

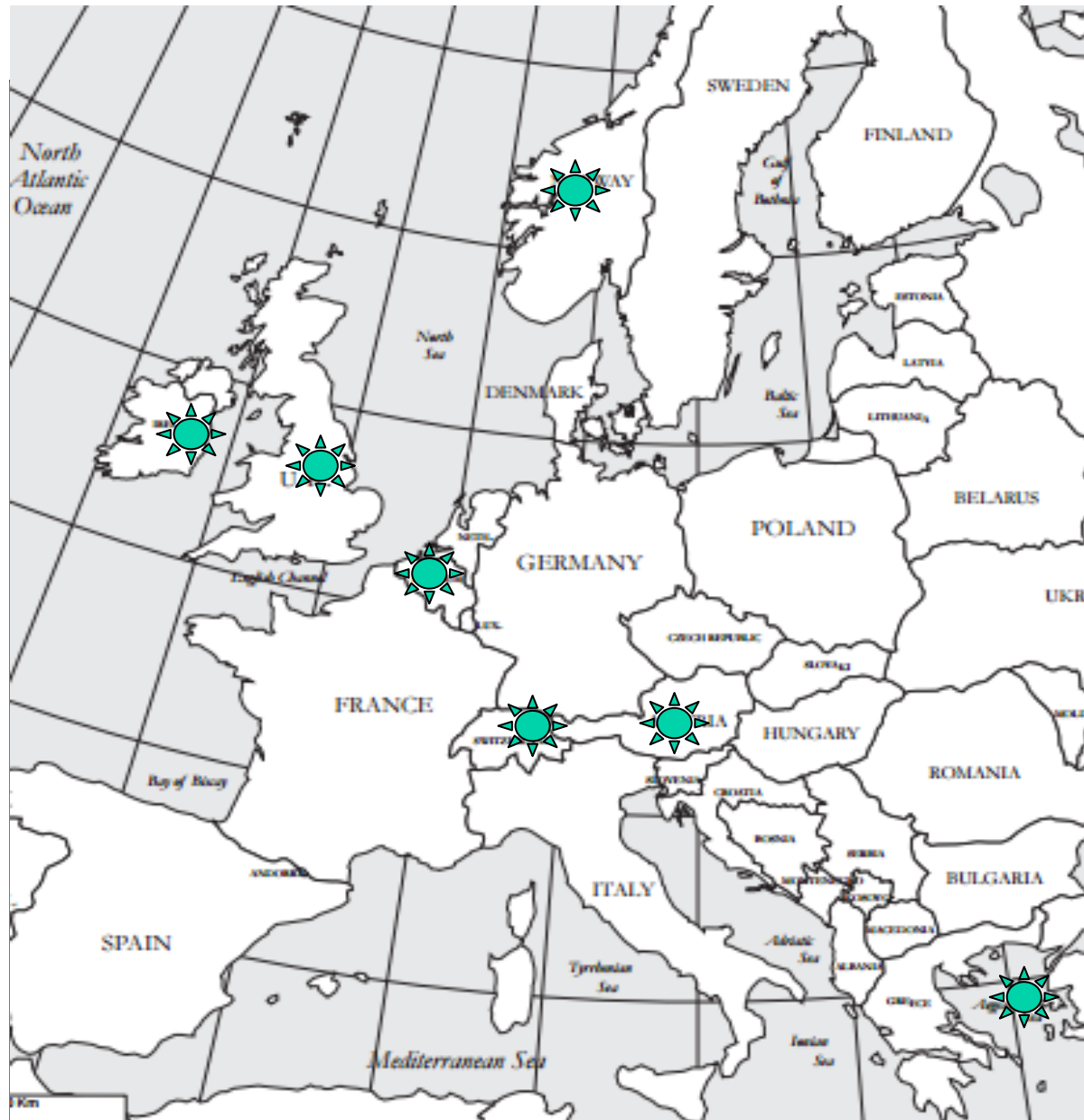


# **Factors Associated with Anxiety About Aging in Midlife Women: A Cross- Cultural Perspective**



## Task Group 8: Appearance in Midlife



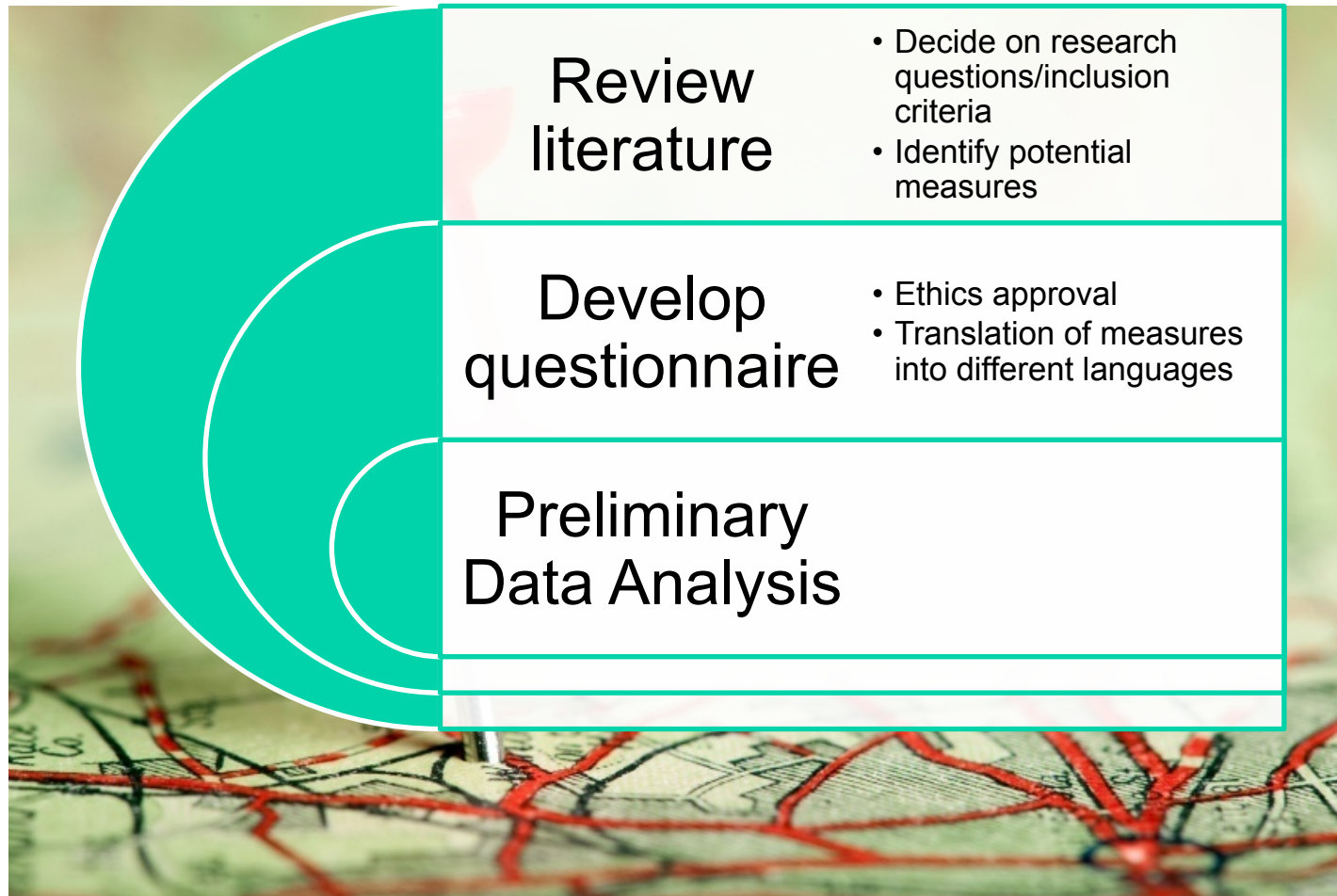


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# The Process....







## Background

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- Appearance changes in the female aging process have been equated with a decline in physical attractiveness in Western societies (Saucier, 2004).





## Background

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- Women continue to feel pressure to attend to their appearance as they age (Bedford & Johnson, 2005)
- Evidence suggests that women increase their appearance related efforts to counteract the effects of physical aging (Baker & Gringart, 2009)
  - Dyeing their hair
  - Diet and exercise
  - Purchasing surgical and non surgical procedures



## Background

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- **ANXIETY ABOUT AGING:** concern and anticipation of undesirable physical, mental and personal losses over the course of the aging process (Lasher & Faulkender, 1993)
- Anxiety about age-related changes linked to **BODY DISSATISFACTION** in middle aged women (Lewis & Cachelin, 2001; Midlarsky & Nitzburg, 2008)
- Another aspect of body image is **importance attached to physical appearance.** Where research has shown that body dissatisfaction can remain relatively stable over the life span the importance attached to physical appearance declines with age (Tiggemann, 2004)



