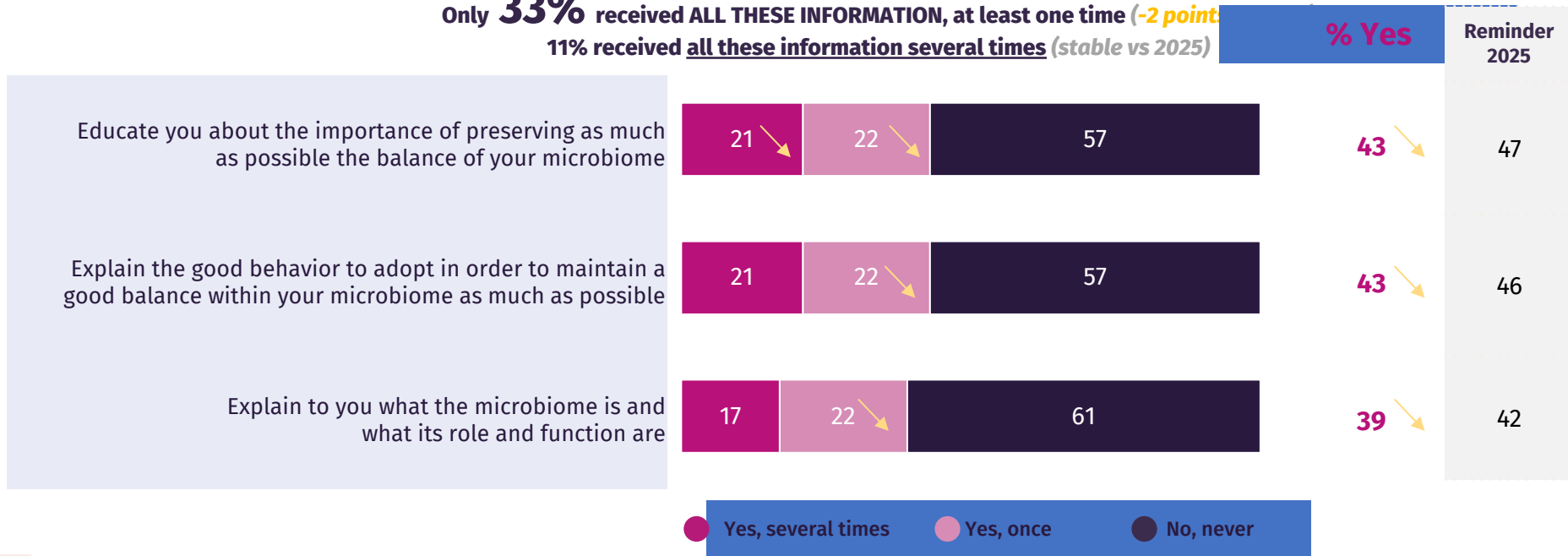
Question 5. Have any of the healthcare professionals you have seen ever done any of the following?

Base: All respondents

**50%** received at least one piece on information, at least one time (-5 points vs 2025)

Only **33%** received ALL THESE INFORMATION, at least one time (-2 points vs 2025)

11% received all these information several times (stable vs 2025)

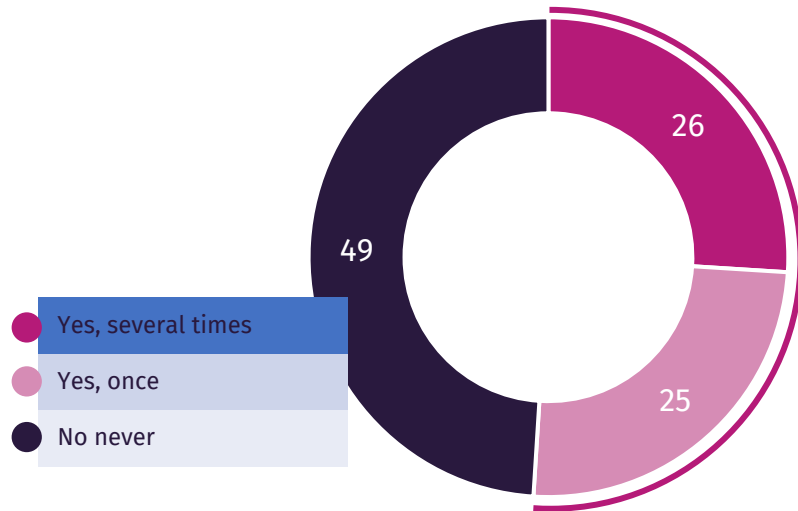


A full definition explaining the microbiome has been displayed to respondents before this question

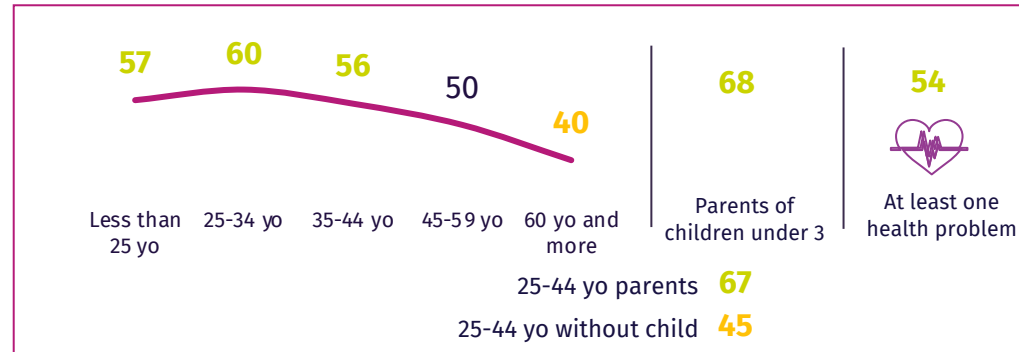
# ...there has been a slight increase in probiotic/ prebiotic prescriptions.

Question 5. Have any of the healthcare professionals you have seen ever done any of the following?  
Base: All respondents

## “Prescribe probiotics or prebiotics”



**51%** were prescribed with probiotics or prebiotics  
+2 points vs 2025



● Significant differences vs total - superior    ● Significant differences vs total - inferior

# Asian and Latin American respondents are more likely to have received microbiome information from healthcare professionals.

Question 5. Have any of the healthcare professionals you have seen ever done any of the following?

Base: All respondents

% Yes	Question 5. Have any of the healthcare professionals you have seen ever done any of the following?															
	TOTAL	USA	LATIN AMERICA	Brazil	Mexico	EUROPE	France	Germany	Italy	Portugal	Poland	Finland	ASIA	China	Vietnam	
Prescribe probiotics or prebiotics	51	45	63	53	73	40	28	24	56	43	66	23	74	65	82	
Educate you about the importance of preserving as much as possible the balance of your microbiome	43	38	56	51	61	33	30	27	39	41	34	26	66	57	74	
Explain the good behavior to adopt in order to maintain a good balance within your microbiome as much as possible	43	38	58	52	63	32	30	25	41	43	31	20	65	56	74	
Explain to you what the microbiome is and what its role and function are	39	36	48	43	54	28	26	23	34	35	30	20	64	52	75	

● Significant differences vs total - superior

● Significant differences vs total - inferior

# Even when antibiotics are prescribed, the information provided by healthcare professionals remains limited and shows no signs of increase.

