

# Why Psychosocial Risk Must Be a Bigger OSH Priority

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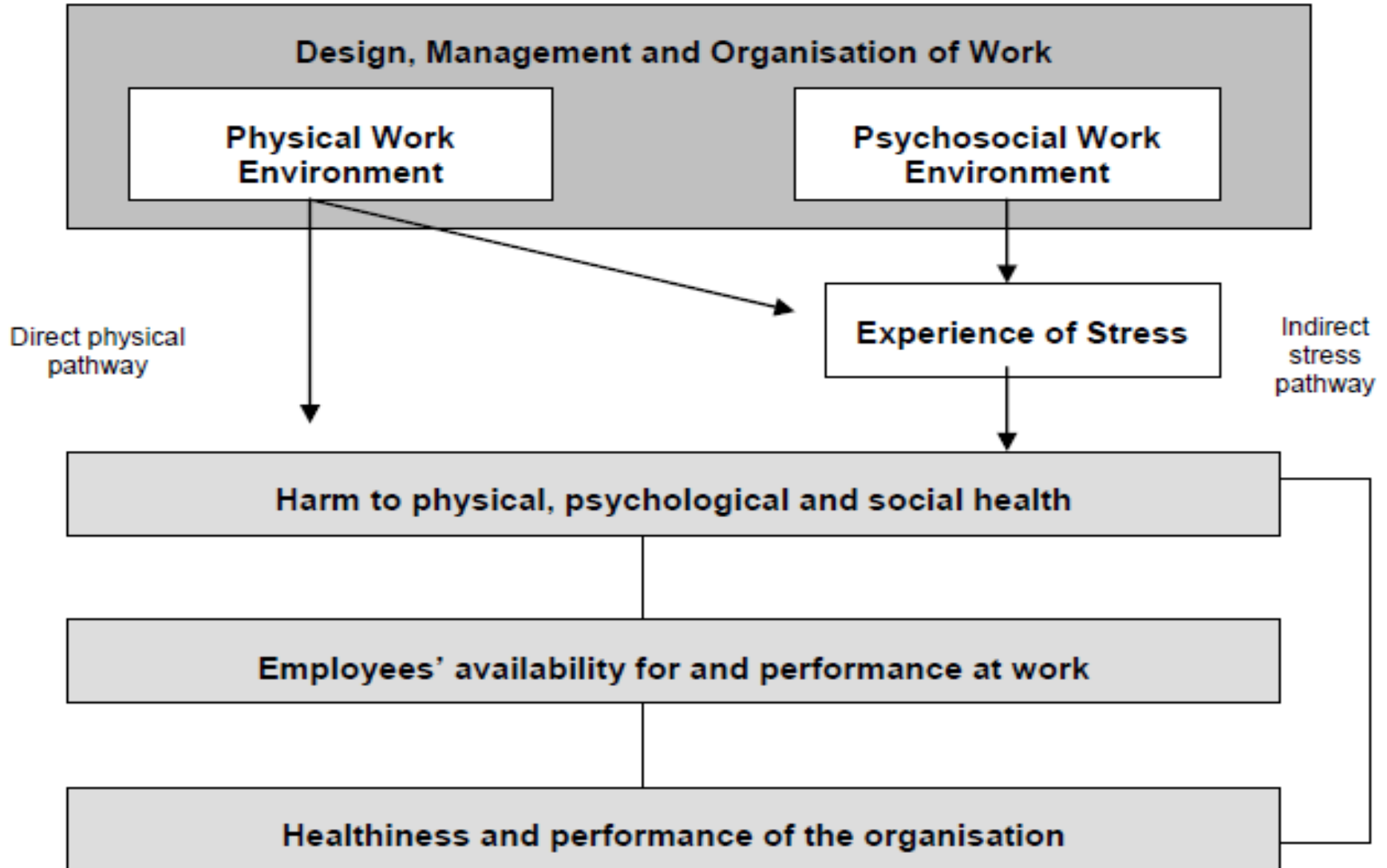
