“The Real Cretan Experience”

In collaboration with the

Hellenic Center of Excellence for Health & Wellness

Temporal Trends in the Cretan Diet: from the Rockefeller Study to Present

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Crete

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Heraklion Archaeological Museum

TRAVELS IN CRETE by R. Parsley (1837)

The evening meal was a dish of wild greens, which seem to be their main diet, they boil them and add olive oil. Bread, olives and sometimes cheese complement their meals.

A mother will rarely give bread to her child without putting oil on a plate to soak it in **this liquid of life** and make it more delicious.

Oil is used with all kinds of vegetables, as well as in the preparation of all kinds of meat and fish: in short it goes into all dishes.

The Rockefeller Study

The first investigation of food practices and dietary patterns in Crete.

- 1948 19 May to 15 November 1948
- Island of Crete
- Members of 128 households (collection of demographic, social, economic, health and dietary data)

Specifically, the study:

Examined the feasibility of raising the standard of living in an undeveloped area

Explored ways in which knowledge and skills from industrialized countries could assist underdeveloped areas such as Crete. ...

The Rockefeller Report (1948)

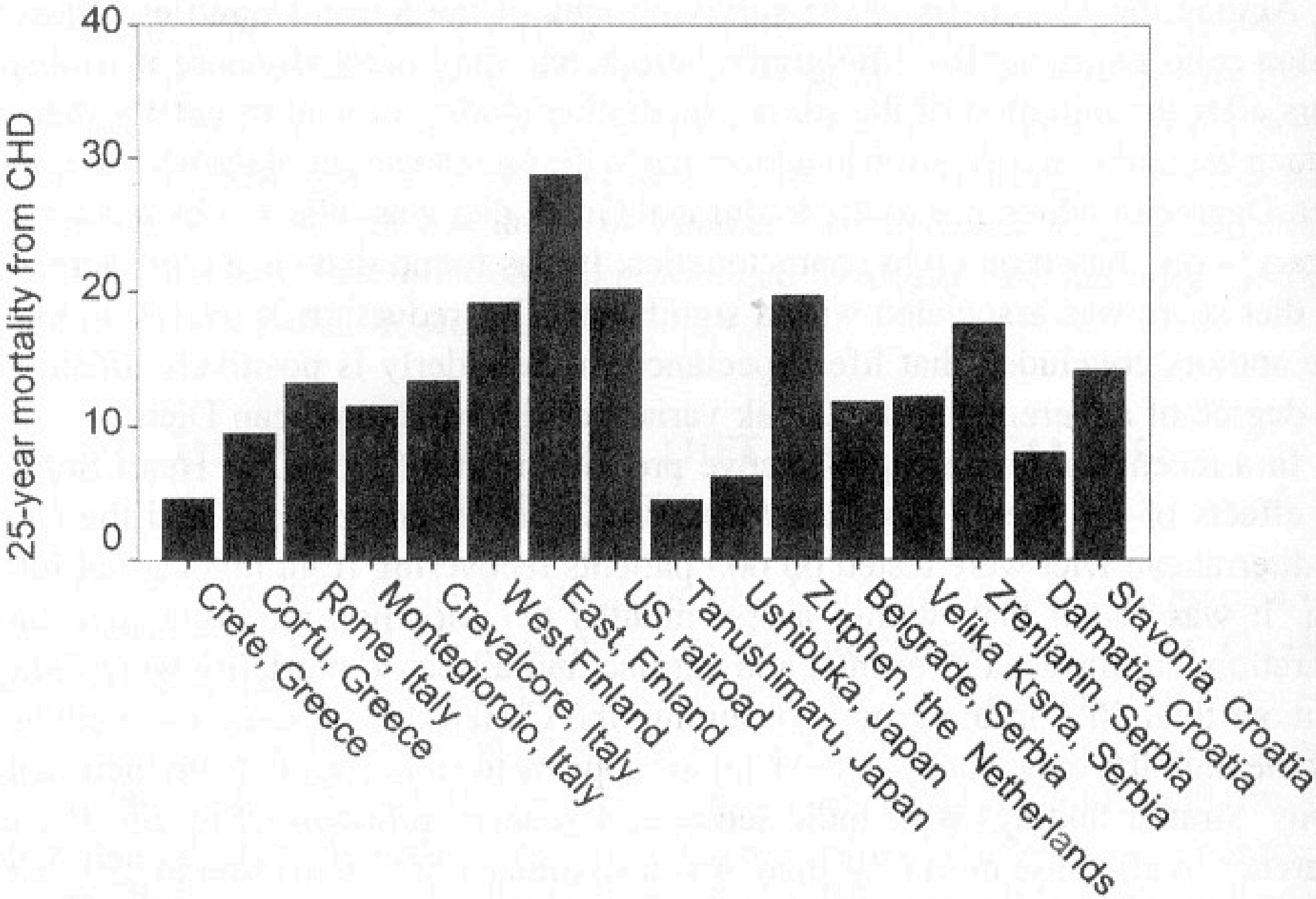
"…….the food consumption levels **were surprisingly good**. On the whole, their food pattern and food habits were extremely well adapted to their natural and economic resources as well as their needs".

Allbaugh LG. Crete: a case study of an underdeveloped area.
Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953

Life expectancy / Disease Rates in U.S.A, Greece and Japan, In 1960's

		U.S.	Greece	Japan
Life expectancy at age 45 in years	(M)	27	**31**	27
	(F)	33	34	32
Coronary Heart Disease	(M)	189	**33**	34
	(F)	54	14	21
Cerebrovascular Diseases	(M)	30	26	102
	(F)	24	23	57
Breast Cancer	(F)	22	8	4
Stomach Cancer	(M)	6	10	48
	(F)	3	6	26
Colon, Rectal Cancer	(M)	11	3	5
	(F)	10	3	5
Total Cancer	(M)	102	**83**	98
	(F)	87	61	77

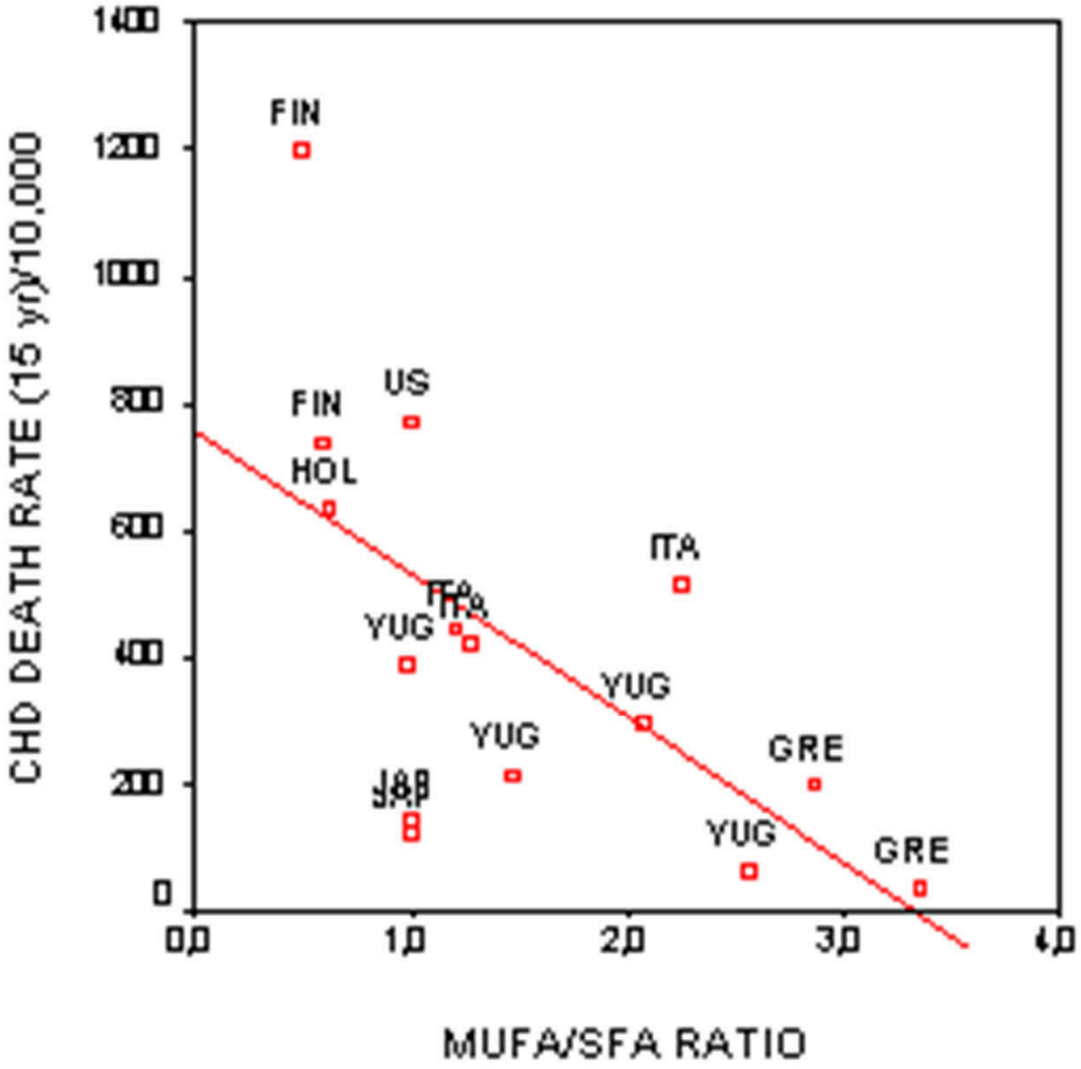
Willet W. Science 1994



CHD mortality of the Seven Countries Study cohorts.

