Nordic participation in European Action Week

Inspection of justification in radiology

EG. Friberg (DSA), A. Widmark (DSA), HN. Waltenburg (SIS), T. Cederlund (SSM), C. Bladh (SSM), R. Bly (STUK) and N. Pétursdóttir (IRSA)

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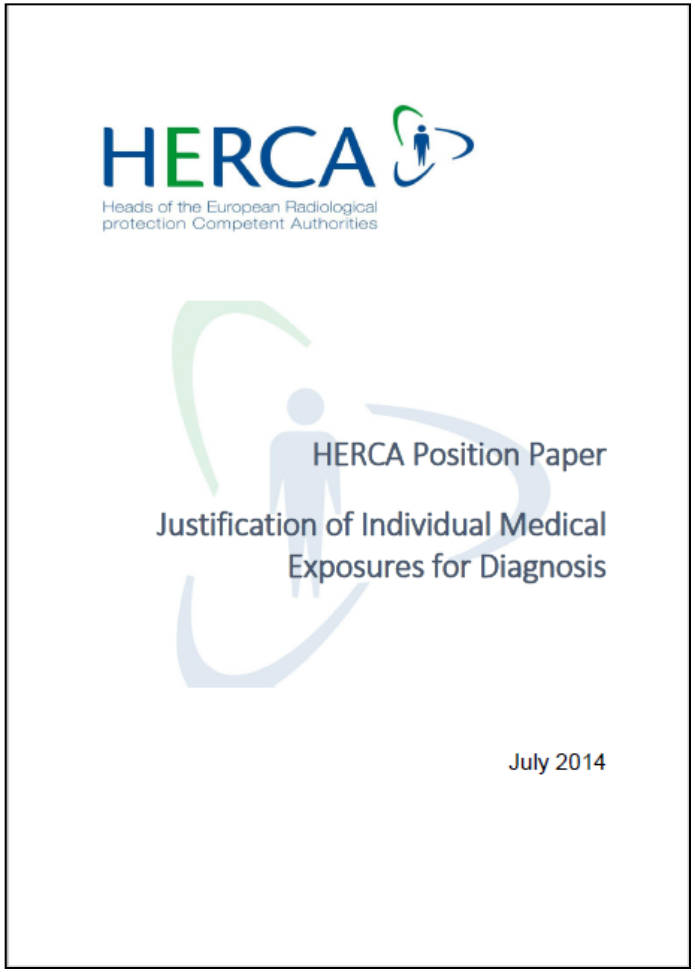
Background

- Justification is one of the fundamental principles in RP
- Its necessity is reinforced in the new EU-BSS Directive and its need for enhanced implementation is addressed in the “Bonn Call for Action” and in the council conclusions on justification by the European Commission
- To be carried out at an individual level *before* exposure
- Strong indications that 20-30% of medical exposures are unjustified/inappropriate in many economically developed countries

HERCA initiative on justification

Heads of the European Radiological protection Competent Authorities

- Regulatory bodies have an important role in promoting and ensuring that justification is properly implemented at medical imaging facilities
- HERCA position paper on justification of individual medical exposures for Diagnosis
  - Provide clarity on the regulatory framework for justification
  - Justification is not just one action, but a process including many different steps
- HERCA organized a European Action Week on inspection of justification in radiology (2016)



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European Action Week

Coordinated inspection of justification in medical imaging

Purpose

- Assess whether the justification process takes place in the medical imaging facilities
- Identify week links in the justification process
- Increase the awareness on the necessity of justification in medical exposure

HERCA
HEADS OF THE EUROPEAN RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION COMPETENT AUTHORITIES

XX NOVEMBER 2016

HERCA Inspection Week

INFORMATION LEAFLET

On the International Day of Radiology on 8 November 2016, [name of national radiation protection authority] will start a special series of inspections in a number of radiology departments and practices over the country, as part of a European initiative launched by HERCA. HERCA (Heads of Radiation Protection competent Authorities) is a voluntary association that brings together 56 radiation protection authorities from 32 European countries. These authorities develop national legal frameworks for the safe use of ionizing radiation and conduct inspections to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

Where and when will the inspections take place?
Starting on 8 November 2016, the national radiation protection authority will be conducting inspections in a representative number of radiology departments and practices all over the country, both private and public, large and small.

Who will conduct the inspection?
The inspection will be carried out by inspectors from the national radiation protection authority following normal inspection procedures.

What is the topic of focus?
The inspectors will pay specific attention to the justification process of medical imaging procedures that involve ionizing radiation. The justification principle requires that each medical imaging procedure should contribute sufficiently to patient care to outweigh the possible detriment caused by radiation exposure. Justification is a complex process that requires various inputs and checks to be performed by different health professionals who each have their own responsibilities. The inspectors will trace the steps of a normal justification process and will try to verify to what extent the referrers, the radiological practitioners and staff working under their responsibility adhere to the corresponding procedures.

