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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG THE ELDERLY COMMUNITY DWELLERS IN A SUBURBAN DISTRICT IN SELANGOR

Zaiton A,^{1,2} Irmi Z,¹ Faezah H ¹

¹Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences UPM

² Institute of Gerontology UPM



Introduction

- Physical activity (PA) is one of the important factors in the active ageing process
(WHO,2002)
- Exercise has been proven to have beneficial effects on both healthy and unwell older persons.
(Young S.L 2003)
- Regular PA reduced the risk of coronary artery disease ,diabetes , hypertension
(Hajiwara A et al 2008)



Objective

- The aim of this study was to evaluate the physically able older person on the types, barriers and their perception in carrying out their physical activities



Methodology

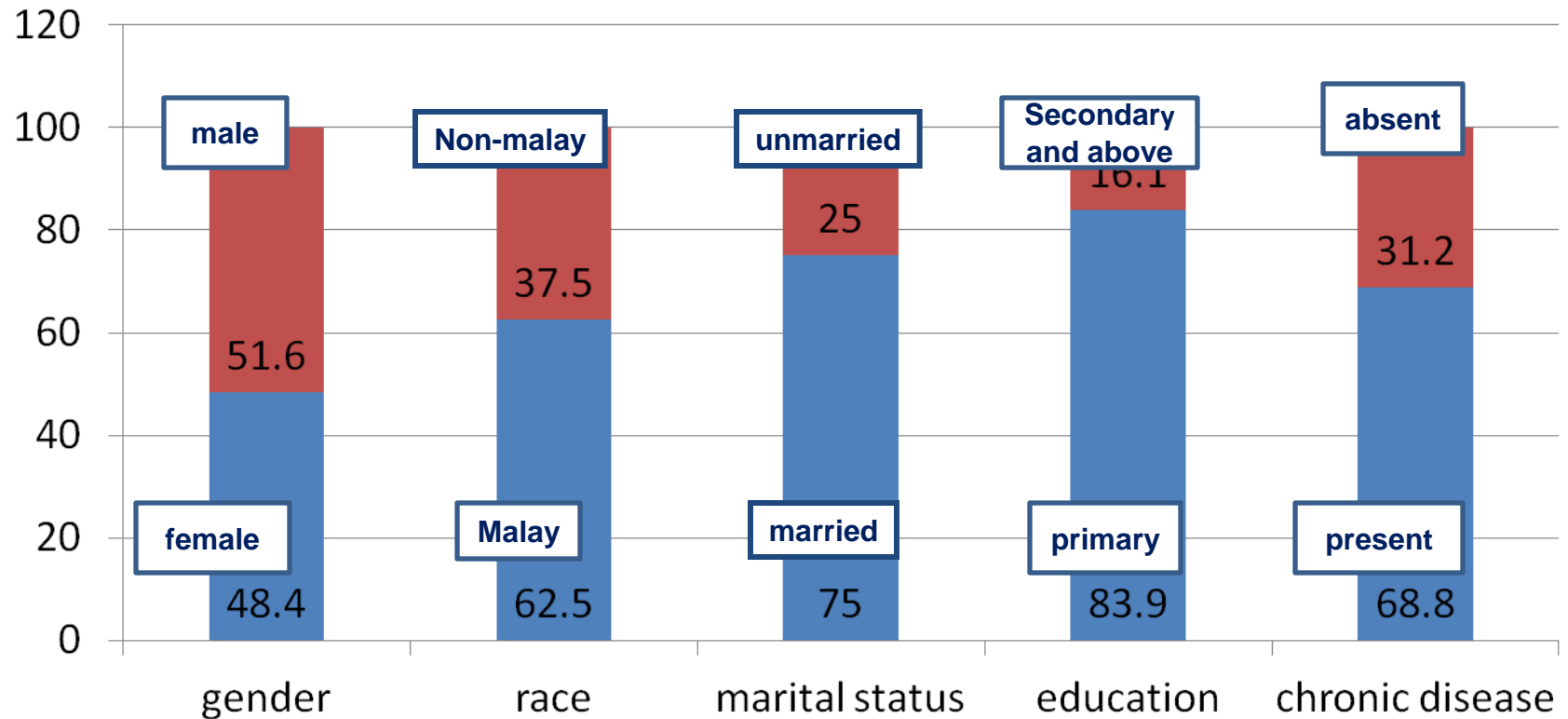
- A survey was conducted among 230 older adults aged 60 years and above
- Six out of eleven villages were included in a sub urban district in Selangor
- Questionnaires consisted of socio-demographic and medical background, types of physical activities (leisure, sports, house work), social support, environment and perception towards PA



