



**Pan American
Health
Organization**

*Regional Office of the
World Health Organization*

Health of Older Adults

Latin America and the
Caribbean

PAHO/2003

Plan

- Why is demography important for aging in LAC?
- Health in older adults
- Public Health actions for the decade

Why does the demographic origin of aging matter?

- Period conditions for older adults
 - Poverty, malnutrition
 - Double exposure to infectious and chronic diseases
 - New nutritional regime (“nutritional transition”)
- Cohort conditions for elderly people
 - Selection effects
 - Nutritional status and illness exposure during early childhood

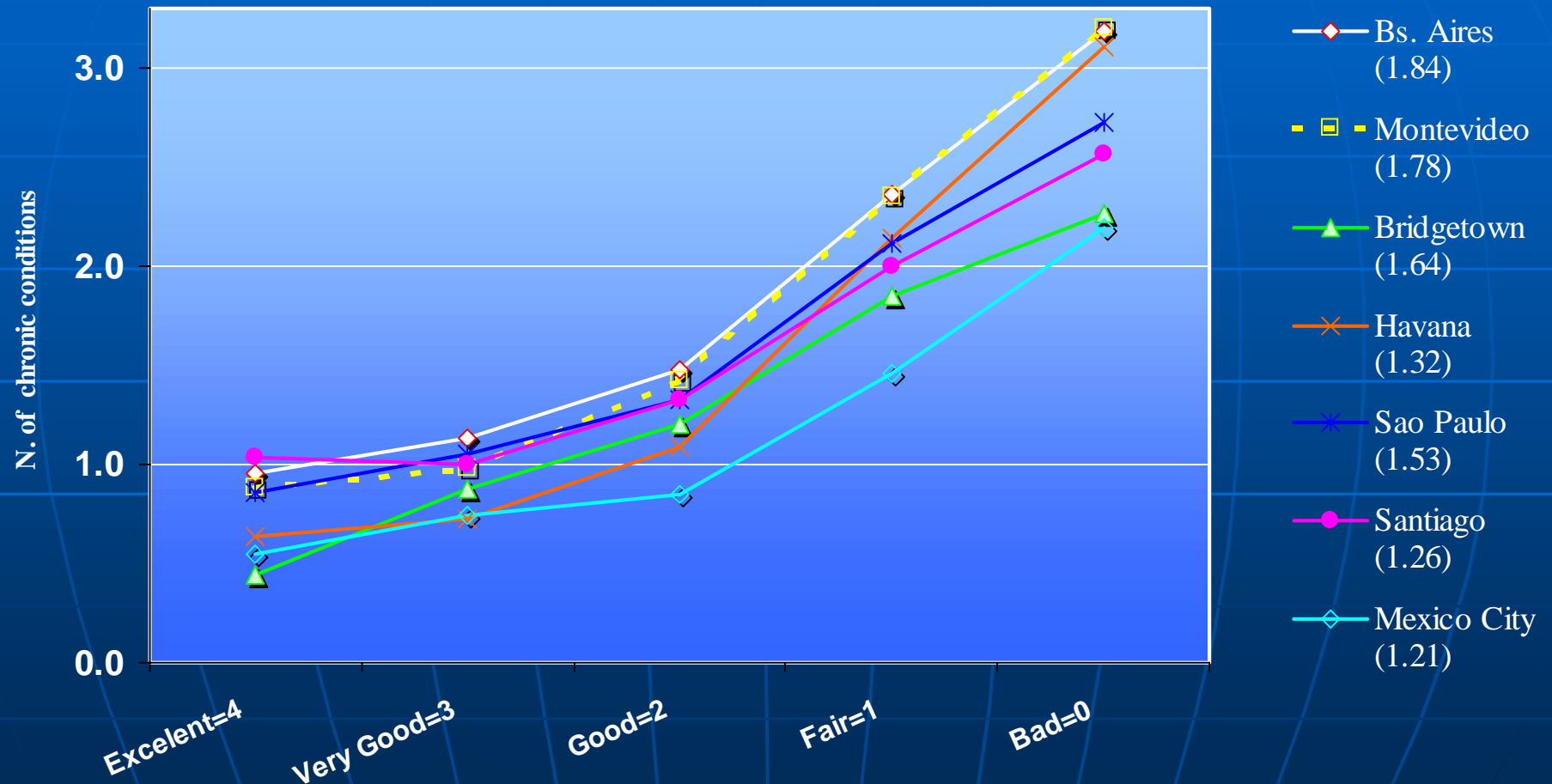
Prediction/conjecture

- As more people survive to age 60 and over...
 - We should see higher prevalence of illnesses associated with cardiovascular system, metabolic (diabetes), and others associated with obesity
 - We should see increases in functional limitations and disabilities
 - We will need to increase public health spending to take care of the health needs of elders

Health in old age

- The majority of older persons report that their health is not good.