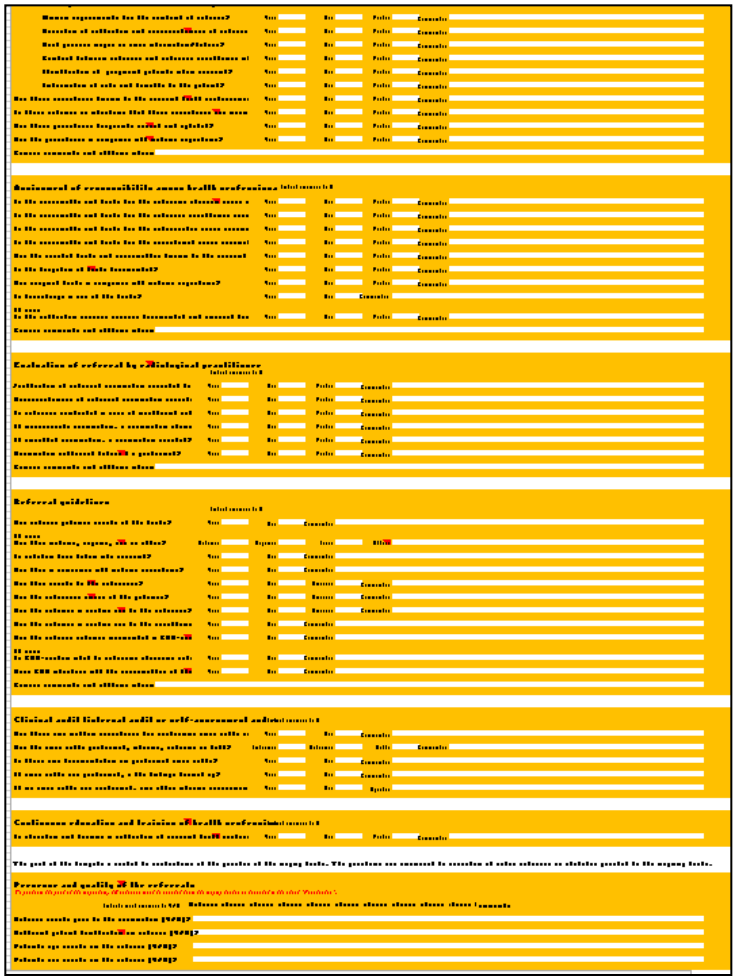
Who might be interviewed?
The inspectors might interview all those who are directly and indirectly involved in the justification process: the referring physicians, the radiological practitioners, reception staff, radiographers and nursing staff, the people responsible for quality assurance and clinical audits, etc.

What is the objective of these inspections?
The goal of this HERCA initiative is to monitor to what extent the justification principle is put into practice in diagnostic radiology all across Europe and to identify potential routes for improvement. The findings will be presented in a report that will be published on the HERCA website.

HERCA INSPECTION WEEK

Method

- All HERCA countries invited to participate
- To inspect a representative number and type of facilities
- Inspections were notified in advance
- Performed according to a common inspection template
- Inspections based on document review, interviews and observations

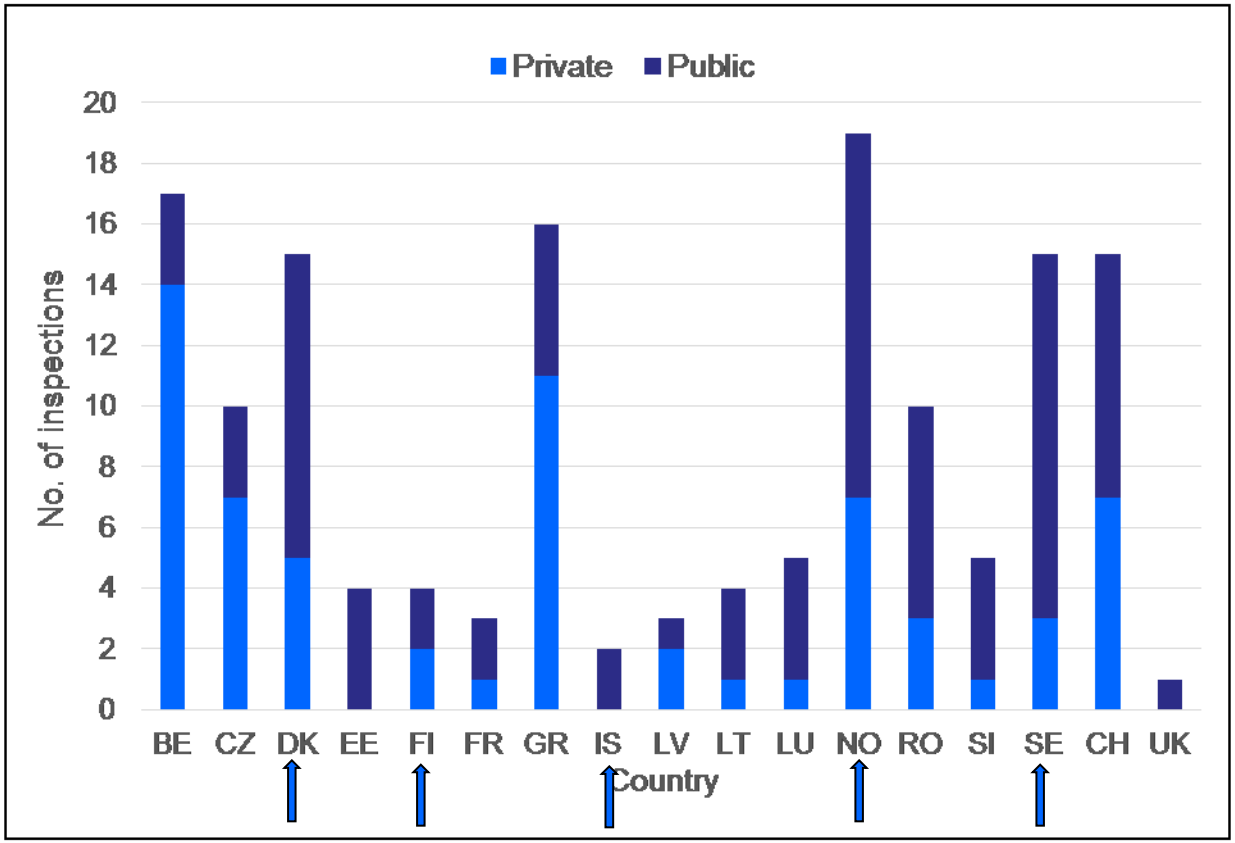


Investigated topics

- Availability of procedures for the justification process (in QA-system)
- Assignment of responsibilities and tasks for justification
- Daily practise for evaluation of referrals
- Availability, awareness and use of referral guidelines
- Procedures for and performance of clinical audits
- Adequate knowledge, competence and training on the process of justification
- Overall quality of referrals
  - Review of 10 referrals per medical facility (5 X-ray, 5 CT)