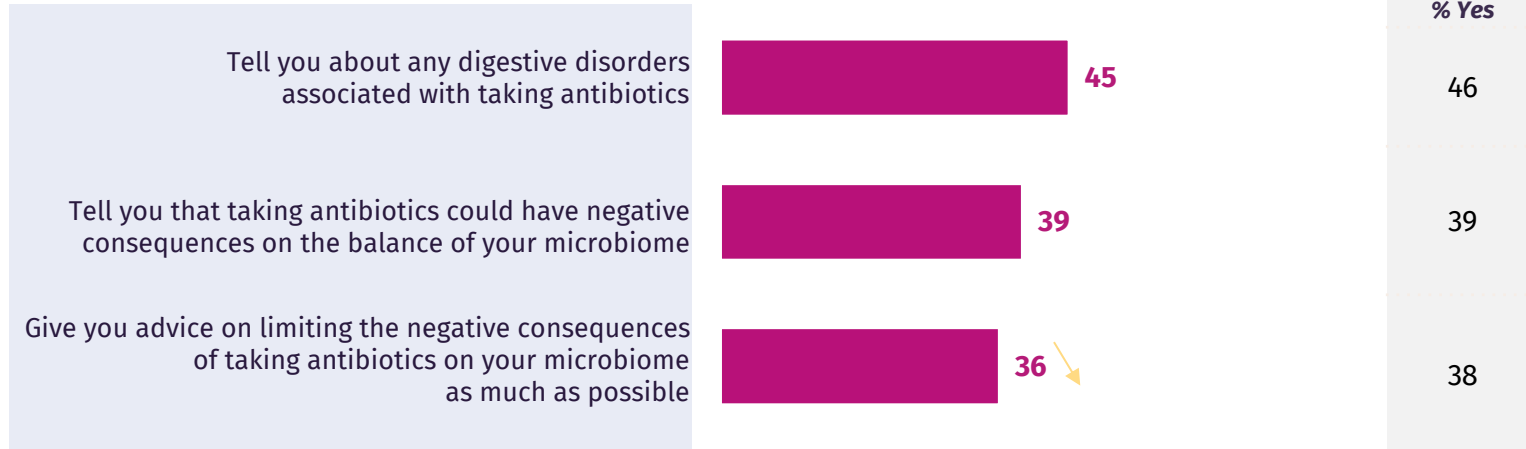
Question 7. The last time a doctor prescribed antibiotics, did they do the following?

Base: All respondents

Only **25%** received ALL THESE INFORMATION from their HCPs  
*Stable vs 2025*

% Yes

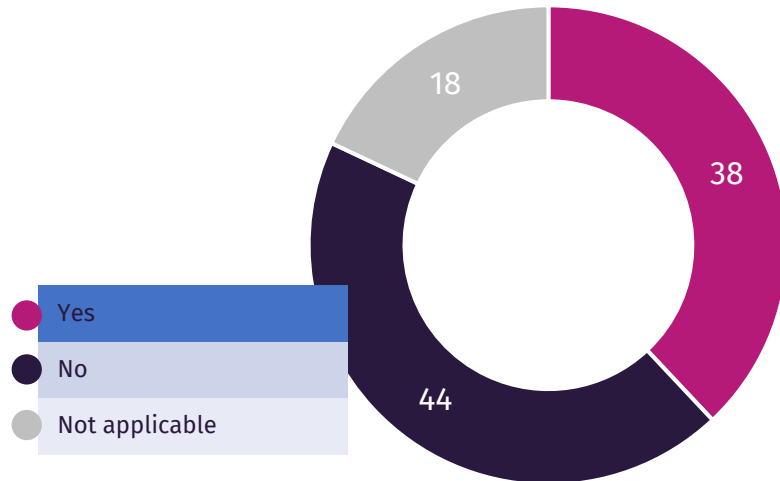
Reminder  
2025  
% Yes



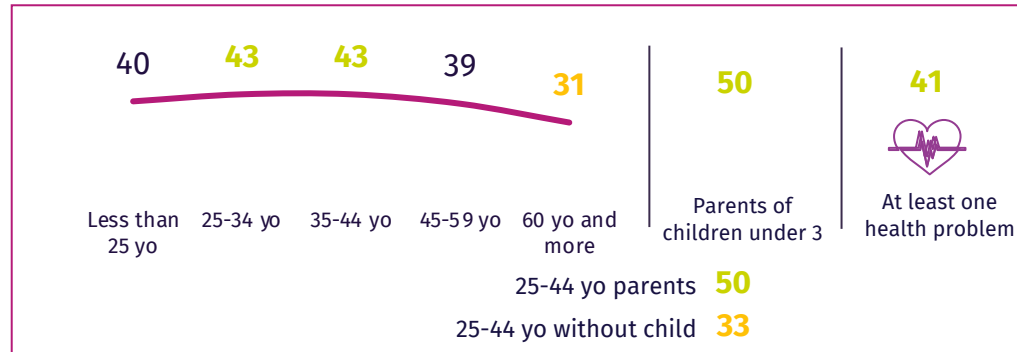
# Almost 2 in 5 have been prescribed probiotics or prebiotics when receiving antibiotics.

Question 7. The last time a doctor prescribed antibiotics, did they do the following? **New item**  
 Base: All respondents

## “Prescribe probiotics or prebiotics”



**38%** were prescribed with probiotics or prebiotics



● Significant differences vs total - superior ● Significant differences vs total - inferior

# France, Germany, Finland, and the US have the lowest rates of probiotics or prebiotics prescriptions.

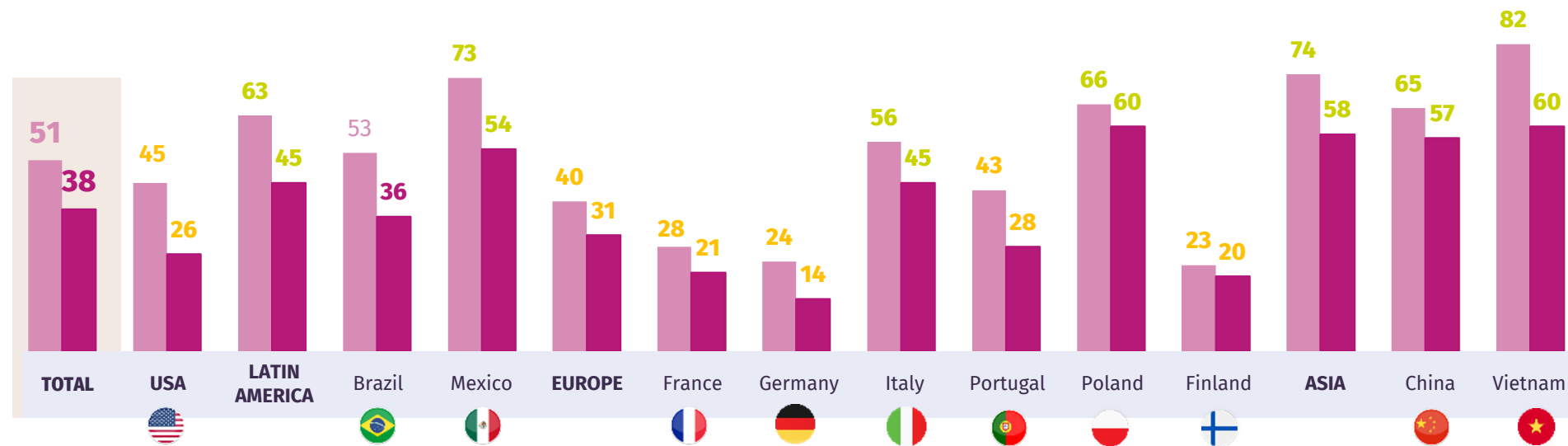
Question 5. Have any of the healthcare professionals you have seen ever done any of the following?