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

% of
respondents

Socio-demography



Total respondents=192

Mean age = 67± 0.44 years old

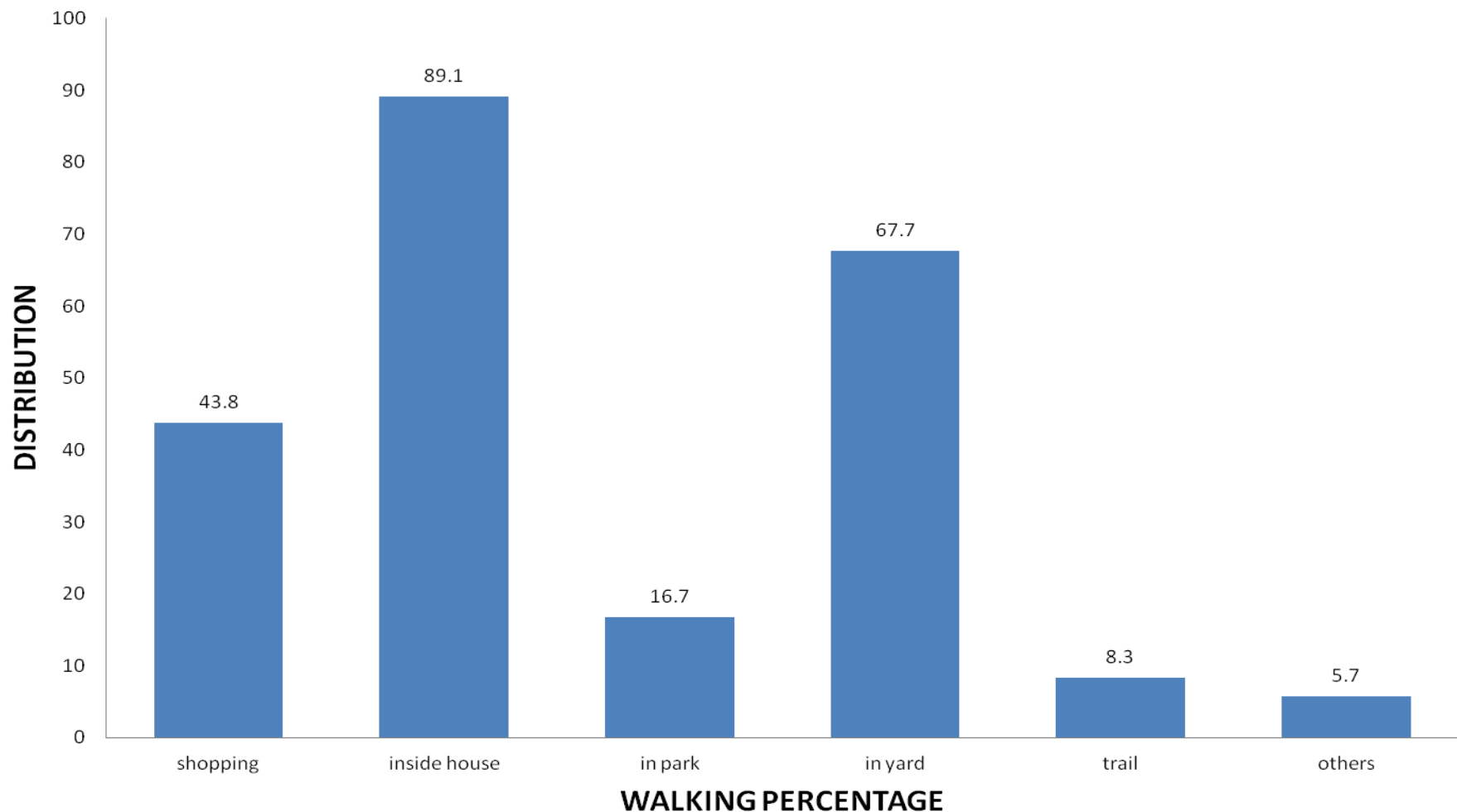
There was no significant relationship between physical activities and socio-demographic factors.



