

Diabetes in Europe – how big is the problem?

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In 2013, 8.5% of all adults in the European region were estimated to have diabetes. Many of these cases are preventable. Without action to prevent diabetes this figure is predicted to reach 10.3% of all adults in the European region by 2035.

Background and aims:

Diabetes mellitus (DM):

- Is a serious and increasing global public health burden
- One of the most common non-communicable diseases (NCDs)
- leading cause of death in many countries
- One of the most challenging health problems of the 21st century.

→ Estimates of the burden of DM are essential to allocate resources appropriately.

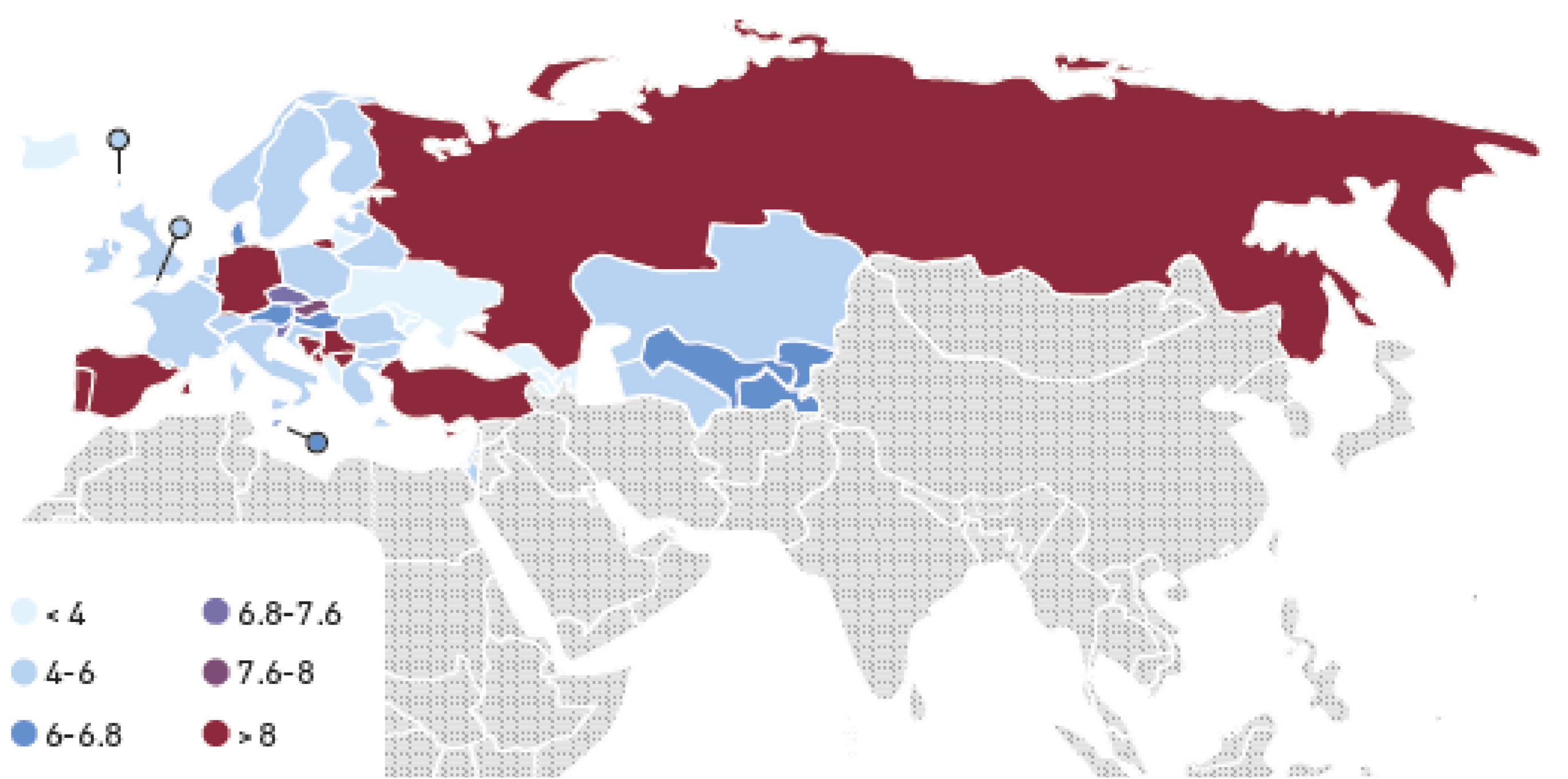


Fig. 1: Comparative prevalence (%) estimates of diabetes (20-79 years) in the European Region, 2013