Question 7. The last time a doctor prescribed antibiotics, did they do the following?

Base: All respondents

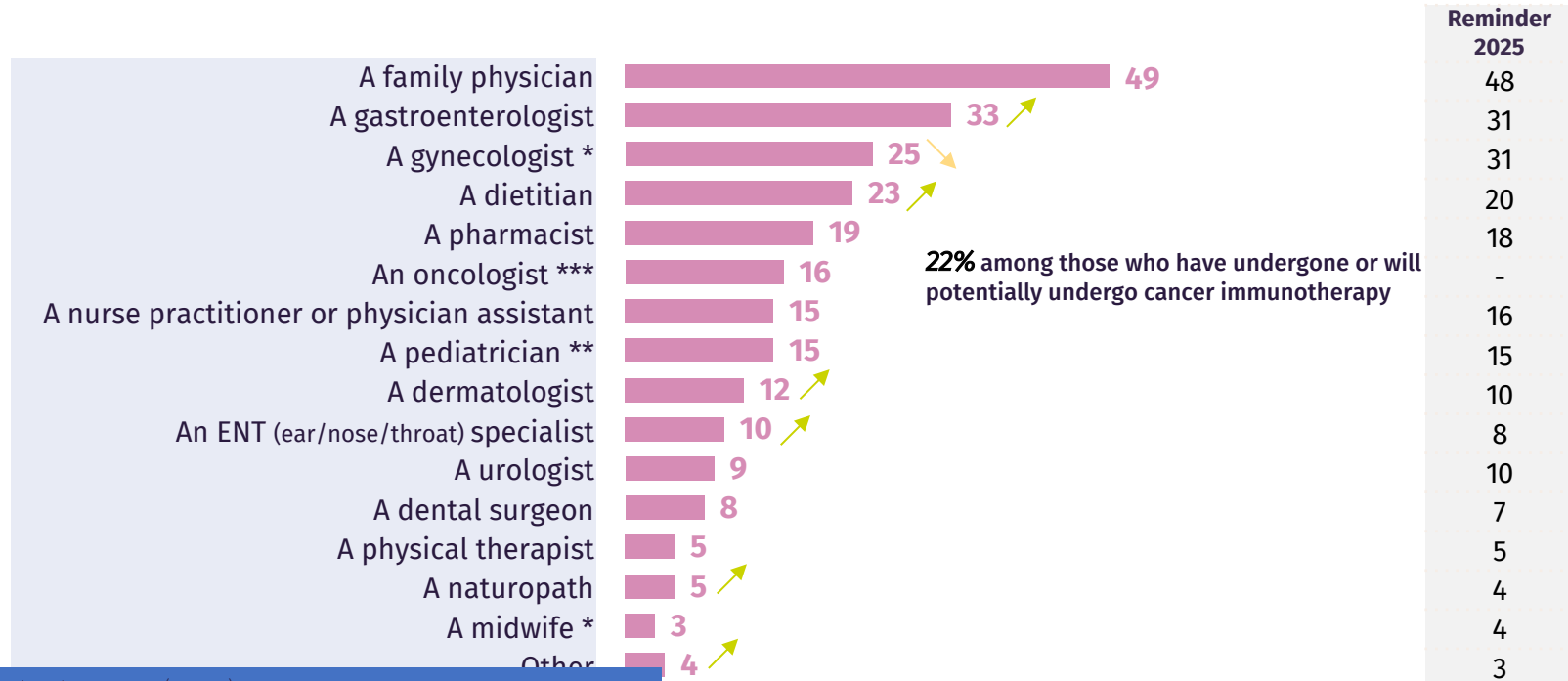
% Prescription of probiotics or prebiotics

% Prescription of probiotics or prebiotics alongside antibiotics prescription



# Among HCPs, family physicians come first in providing microbiome information, gastroenterologists second.

Question 6. And which healthcare professionals provided you with these explanations?  
 Base: People who've received information or probiotics/ prebiotics prescription from HCPs (n=4879)



\* Only displayed to women (n=2549)  
 \*\* Only displayed to Parents (n=2378)  
 \*\*\* New item 2026, only displayed to respondents suffering from cancer (n=213)



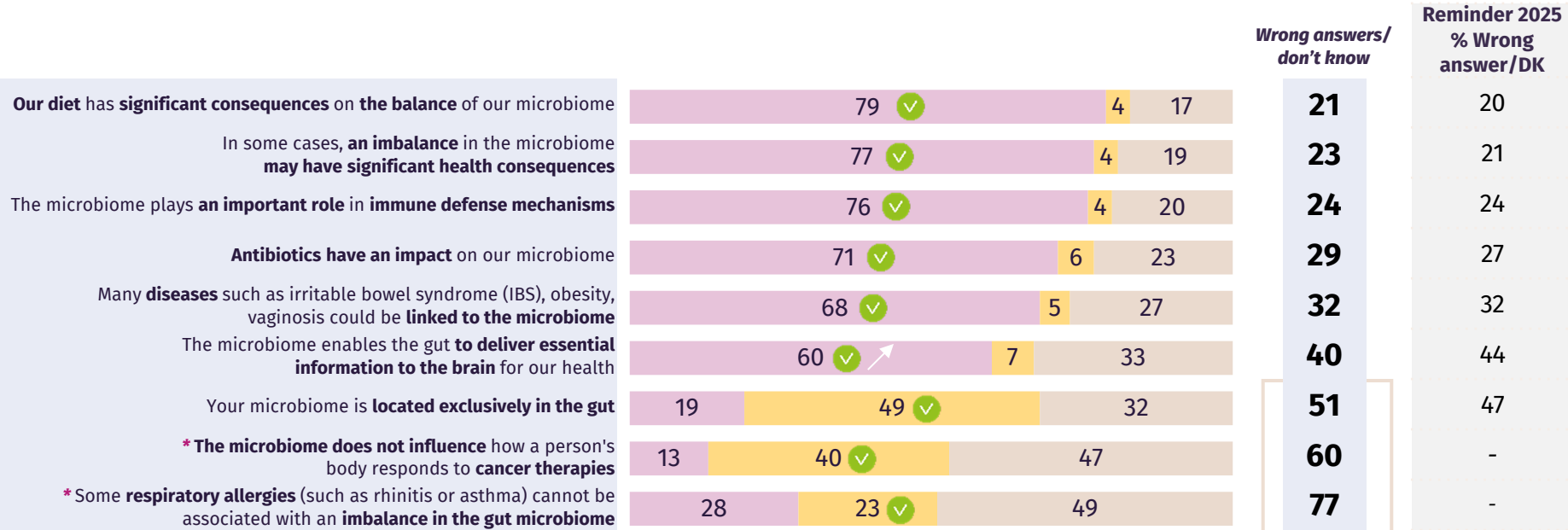
3

**Thus, even with increased awareness, there is a pressing need to enhance microbiome knowledge with the support of healthcare professionals**

# More specific aspects of microbiome remain poorly known, whether regarding its diversity or its impact on diseases. Moreover, there are no signs of improvement.