The Seven Countries Study (Keys, 1970)

Keys et al
Am J Epidemiol 1986;124:903



The Rockefeller Report

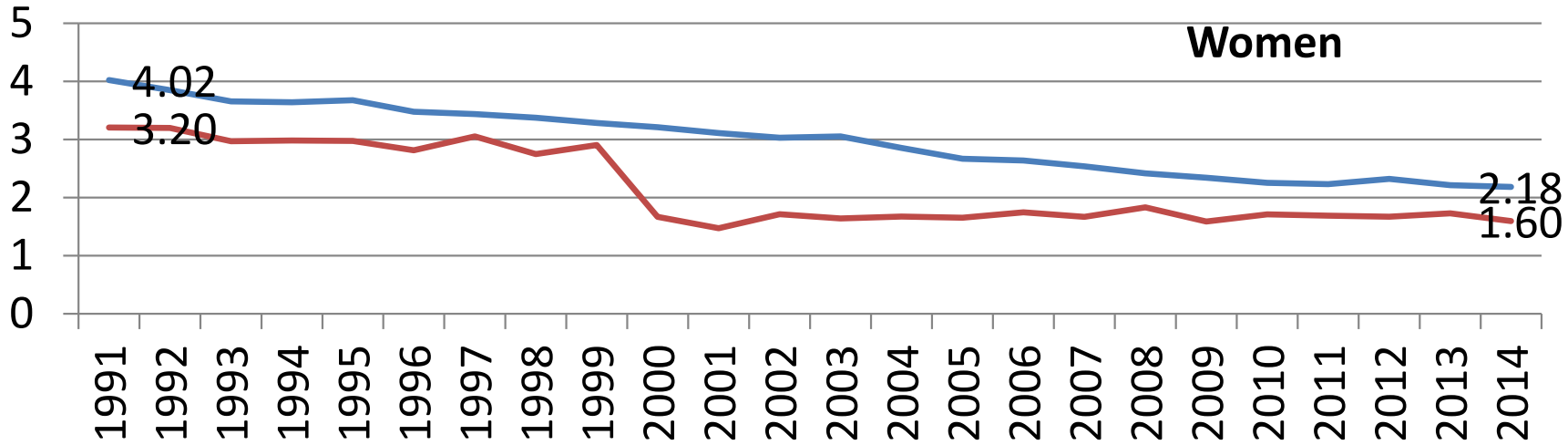
"…….olives, cereal grains, pulses, fruit, wild greens and herbs, together with limited quantities of goat meat and milk, game, and fish consist the basic Cretan foods... no meal was complete without bread … Olives and olive oil contributed heavily to the energy intake ... **food seemed literally to be 'swimming' in oil".**

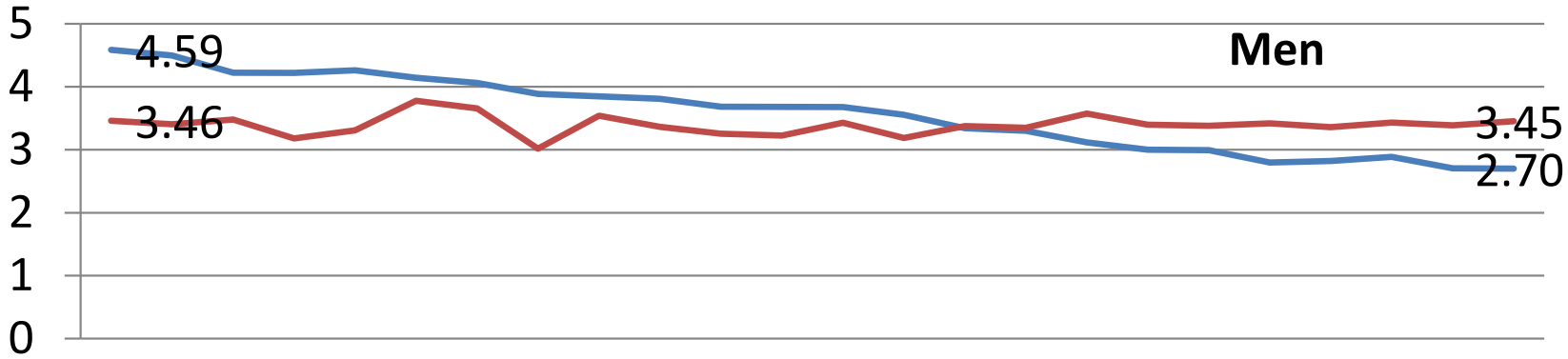
Allbaugh LG. Crete: a case study of an underdeveloped area. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953

Cretan Mount Tea (Malotira) (*Sideritis syriaca*)

Source: https://www.cretanbeaches.com/en/flora/cretan-mount-tea-malotira

SDR* from CVD all ages (per 1.000 males and females) **





Standardized Death Rate

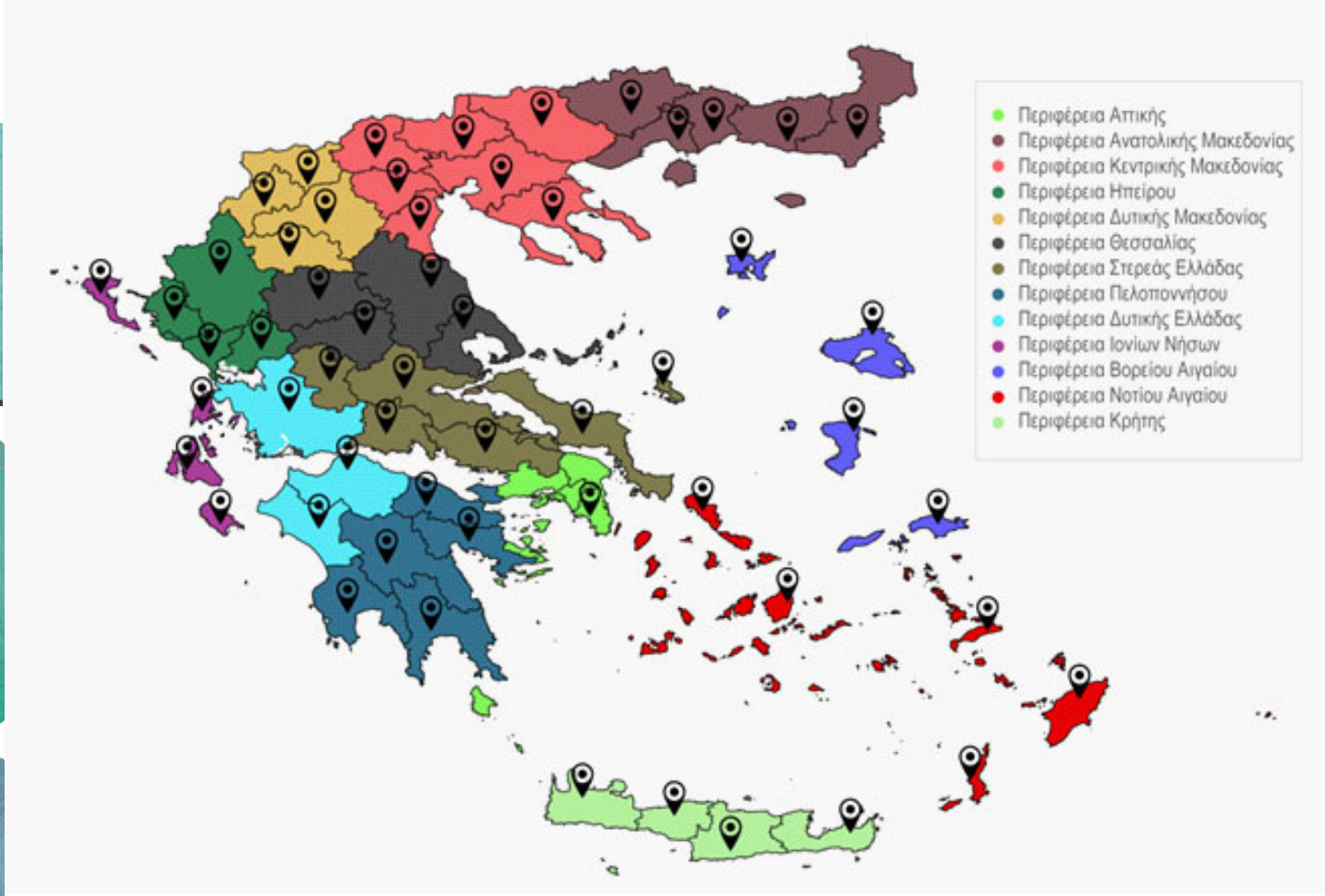
Greece- Crete

*** Standardized population of Greece**
*****Source ELSTA***

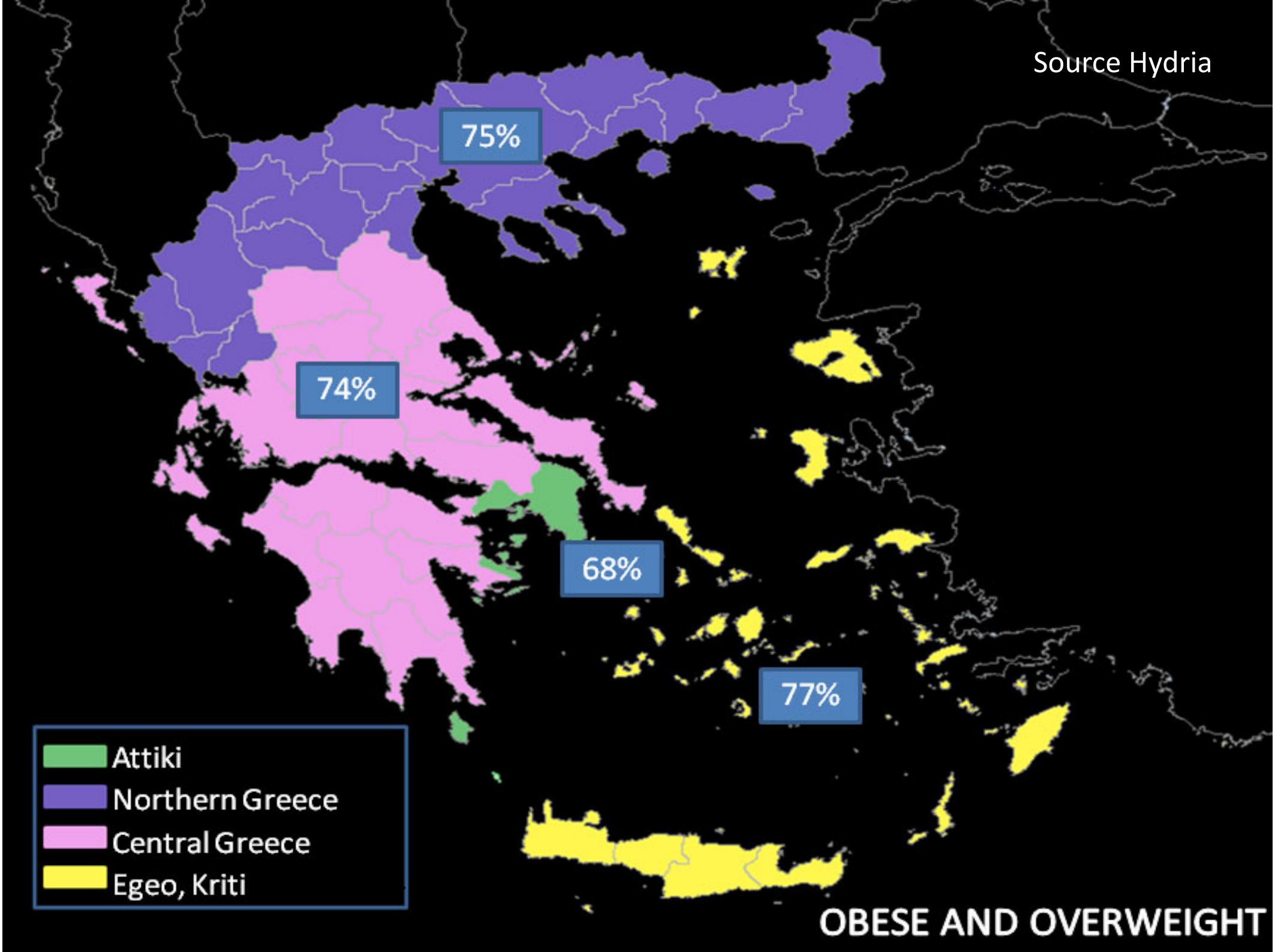
Source: Orfanos 2017

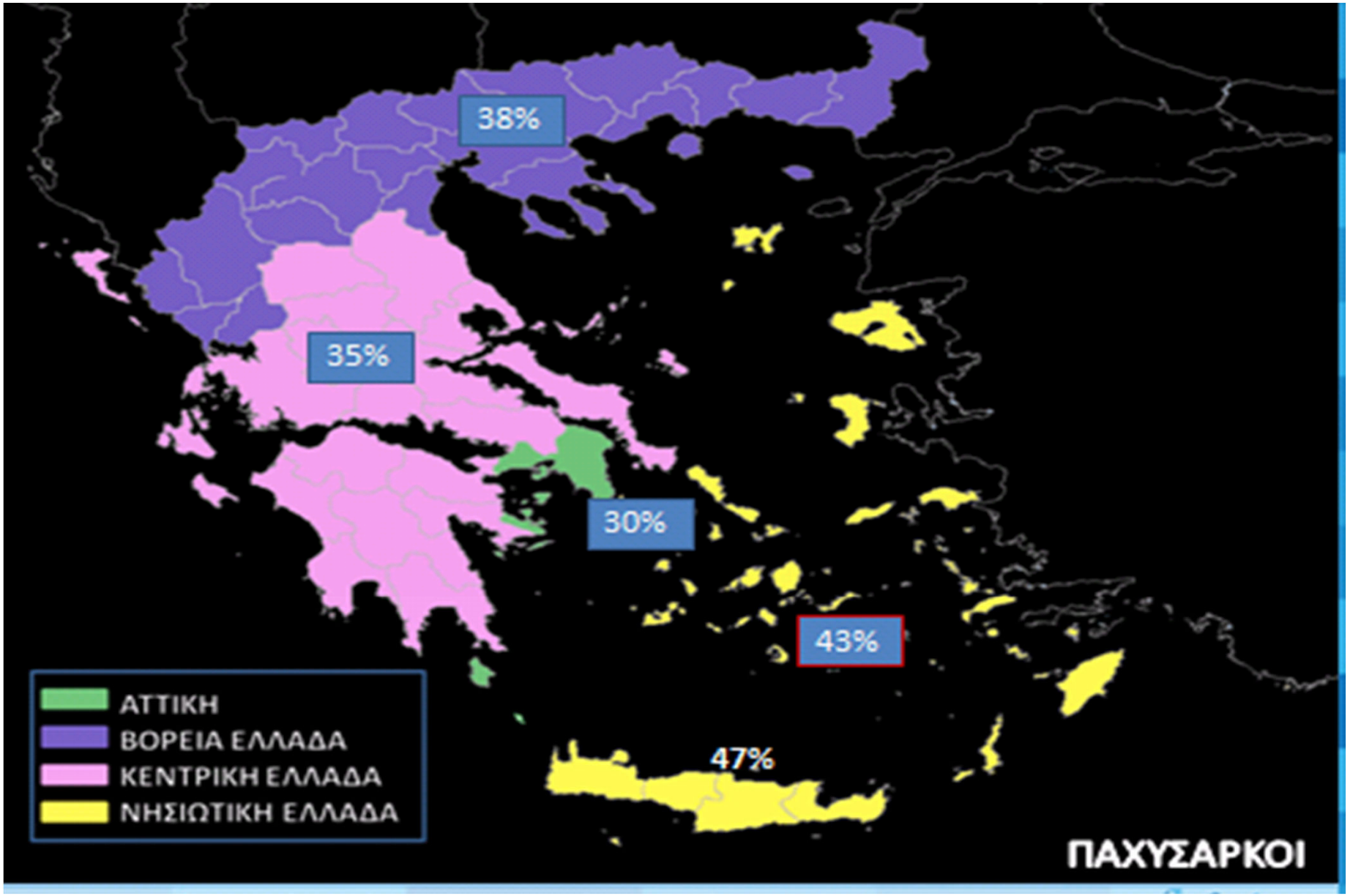
hydria

HEALTH & NUTRITION OF THE POPULATION IN GREECE

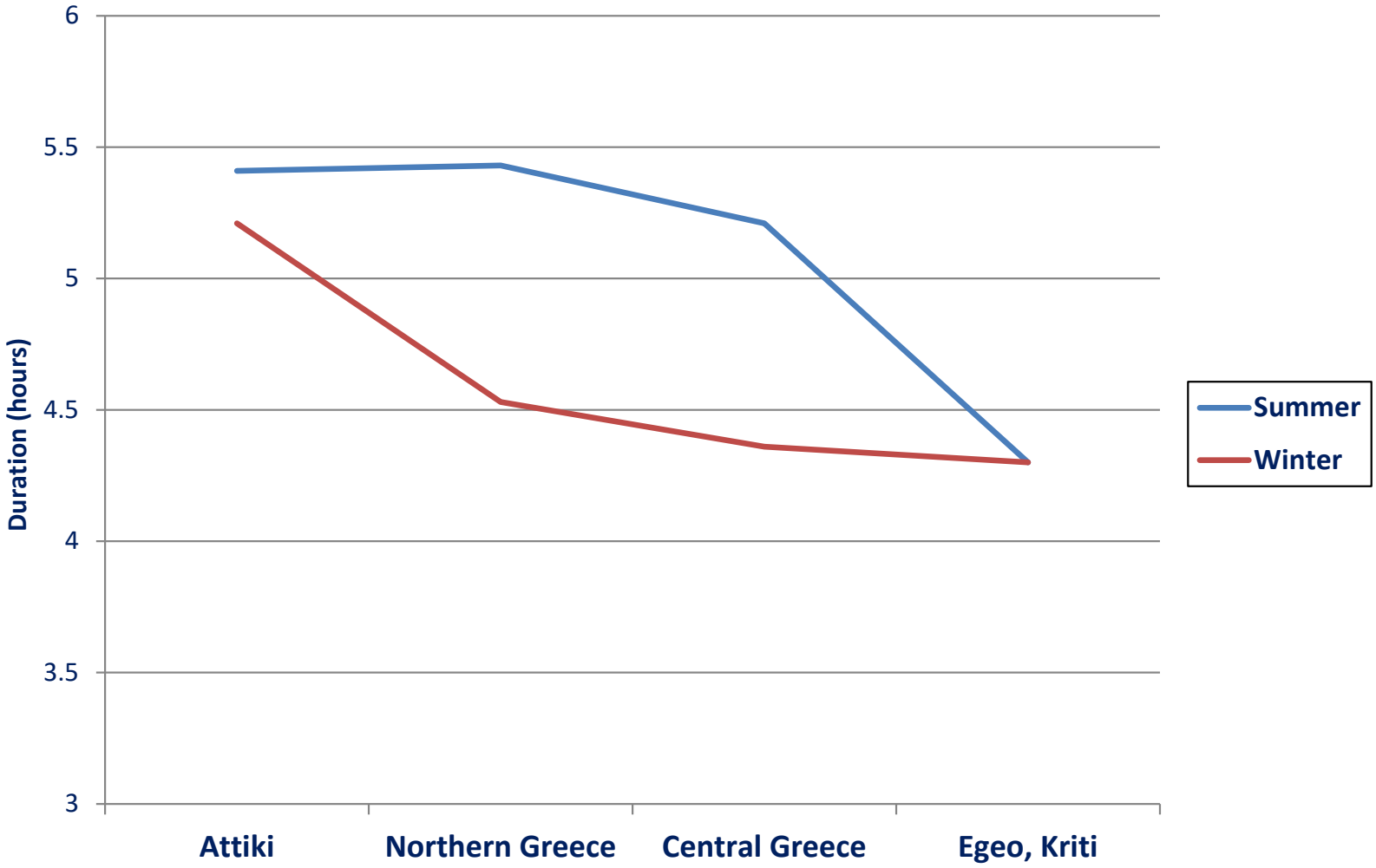


υδρία
ΔΙΑΤΡΟΦΗ & ΥΓΕΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΠΛΗΘΥΣΜΟΥ


Source Hydria
75%
74%
68%
77%
Attiki
Northern Greece
Central Greece
Egeo, Kriti
OBESE AND OVERWEIGHT

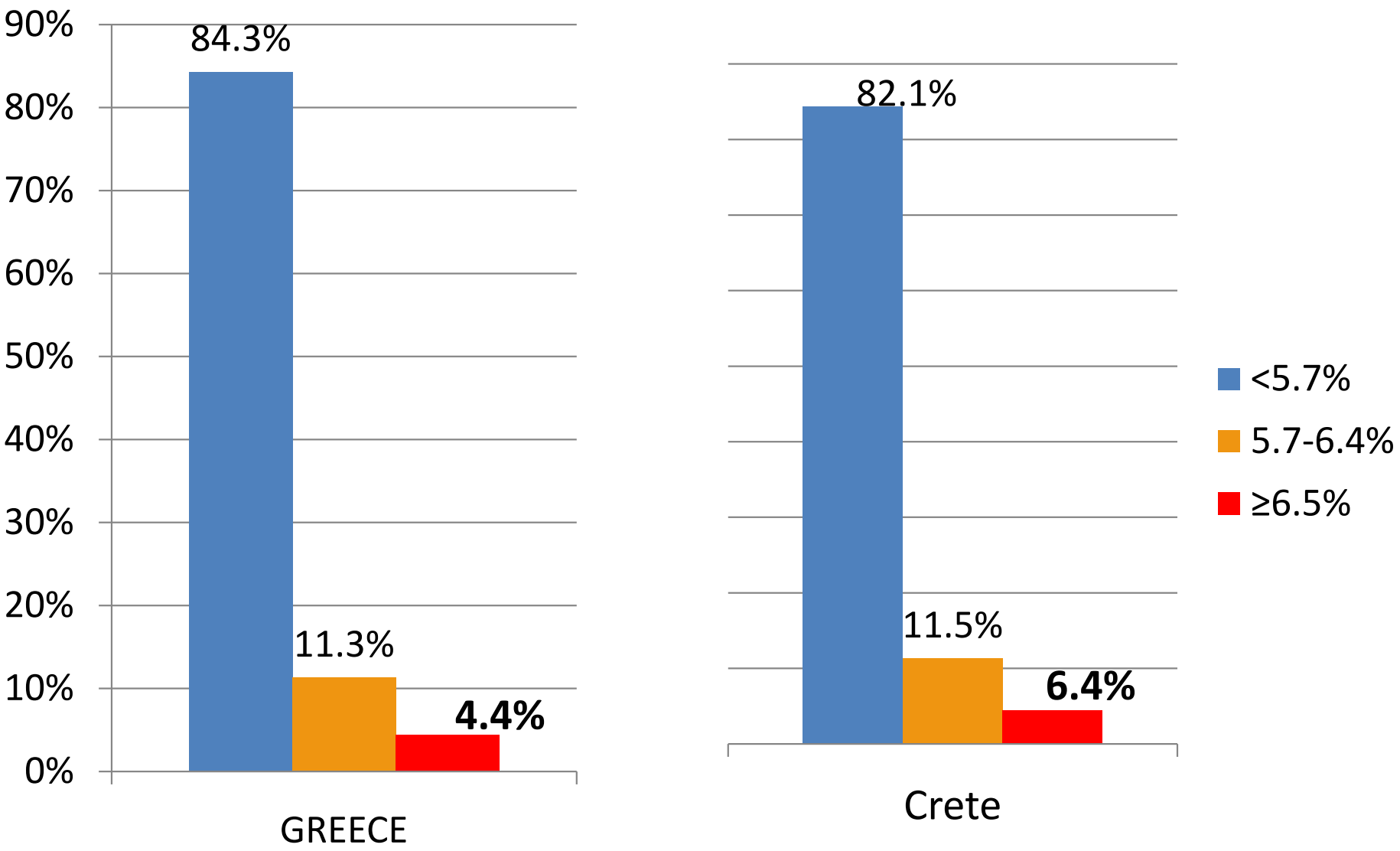

38%
35%
30%
43%
47%
ΑΤΤΙΚΗ
ΒΟΡΕΙΑ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ
ΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΗ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ
ΝΗΣΙΩΤΙΚΗ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ
ΠΑΧΥΣΑΡΚΟΙ

Average duration of walking per week
(including walking to work, shopping, entertainment) during the past 12 months



Source Hydria

Distribution of individuals (%) according to the values of glycated hemoglobin
Results from a representative sample of adults



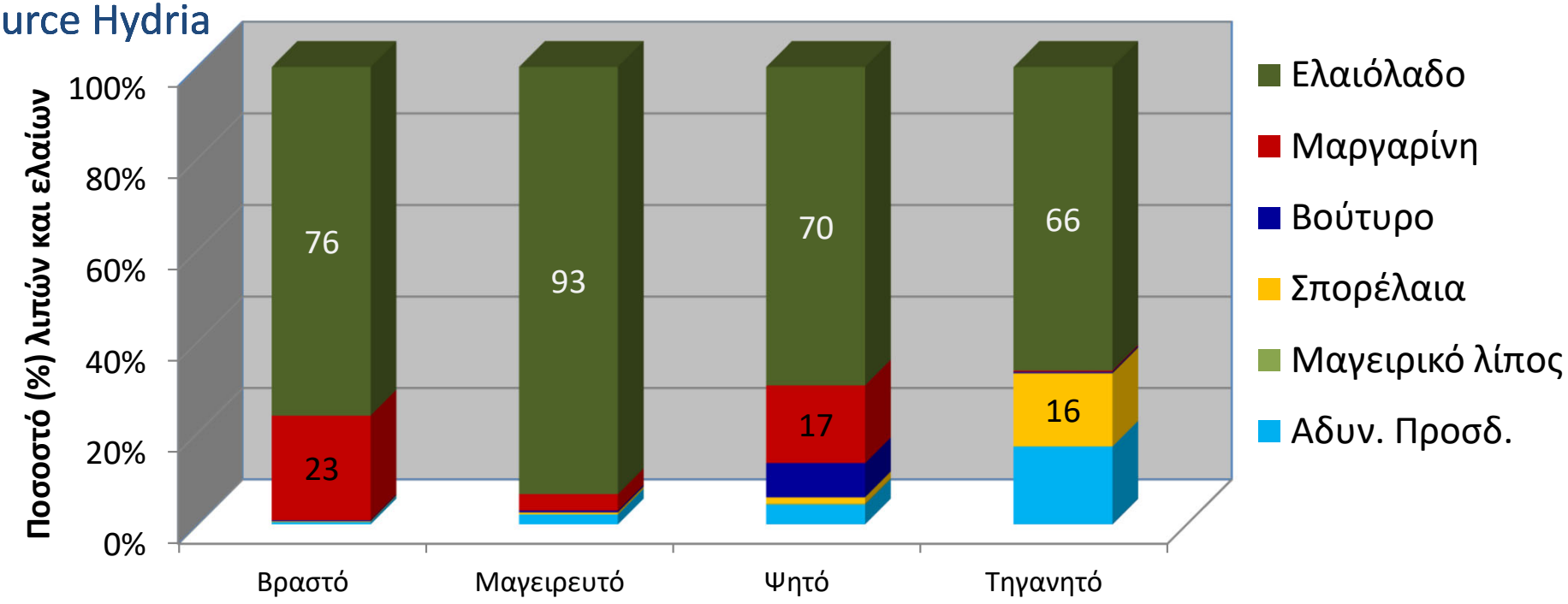
Source Hydria

Mean consumption (g/day energy adjusted)
of selected foods and beverages in Greece and Crete)

	GRE ECE	CRETE
Πατάτες	42	48
Φρούτα	134	175
Ελαιόλαδο	34	38
Κόκκινο κρέας	49	56
Πουλερικά	24	38
Κρασί	59	84
Μπύρα	52	65

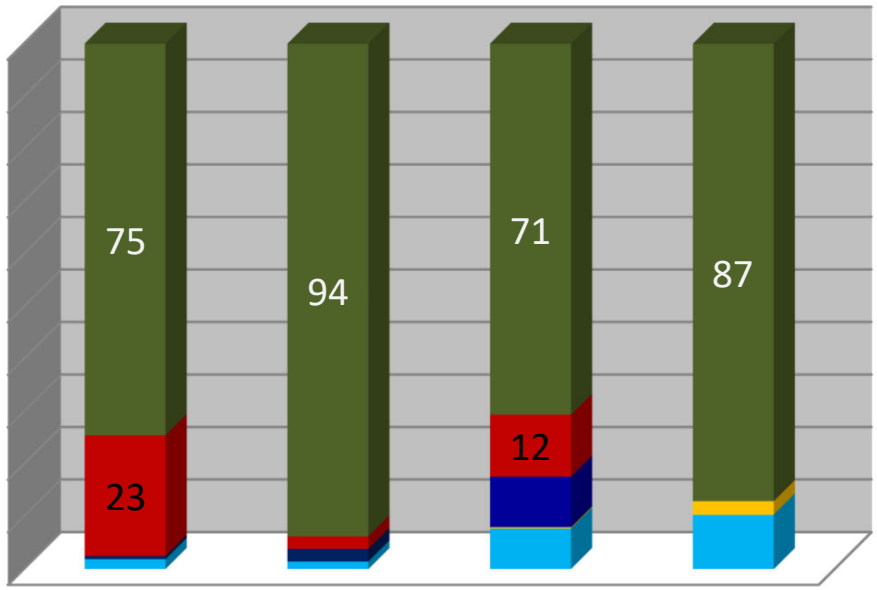
The use of added fats and oils per cooking method(%)

Source Hydria



GREECE

CRETE



Learn from the past

Preserve what we learned for the next generation

Give roots to the next generation