

# SUNSCREENS AND CHILDREN AGED LESS THAN 12 YEARS : INTERNATIONAL SURVEY IN 2 HEMISPHERES.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cumulative sun exposure and sunburn during childhood are the main preventable causes of skin cancers. Indeed, 50-80% of cumulative exposure occurs during early childhood. The World Health Organization recommend the use of sunscreens during sun exposure as well as to avoid or limit sun exposure during the hottest hours of the day, i.e. between 11:00 and 17:00.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To describe the children's behavior towards the use of sunscreens. This international e-survey was conducted among national representative samples from 7 countries of parents or grandparents of children aged 12 or under who care for their (grand)children for at least 2 weeks during the summer holidays. To take into account the summer period, the survey was conducted at the end of August in 5 countries of the Northern Hemisphere: France, Germany, Spain, Italy and the United States and in January in Australia and Brazil.

## RESULTS

A total of 8,120 parents/grandparents answered the survey related to the behavior of children towards the use of sunscreen. Of these, 98.0% acknowledged that their children were exposed to the sun in some way, and 70.0% were at the hottest hours of the day of whom, only 32.7% were used one sun protection measure.

Globally, 96.7% of children were sun protected used at least one mean of protection; hat or cap (76.6%), sunglasses (58.6%), and sunscreen (94.6%).

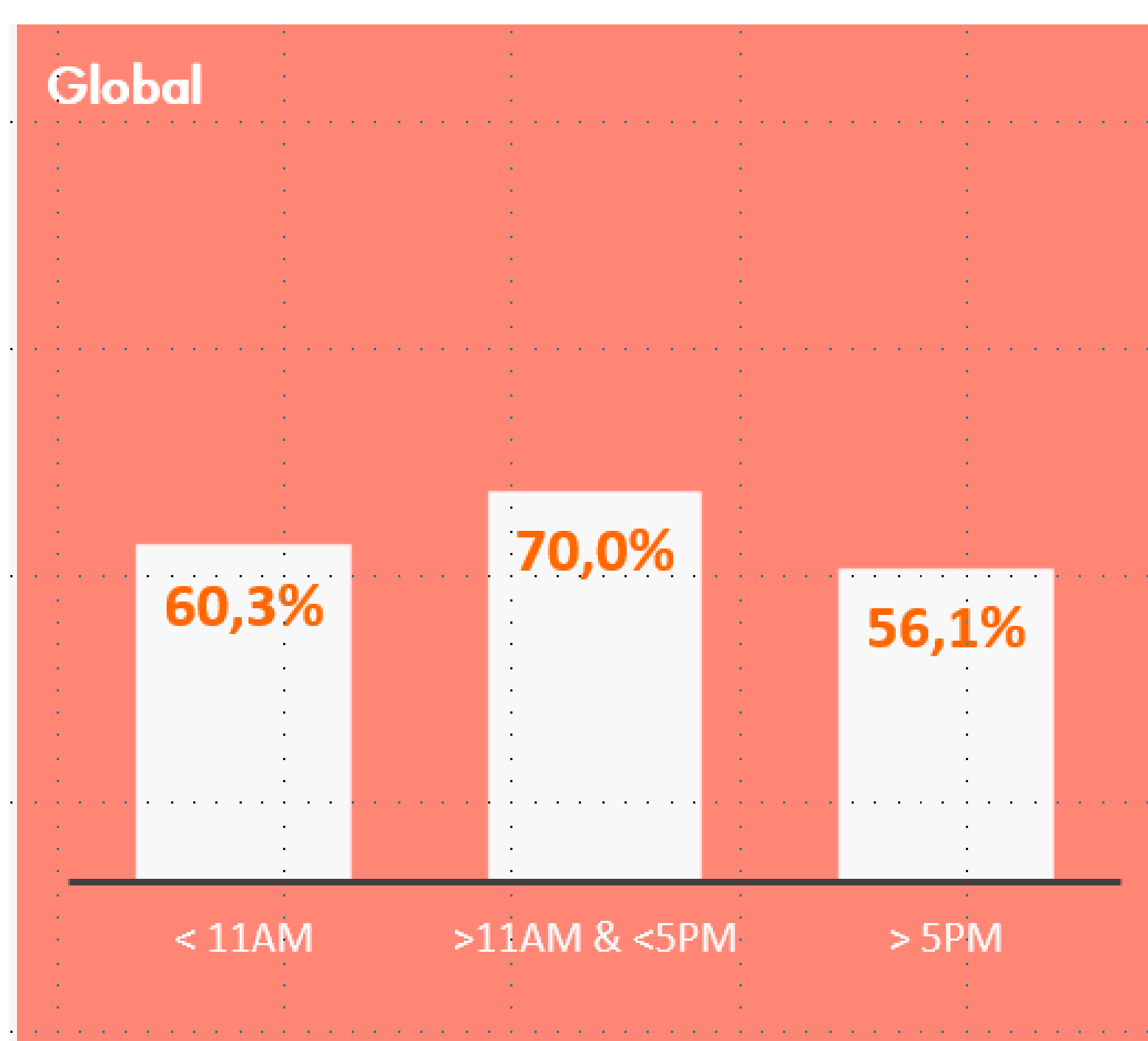
From those using sunscreen, 86.4% used a product specifically labelled for children. Surprisingly, only 18.5% received repeated applications of sunscreen (every 2 hours) during sunny days falling to 10.5% on days where the sun was hidden by clouds.