Older Adults (60 +): Self-assessed health according to number of chronic conditions (including depression) by city (%)



Healthy lifestyles by levels of education

How many elders do not smoke, do regular physical activity and are not overweight?

- 5% with less than 3 years of education
- 10% with 3 or more years of education

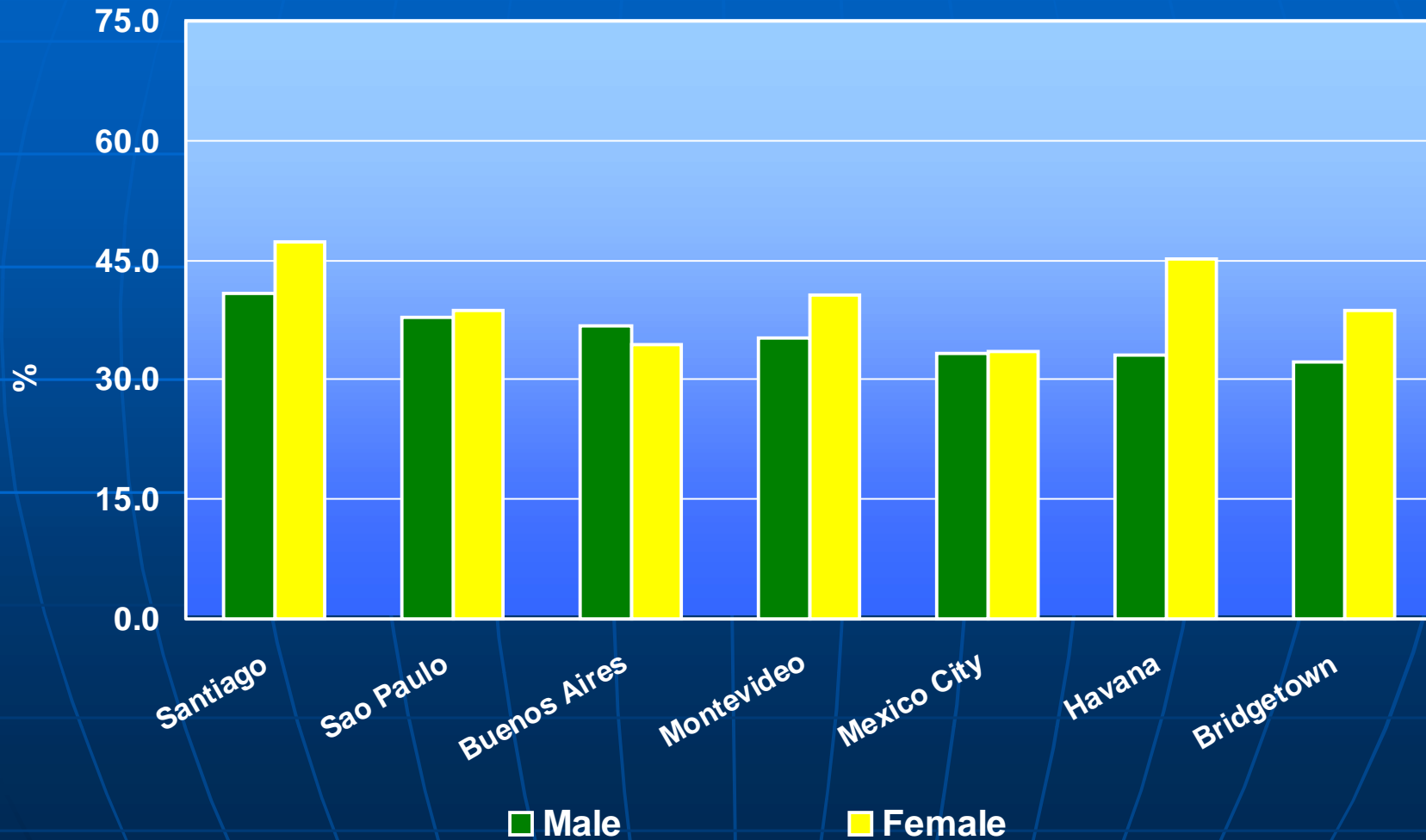
Modifiable risk factors

- Physical activity
 - 3 out of 4 elders do not engage in vigorous physical activity
- Nutrition
 - 61% are overweight
- Smoking
 - 1 out of 4 older men smoke

Public Health Response

- Develop base line for malnutrition, physical activity and smoking in the community
- Develop nutrition and physical activity initiatives - set targets and measure success
- Include older persons in all smoking cessation campaigns

Older Adults (60+) reporting at least one life threatening condition – By sex (%)



Public Health Response

- Reorient primary health care to promote and protect the health of older persons
- Implement preventive medicine protocols for older persons and provide universal coverage for targeted interventions
- Monitor, evaluate, implement changes and continue to evaluate using an evidence-based approach to community health interventions.