Types of Activity

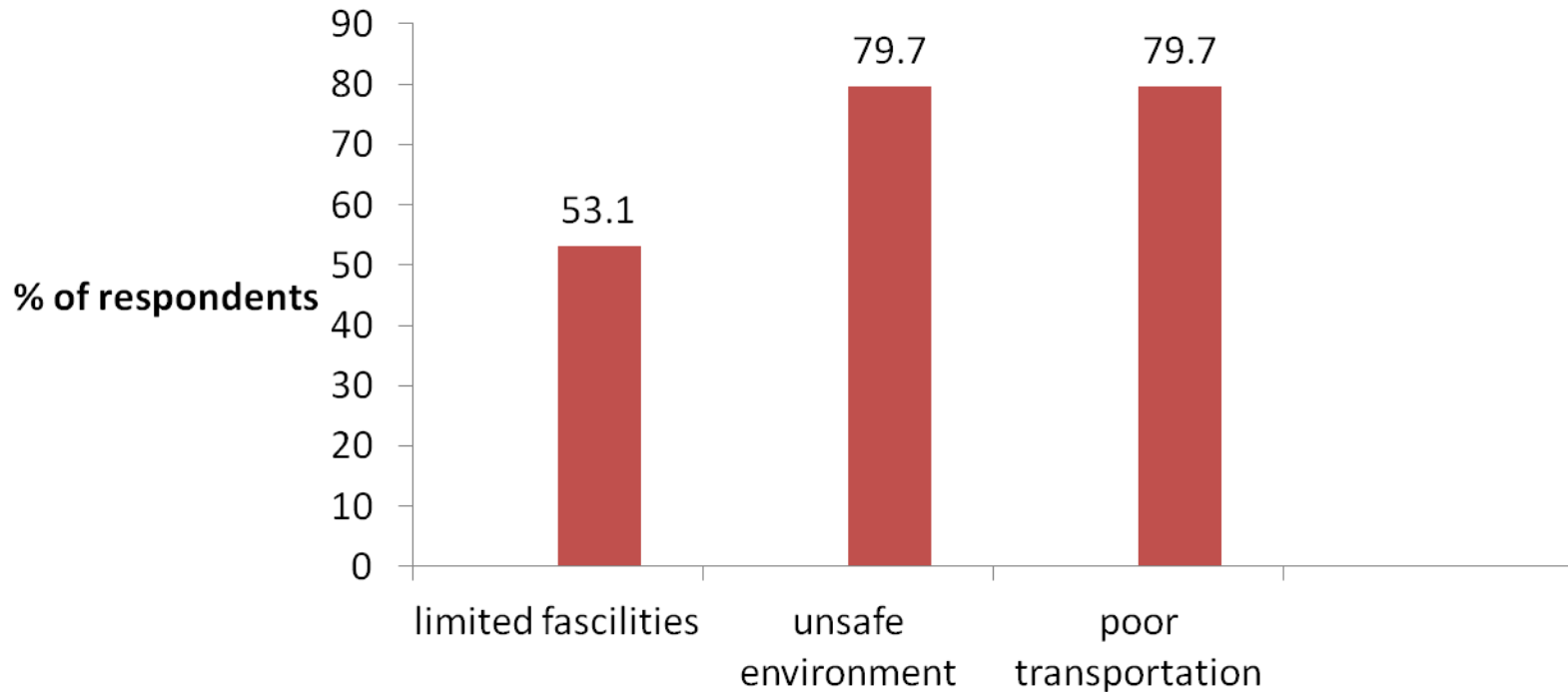
- In leisure activities
Majority of the respondents walked mainly within their houses (89.1%), gardening (58.9%), cycling (15.6%), jogging (13.5%), climbing (16.1%) and weight lifting (9.9%).
- 1 older adult played tennis
- 75% respondents do household activities

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY WALKING



- The main exercise among Malaysian adults was walking (Poh BK, et al Mal J Nutr 2010)
- Low intensity PA and walking was the exercise of choice among the elderly (Akiko H. et al, 2008 ,Wong ML, 1998, Belza B, 2004)

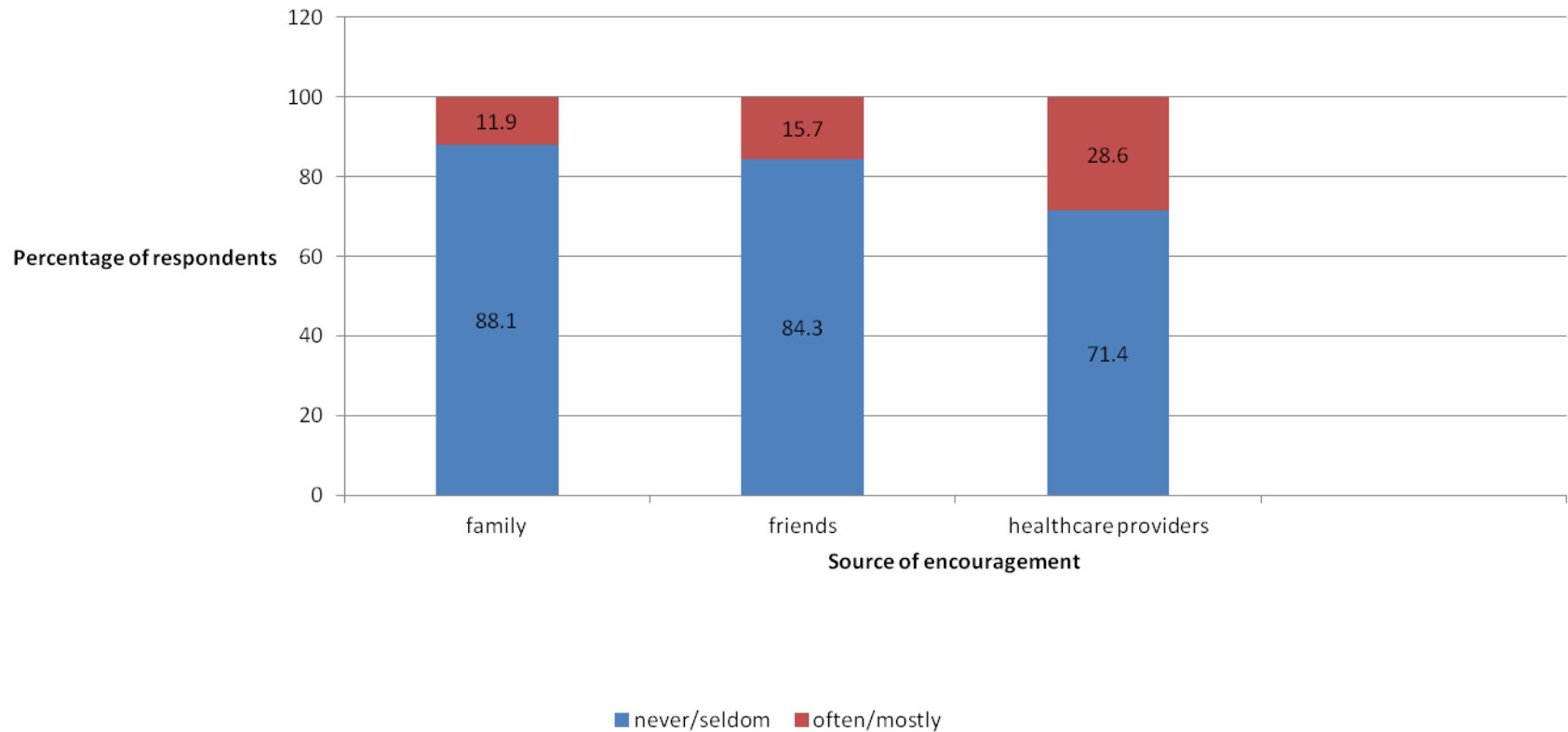
Environmental Barriers to physical activities



Environmental factors that hindered elderly from being physically active included weather; **neighborhood safety; fear of crime**; program costs; and **inadequate availability, frequency, and reliability of affordable transportation** (Eyler AA, 1998, Belza B, 2004).