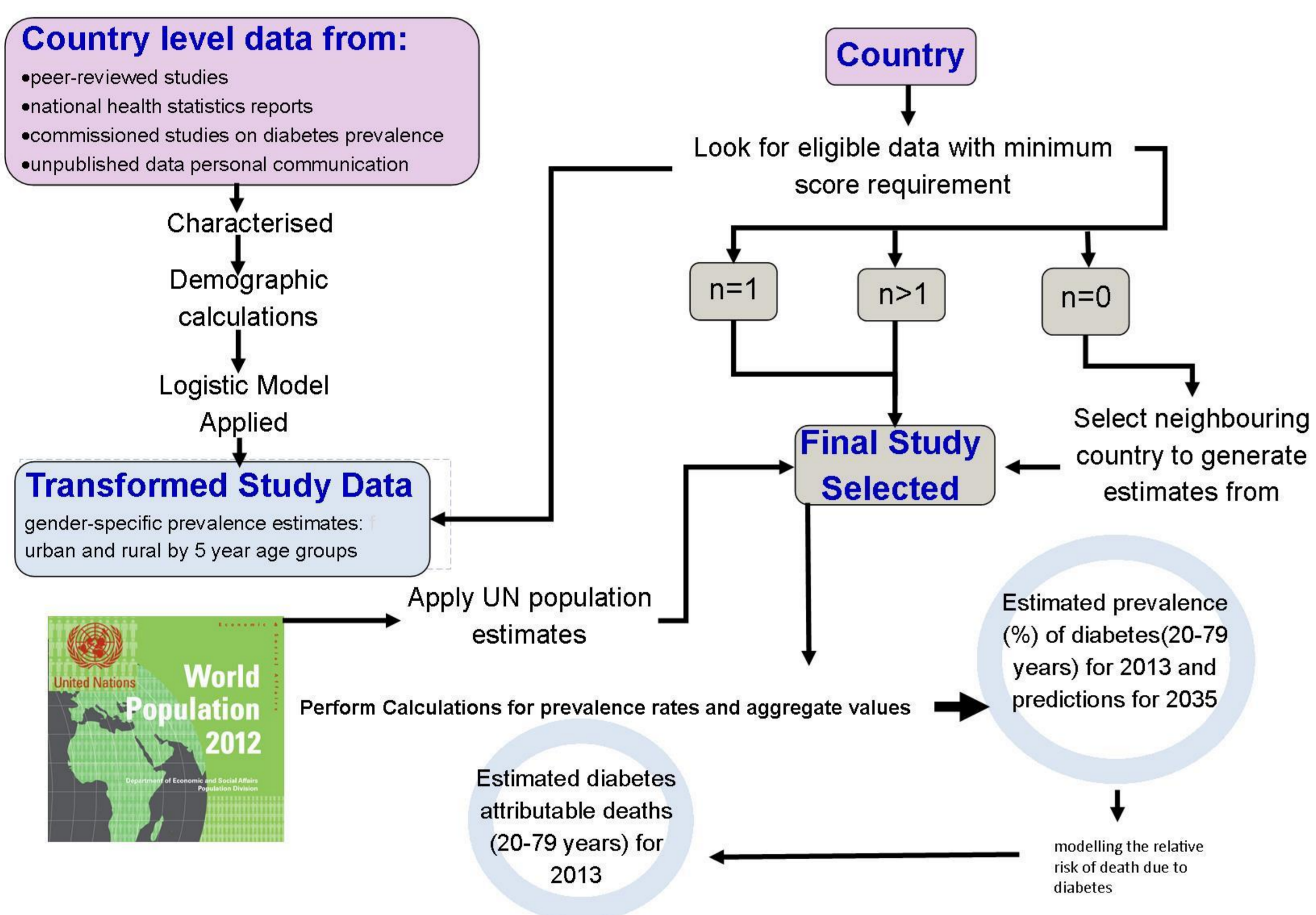


Fig. 2: Flow charts of the Methods used

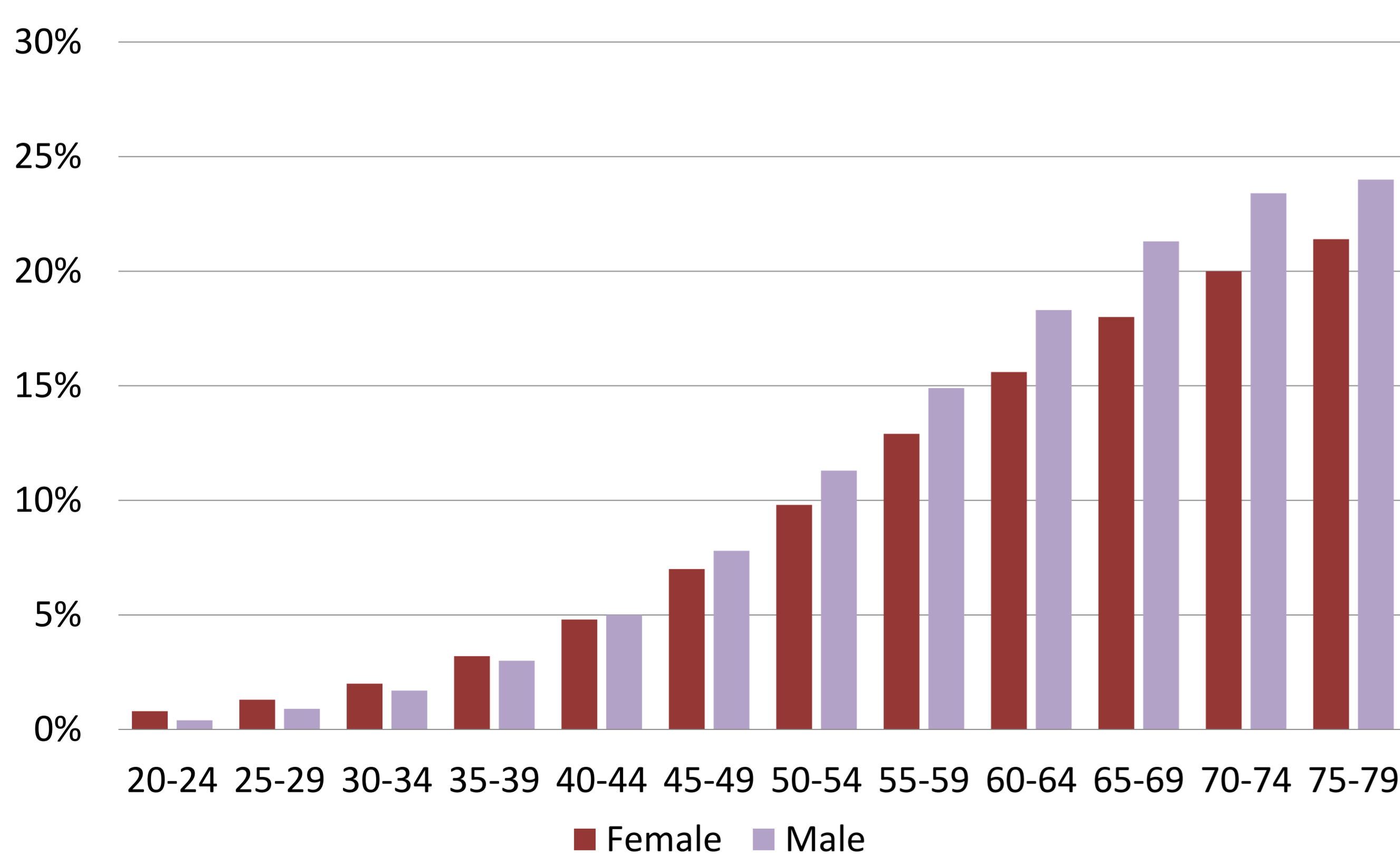
Materials and methods:

- Studies reporting age-specific prevalence of DM
- Highest scoring studies by country were selected for inclusion
- Estimates of undiagnosed diabetes were derived from surveys based on blood tests
- Prevalence estimates were applied to UN population estimates for 2013 and 2035 to determine the prevalence of DM
- Attributable deaths were calculated using the derived prevalence estimates and modelling the relative risk of death due to diabetes.
- Detailed methodology is available in published literature (1,2).