Question 4. For each of the following statements, tell us if you think it is TRUE or FALSE. If you are unsure about your answer, answer I don't really know.

Base: All respondents



 Good answer
 \* New items



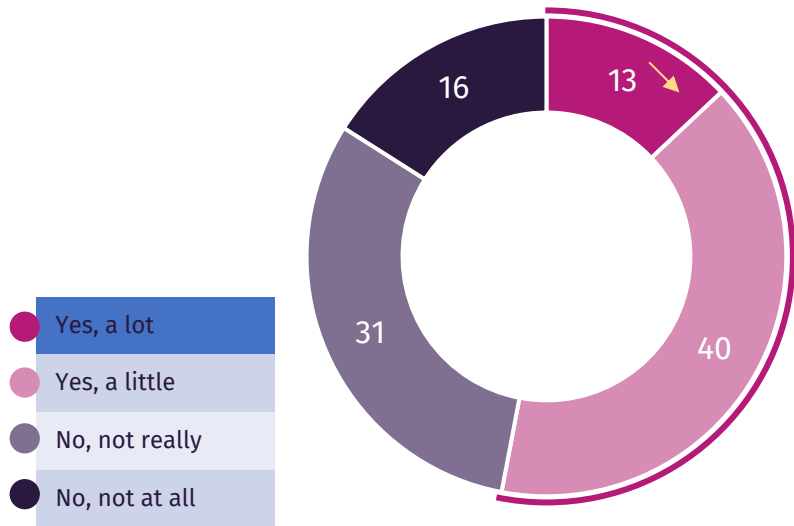
4

**Further progress is also needed on microbiome-friendly habits, as harmful microbiome behaviors are widespread**

# Half of respondents reported having adjusted their behaviors to support microbiome balance, with parents most likely to do so.

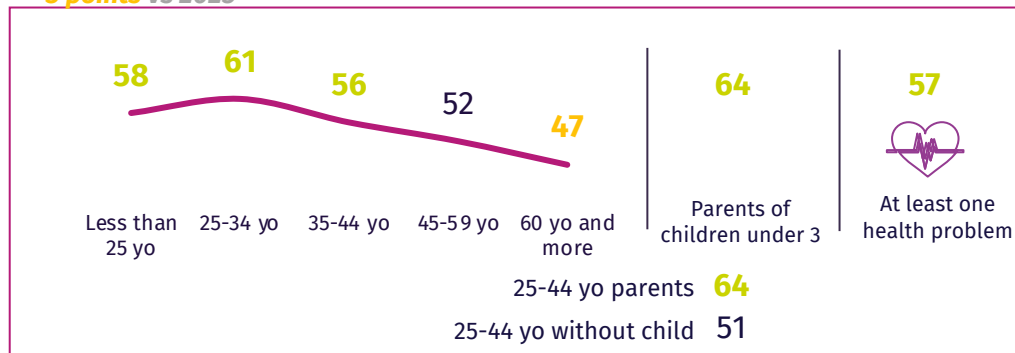
Question 10. And in your daily life, have you changed your behaviors to keep your microbiome as balanced and functioning as smoothly as possible?

Base: All respondents



**53%** have changed their behaviors

-3 points vs 2025



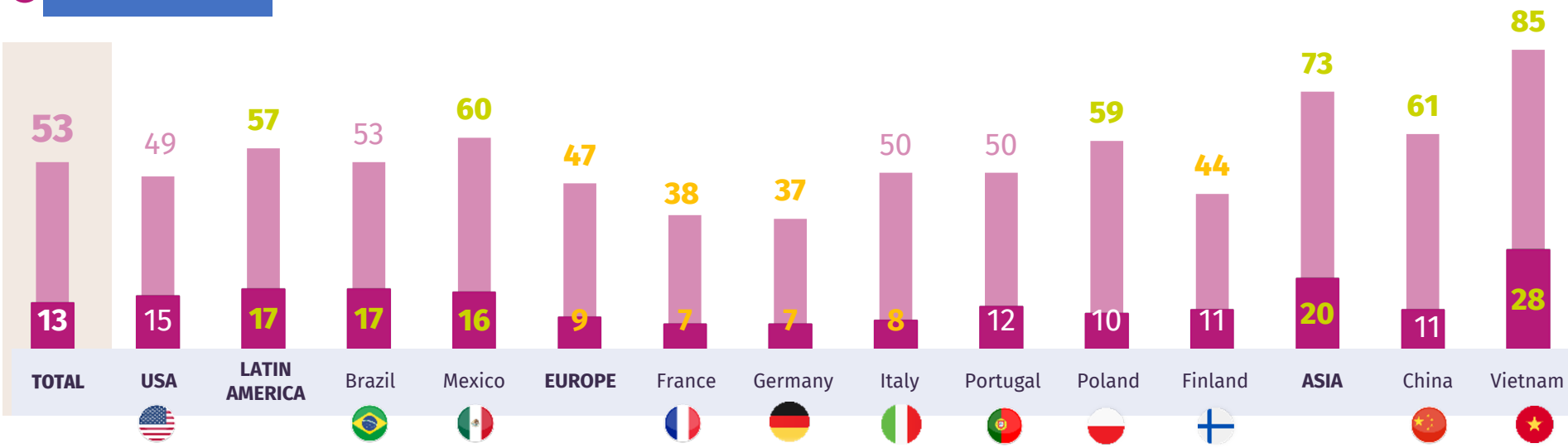
# In Asia, Mexico, and Poland, people are more likely to have changed their behaviors to support their microbiome.

Question 10. And in your daily life, have you changed your behaviors to keep your microbiome as balanced and functioning as smoothly as possible?

Base: All respondents

% Yes

Yes, a lot

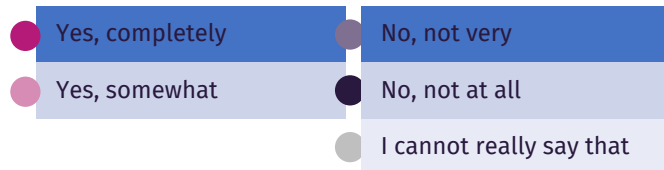
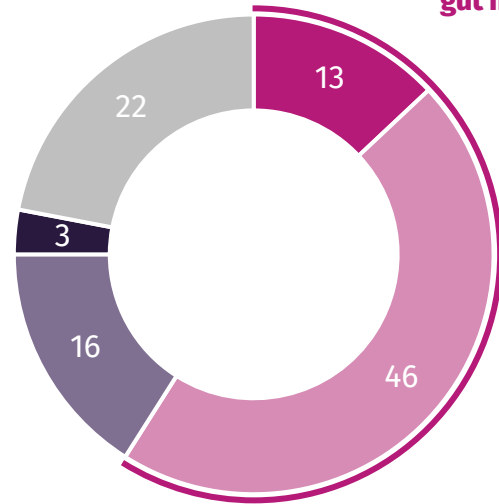


# Most people consider their gut microbiome well balanced. However, only a minority describe it as “completely” balanced.

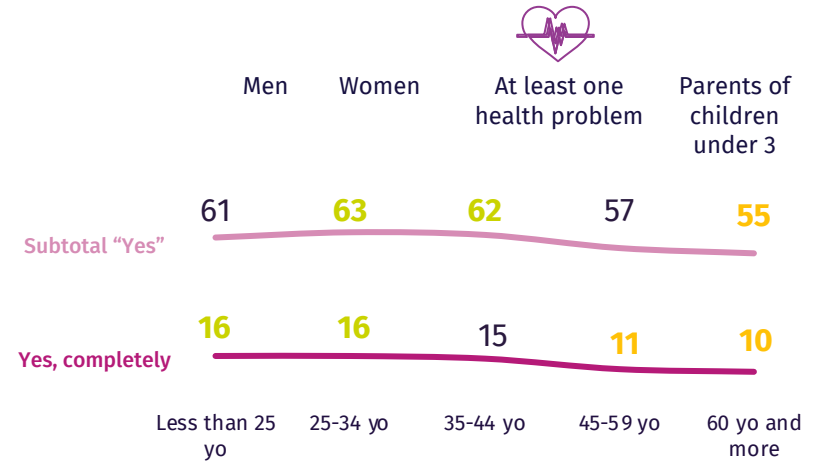
Question 14V4. Do you consider that your gut microbiome is currently well balanced? **New question**

Base: All respondents

**59%** consider that their gut microbiome is currently well balanced



Subtotal “Yes”	60	58	57	68
Yes, completely	14	12	12	16



● Significant differences vs total - superior ● Significant differences vs total - inferior

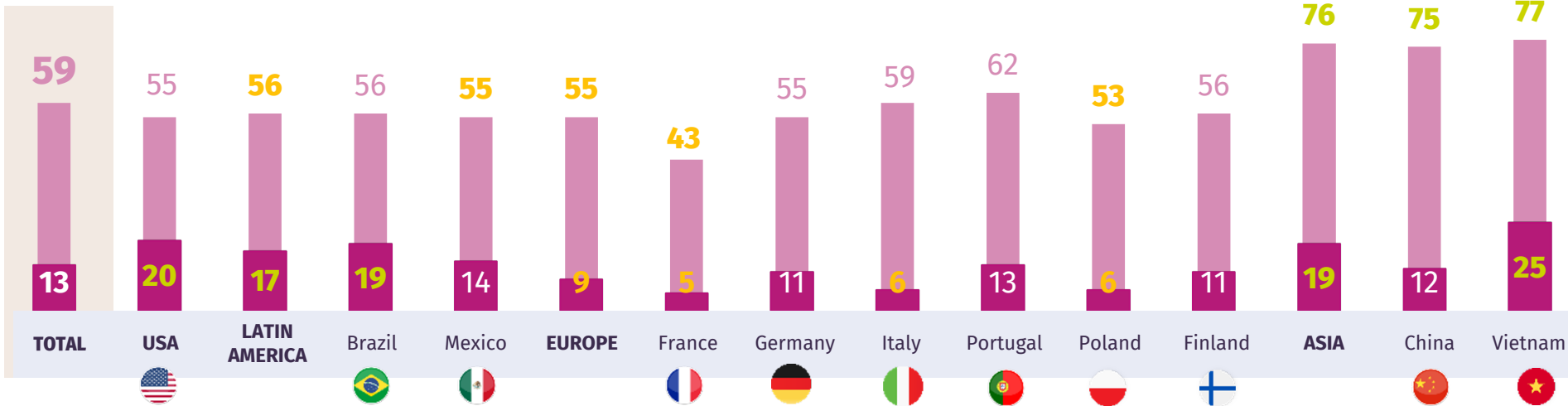
# Asian respondents are more likely to consider that their gut microbiome is well balanced.

Question 14V4. Do you consider that your gut microbiome is currently well balanced? *New question*

Base: All respondents

% Yes

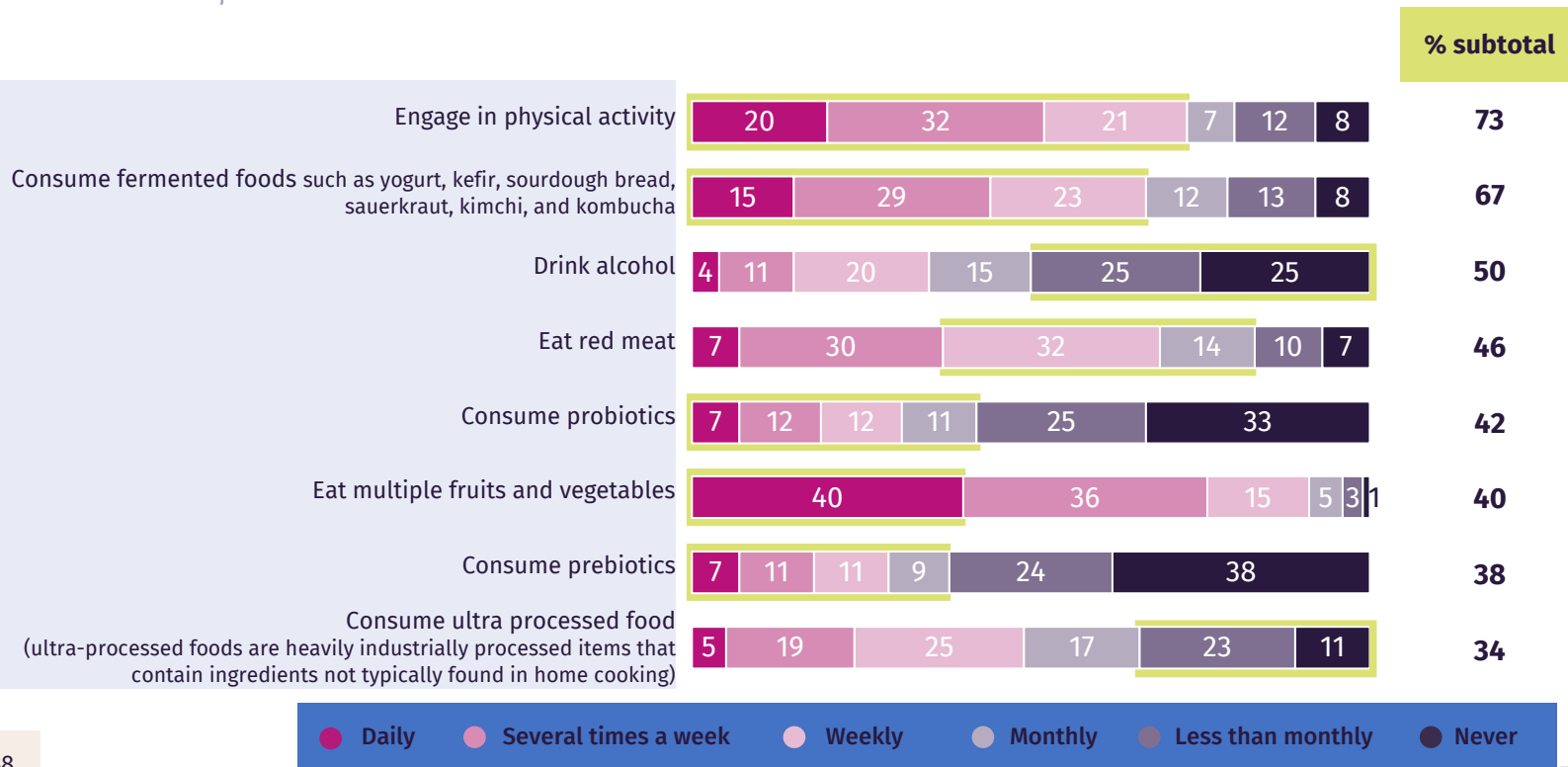
Yes, completely



# Major dietary habits are adopted by only a minority of respondents: consuming probiotics or prebiotics, eating various fruits and vegetables, avoiding ultra-processed food.

Question 11V4. How often do you include the following in your daily life? *New question*

Base: All respondents



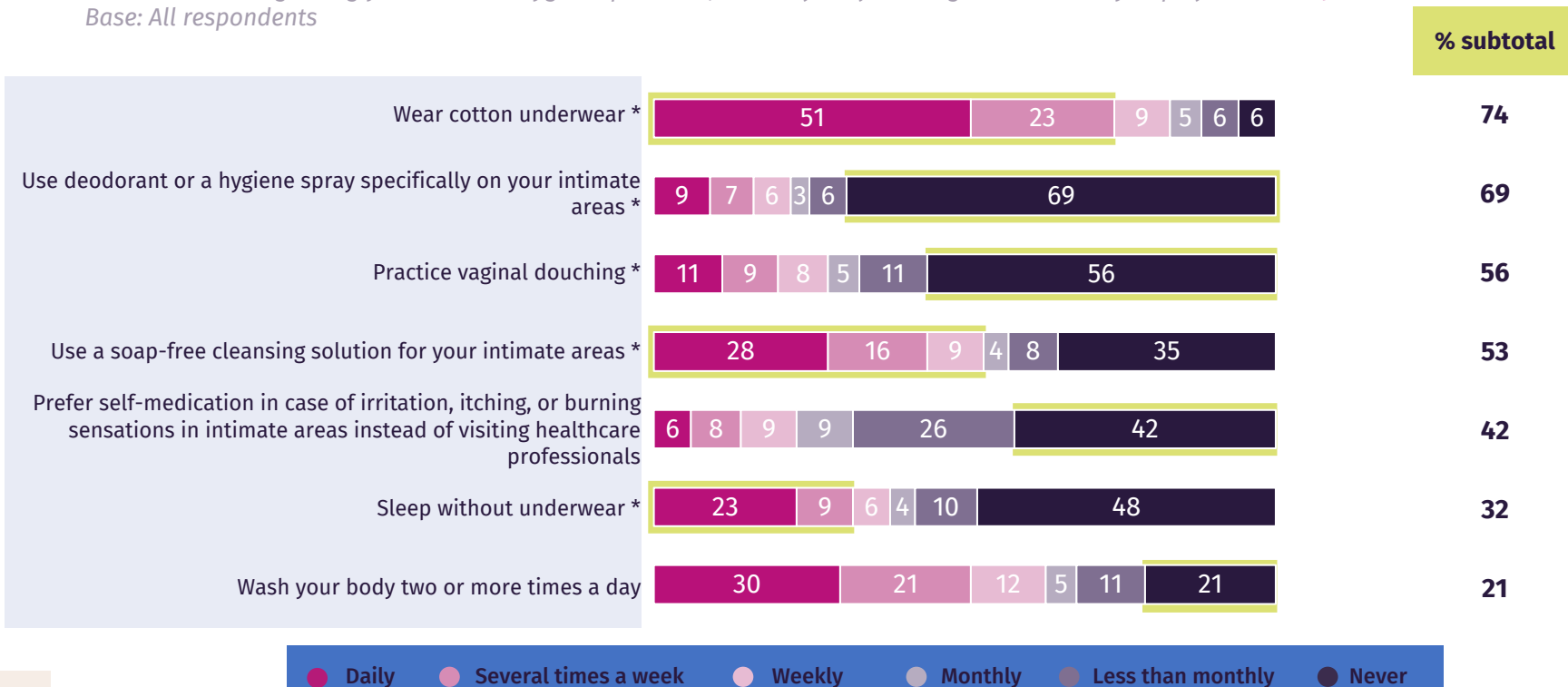
● Daily
 ● Several times a week
 ● Weekly
 ● Monthly
 ● Less than monthly
 ● Never

# Many respondents don't adopt protective behaviors for their microbiome, such as avoiding vaginal douching, self-medication or washing multiple times a day.

Question 11V4. How often do you include the following in your daily life? **New question**

Question 12V4. Regarding your intimate hygiene practices, which of the following behaviors do you perform? **New question**

Base: All respondents



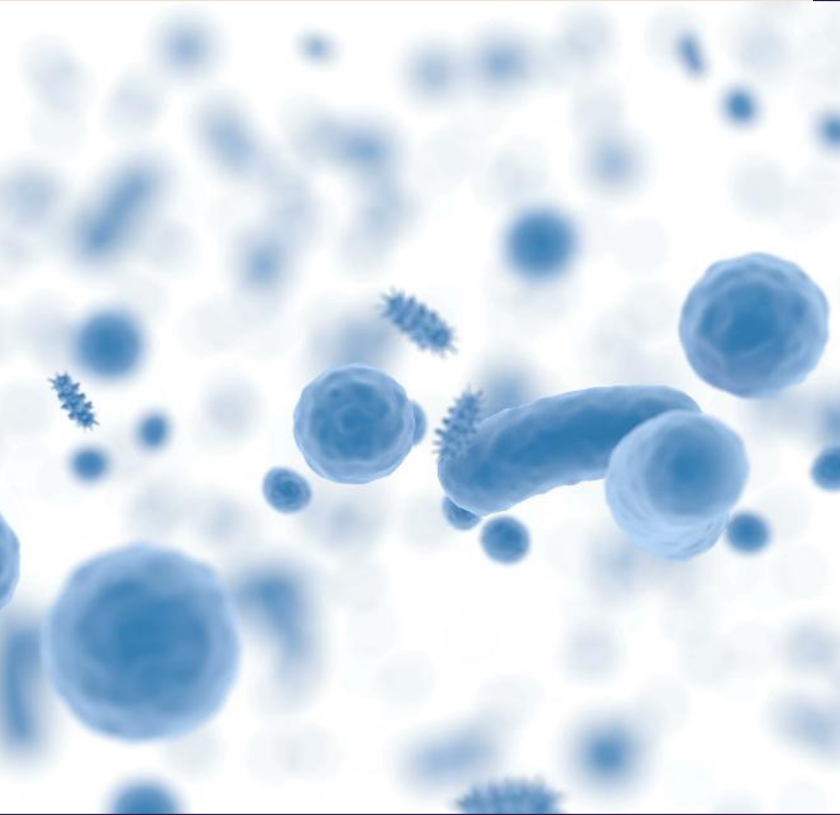
● Daily ● Several times a week ● Weekly ● Monthly ● Less than monthly ● Never