When specifically looking at children preferences, 51.3% of these expressed the wish to apply sunscreen by themselves [until 57.8% for children over 6 years old]. This trend was observed in all countries at a certain degree [41.3% in France, 41% Italy, 45.6% in Germany, 51.7% in Spain, 54.5% in the USA, 69.2% in Brazil and 58.2% in Australia].

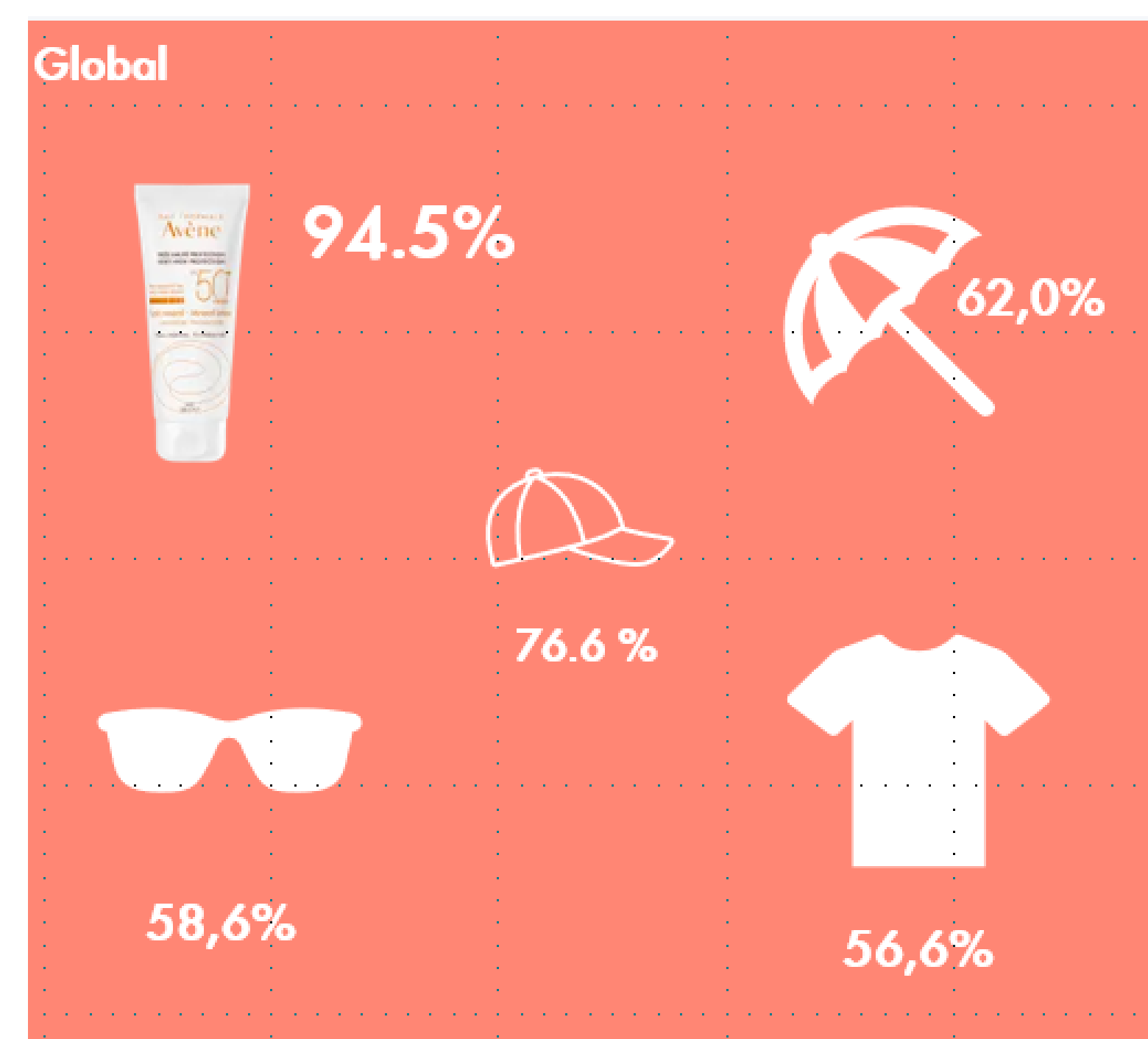
When asking parents "Do your children understand the importance of applying sunscreens", 84.6% answered Yes [77.5% in Italy to 92.9% in Brazil].

