

# Headline indicators for monitoring the performance of health systems

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## Background

- Evidence-based policymaking calls for a coherent **health system performance assessment (HSPA)** framework and **prioritized indicators** at the European level.
- Selected “headline” HSPA indicators may provide early warnings of policy impacts.

## Aims

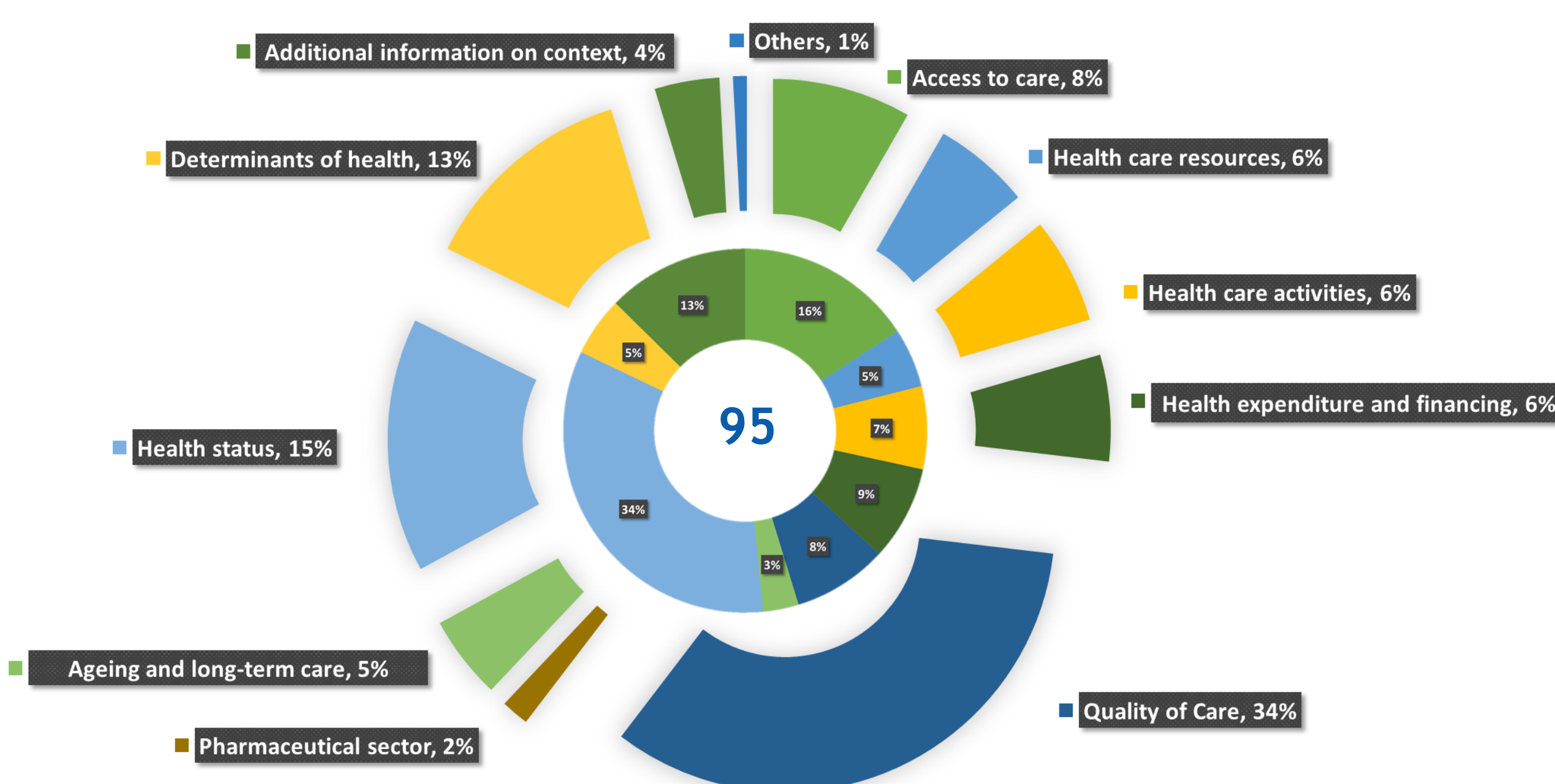
We propose a prioritized set of HSPA indicators with the aim of **informing comparative analysis of policy impacts** in a hierarchical way.

## Methods

- Appraised health system performance (HSP) reports in Member States at EU and international level.
- Conducted a **two-stage EU-wide online survey**, the European Health System Indicator survey (euHS\_I survey), where European experts assessed the relevance of **existing and proposed HSPA indicators** for
  - specific performance domains, i.e. access, efficiency, equity and quality of care, and
  - their policy importance.
- Employed a broad range of qualified experts in the field.
- Frequency analysis** was performed where “domain frequencies” and “headline level frequencies” were calculated for each HSPA domain. This was complemented by listing rankings of indicators based on individual preferences of participants.

**Fig 1:** Distribution of stepwise adjustment of indicator inventory for euHS\_I survey

**Outer circle:** indicator set after adjustment for overlaps for 1<sup>st</sup> stage survey (N=361)  
**Inner circle:** indicator set for 2<sup>nd</sup> stage survey (N=95)



## Results

- Established a HSP indicator inventory by organising 2168 health and health system indicators used in 43 performance reports.
- Indicators listed in the domains quality of care, health status and determinants of health dominate the current HSP indicator landscape.

**Table 1:** Top three listed headline indicators ranked by individual preferences

	Name of indicator
Access	1. Share of population covered by health insurance *
	2. Reported waiting times for access to specialist (care)
	3. Accessibility to acute care
Efficiency	1. Average length of stay (ALOS), total and selected diagnoses
	1. Total health care expenditure by all financing agents (total, public and private sectors) *
	2. Health expenditure per capita in PPP (purchasing power parities) in relation to life expectancy at birth
Quality of Care	3. Number of surgical operations and procedures
	1. Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (HSMR)
	2. Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (ACSC) Hospitalization Rate
Equity	3. Prevalence and incidence rate of hospital-acquired infections (% of patients hospitalised) *
	1. Geographic distribution of doctors: Physicians density in predominantly urban and rural regions
	2. Percentage of households experiencing high levels/catastrophic of out-of-pocket health expenditures *
Health Status	3. Self-reported/perceived general health
	1. Healthy Life Years (HLY)
	1. Life expectancy *
Health Determinants	2. Avoidable mortality rate: amenable and preventable deaths
	3. Infant mortality rate
	1. Prevalence of different smoking status, self-reported *
	2. Body Mass Index *
	3. Opportunities for education: Participation in early childhood education
	3. Overall experience of life: Life satisfaction

\* indicator with lowest sum of all three rankings

## Highlights

- Proposes a set of **23 headline HSP indicators** for the first time.
- Highlights the importance of indicator development in health system areas beyond public health.
- Headline indicators should be sorted as first line indicators in Eurostat, OECD and WHO and in country health profiles.