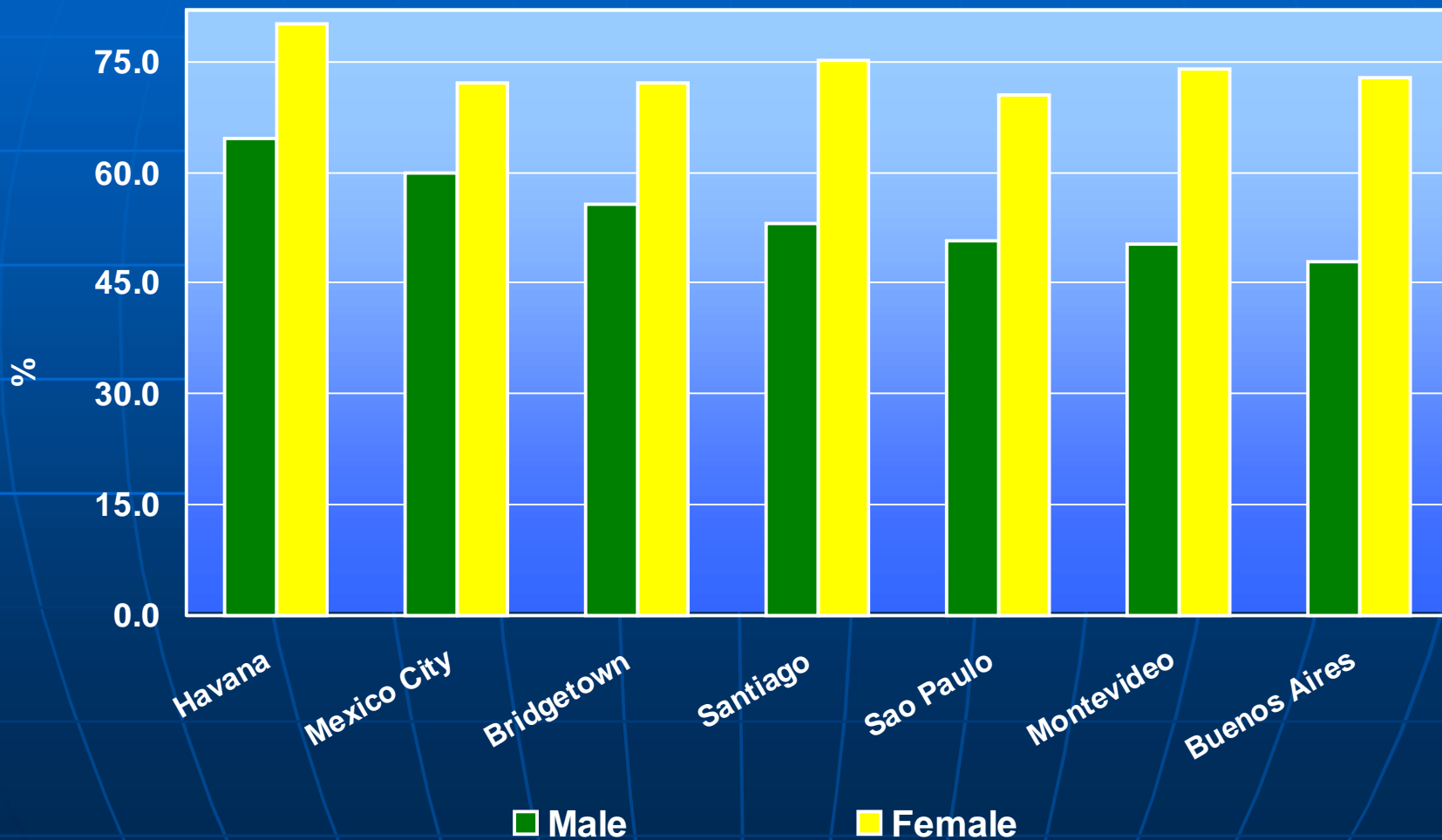
Health Care Services for Older Persons

Community health - health education

Primary Health Care

**Hospital
specialized care
long term care**

Older Adults (60+) reporting at least one disabling condition – By sex (%)



Barriers to Health Care Services

- Policy barriers
- Provider barriers
- User barriers

Who cares for elders?

- Health care professionals without training in the medical care of older persons
- Community health workers without the supervision or the tools to care for older adults
- Family caregivers without the support of the community

Public Health Response

- National plan for the development of health professionals trained in the medicine of older persons
- Community training programs for informal caregivers and family members

Summary

Action plan for the implementation of Madrid from a public health perspective:

- information system
- extend social protection to the most vulnerable older persons
- reorient primary health care to meet the health needs of older persons
- have targets for the development of human resources for an aging society
- develop a national policy for long term care