## Background

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- Self esteem has consistently shown a negative relationship with body dissatisfaction (Stice, 2002)
- Negative evaluation of appearance can lead to symptoms of poor psychological well being due to the centrality of the evaluative dimension of appearance to women in Western Society (Stice, 2001)
  - Poor psychological well-being can promote body image disturbance (Taylor & Cooper, 1992)





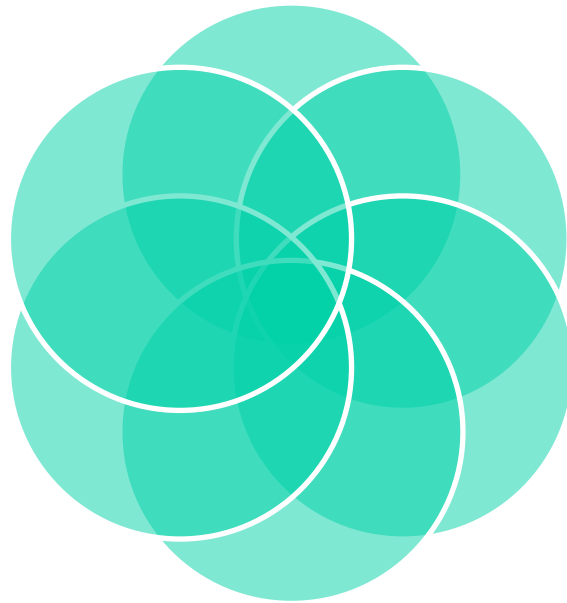
Aging Anxiety

Psychological  
Distress

Body  
dissatisfaction

Self Esteem

Importance of  
Appearance





## Background

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- Very few studies have investigated these variables in middle aged women
  - Important to understand the relationships due to implications for
    - a. mental health (e.g., depression, disordered eating)
    - b. behaviours impacting on physical health and other key areas of living.



## Aims:

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- To examine correlates of appearance related concerns (e.g., aging anxiety, physical appearance evaluation) in middle aged women.
- To explore differences in appearance related concerns across six countries.
- To examine the impact of appearance related concerns on behaviour.
  - LIFE STYLE BEHAVIOURS (e.g. dieting, physical activity)
  - SURGICAL COSMETIC PROCEDURES (e.g. breast augmentation)
  - NON-SURGICAL COSMETIC PROCEDURES ( e.g. botox)



