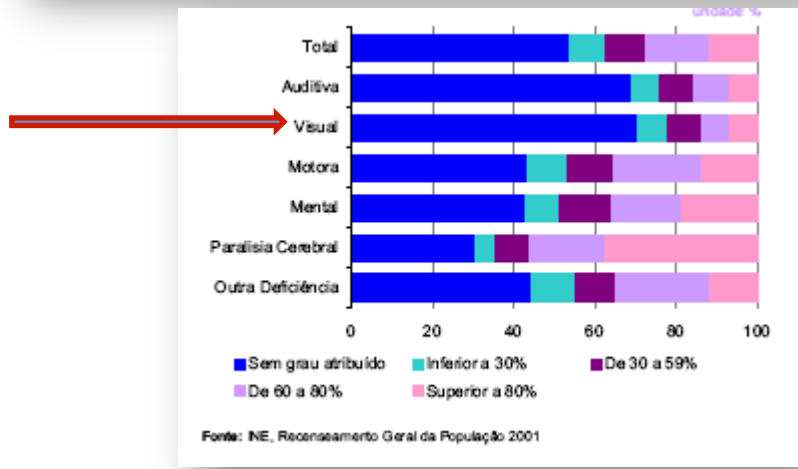
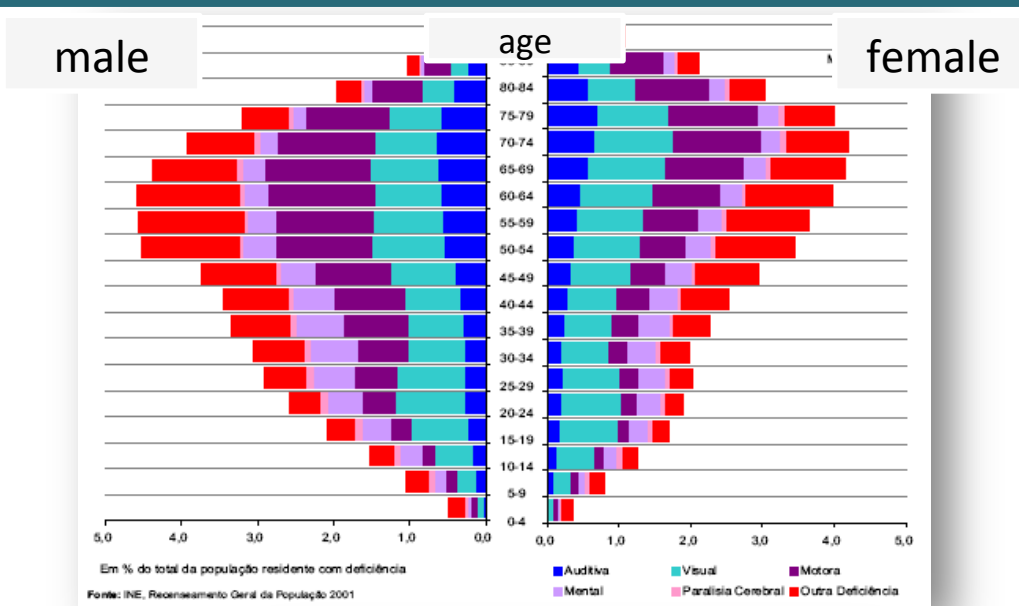


Visual Impairment in Portugal

Do we know the real numbers?



Top graph shows the percentage of the visual impaired (light blue) amongst the population with self reported disabilities based in the national Census 2001.

It is estimated that 170 000 people have visual impairment, there is no established low vision care network to serve this population

We are not sure about these numbers, why?

- 1) Bottom graph, 70% do not register (dark blue) for the purpose of tax reduction and other social help!?
- 2) Top graph, visual impairment is highly common in the range 24-29 years old!?

Optometrists and low vision care in PT

Why vision impairment is not covered by professional low vision services (LVS) ?

PAST

Optometrists were almost unaware that low vision care was part of their job, low vision was seen as solidarity

Facts

- 👎 Training was not available at Optometry Schools
- 👎 LVS regarded as non-profit business
- 👎 People not referred to LVS by their eye care providers

PRESENT

Optometrists are getting motivated to low vision care, they know what care they can provide and some are investing in their practices

Facts

- 👍 LV training and research is now available at Optometry Schools
- 👍 The aging population will increase the demand/profits (?)
- 👍 Patients are getting referred by Ophthalmologists due to better professional relationship
- 👍 Patients now know that they can look for LVS
- 👎 Optometrists not included in ophthalmology departments

FUTURE

Optometrists will increase their role in low vision care because it will be necessary and better for their business

Facts

- 👍 Optometrists will be the better qualified professionals for LVS
- 👍 Public health care system will include LVS with Optometrists (?)
- 👎 Lower incomes will reduce de private request for LVS