\* Only displayed to women (n=3872)

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Institute et Ipsos bva - April 2026

International  
Microbiota  
Observatory

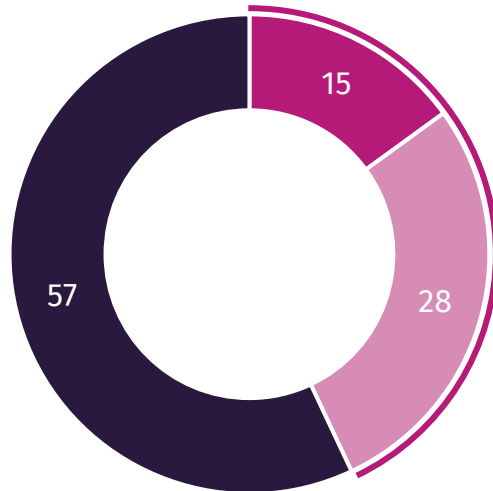
Ipsos bva



## Focus on the first 1,000 days of life

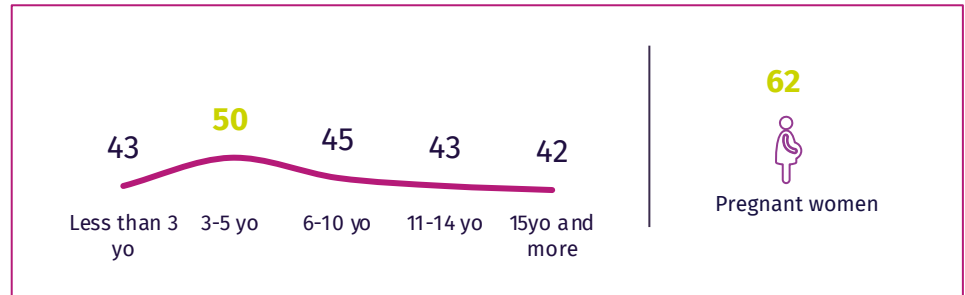
# Over 4 out of 10 parents or pregnant women have already heard about the scientific concept of the “first 1,000 days of life”. Only a minority know precisely what it is.

Question 2V4. Have you ever heard about the scientific concept of the “first 1,000 days of life”? **New question**  
 Base: Parents or pregnant women (n=3040)



- Yes, and I know exactly what it is
- Yes, but I don't know exactly what it is
- No, I never heard about it

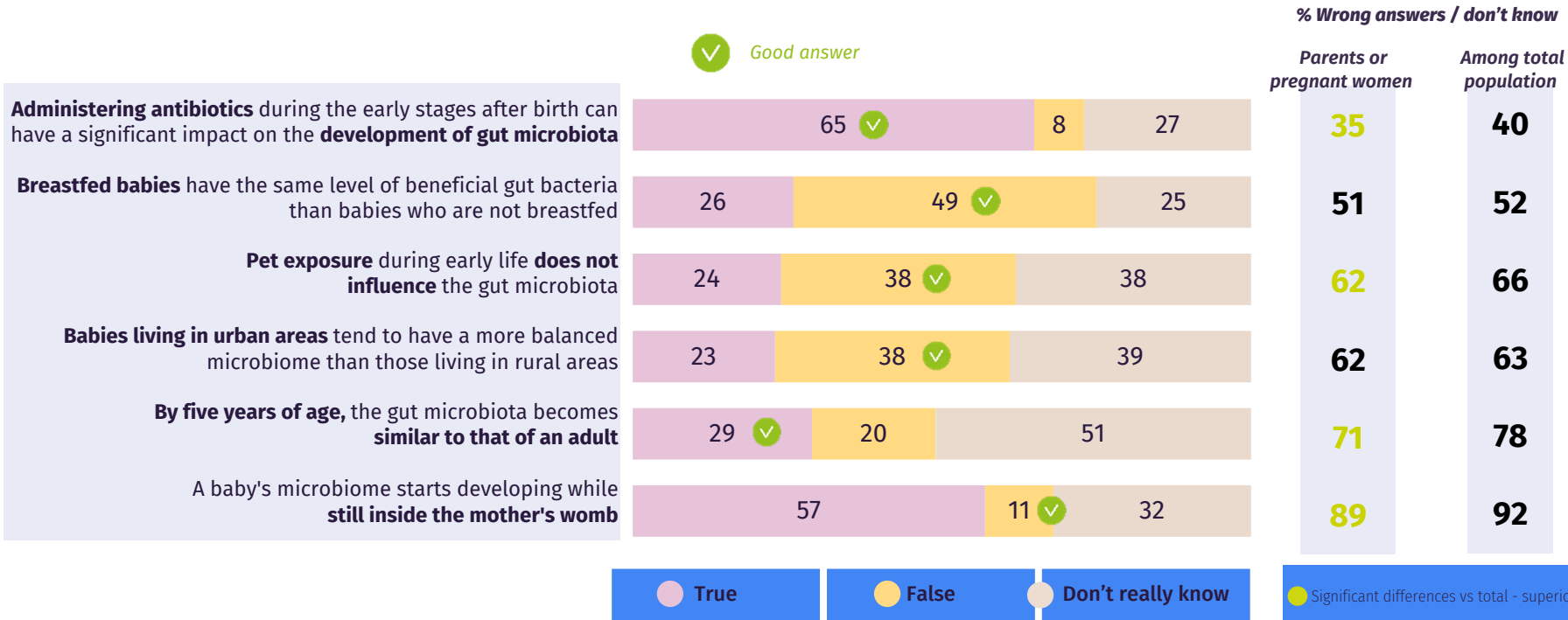
**43%** of parents have heard about the scientific concept of the “first 1,000 days of life”  
**28% among total population**



# Apart from the impact of taking antibiotics at an early age, parents and pregnant women appear mostly uninformed about what can influence their child's microbiome.

Question 4V4. For each of the following statements, tell us if you think it is true or false. If you are unsure about your answer, answer I don't really know. **New question**

Base: Parents or pregnant women (n=3040)



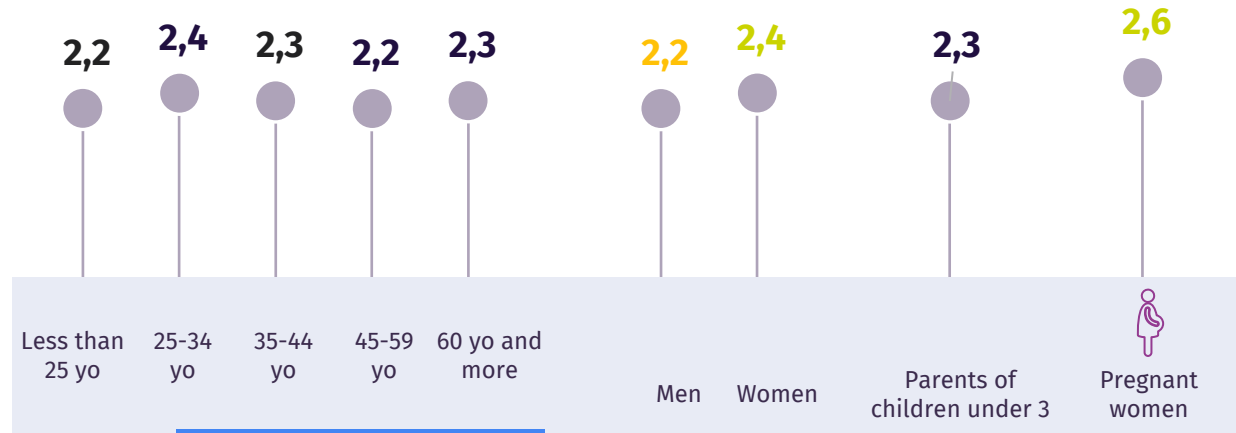
# Women, and especially pregnant women, are better informed than average about what can influence babies' microbiome.