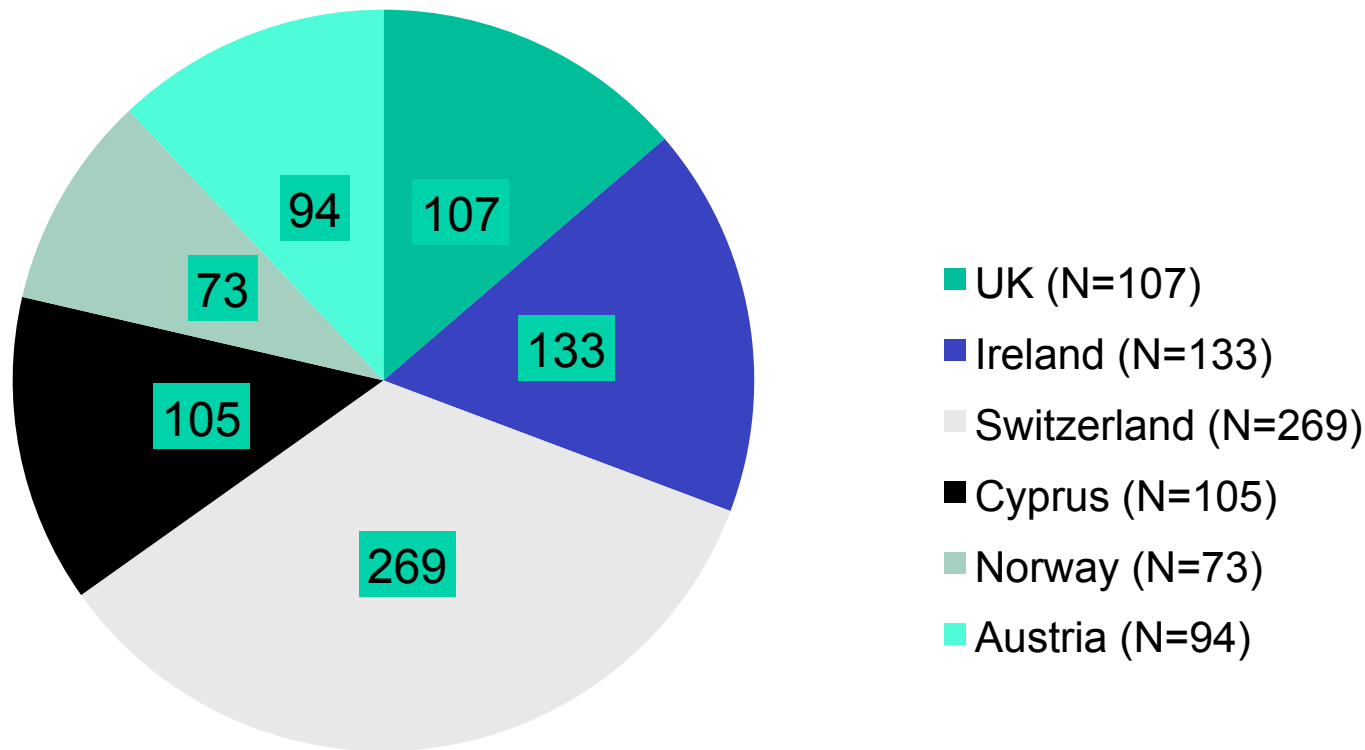
## Methods

Measure	Description	Cronbach Alpha
Anxiety about Aging Scale Lasher & Faulkender (1993)	Anxiety about changes in physical appearance subscale	.70
CARSAL Moss & Rosser, 2012)	Importance of appearance to one's self-concept	.82
MBSRQ Cash (2000)	Physical Appearance Evaluation	.87
Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSCL-10) (Strand et al., 2003)	Psychological Distress	.90
Single-item Self-esteem Scale (SISE; Robins et al., 2001)	Self-Esteem	



## Participants

- 860 females aged 45 to 65 recruited from UK, Ireland, Switzerland, Austria, Cyprus and Norway to participate







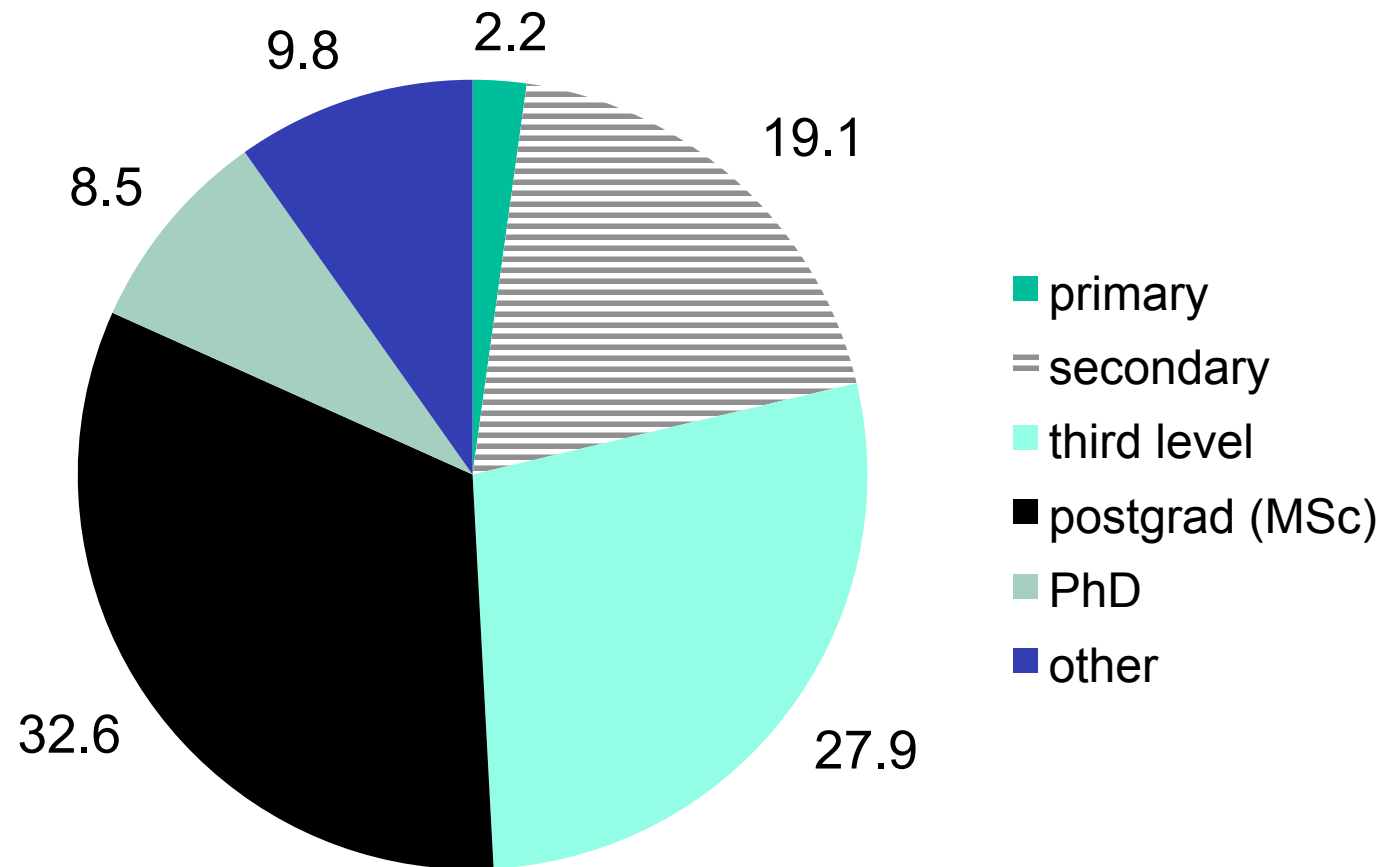
## Demographics

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- Mean Age = 52.79 (SD=5.18)
- 62% sample married; 38% divorced, single, widowed, separated, civil partnership
- 51% city/urban; 21% suburban; 28% rural
- 85% in part time or full time employment; 3% unemployed; 12% retired, stay at home parent or other



## Highest Level of Education





## Descriptives

Variable	Mean	SD
Psychological Distress	18.38	6.15
Self Esteem	4.60	1.49
Aging anxiety	13.24	4.31
Physical Appearance Evaluation	22.95	5.90
Importance of Appearance	19.54	5.19



## Correlations

	Importance of Appearance	Appearance Evaluation	Self Esteem	Psych Distress	Aging anxiety
Appearance Evaluation	-.03	1.00	-.04	-.30**	-.16**
Self Esteem	.04	.47**	1	-.55**	-.18**
Psych Distress	.19**				.24**
Aging Anxiety	.31**				



## Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Aging Anxiety

Step 1: Demographics	Standardized Beta
Age	-.03
Marital status	-.03
Country	-.16**
R2	.05**
Step 2: Cognitive Appraisal Processes	
Self esteem	-.06
Appearance evaluation	-.06
Importance of appearance	.27**
R2	.15**
R2 change	.10**
Step 3: Indices of Mental Health	
Psychological Distress	.10**
R2	.16**
R2 change	.01**





## Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Physical Appearance Evaluation

Step 1: Demographics	Standardized Beta
Age	-.05
Marital status	.09**
Country	.06
R2	.02**
Step 2: Cognitive Appraisal Processes	
Self esteem	.41**
Aging Anxiety	-.05
Importance of appearance	.03
R2	.22**
R2 change	.02**
Step 3: Indices of Mental Health	
Psychological Distress	-.05
<b>R2</b>	<b>.22**</b>
R2 change	.00



## Differences in Physical Appearance Evaluation according to Marital Status

Variable	M	SD	t
Married (N=529)	3.25	.82	$t=-2.45^*$
Other (N=320)	3.35	.87	

**$*p < .05$**



## Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors of Importance of Appearance

Step 1: Demographics	Standardized Beta
Age	.02
Marital status	.05
Country	-.03
R2	.00
Step 2: Cognitive Appraisal Processes	
Self esteem	.09**
Aging Anxiety	.29**
Physical Appearance Evaluation	.04
R2	.10**
R2 change	.10**
Step 3: Indices of Mental Health	
Psychological Distress	.18**
<b>R2</b>	<b>.12**</b>
R2 change	.02

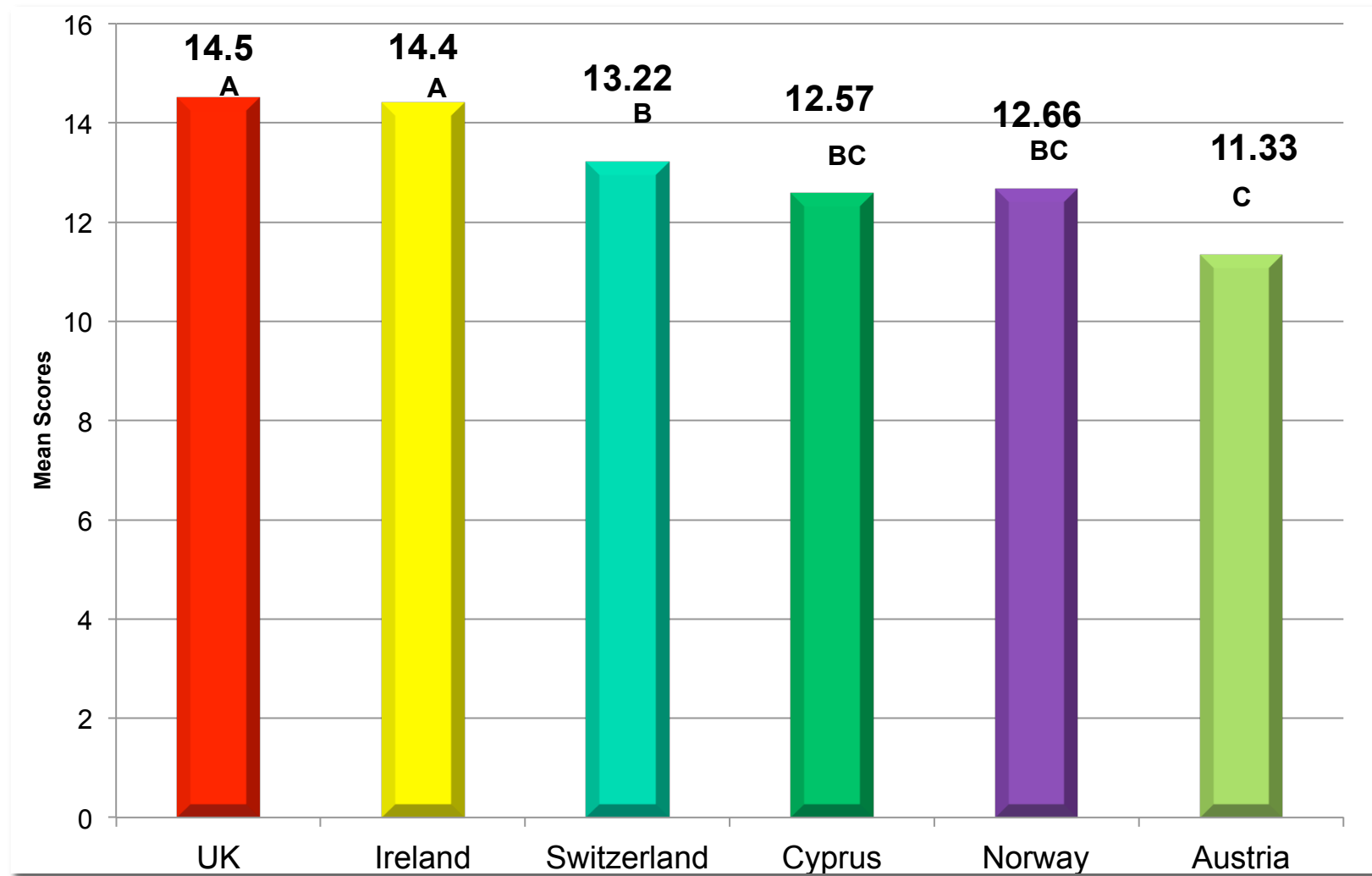


## Hierarchical Regression of Predictors of Psychological Distress

Step 1: Demographics	Standardized Beta
Age	.03
Marital status	.02
Country	-.07*
R2	.02*
Step 2: Cognitive Appraisal Processes	
Self esteem	-.50**
Aging Anxiety	.08*
Importance of Appearance	.14**
Physical Appearance Evaluation	-.05
<b>R2</b>	<b>.34**</b>
R2 change	.32**



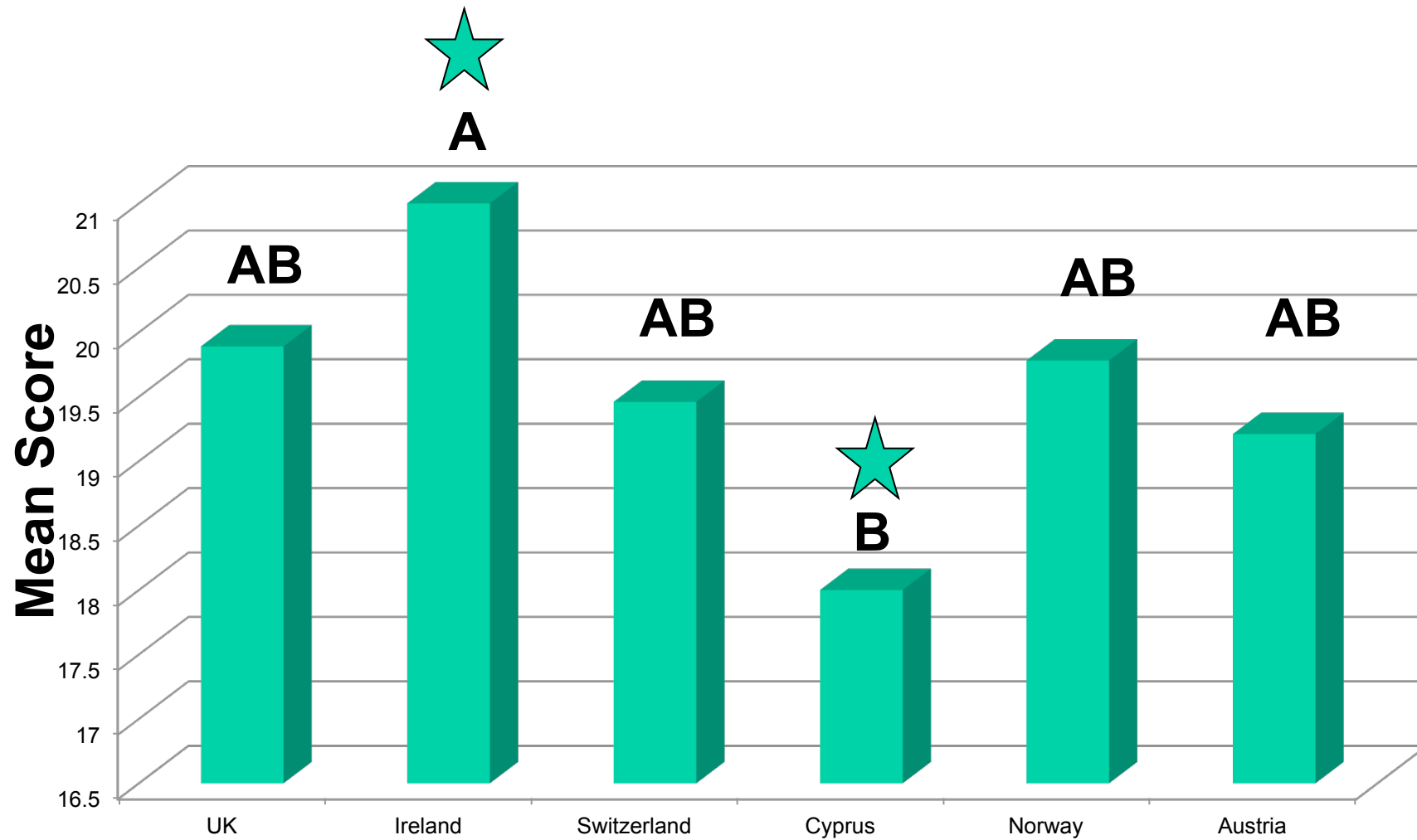
## Mean Differences in Aging Anxiety Across Countries





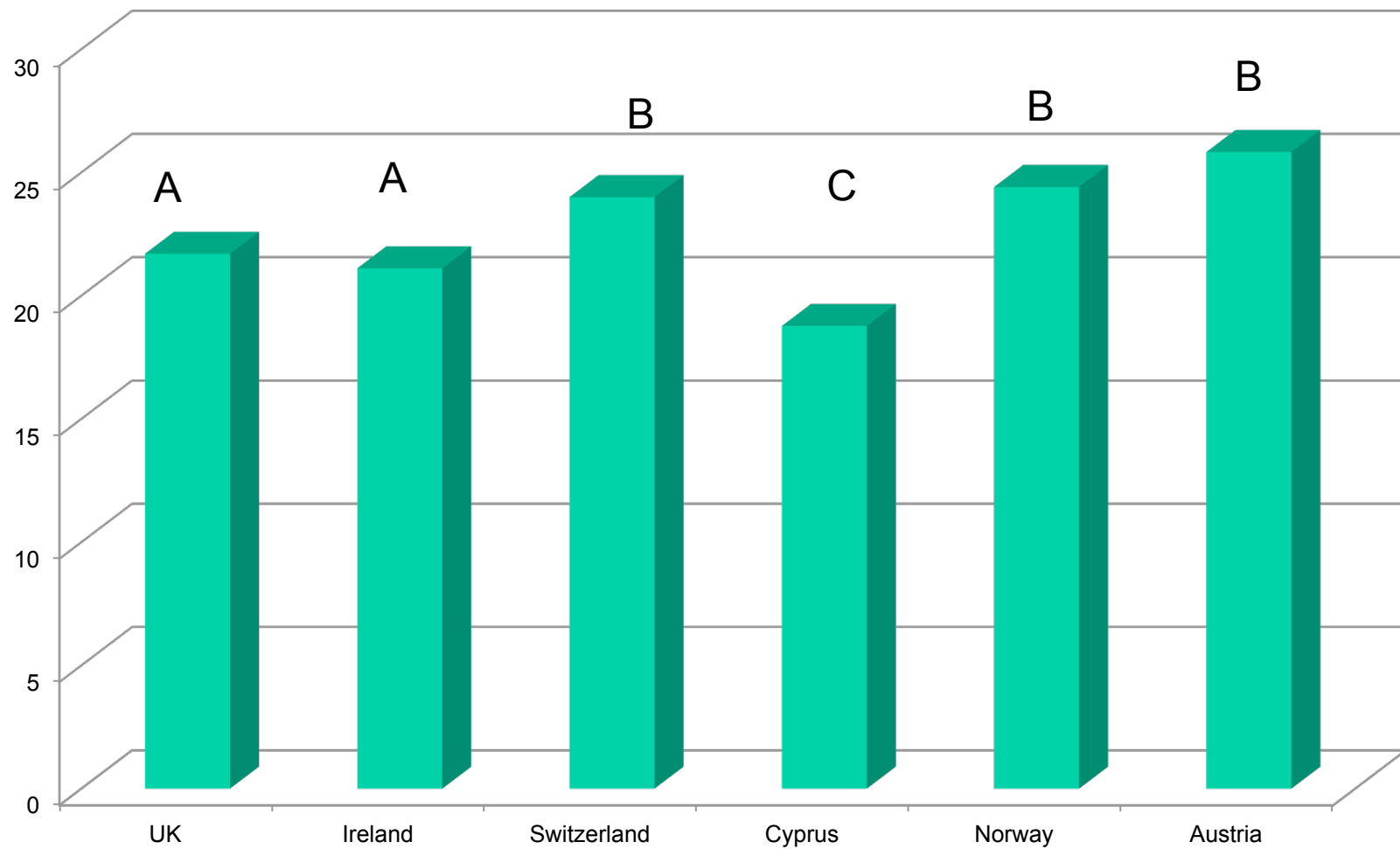


## Mean Differences on Importance of Appearance



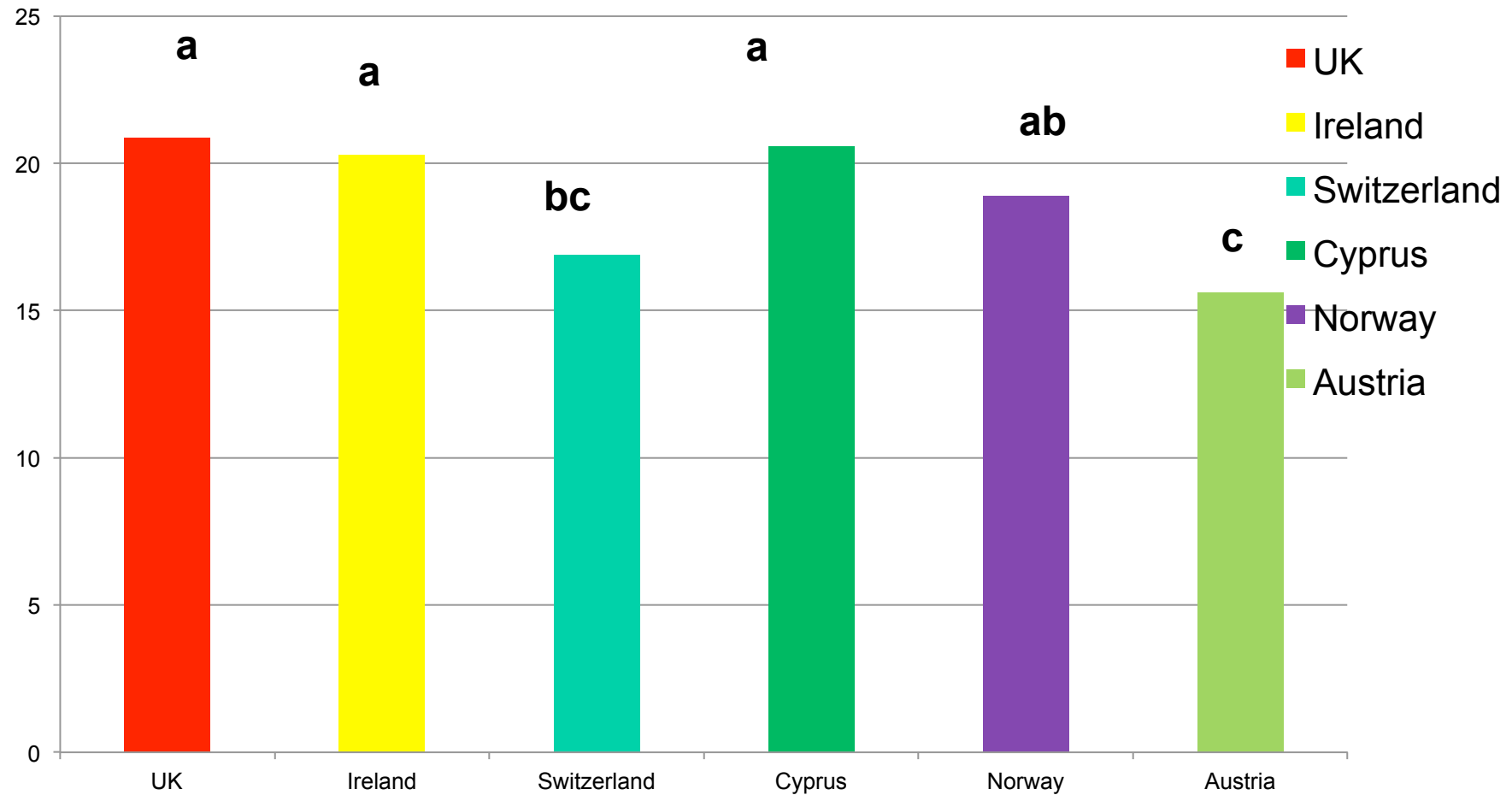


## Mean Differences in Physical Appearance Evaluation



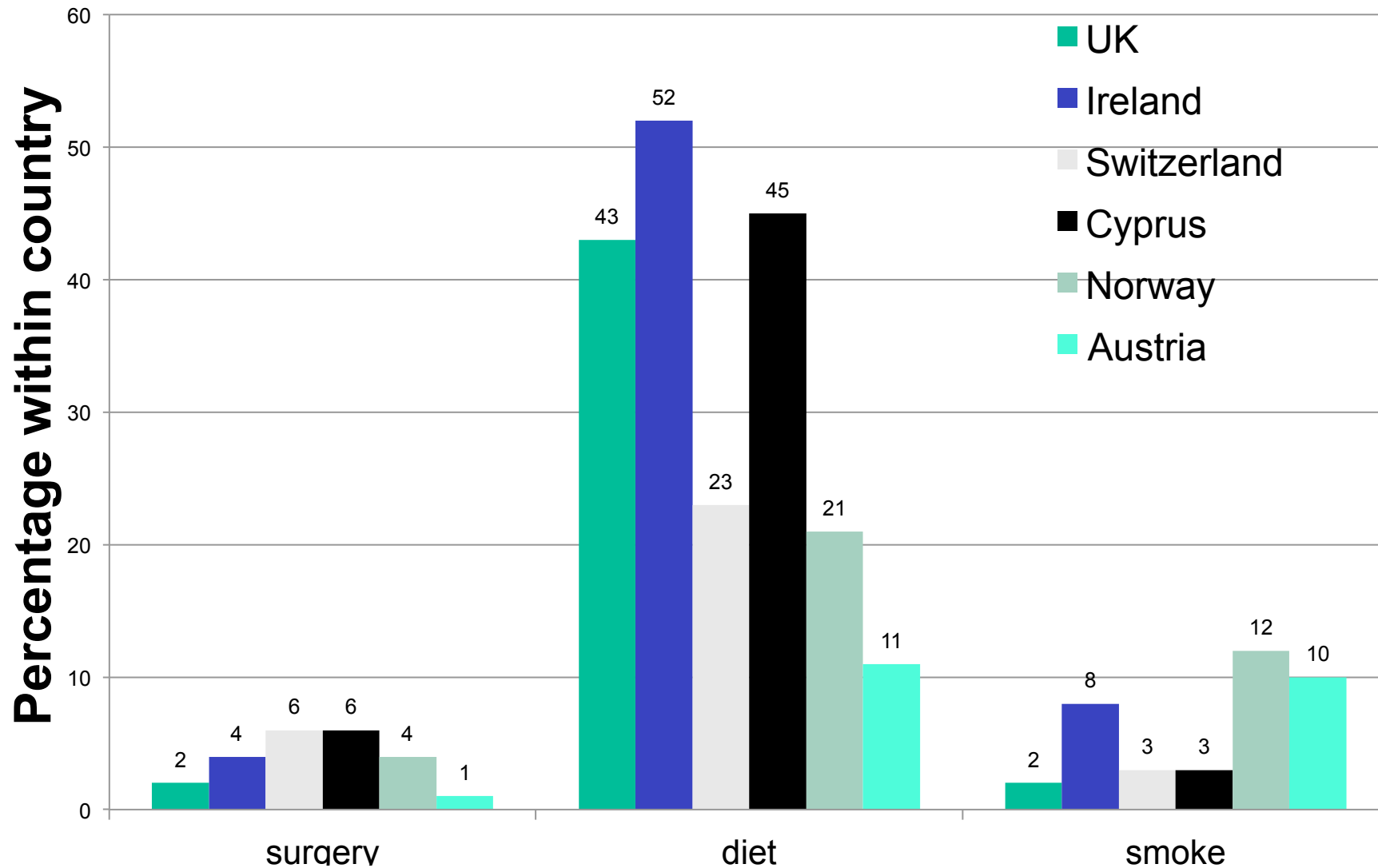


## Mean Differences in Psychological Distress Across Countries



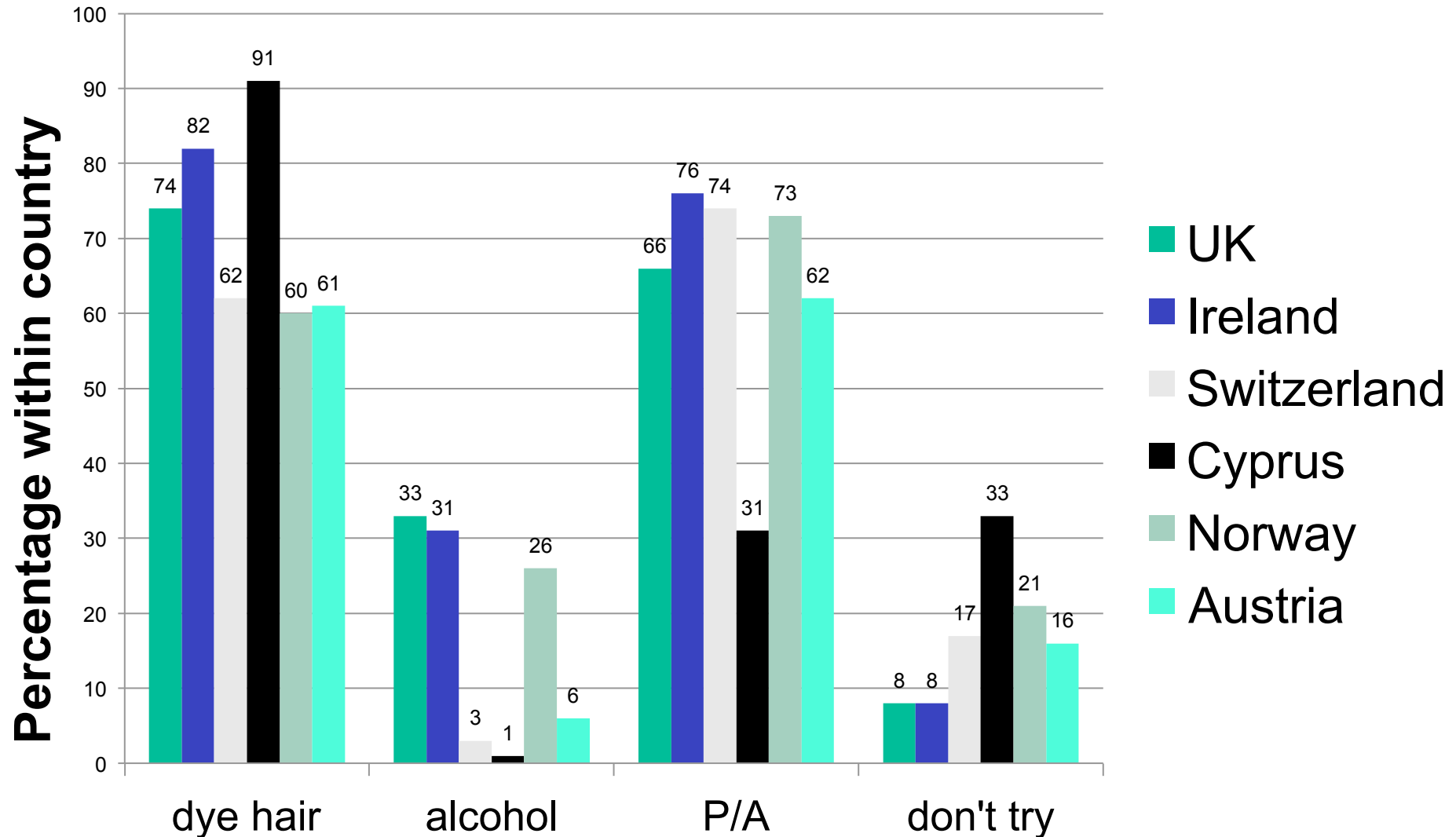


## Behaviours Used to Manage Age-Related Changes



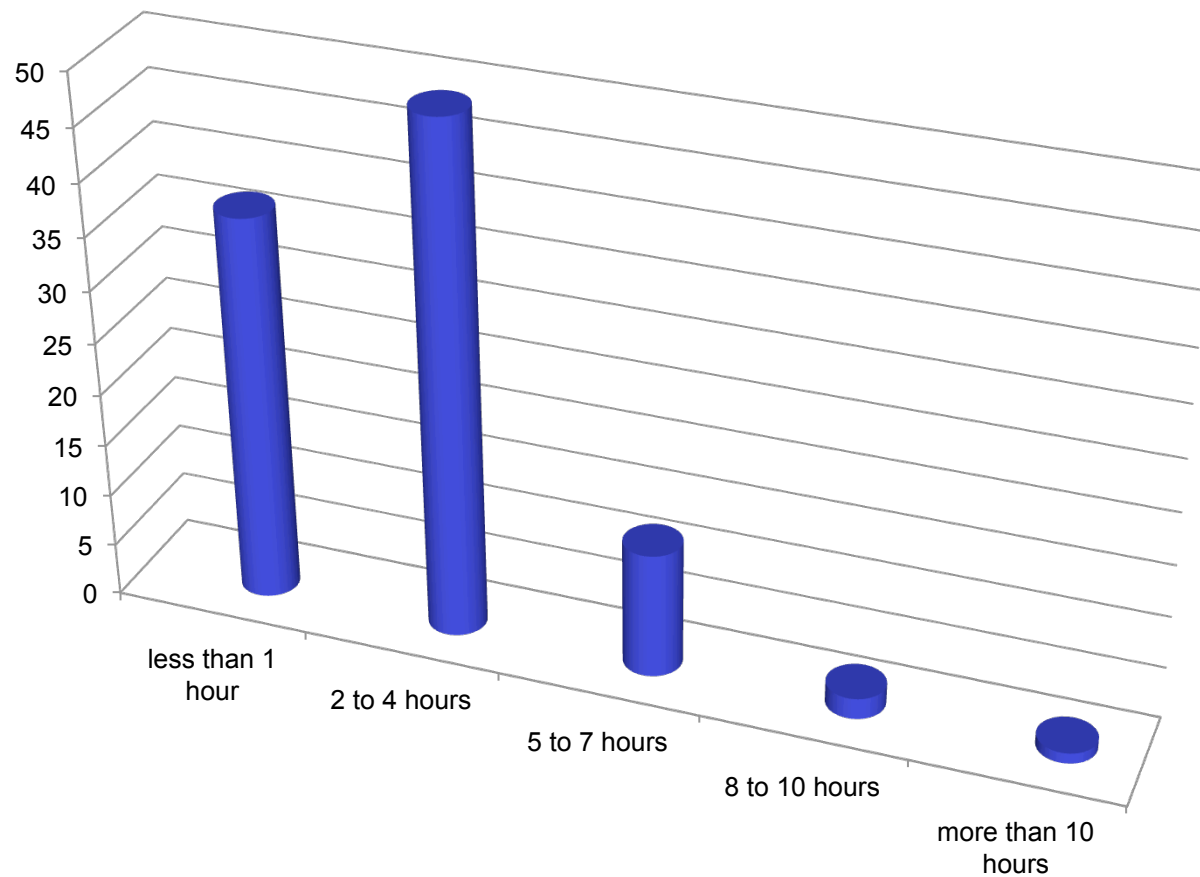


## Behaviours Used to Manage Age-Related Changes





# Investment: How long do you spend each week managing age related changes?





## Results: Key Findings

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- Importance of appearance to the individual's self-concept is a strong predictor of aging anxiety (10%). Likewise aging anxiety is a predictor of importance of appearance
- Centrality of self-esteem across the ages
  - Self esteem strong predictor of positive physical appearance evaluation in midlife women
- Public health perspective
  - high percentage of women reporting dieting and alcohol consumption to manage age related changes in England, Ireland
  - low reported engagement in physical activity by middle aged women from Cyprus



## Work in Progress and Plans for Future

- Write up two papers
- Use the findings from the pilot work to apply for funding
- Disseminate findings – conference presentations, feedback to participants
- Continue to work collaboratively to develop this line of research





Thank you