Results – Participating countries

- Totally 17 countries participated and 148 inspections performed
- Nordic countries accounted for 37% of the inspections (totally 55)
  - Results not representative for Finland and Iceland, due to few inspections



<u>Europe:</u>

- Private: 44%
- Public: 56%

<u>Nordic:</u>

- Private: 31%
- Public: 69%

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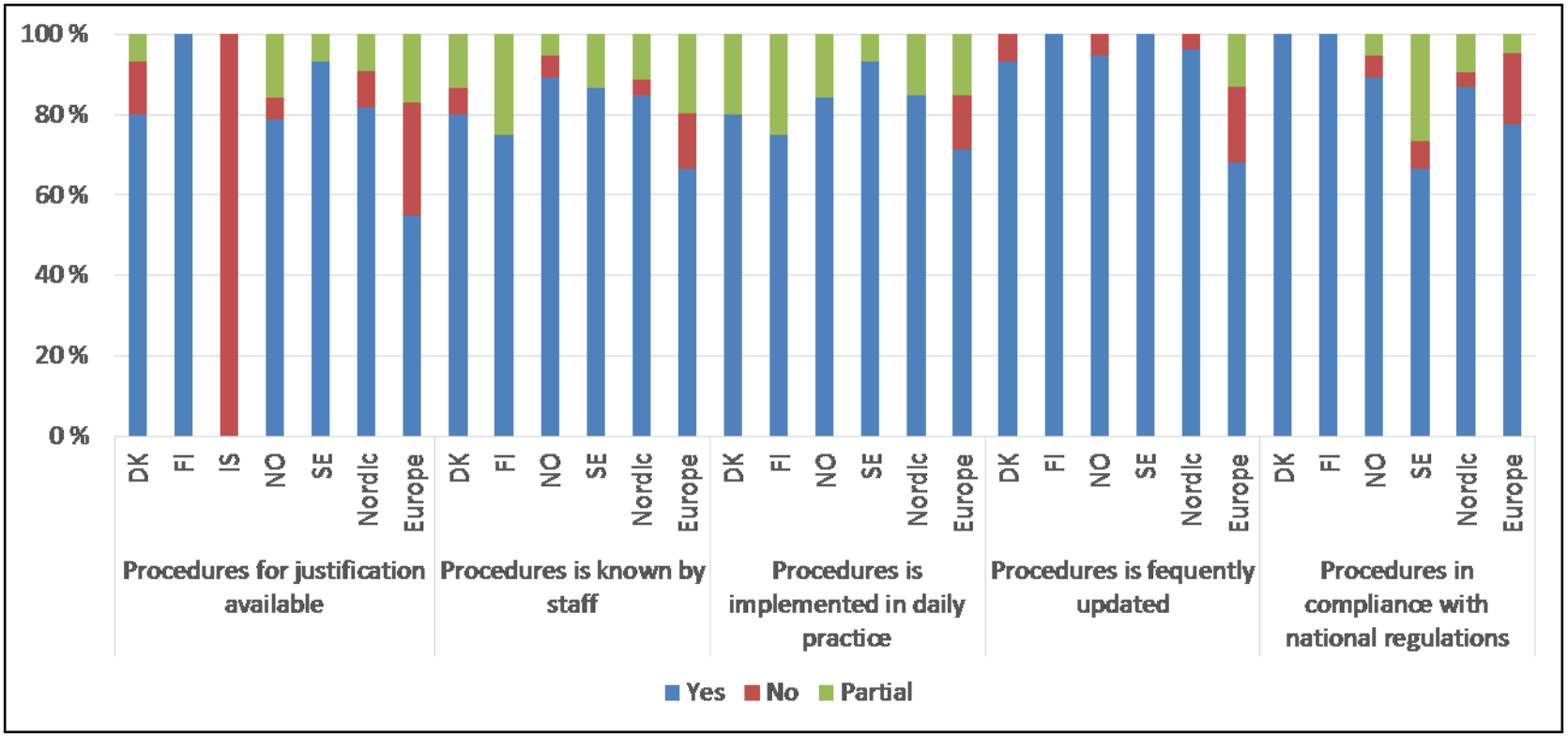
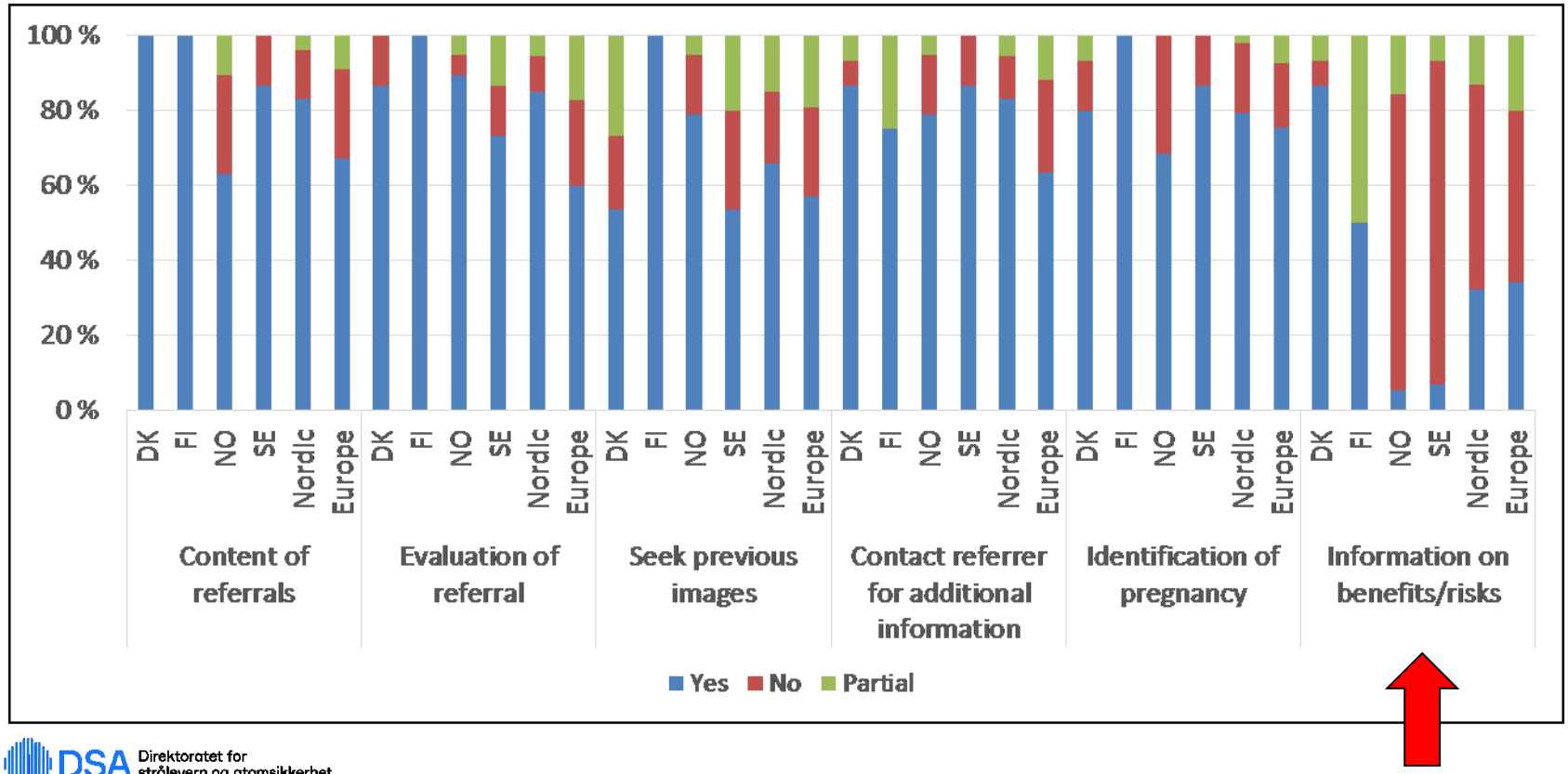
Results – Procedures for justification



- In general: Procedures for justification were available to a higher degree at facilities in the Nordic countries (82%) compared to European countries (55%)
- Missing procedure: some kind of practical routine were often established

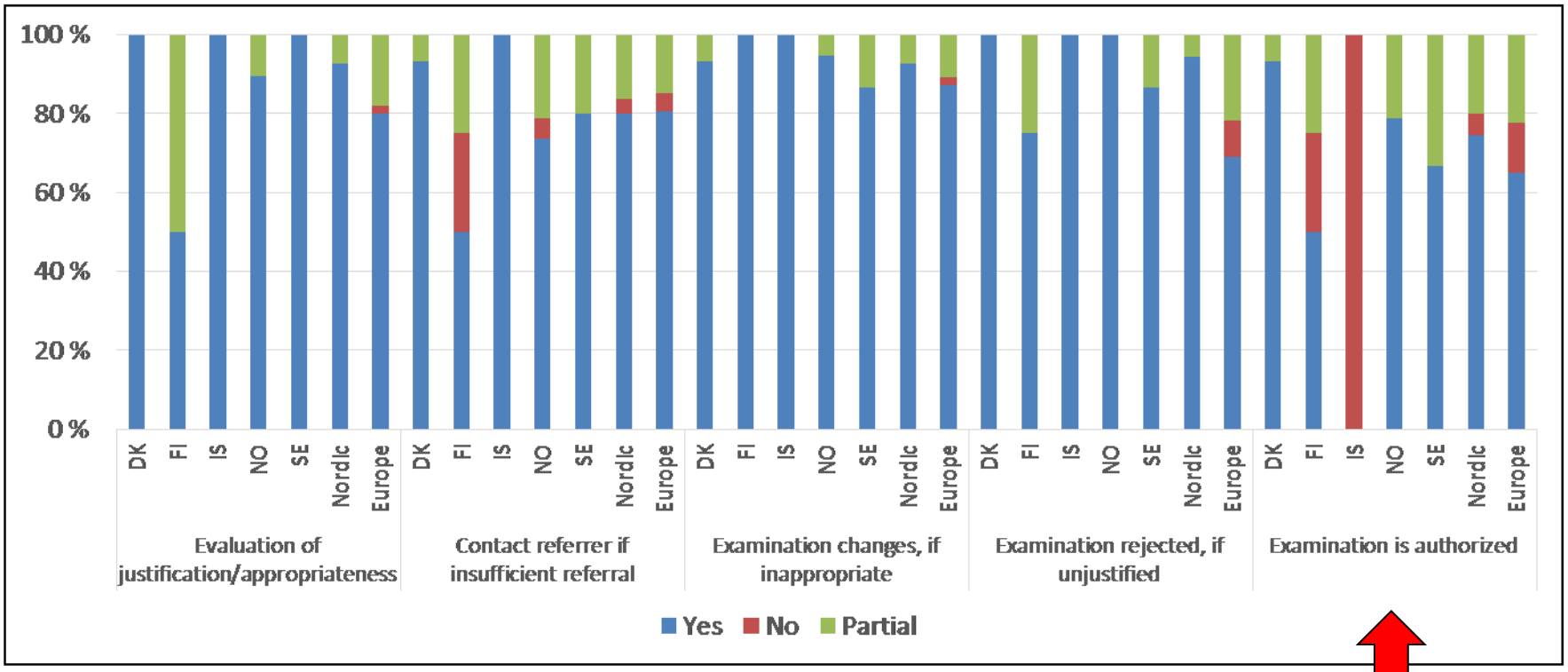
Results – Content of procedures

- Most topics identified by HERCA as important for a proper justification process, were covered to some extent by the available procedures
- Information to patient about benefits and risks was poorly addressed



Results – Daily practice on evaluation of referrals

- Most Nordic facilities had established good practice for evaluation of referrals before the examinations were performed
- Still too many inappropriate and unjustified examinations performed
- Practice for communication between practitioner and referrer, and authorization of examinations must be improved



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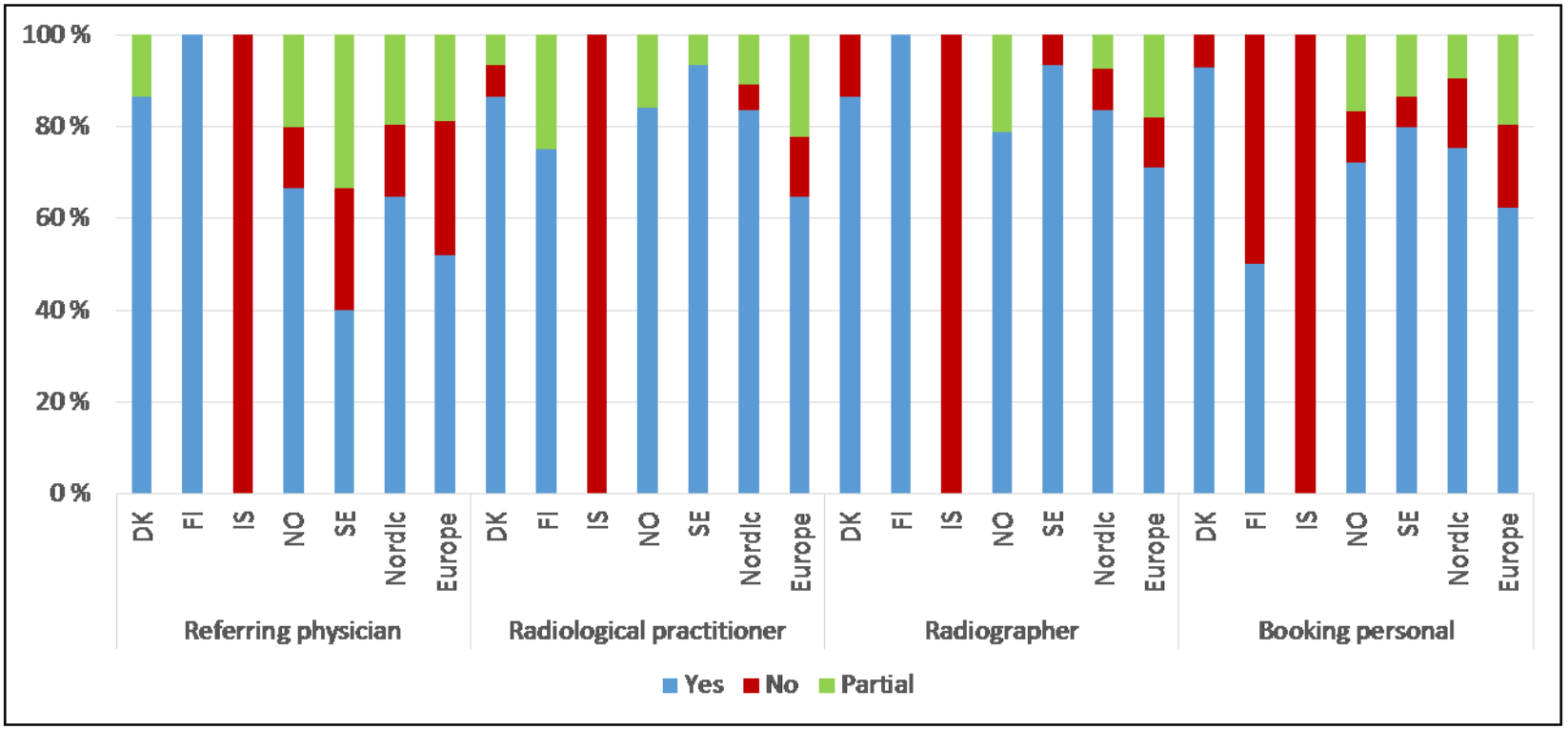
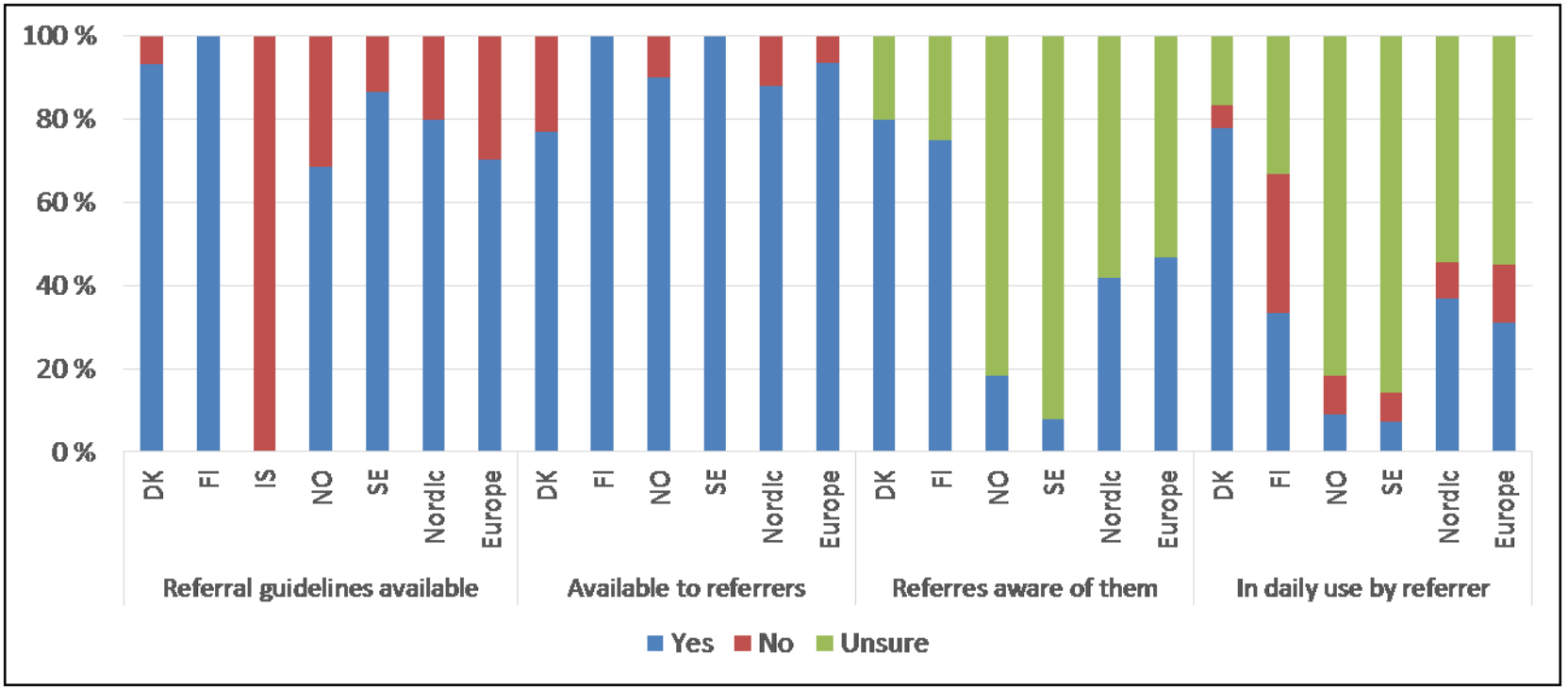
Results – Allocation of responsibilities