Question 4V4. For each of the following statements, tell us if you think it is true or false. If you are unsure about your answer, answer I don't really know. **New question**

Base: Parents or pregnant women (n=3040)



Number of good responses on average



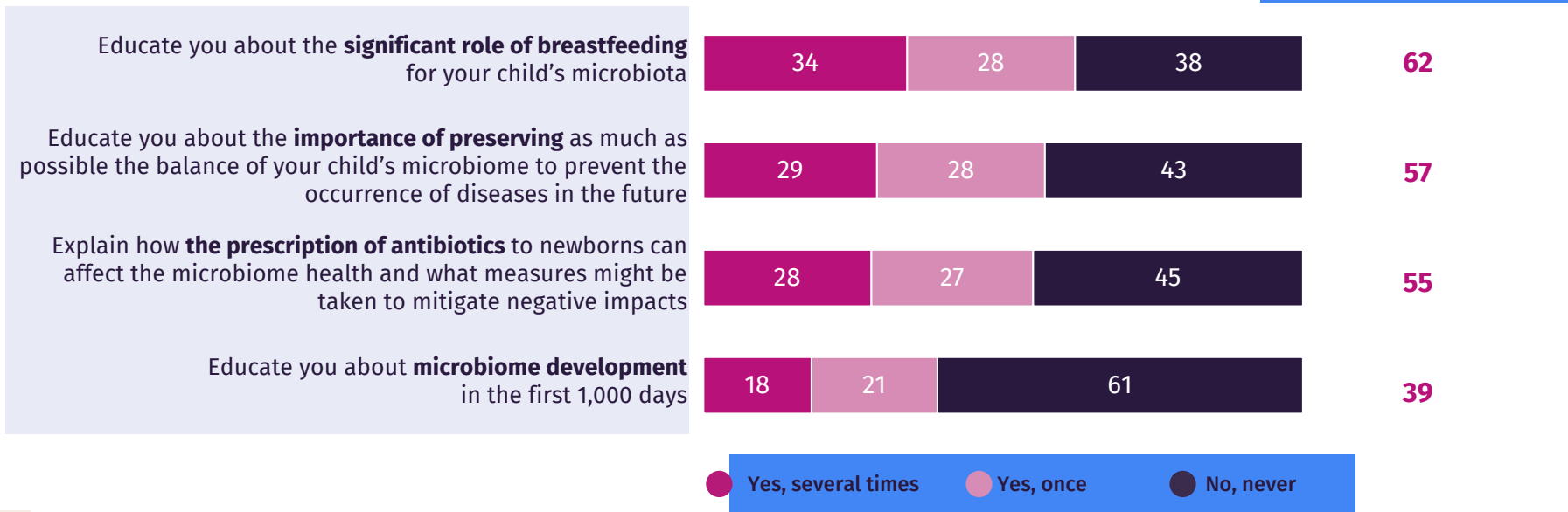
● Significant differences vs total - superior  
● Significant differences vs total - inferior

# Education about microbiome development in the first 1,000 days of life is quite rare: less than a third of parents have received all information about child's microbiome from their pediatrician.

Question 5V4. Has the pediatrician or the doctor monitoring your child's health ever done any of the following? New question  
 Base: Parents (n=3000)

Only **31%** received **ALL THESE INFORMATION**, at least one time  
 9% received all these information several times

**% Yes**

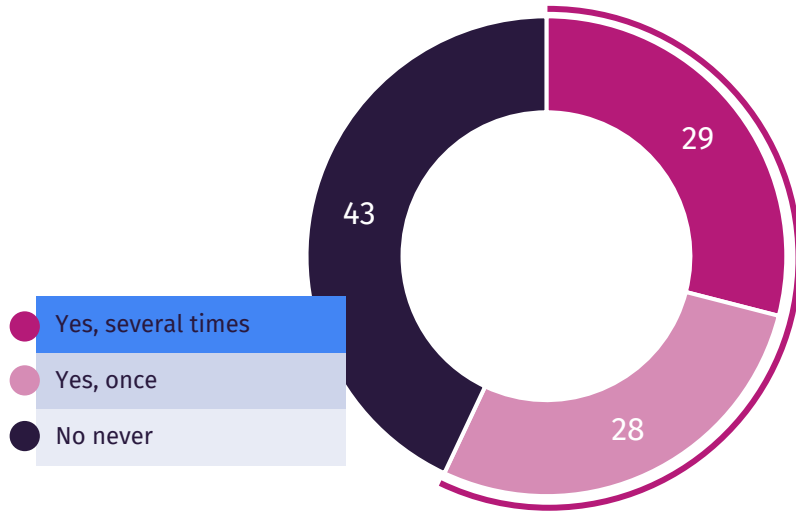


● Yes, several times   
 ● Yes, once   
 ● No, never

# Half of parents recall their child being prescribed with probiotics or prebiotics.

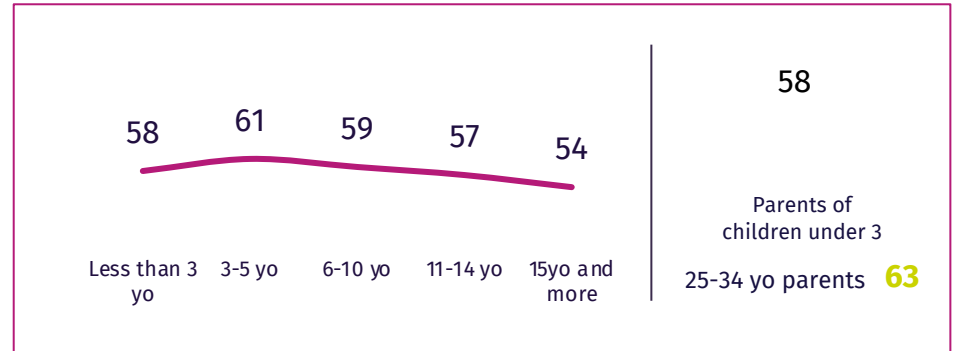
Question 5V4. Has the pediatrician or the doctor monitoring your child's health ever done any of the following? **New question**  
 Base: Parents (n=3000)

## "Prescribe probiotics or prebiotics for your child"



**57%** were prescribed with probiotics or prebiotics for their child

**Global general population: 51% were prescribed with probiotics or prebiotics**



● Significant differences vs total - superior ● Significant differences vs total - inferior

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# GAME CHANGERS

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# THANK YOU