

# Fire safety of the growing vulnerable community in Europe

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# Growing vulnerable community

- Elderly people
  - 20% of the EU's population is 65 years or older
  - Life expectancy at birth is expected to increase in the coming 50 years
  - Ageing of the population
  - Living at home
- People with disabilities
  - The number of Europeans with disabilities is also rising significantly
  - Particularly vulnerable if they live on their own.
- Children
  - Always need our special attention and care concerning safety, including fire safety.

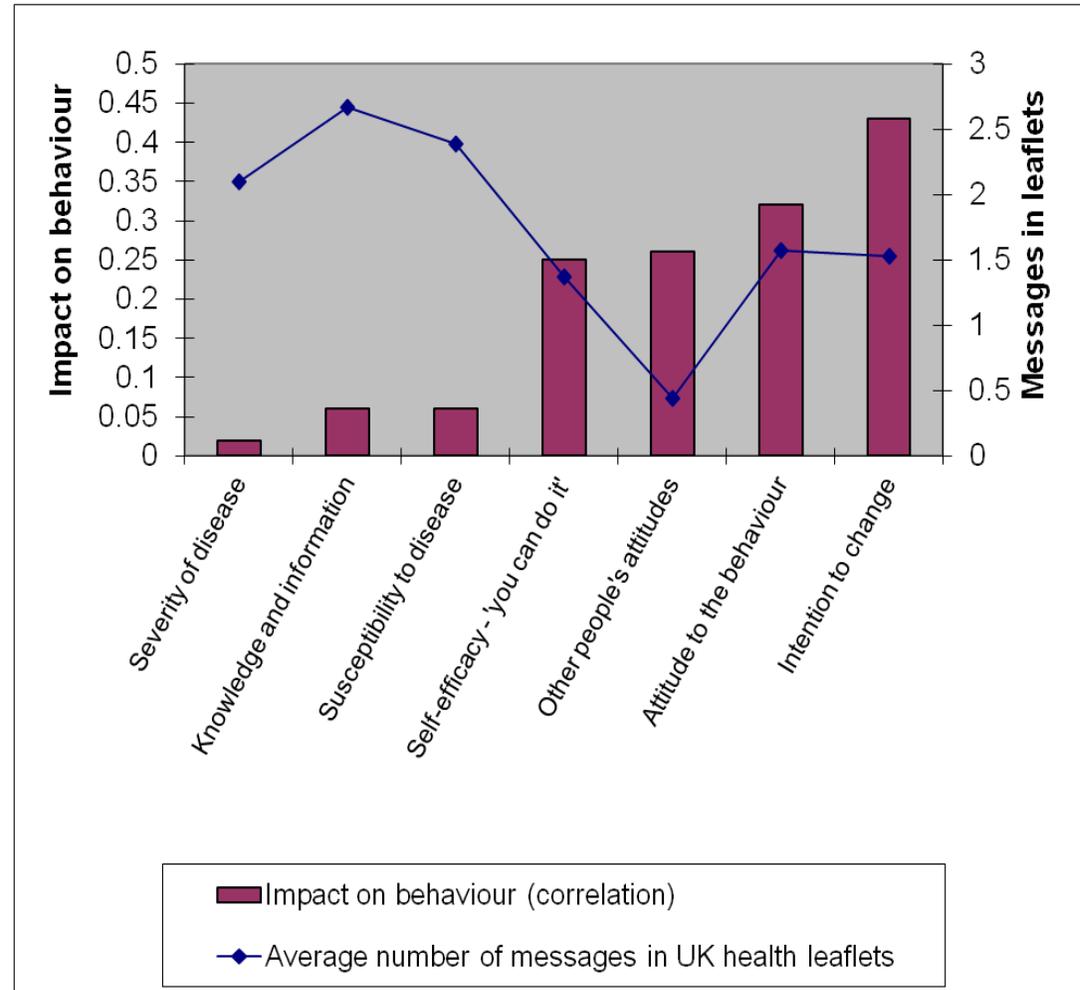
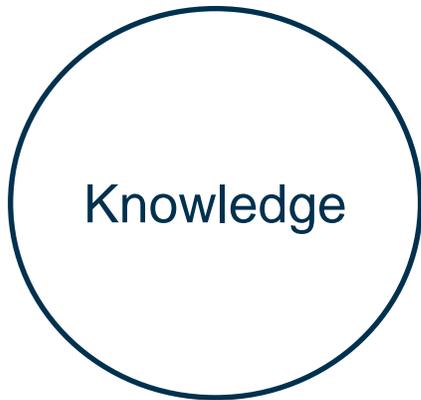
# Risks

- Due to their mental or physical state, vulnerable people have a bigger chance of causing a fire.
- Have difficulty in escaping from their living environment in a timely and safe way.
- 50% of deadly victims because of a residential fire of is 65 years or older (Institute for Safety (2018))
- Elderly people are six times more likely to get injured in the event of a fire
- Burns are much more difficult to treat due to their older skin
- Elderly people are much more prone to the effects of inhaling smoke

# How to reach the vulnerable community?

- Technical provisions
- Improving fire-safe behaviour
- How do you convey your message at this moment?
  - Use of arguments
  - Trying to convince the target group
  - Talk about the target group → what do we think needs to be done?
- The way of sharing information is decisive

# Improving fire-safe behaviour



Halpern et al.  
 (UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit,  
 2004).  
*Personal Responsibility and Changing  
 Behaviour: the state of knowledge and its  
 implications for public policy.* HMSO,  
 London.

# Improving fire-safe behaviour of the elderly

- What we used to do:
  - Sharing information in presentations
  - Lot of subjects
  - Focusing on knowledge
  - Tell elderly people what they need to do
- What we are working on:
  - Objective: develop an intervention to change behaviour of elderly people to improve their fire-safe behaviour
  - Focus on risk behaviours
  - Performing research into current behaviour and determinants of behaviour
  - Talking with target group, involve them
  - Develop interventions based on research

## Key message

- If nothing is done, the number of fire casualties among vulnerable groups will increase rapidly in the coming years → interventions are needed
- Avoid the pitfall of talking about the target group: involve vulnerable community in development interventions
- Keep working on interventions, invest in research
- Gain insight in risk factors and determinants
- Sharing knowledge is not enough