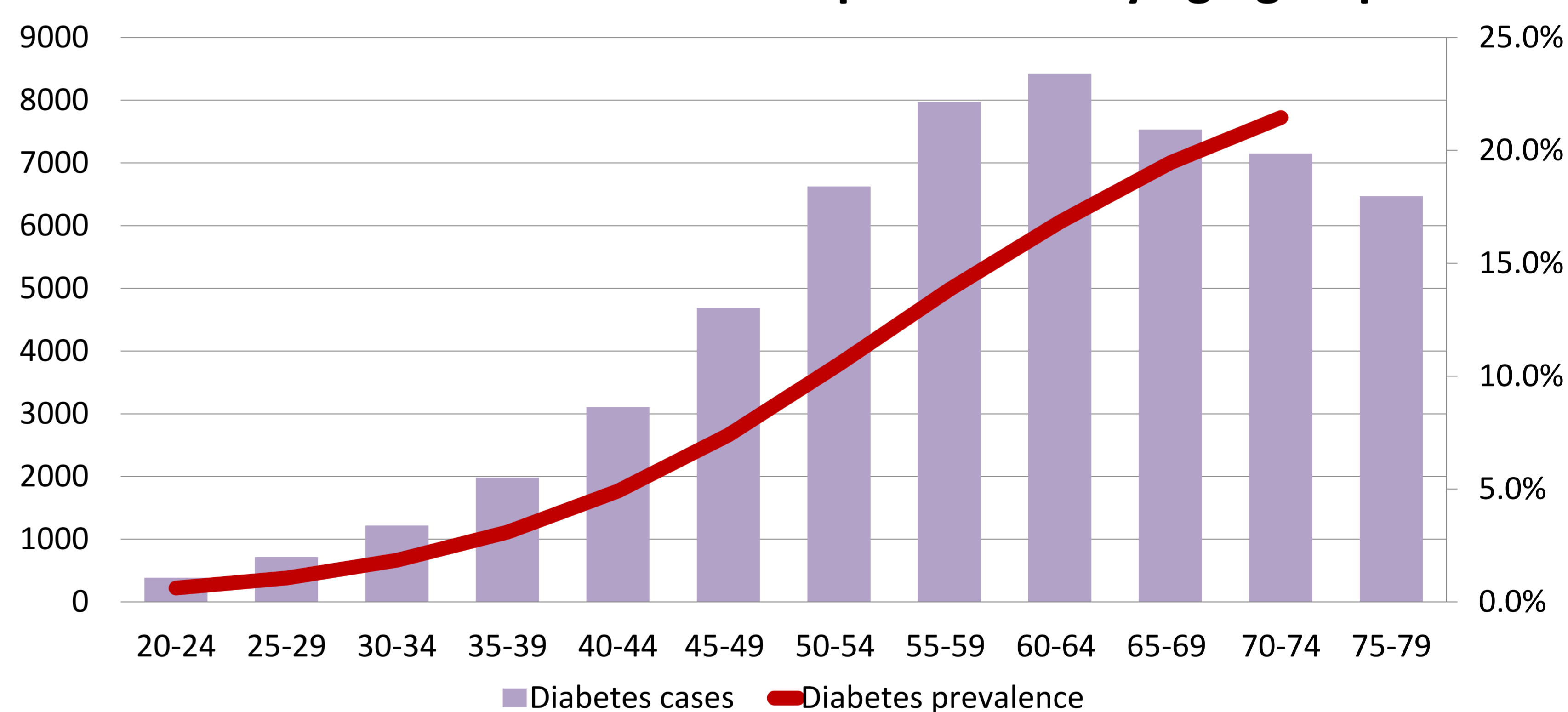
Results:

- 8.5% of adults in Europe have diabetes → a total of 56 million people
- Including 20 million people who are estimated to be undiagnosed
- An estimated 619,000 deaths are attributable to diabetes, equivalent to 1 in 10 deaths in adults
- If no concerted action is taken, the number of adults with diabetes in the European region will increase by 22% to 69 million cases by 2035.

Age- and gender specific prevalence of diabetes



Diabetes cases and diabetes prevalence by age-group



Conclusion: Urgent preventive action is needed to control the rise in diabetes. As the population of Europe is ageing and urbanisation is increasing, an increasing number of people will be at risk of diabetes. Work is needed to implement the Global Action Plan for the prevention and control of NCDs to reduce the burden of these diseases and maximise healthy life expectancy.

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Reference

1. Guariguata L, Whiting D, Weil C, Unwin N. The International Diabetes Federation diabetes atlas methodology for estimating global and national prevalence of diabetes in adults. *Diabetes Res Clin Pract.* 2011 Dec;94(3):322–32.

2. Guariguata L, Whiting DR, Hambleton I, Beagley J, Linnenkamp U, Shaw JE. Global estimates of diabetes prevalence for 2013 and projections for 2035. *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice.* 2014 Feb;103(2):137–49.

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