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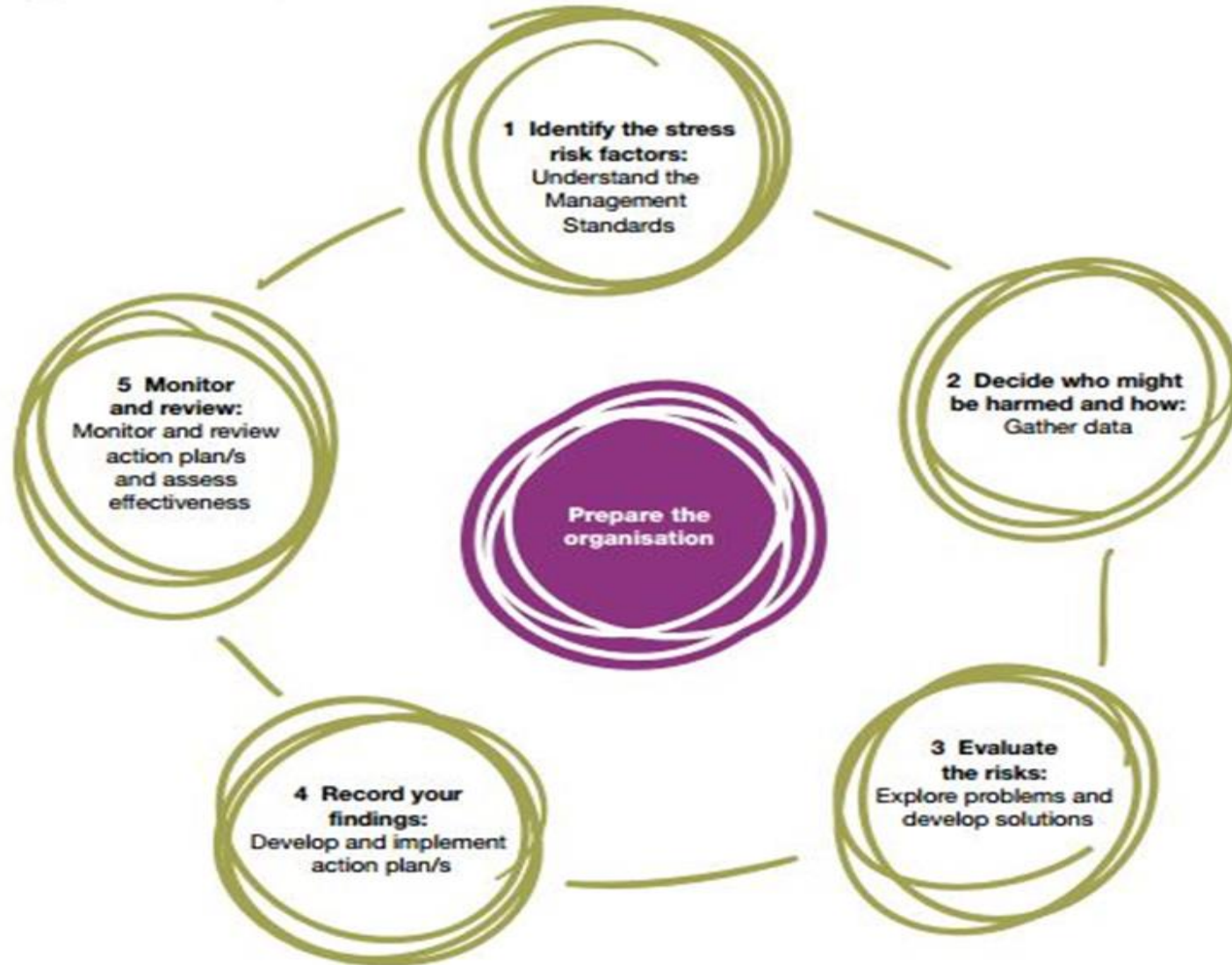
# Psychosocial 'Risk', Good Work & Health

- How helpful is the concept of 'Risk'?
- Conceptions of 'Good Work'
- What the research says about 'Good Work' & Health outcomes
- Core components of 'Good Work'
- Employer Interventions
- Future trends

# The Dual Pathway Hazard-Harm



# HSE Stress Management Standards



# Mental Illness in Europe

- Today, 38 per cent of EU citizens are affected by mental illness
- Only 25 per cent of them receive any treatment
- The direct and indirect costs of mental illness across Europe is over €460bn – or 3.4 per cent of GDP – a significant impact on Productivity
- In some parts of Europe the quickest way to get acute medical care for a severe mental illness is to get arrested

# Conceptions of 'Good Work'



# Good Work and ‘Animating Purpose’

*“If a man has done much he is more contented after his labours than if he had done nothing whatever: for by work he has set his powers in motion.”*

(Immanuel Kant)

# Good Work and ‘Meaning’?

*“Work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor: in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying.”*

(Studs Terkel)



# Is Good Work Fun Work?



# Is Good Work Fun Work?

*In 1940 John Gallo was sacked because he was 'caught in the act of smiling', after having committed an earlier breach of 'laughing with the other fellows', and 'slowing down the line maybe half a minute'*

*(Collinson 2002)*

*"When we are at work we ought to be at work. When we are at play we ought to be ay play. There is no use trying to mix the two."*

*(Henry Ford)*

# Good Work, Engagement & Performance

*“If you want someone to do a good job,  
give them a good job to do.”*

(Frederick Herzberg)

# Good Work & QWL (Cherns, 1975)

- Autonomy is preferable to dependence;
- High levels of skill are preferable to low;
- Learning is good;
- A high degree of self-investment in work is good, provided that the work itself and the work situation offer opportunities for growth and self-realization.

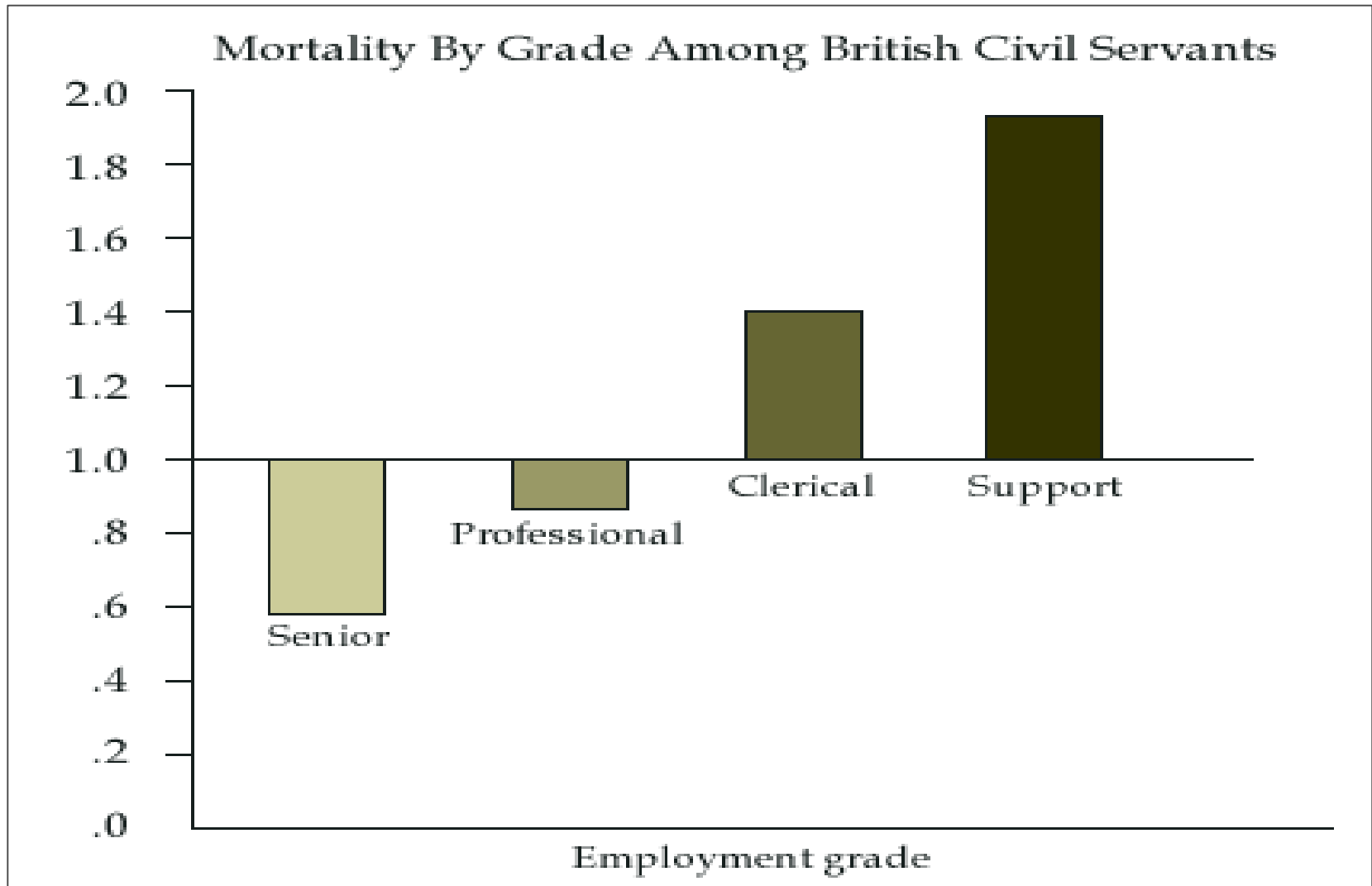
# What the Research Says



# ‘Decent’ or ‘Good’ Work?

- Understandable focus on quantity of jobs but, until recently, less emphasis on quality
- ILO has a ‘Decent Work’ campaign – global focus on conditions, social protection, employment rights
- EWCS (Eurofound) – data on experiences of job demands
- Institute of Health Equity – good work as ‘social determinant’ of health

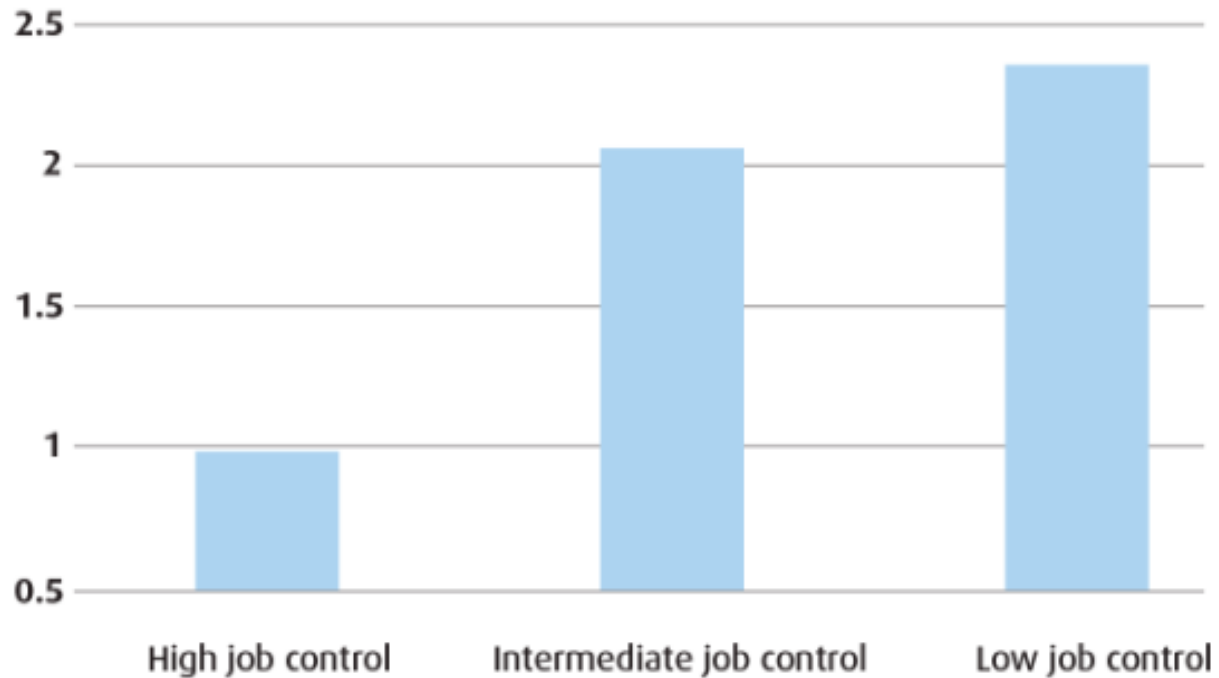
# Whitehall II Study (Marmot et al)



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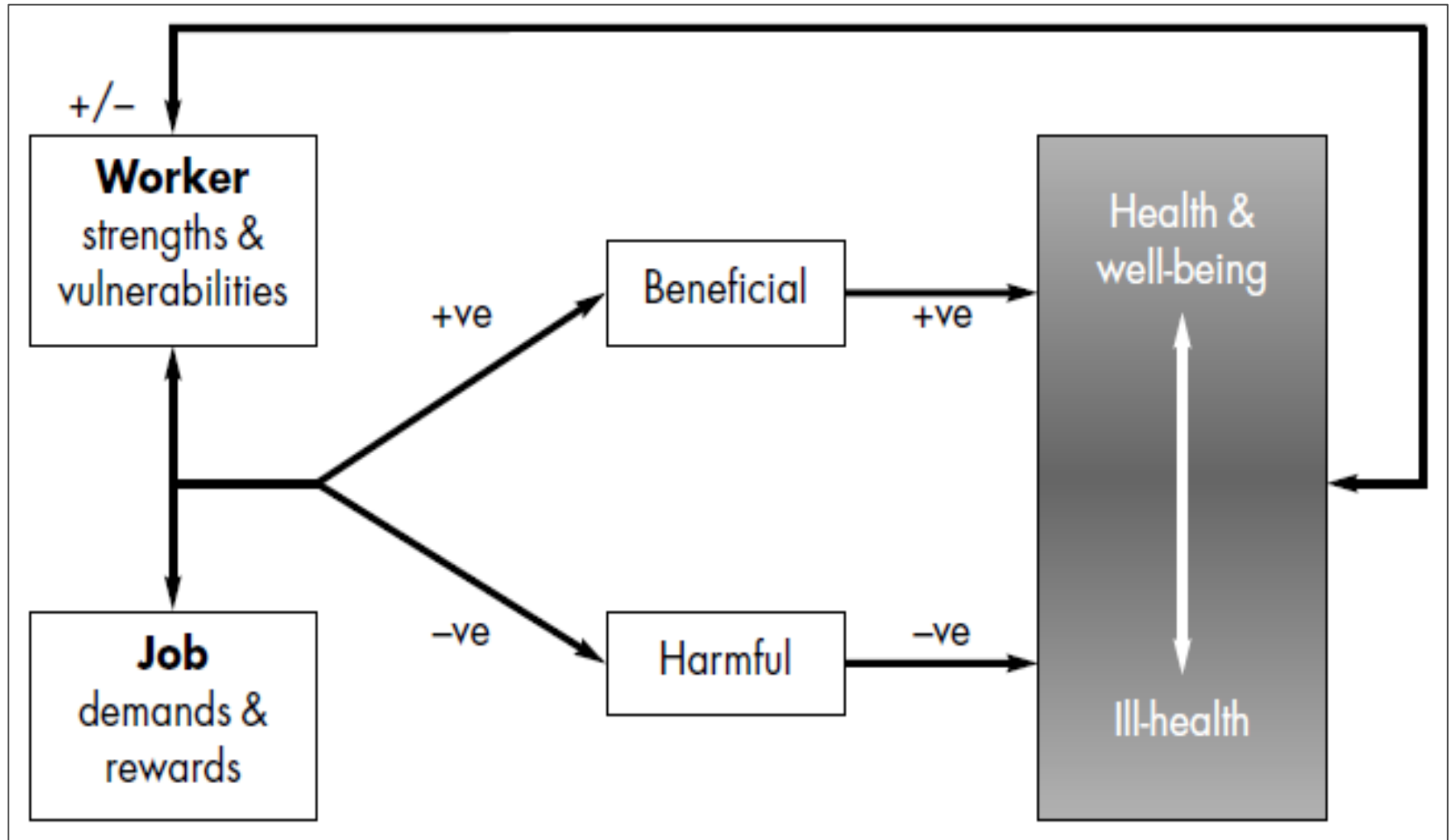
Self-reported job control and coronary heart disease incidence

Likelihood of CHD





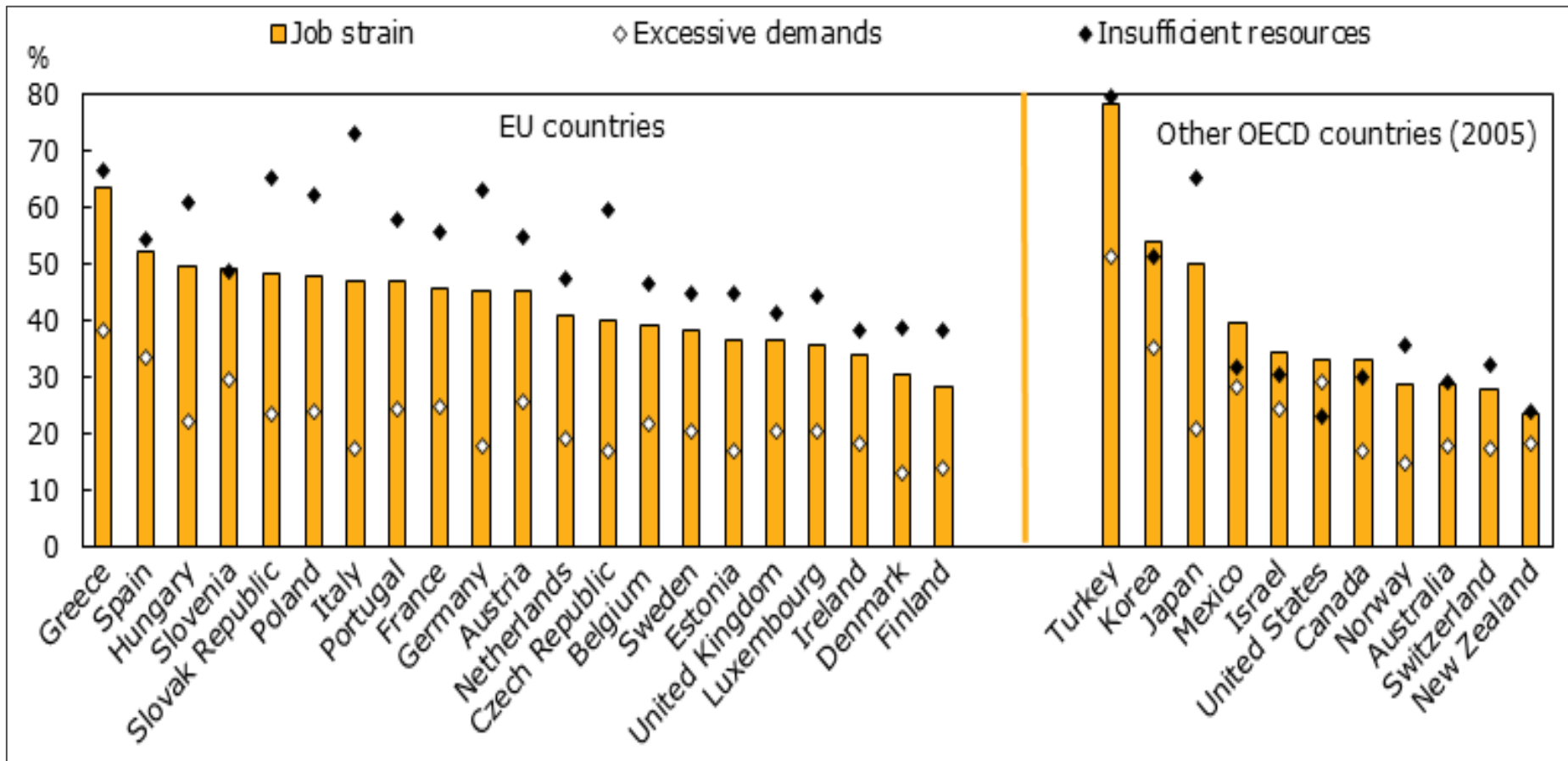
# Waddell & Burton (2006)



# OECD – Job Quality Index

- Looks at both job demands and the resources individuals have to manage these demands
- More emphasis on ‘psychosocial’ risk at work
- International data on ‘job strain’

# Job Quality in EU & Beyond



# Good Work has Therapeutic Benefits

- Positive 'Psychosocial' work environment (Butterworth et al, 2011)
- 'Competitive' employment can support recovery & functional remission for those with severe mental illness (Haro et al, 2007)
- Functional restoration programmes have 85% success rates (Armour, 2016)

# Components of Good Work



# Making 'Good Work', Work



# Is Any Job a 'Good' Job?

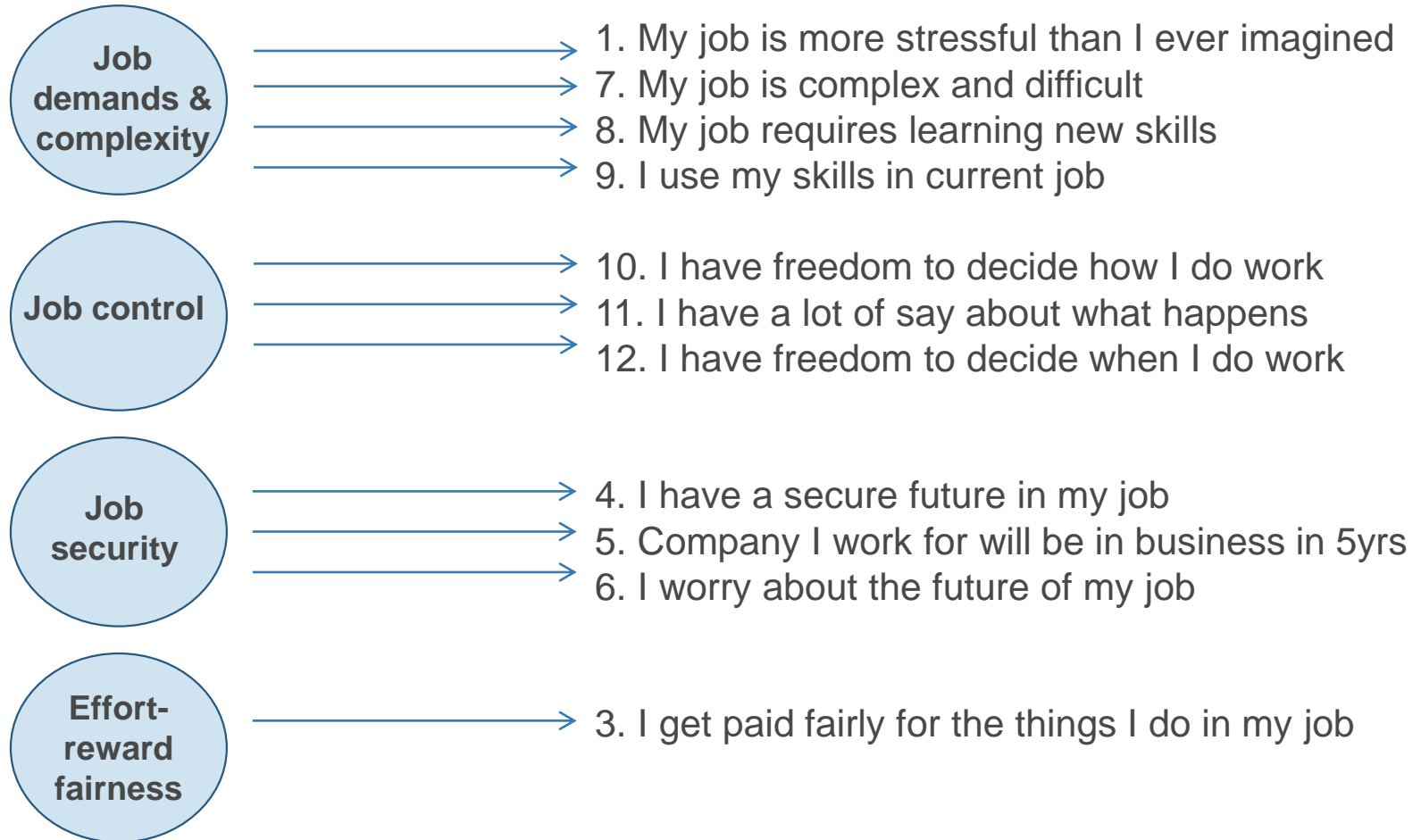
- Being out of work is bad for income, self-esteem, dignity, social inclusion, relationships and health
- Being in even poor quality work which is boring, routine or represents under-employment is widely regarded as a good way for the workless to remain connected to the labour market and to keep the work 'habit'
- BUT...

# A Message from HILDA

- Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey
- Analysis (Butterworth et al, 2011) of seven waves of data from 7,155 respondents of working age (44,019 observations) from a national household panel survey.
- Longitudinal regression models evaluated the concurrent and prospective association between employment circumstances (unemployment and employment in jobs varying in psychosocial job quality) and mental health, assessed by the MHI-5



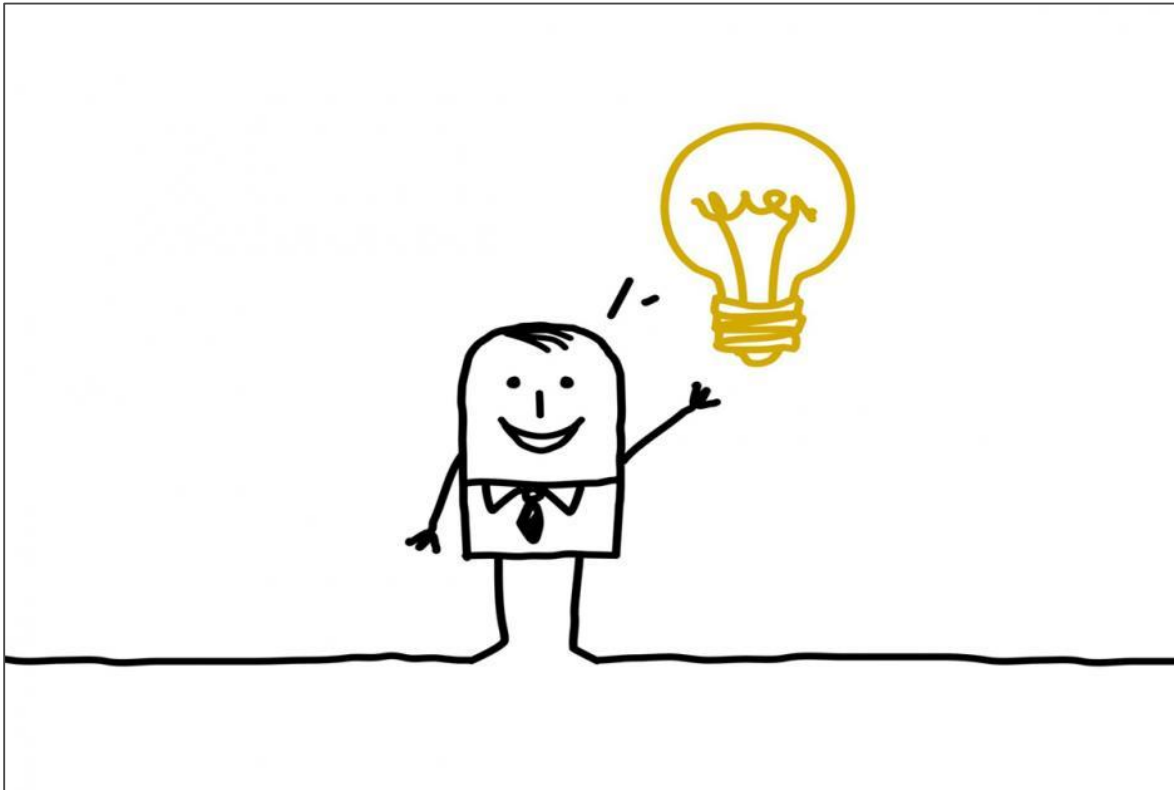
# