Co-funded by the European Union

ERA PROJECT: UNDERSTANDING THE RURAL ELDERLY

Cognitive Profile & Cultural Nuances Across Lithuania, Turkey, & Bulgaria

The Universal Cognitive Profile

All groups show Preserved Crystallized Intelligence (vocabulary, math, proverbs) but Vulnerable Fluid Intelligence(working memory, attention, new spatial tasks).

Bulgaria
The "High-Education, High-Anxiety" Profile

Key Traits: This cohort has the highest level of education and the highest rate of reported chronic diseases (67.4%). High anxiety was observed, specifically the fear of being labeled "demented".

Critical Sensory Need: The issue is vision—nearly 80% wear glasses.

Toolkit Recommendation: High Contrast and Large Print are mandatory. Activities must be presented as "brain training" or "arts" to mitigate anxiety.

Lithuania
The "Critical and Private" Profile

Key Traits: Respondents were critical of the test, calling questions "too simple". Reported the highest frequency of daily forgetfulness (54% forget location of items). Only 23% reported chronic diseases due to a reluctance to share health data.

Cultural Clash: Resistance to using recycled materials ("trash art"); a preference for "higher culture" activities.

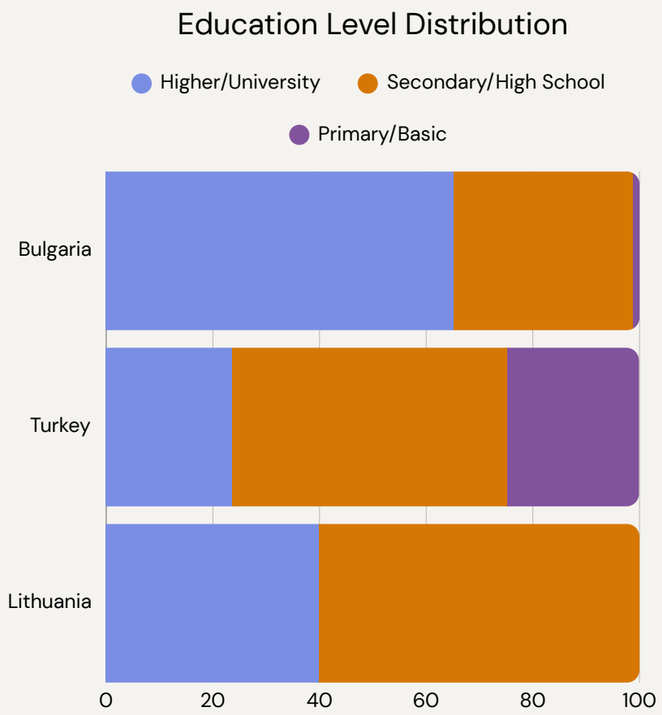
Toolkit Recommendation: Avoid over-simplification to counter boredom/criticism. Incorporate "high culture" elements (music, drama).

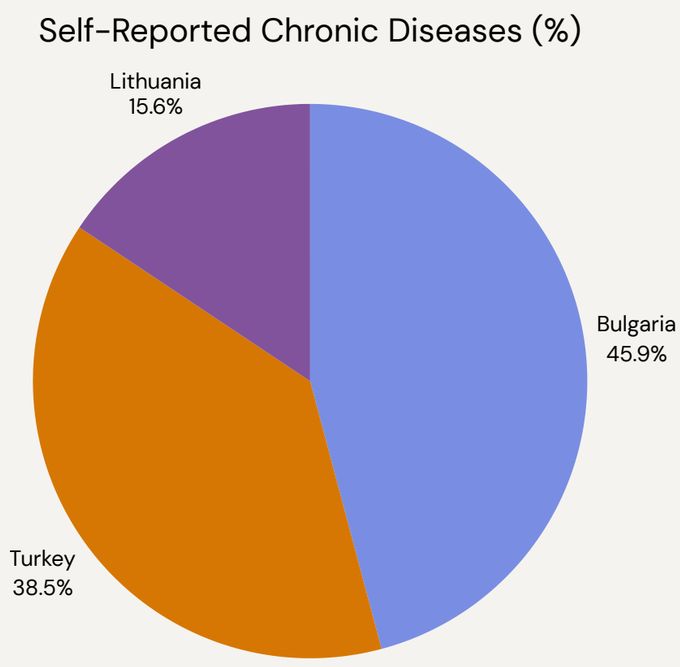
Turkey
The "Diverse" Profile

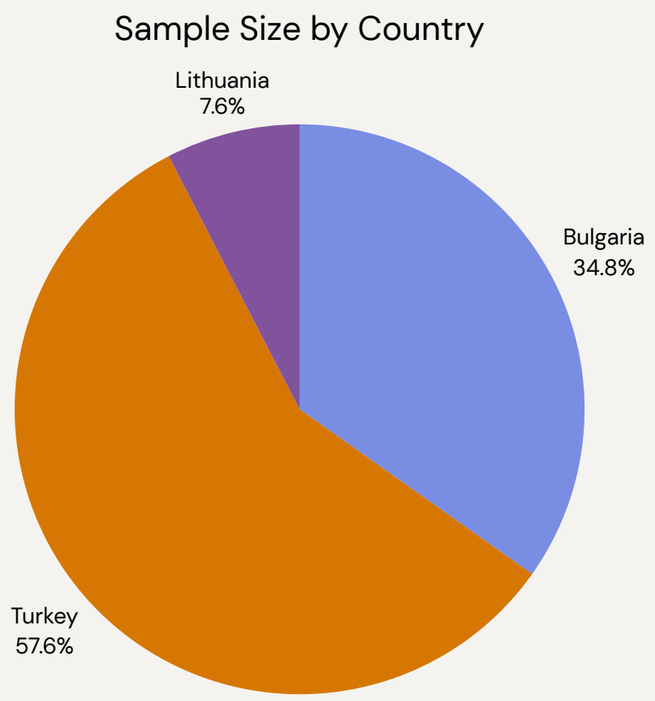
Key Traits: The most robust and representative sample , with balanced education distribution. Shows the highest concentration of hearing aid users (18.7%).

Key Cognitive Finding: The group struggled with abstract visual tasks (Counting Triangles: 58.2% correct).

Toolkit Recommendation: Facilitators must speak loudly and clearly, face-to-face, to ensure clear communication. Requires clear, unambiguous instructions.







ERA Toolkit Design Implications (WP3)

Accessibility is Non-Negotiable

Visual: Must use large fonts and high contrast (for Bulgaria's 79.3% with visual aids).
Audio: Facilitators must be trained for clear, face-to-face communication (for Turkey's 18.7% hearing aid users).

Engagement Strategy

Technology: Adopt a Hybrid Approach; rely on facilitators or a "buddy system," not independent digital use.
Content: Leverage cultural strengths like proverbs, metaphors, and storytelling as entry points.
Tone: Activities should be "adult" in nature, presented as "brain training" or "arts," not "testing."

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