In addition, 57.3% of the children thought the product smelled good, 42.1% thought it was pleasant, and 7.9% said it causes itchy.

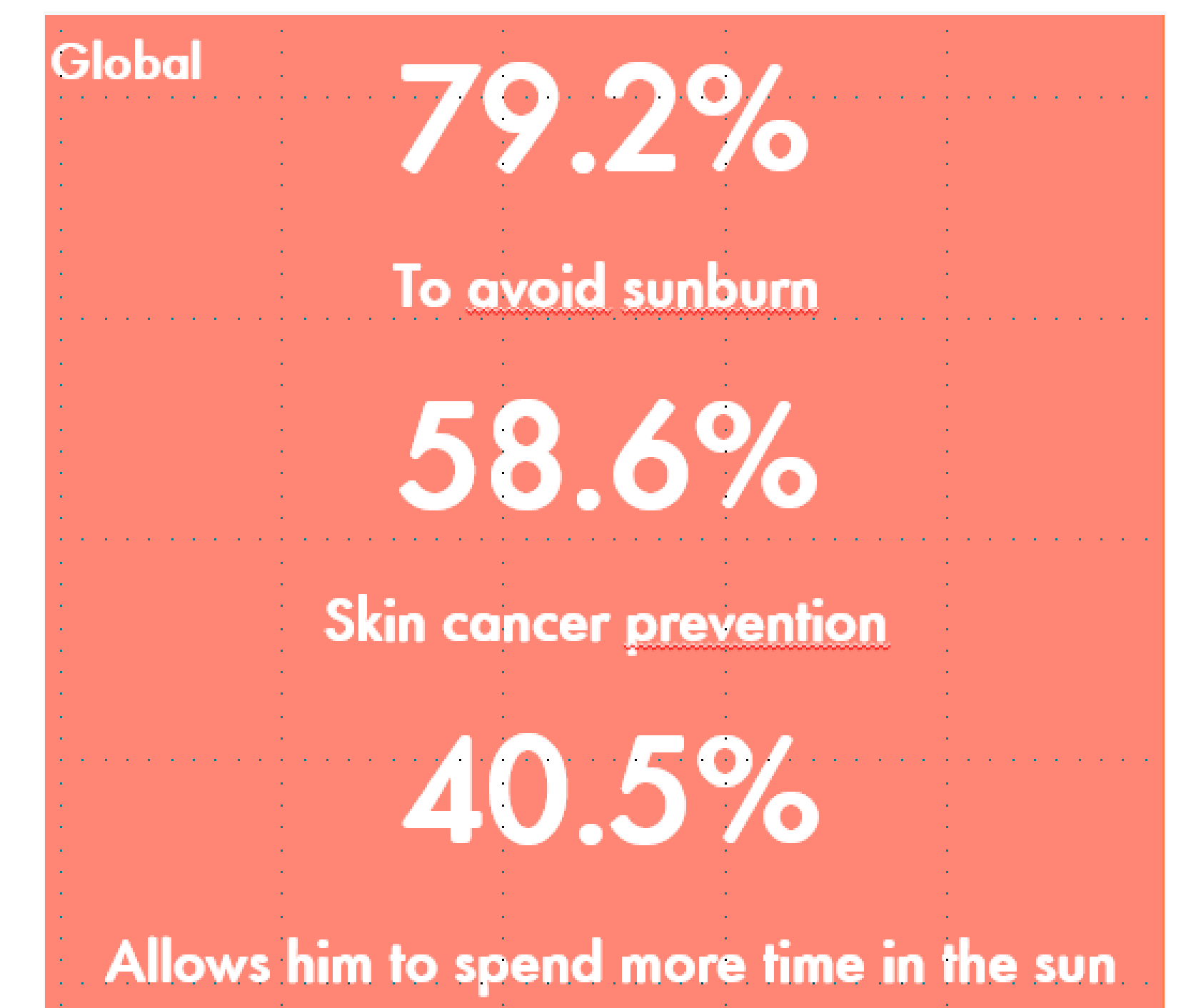
**Child exposure time  
in the sun**



**Protection of the child  
in the sun**



**Motivation to use  
sun protection products**



## DISCUSSION

For more than 30 years, health authorities have been conducting annual sun prevention campaigns, but we note that many do not comply with them.

The fact that one out of two children express the wish to apply sunscreen by himself with 2 out of 3 declaring to have understood the importance of this gesture. This particular information is a matter of hope in the success of future public health campaigns aiming to alert on the risk of skin cancer associated with sun exposure.

**Conflict of interest :** This study received funding from Patient Centricity by Pierre Fabre