



HelpAge

International

Country profile:

The rights and wellbeing of older persons in Jordan

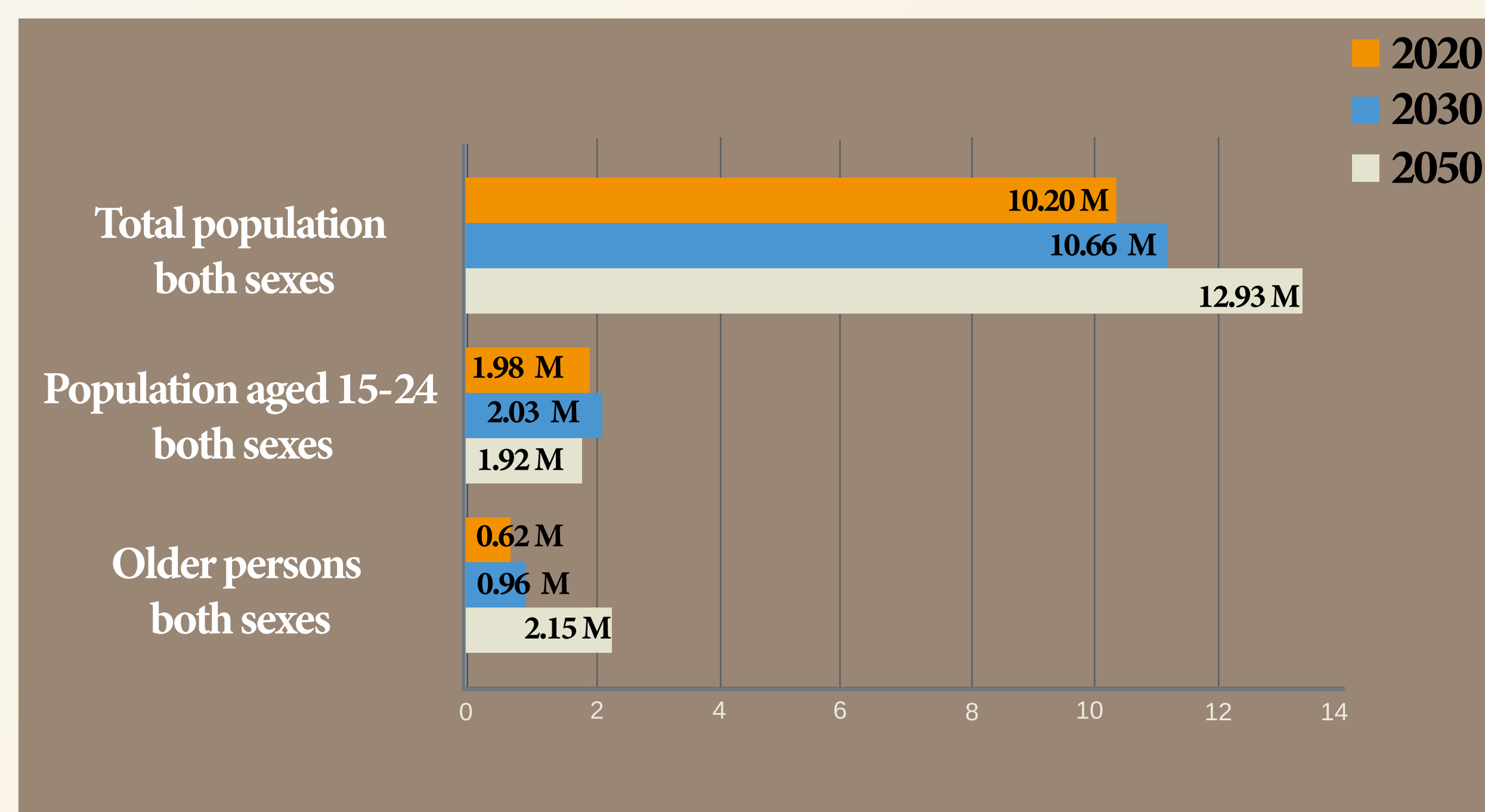
This infographic is part of the set of country profiles on ageing across the Arab region. Drawing on the latest openly available data from 2015 - 2020, it highlights the situation of older women and men¹ in relation to income, health, education, autonomy and safety, and how national systems and national strategies on ageing address their needs and their rights in these areas. These country profiles aim to help examine the progress towards older persons' inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to identify opportunities to strengthen national strategies and data.²



GENERAL CONTEXT

Number and proportion of older and younger persons, 2020 - 2050³

Jordan is going through a demographic transition as the number of persons aged 60+ is expected to more than double between 2020 - 2050 from about 620,000 (6% of the total population) to 2.15 million (16.6%).

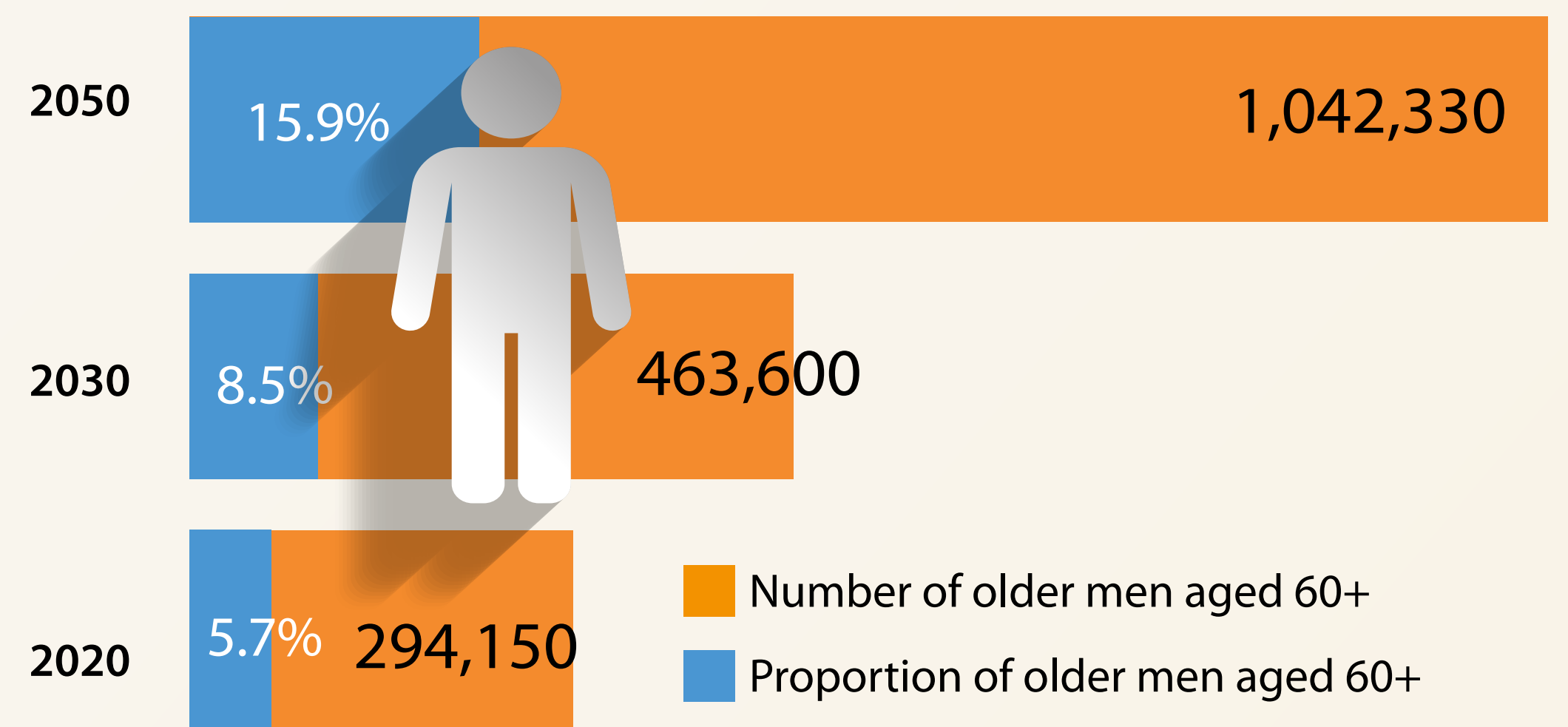
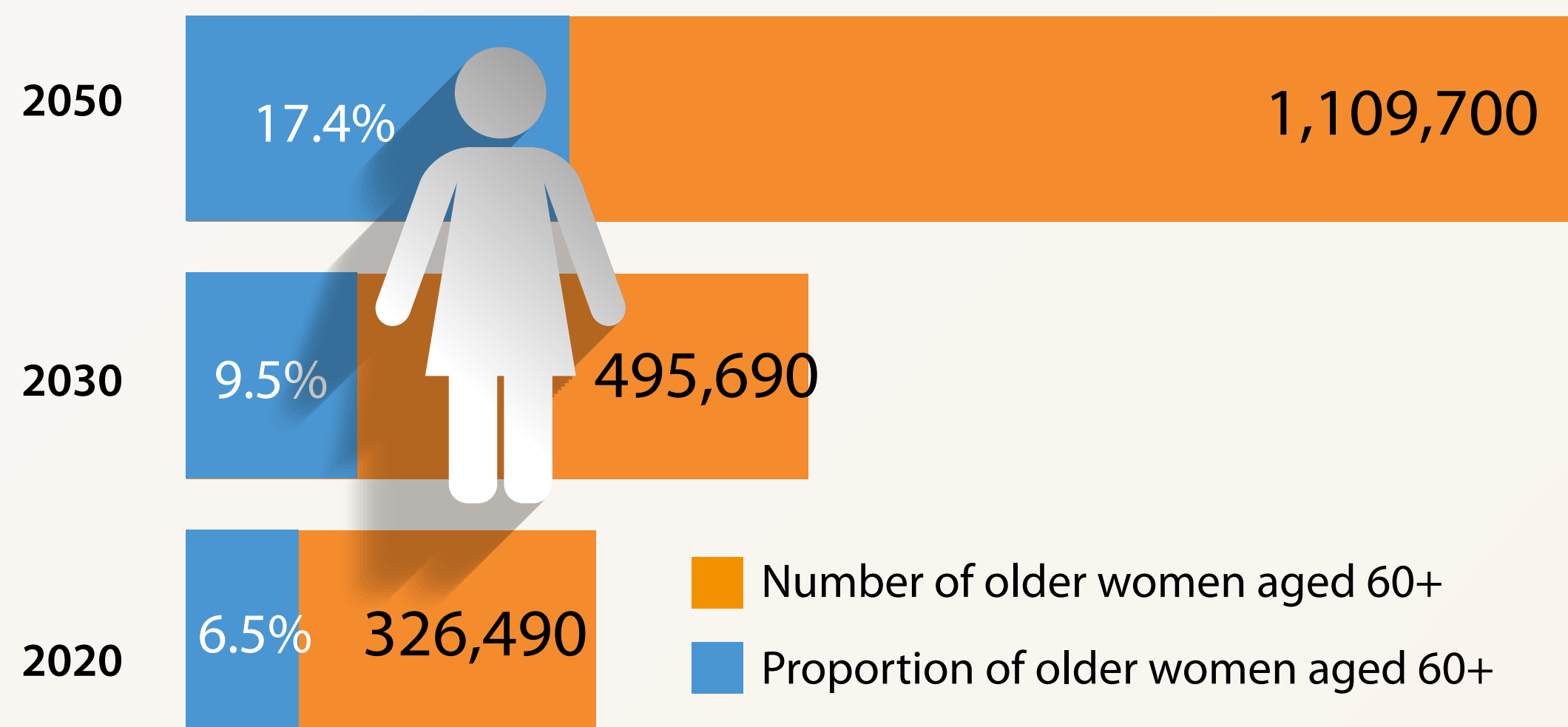
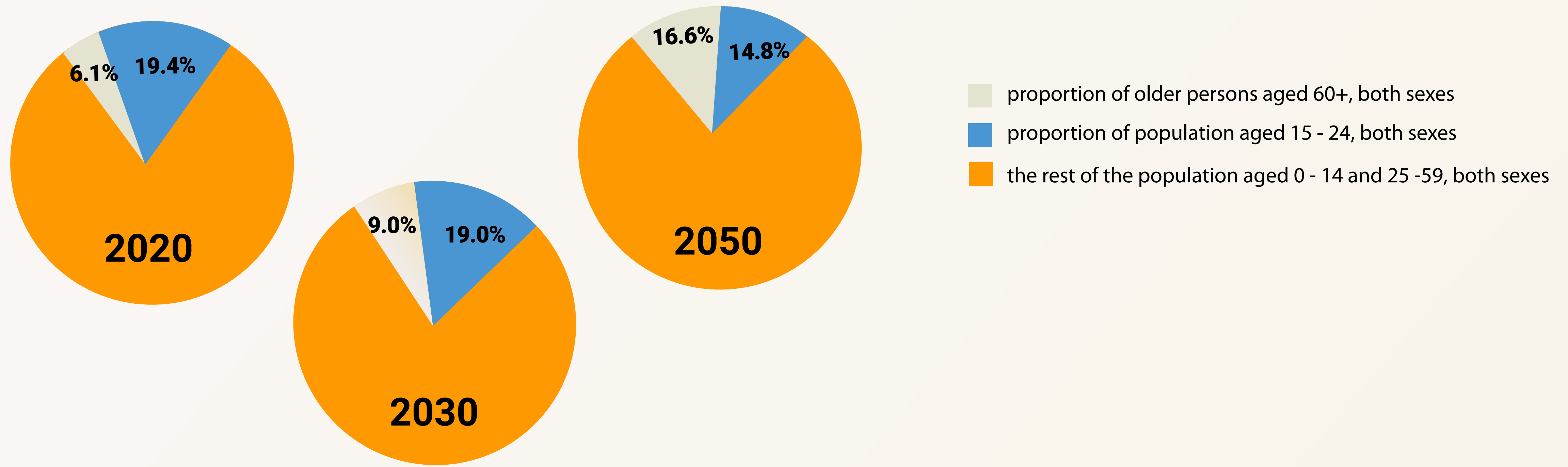


Over the same period, the number of persons aged 15 - 24 will decline by 4.6 percentage points. Jordan hosts refugees and according to the 2015 Census 4.2% of female and 4.1% of male refugees are ages 60+.

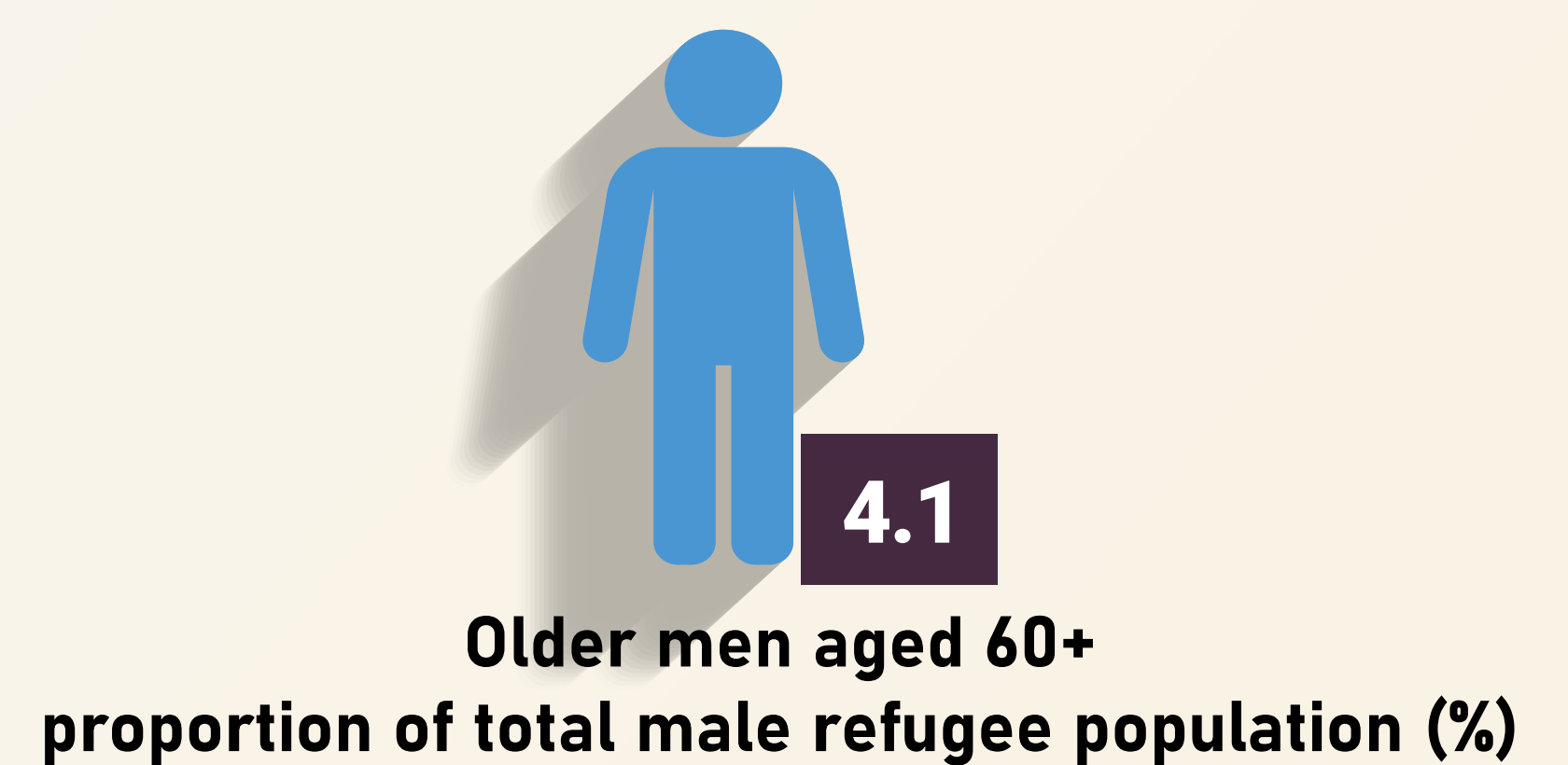
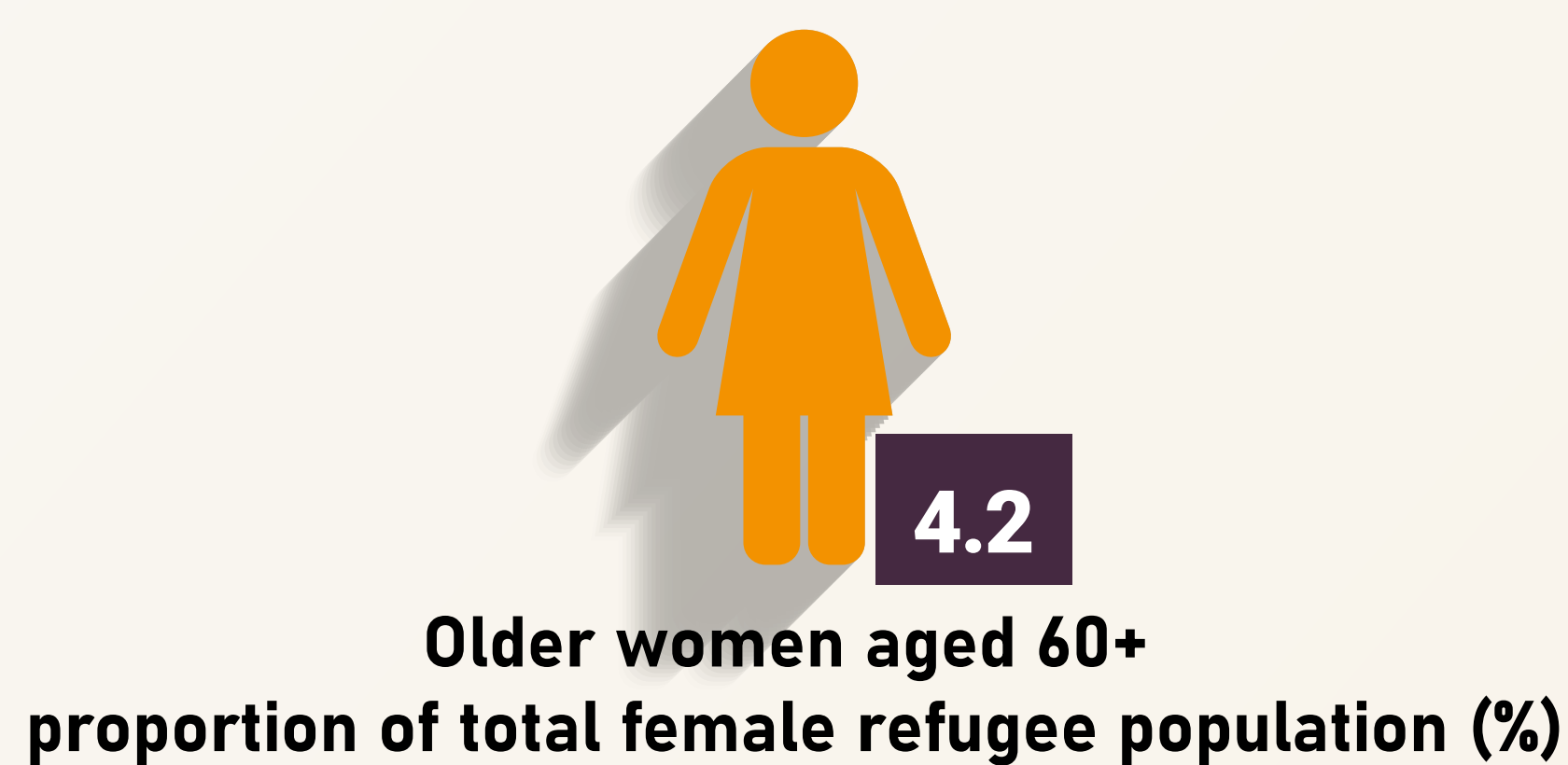
¹ For statistical purposes, 'older person' is defined as an individual aged 60 and over.

² The profiles were prepared by HelpAge International. The profiles do not reflect the views of UNFPA and any errors are attributed to the researchers.

³ Proportion of older women (men) is defined as the percentage of women (men) aged 60 and over of the women (men) of all ages. Throughout the profile some of the indicators are expressed as 'proportion of older persons/women/men'. Such indicators should be interpreted as a percentage of persons/women/men aged 60 and over of the respected population group, unless expressed otherwise. For example, '9.3% of older men have a disability' means that of all men aged 60 and over 9.3 per cent have a disability.



Proportion of older persons refugeesⁱⁱ



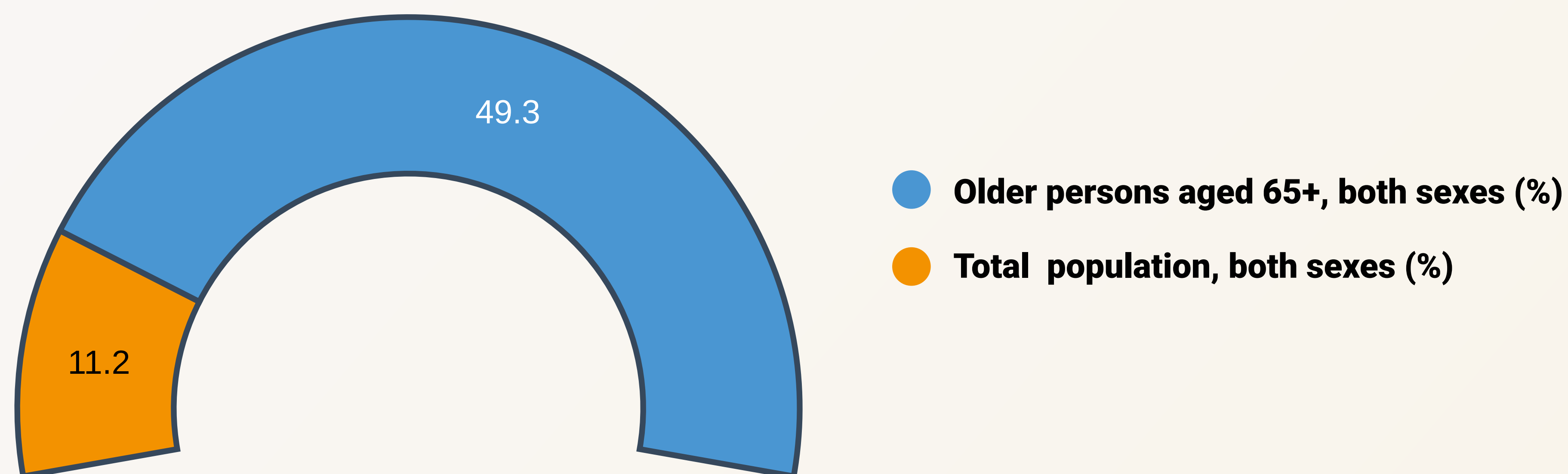
Proportion of older persons with disabilitiesⁱⁱⁱ

Disability rates increase with age as 49.3% of the Jordanian population aged 65+ have a disability compared with 11.2% of the general population. Among Syrian refugees, older women are more likely to have functional difficulties (28%) than older men (16%).

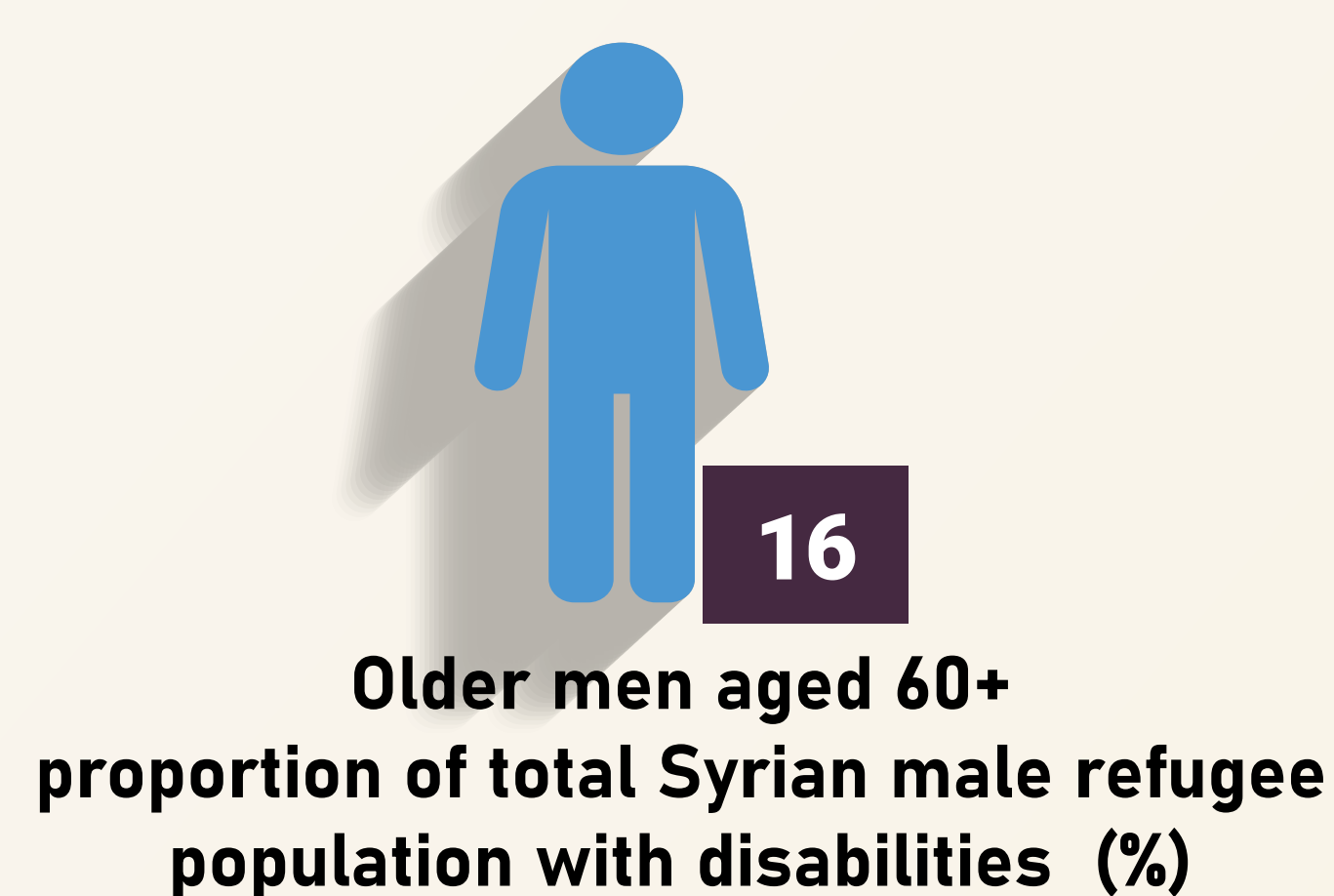
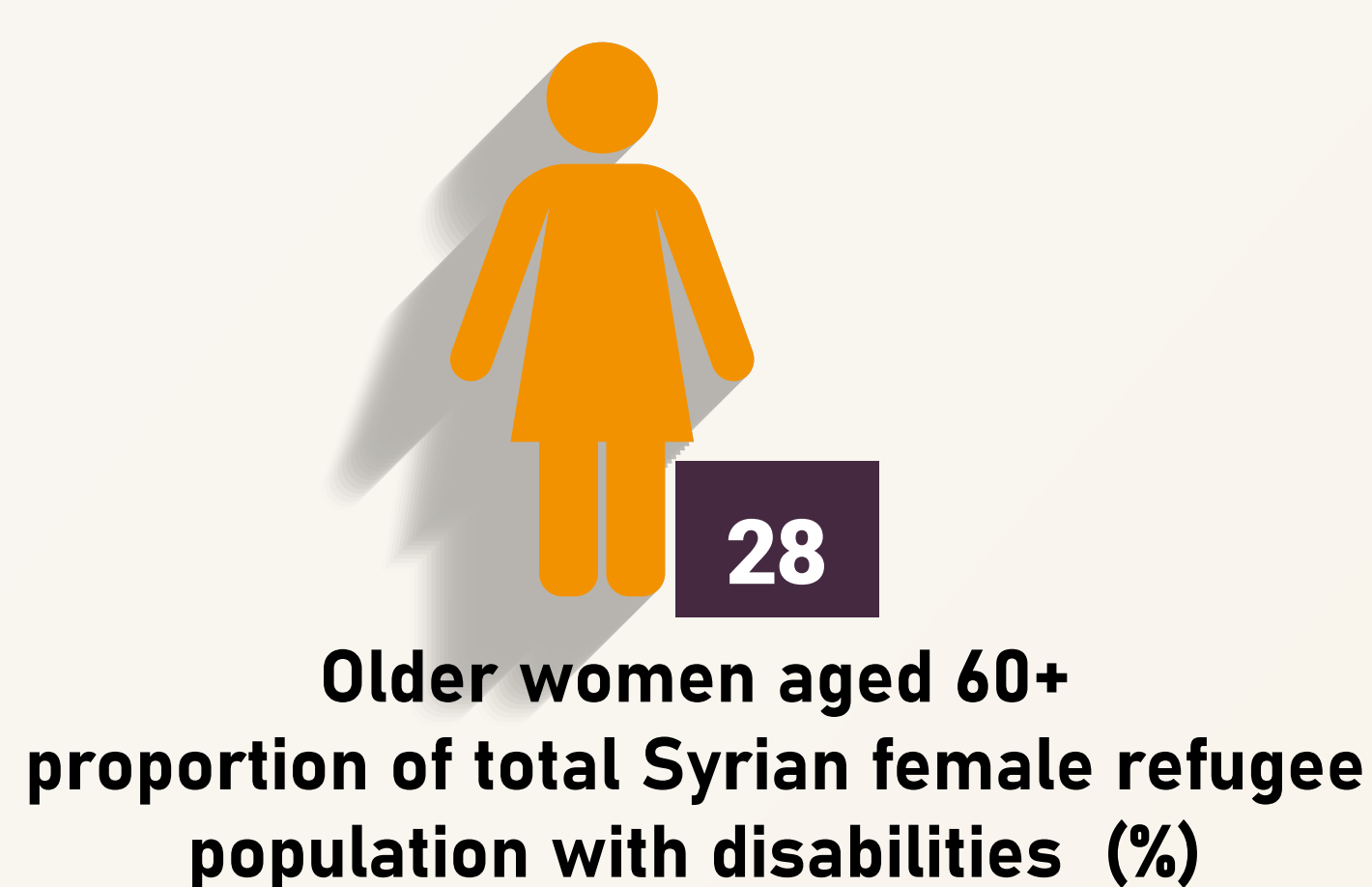
To ensure every person is able to lead an independent and dignified life at any age, and their communities benefit from the demographic dividend⁴, national policies and systems across all sectors must address the wellbeing and rights of individuals across the life course⁵. To assess the policy response, the profile examines the National Strategy for Senior Citizens 2018 - 2022, towards achieving a society for all ages of the National Council for Family Affairs.

⁴ The demographic dividend is the economic growth resulting from the number of persons in employment exceeding the number of persons outside of the labour market. Demographic dividend, <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/topics/demographic-dividend-6>

⁵ Life course approach to policy recognises that individuals' roles, abilities, and needs are shaped by positive and negative experiences, and as we age these experiences accumulate. To mitigate immediate and long-term impacts of disadvantages, policies must consider how intersecting identities and varying forms of discrimination experienced across the life course can lead to individual 'being left behind'. Life course approach to ageing, <https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/life-course-approach-to-ageing/>



Older Syrian refugees with disabilities^{iv}



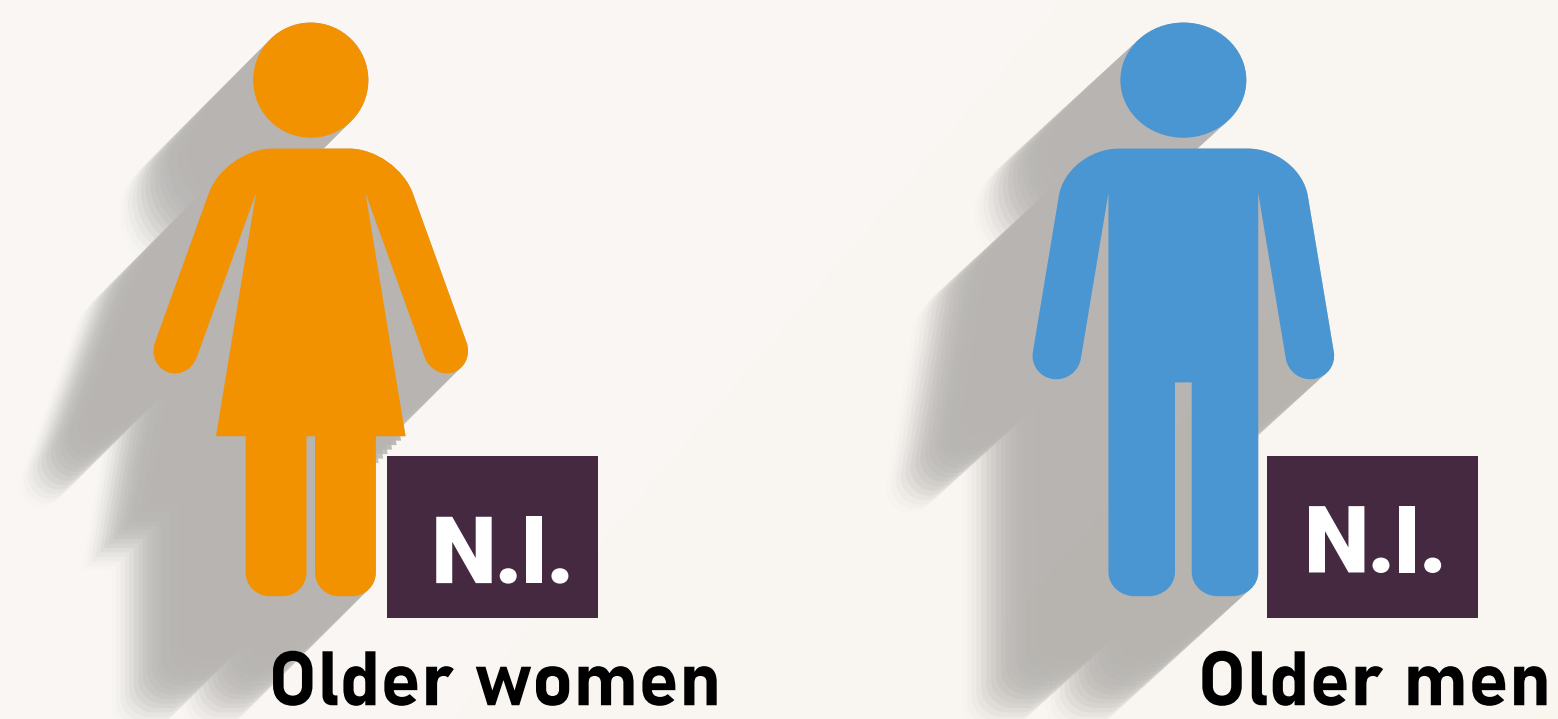
Existence of national strategy on ageing^v **YES**
 Existence of national legislation and enforcement strategy against age-based discrimination **N.I.**⁶

THE RIGHT TO SOCIAL PROTECTION, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND WORK

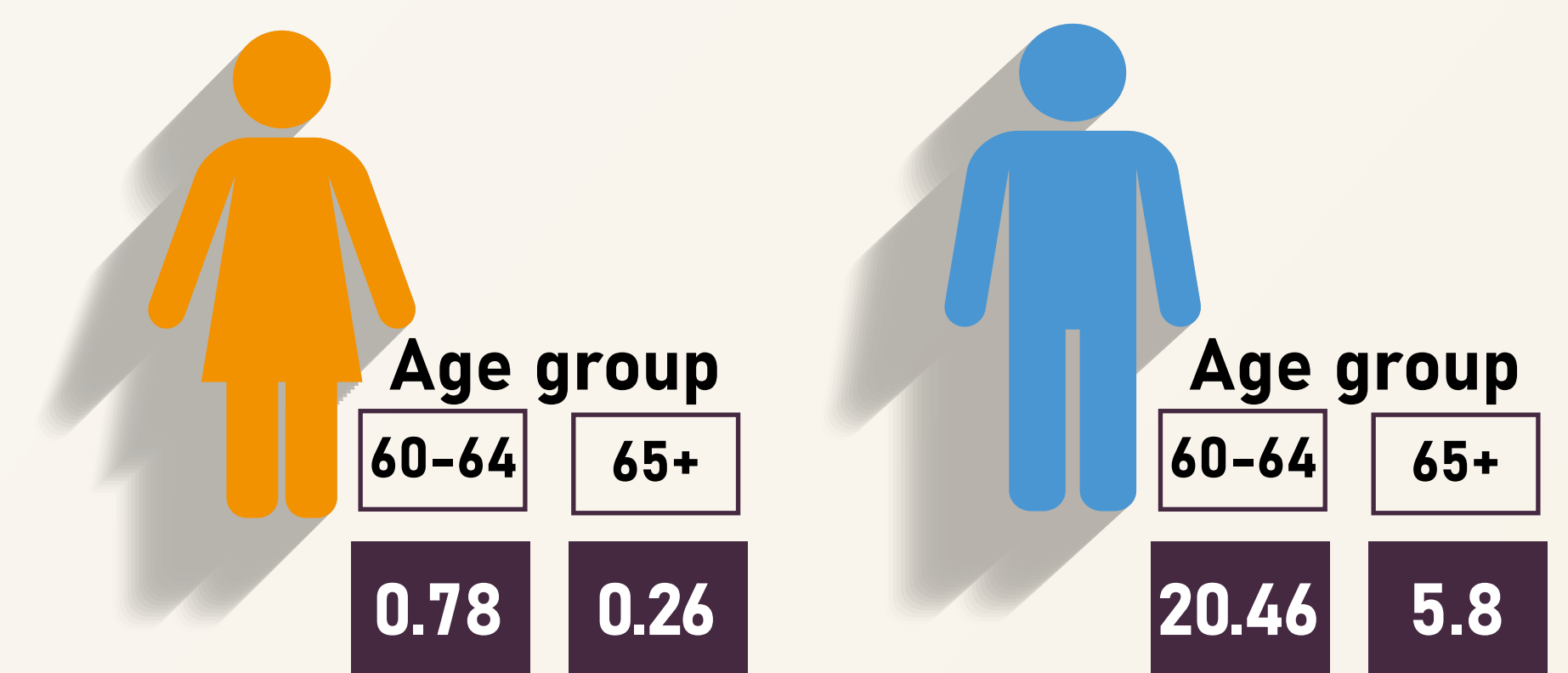
Data on poverty among older persons is not available. Older persons, primarily men, continue to work past the retirement age, as 20.5% of men aged 60 - 64 and 5.8% of men aged 65+ are in employment. The National Strategy on Ageing recognises older persons' right to social protection and a pension so they can lead independent and dignified lives on an equal basis with others. However, only 16.2% of older women and 80.7% of older men receive a pension, and the National Strategy does not acknowledge older persons' right to work when in receipt of a pension.

⁶ n.i. – data or information is not available.

How many older persons live in poverty?

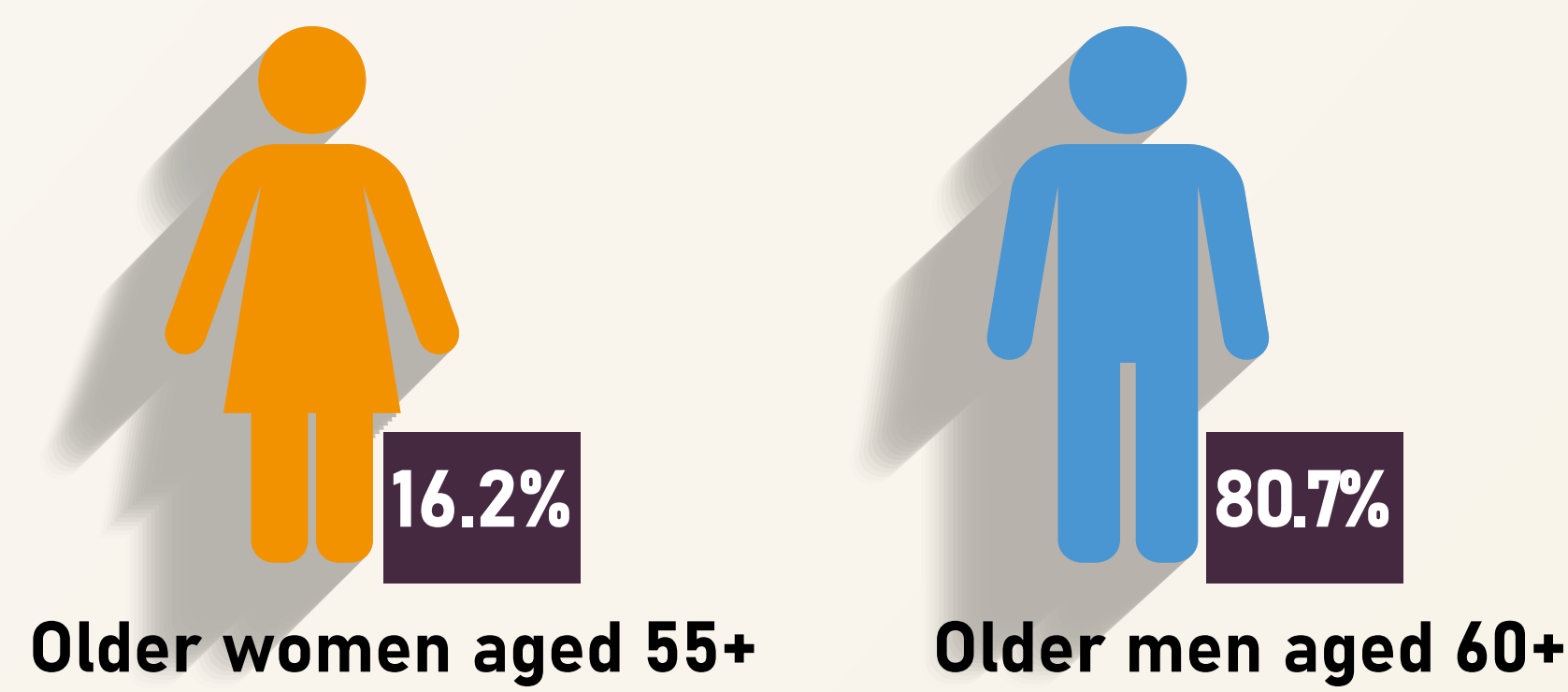


Who works in older age?^{vi}



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

Pension systems provide income security for all older persons^{vii}



National Strategy on ageing addresses:

- Social protection and social security systems which provide universal coverage **YES**
- Social protection and social security measures that are of a high enough value, quantity and quality, and for the full period of life **NO**
- Freedom from discrimination on the basis of age and other grounds in all matters related to employment **NO**
- Right to work when receiving a pension **NO**

THE RIGHT TO AUTONOMY, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Nearly 60% of older persons feel they have control over their lives. 2.8% of older women and men report limited control over their own decisions about finances, health, family life and other aspect of their lives, and 1.4% feel they have no control. This data should be considered with caution due to the small sample size. Additionally, the information was collected pre-pandemic, and according to the recent COVID-19 assessment 12% of Jordanians and refugees aged 60+ reported not being able to cope with or manage their life.^{viii} The National Strategy on Ageing does not address the right of older women and men to autonomy and legal capacity to make decisions over all aspects of their lives.

How much freedom of choice and control do older persons feel they have over their life?^{ix}

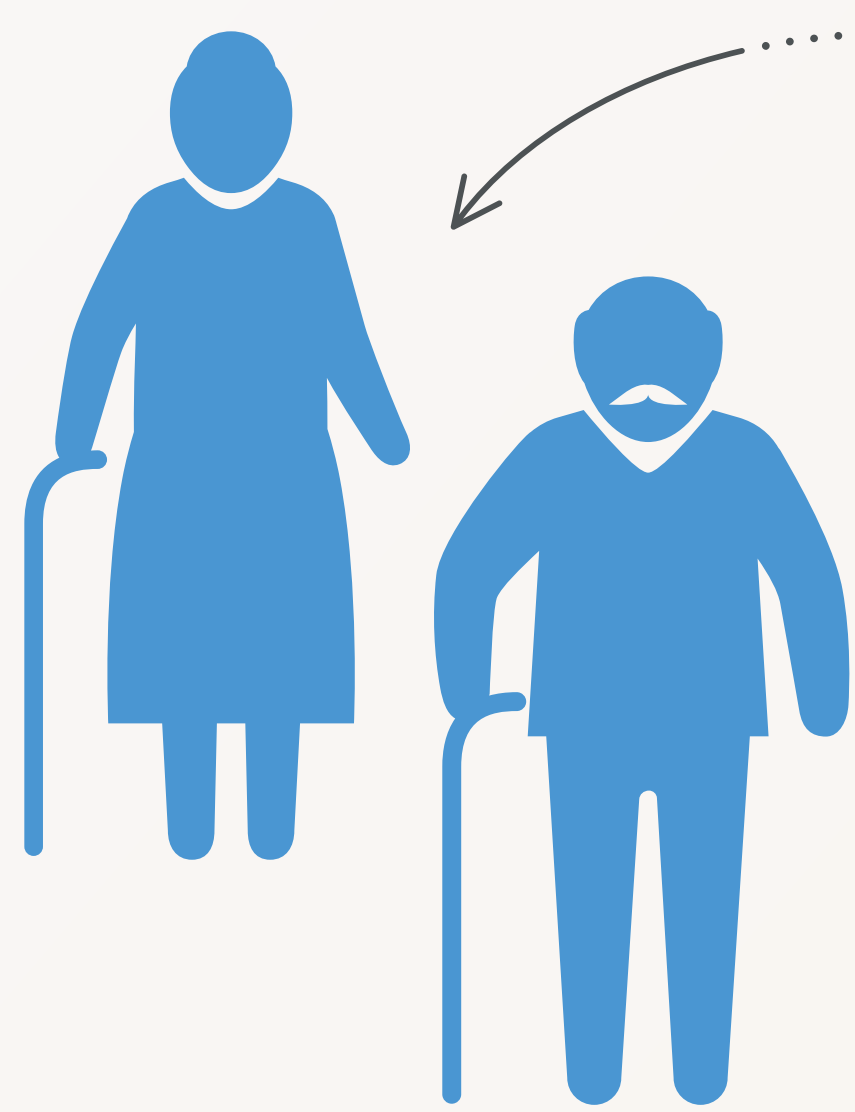
	Older persons, both sexes (%)	Total population aged 16+ (%)
	65+	16+
None at all	1.4	2.5
Limited	2.8	5.9
Moderate	36.4	39.2
High	59.5	52.5

How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

National strategy on ageing addresses:

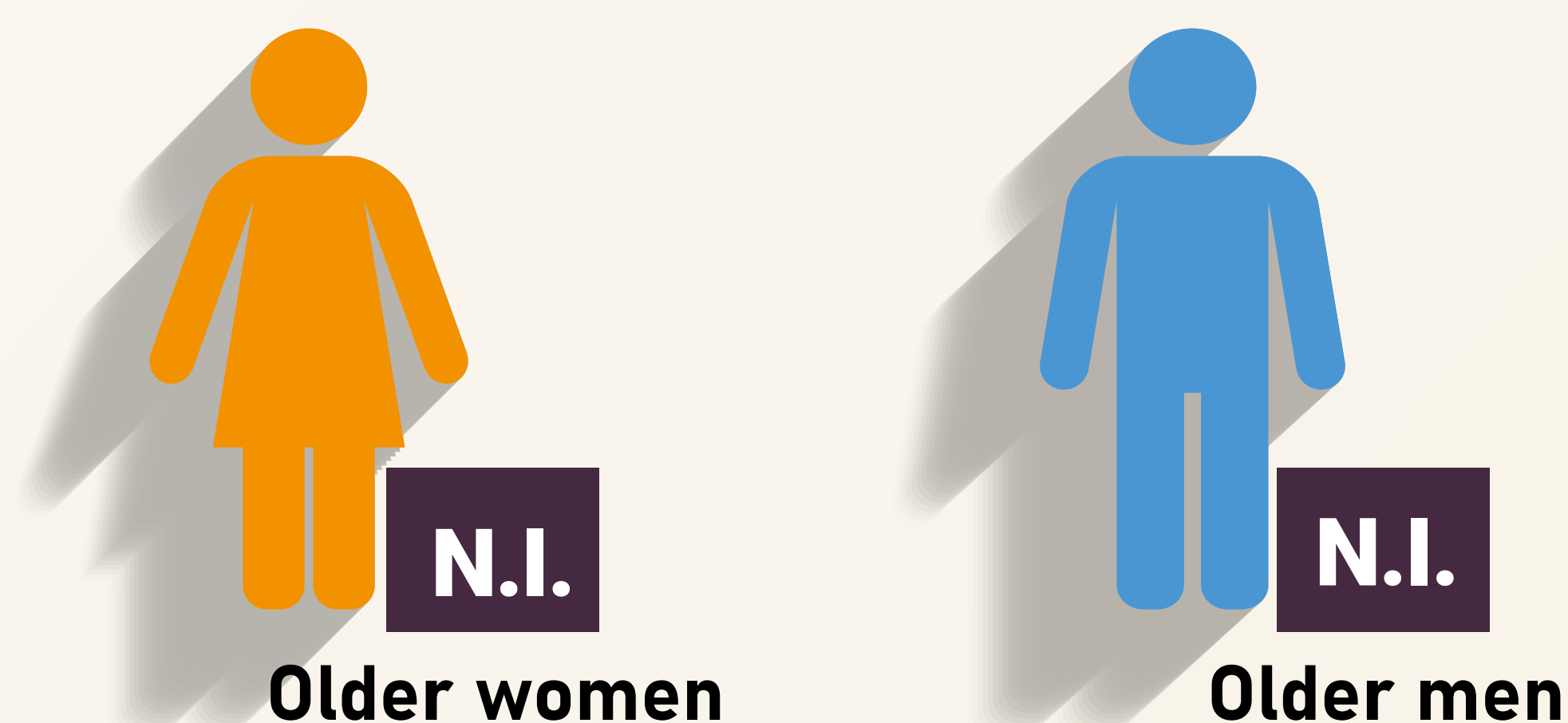
- Older persons' autonomy and independence over all aspects of their lives **NO**
- Enjoyment of legal capacity to make decisions, to determine life plans and to lead autonomous and independent lives **NO**

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND NEGLECT



In 2016, 787 complaints of verbal or physical abuse were made by older persons to the authorities^x. While the National Strategy on Ageing addresses the need for production and dissemination of timely and disaggregated statistics on the topic, data on the prevalence of different types of abuses, e.g. financial, psychological or neglect, as well as experiences of physical and sexual violence by older women and men is not openly available. Jordan Population and Family Health Survey collects some of these statistics however, it only interviews girls and women aged 15 - 49.

How many older persons have experienced violence, abuse or neglect?



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

National strategy on ageing addresses:

- All forms of violence, abuse and neglect in public and private settings **YES**
- Regular collection, analysis, utilisation and public dissemination of disaggregated information and statistics on all forms of violence, abuse and neglect **NO**

THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

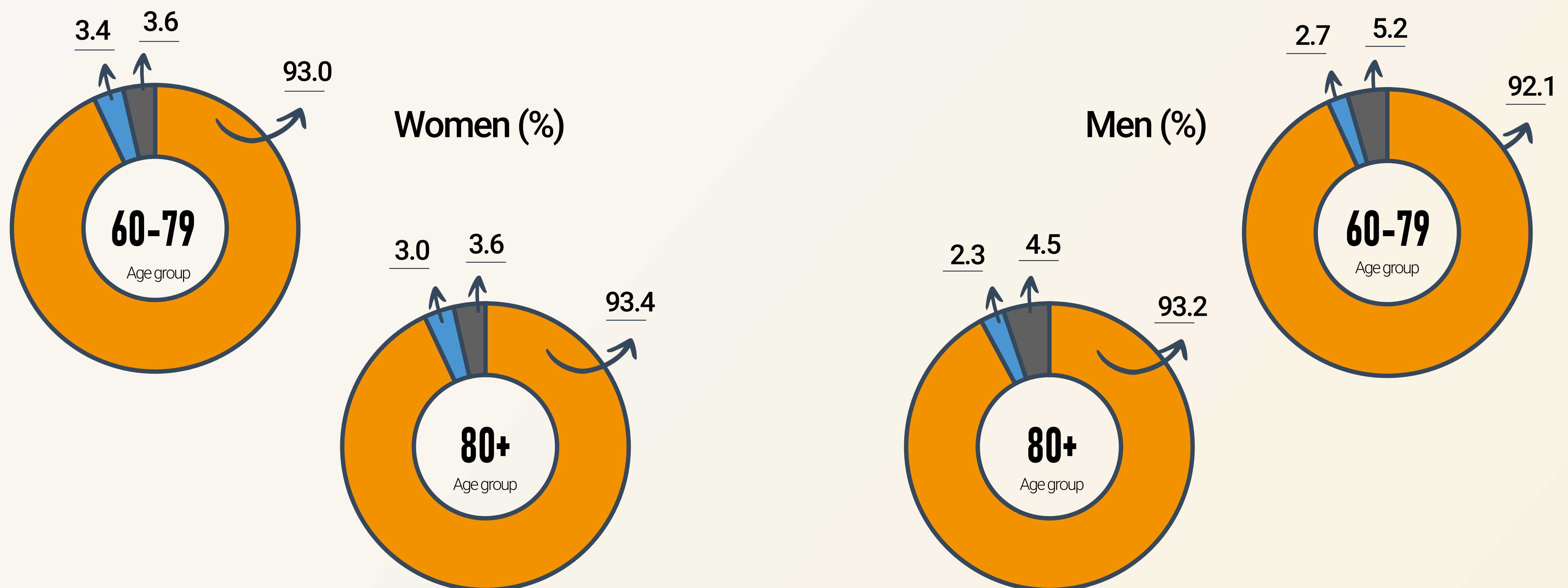
Non-communicable diseases account for more than 90% of years lived with disabilities among older persons. Musculoskeletal disorders, diabetes and kidney diseases, and sense organ diseases are leading causes of disability for both older women and men. 34.6% of older women have diabetes compared with 29.3% of men. Data on hypertension is collected and published however, it was not possible to include it here as the hypertension prevalence is reported for a single age cohort 49 - 69.⁷

In 2016, Jordan started to provide comprehensive health insurance coverage to older citizens aged 80+, extending the coverage to persons aged 60 - 79 in 2018.⁸ However, the exact number of older women and men covered by any type of insurance is not available.

The National Strategy on Ageing addresses continuum of good quality physical, mental and cognitive health services but is missing provisions for integrated health and social care or palliative care.

What are the key causes of disability in older age?^{xi}

● Non-communicable diseases ● Communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases ● Injuries



⁷ Jordan National Stepwise Survey (STEPS) for Noncommunicable Diseases Risk Factors 2019.

⁸ Amended instructions for the inclusion of individual citizens in civil health insurance No. (4) of 2016 <https://bit.ly/3HYssfW> Amended instructions for the inclusion of individual citizens in civil health insurance No. (64) of 2017 (<https://bit.ly/3FVlKoX>)

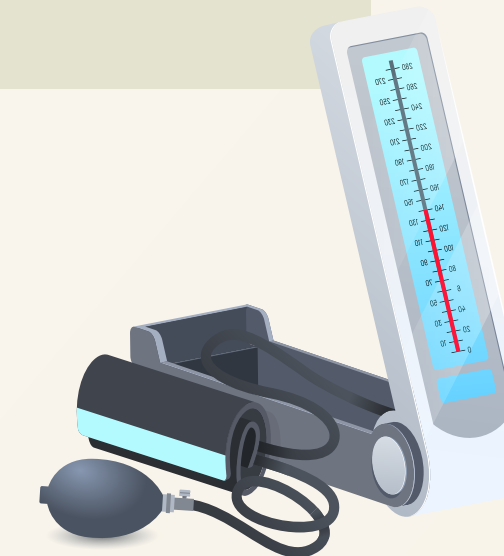
How many older women and men have diabetes?^{xii}

Age group	Women (%)	Men (%)
60+	34.6	29.3
All ages	4.8	4.6



How many older women and men have hypertension?

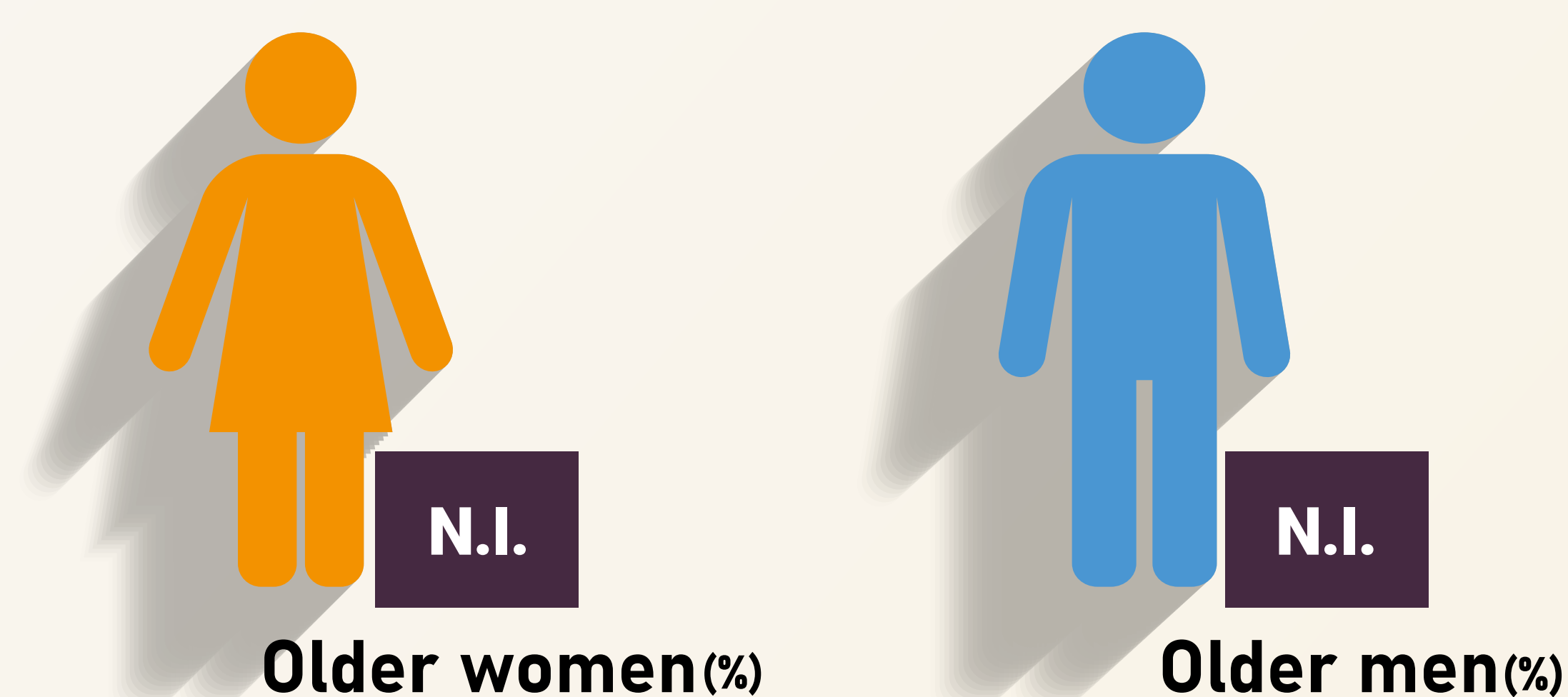
Older women	Older men
- ⁹	-



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

Health protection covers all older persons

Proportion of older persons covered by any type of health insurance.



National Strategy on ageing addresses:

- Continuum of quality and appropriate physical, mental and cognitive health services available and accessible to older persons and which deliver primary, secondary and tertiary health care integrated with care and support, wherever they may reside **Partial (not include integration of health and social care)**
- Holistic palliative care, including access to essential drugs and controlled medicines **NO**

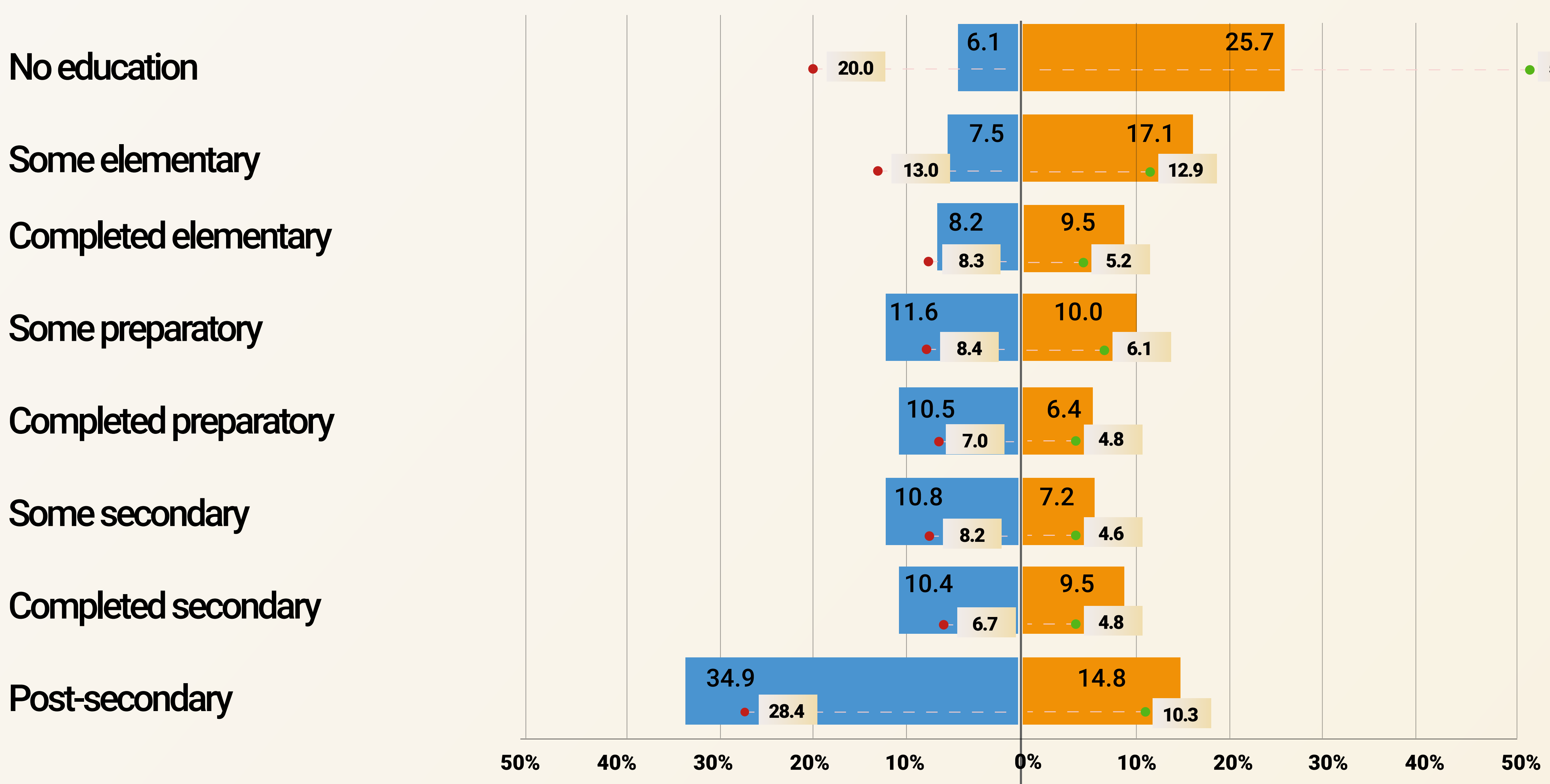
THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The gender and age gaps exist across all levels of education. Older persons aged 65+ have lower educational attainment than a younger cohort aged 60 - 64. More than half of older women aged 65+ are illiterate, compared with 20% of older men of the same age. While the National Strategy on Ageing identifies the need to develop digital skills of older persons, it offers limited considerations for other types of education and lifelong learning opportunities, e.g. self, informal recreational and community-based education, as well as their affordability and accessibility.

How many older persons have an education?^{xiii}

Educational attainment of older persons by the highest level of education completed

- Older men aged 60 - 64 (%)
- Older women aged 60 - 64 (%)
- Older men aged 65+ (%)
- Older women aged 65+ (%)



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

National strategy on ageing addresses:

- All forms of lifelong learning, education and skill building^{xiv}
Partial (limited to digital skills)
- Learning opportunities adapted to the specific needs of older persons
NO
- Lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities that are affordable and financially accessible
NO

The review of statistics published during 2015 - 2021 by the Jordan Department of Statistics (DOS) and Ministry of Health, as well as UN agencies shows that data on older women and men, including refugees, is collected across various socio-economic indicators. However, a number of barriers to better data on ageing limit our understanding of the diverse needs of older women and men, and hinders our ability to monitor progress on their rights.

The most recent open data on health insurance coverage is from the 2015 Census. However, the statistics are not disaggregated by age. Additionally, regular statistical releases such as the Jordan Statistical Yearbook, Jordan in Figures, or DOS Interactive Database include limited disaggregation of socio-economic indicators by age.

There are data gaps on violence, abuse and neglect of older women and men, old-age poverty, and the wellbeing of older persons with disabilities. Partly, this is because some surveys have upper age caps that exclude older persons from samples. For example, the survey on gender-based violence excluded women aged 50 and older, while the survey on NCDs excluded women and men aged 70 and older.

In addition to concerted efforts to close data gaps, remove age caps, and provide consistent analysis and reporting of data by age, sex, and disability, there is a need for a specialised survey to build more in-depth and comprehensive evidence on ageing and the situation of older persons.

NOTES

- i United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition. Rev. 1. Excel files used: Population by broad age groups – male, population by broad age groups – female, percentage by broad age groups – male, percentage by broad age groups – female. <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/> Accessed 6 November 2021
- ii Author calculations based on the Jordan Department of Statistics, 2015, Population and housing census 2015, Table 7.5 Distribution of refugees in Jordan by age group, sex and governorate. http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/population/census2015/Refugees/Refugees_7.5.pdf
- iii Jordan Department of Statistics, 2015, The reality of disability. “Functional difficulties” in Jordan, based on the data of the general population and housing census 2015. Table 2.5 Percentage of prevalence of disability (functional difficulties) among Jordanian population aged 5 and above by age group and type of disability (difficulty), 2015. http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_e/main/population/census2015/Disability%202021.pdf
- iv Tiltnes, A. A. et. al., 2019, The living conditions of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Results from the 2017 - 2018 survey of Syrian refugees inside and outside camps. Table 35 Age distribution of Syrian refugees aged five and above who report ‘a lot of difficulty’ in at least one functional domain. By gender. Percentage. http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Analytical_Reports/English/Syrian_refugees.pdf
- v The profile covers information in the National Strategy for Senior Citizens 2018 - 2022, towards a society for all ages of the National Council for Family Affairs presented in HelpAge International and UNFPA , 2020, The rights of older persons: a review of national ageing strategies in the Arab region. <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/publications/rights-older-persons>
- vi ILOSTAT explorer, Employment-to-population ratio by sex and age (%), 2019. <https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer52/> Accessed 1 June 2021
- vii UNDESA, the Global SDG Indicators Database, SDG 1.3.1, Proportion of population above statutory pensionable age receiving a pension, by sex (%), 2019. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/> Accessed 10 May 2021
- viii HelpAge International, 2020, COVID-19 Rapid Needs Assessment – Jordan. <https://www.helpage.org/download/5f21a33151eef>
- ix World Values Survey wave 7, 2018. Question 48. Percentage of respondents who rated their freedom of choice and control over their life on the scale 1 - 10, where 1 means “none at all” and 10 means “a great deal”. Authors grouped scores into the following categories: ‘Not at all’ – 1; ‘Limited’ – 2, 3, 4; ‘Moderate’ – 5, 6, 7; ‘High’ – 8, 9, 10. Number of persons aged 65+ surveyed: 143. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp> Accessed 06 November 2021
- x National Council for Family Affairs, 2017, Realities of older people in Jordan. Analytical comparative study. Table 19 Number of complaints by older people, p.58. <https://bit.ly/3JE01UK>
- xi Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 (GBD 2019) Results. Seattle, United States: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 2020. Years lived with disabilities 2019. Available from <http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool> Accessed 6 November 2021

- xii Department of Statistics (DOS) and ICF. 2019. Jordan Population and Family and Health Survey 2017 - 18. Amman, Jordan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: DOS and ICF. Table 2.5
- xiii Department of Statistics (DOS) and ICF. 2019. Jordan Population and Family and Health Survey 2017 - 18. Amman, Jordan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: DOS and ICF. Tables 2.12.1 and 2.12.2
- xiv This includes tertiary education, vocational training, digital and new technology-based education, adult education, self, informal recreational and community-based education, lifelong learning programmes, legal literacy, and skills training in literacy, numeracy and technological competences. HelpAge International and UNFPA (2020)

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