- Allocation of responsibilities among involved staff not clearly defined at all inspected facilities
- Known by staff: Nordic (87%), Europe (76%)
- Documentation of delegation: Nordic (67%), Europe (52%)

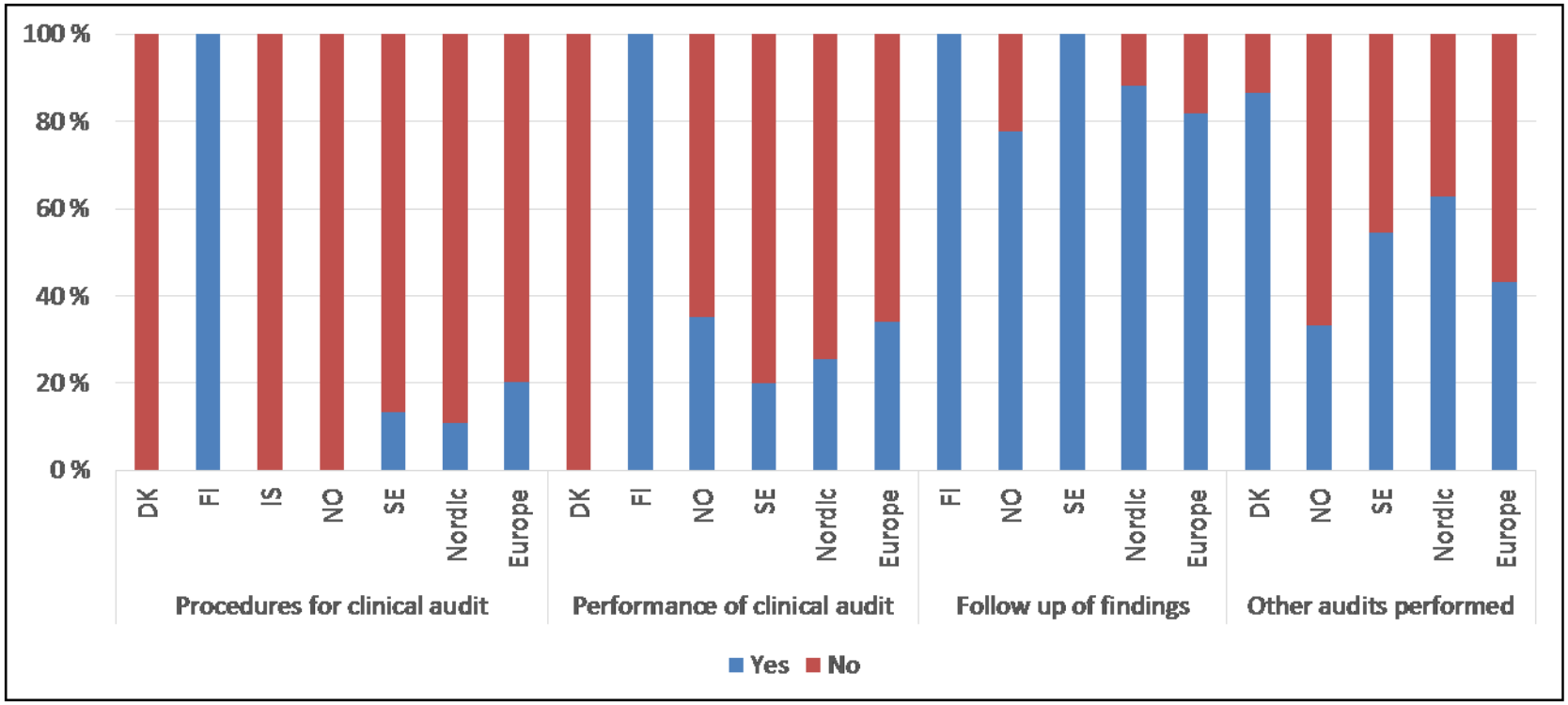
Results – Referral guidelines for imaging