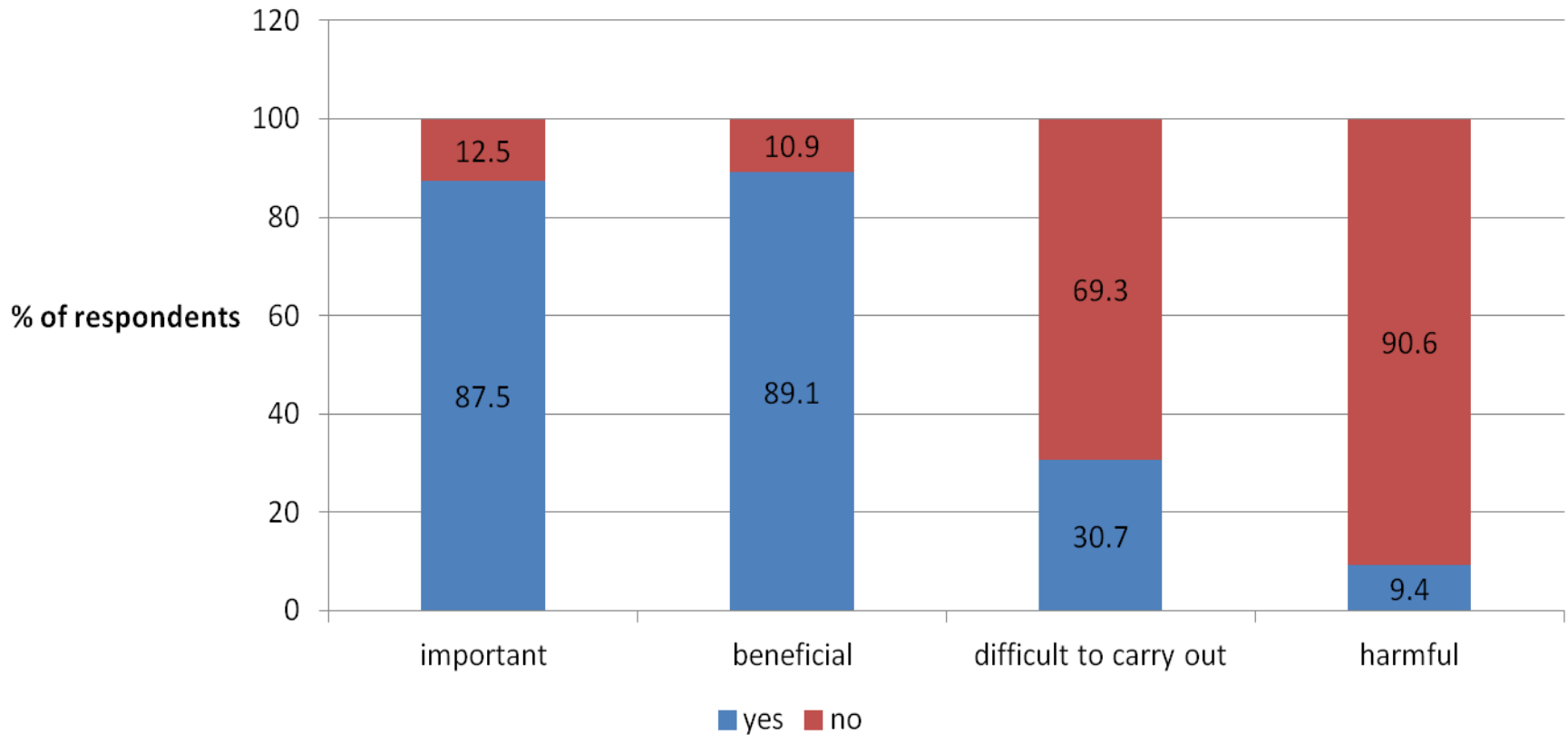
Environmental factors, like safe footpaths for walking and access to local facilities were associated with being active (Booth et al., 2001)

Encouragement on physical exercises



- Lack of motivation and social support were common barriers to PA (*Eyler AA, 1998, Belzar B, 2004*)
- Family encouragement significantly correlate to PA than friends (*Wong ML, 1998*).
- Some of the elderly who live alone have had fewer opportunities to be encouraged by others. (*Y. S. Lee, 2003*)

Perception towards physical activities



Belief about benefits of exercise was positively correlated to PA (*Wong ML, 1998*)
The attitude towards health benefits of PA was associated with physical activity participation. (*Booth et al,2001*)
Conversely, those who were physically active will have good perception about physical activity (*Booth et al,2001*).



Conclusion

- Walking was the most preferred choice of leisure PA
- Unsafe environment and poor transportation were perceived as barriers to PA
- However older adults were perceptive towards PA despite poor encouragement from their families, friends and health care provider
- Hence there is a need for involvement not only from the community and health care agencies but more importantly the support from family members and peers.

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