- Referral guidelines were present at most inspected facilities and made available to the referrers (except Iceland)
- Awareness and use were highly unsure in most countries



Results – Clinical audit

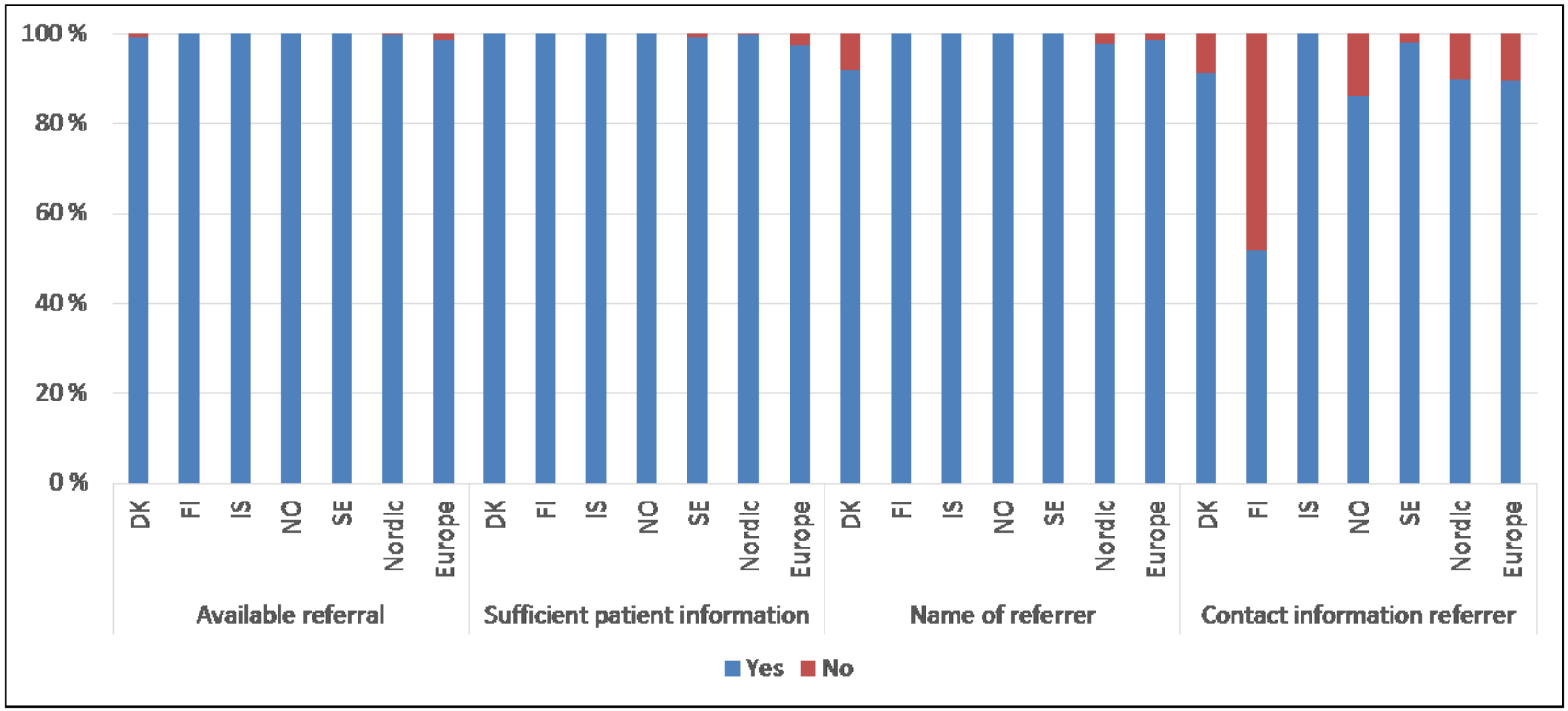
- Only Finland has fully implemented the concept of clinical audit among the Nordic countries
- Clinical audits are seldom performed
- If not clinical audit: Other types of audits/revisions were done in a higher degree at Nordic facilities (63%) than European (43%)



Results – Quality of referral

Administrative information

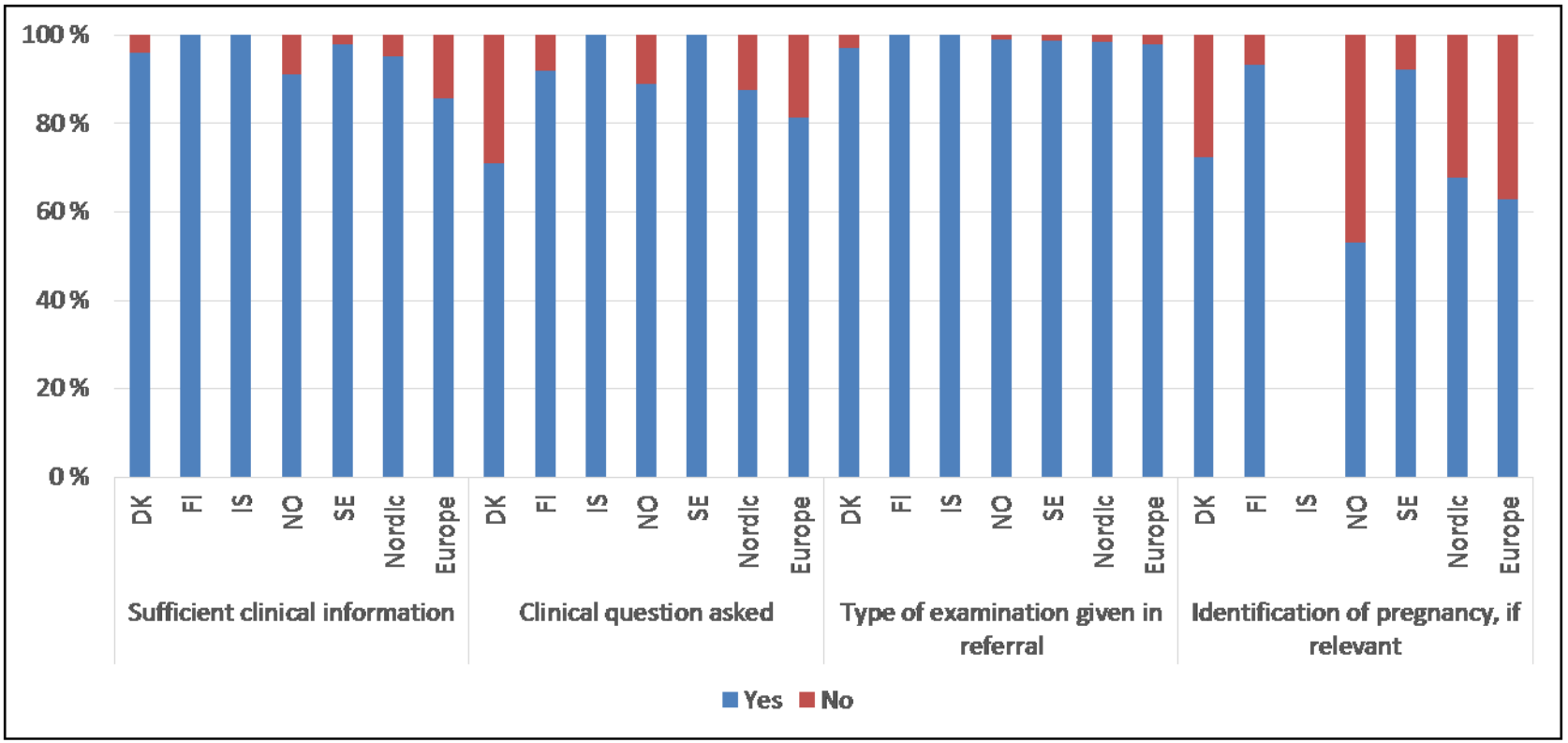
- Referrals were almost always available before exposure
- Quality of administrative information in referrals were good
  - Contact information to referrer were often missing (Finland)



Results – Quality of referral

Clinical information

- Overall quality with regards to clinical information could be improved



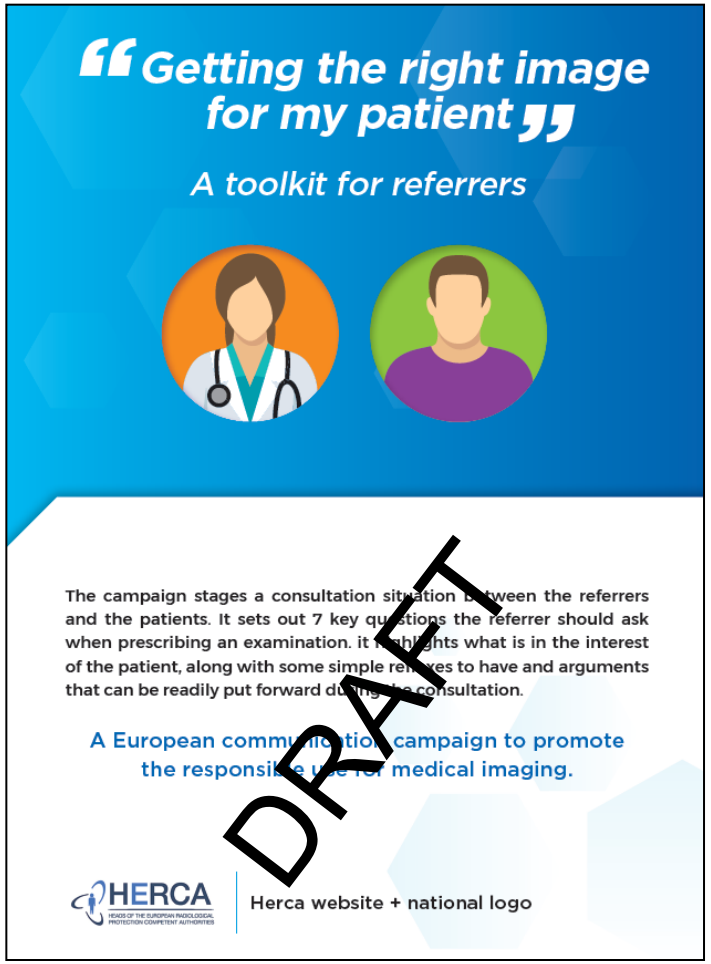
Conclusions

- Implementation of different steps in the justification process varied among countries
- Important that allocation of responsibilities and tasks among health professionals is recognized by the facility management
- Responsibilities and tasks related to the justification process is formalized in written procedures
- Involved staff receive proper training to take on the assigned tasks and responsibilities for justification
- Availability of referral guidelines are still missing in many countries
- The concept of clinical audit is not implemented to a satisfactory level across Europe
- A need to increase awareness and to reiterate the importance of justification in medical imaging

Upcoming HERCA initiative – 2019

European Awareness Week

- **Goal**: to launch a European awareness initiative in a coordinated process across several European countries focused on the justification of medical imaging involving ionizing radiations
- To be launched on the International Day of Radiology (8th of November 2019)



General flyer to introduce the campaign with the 7 questions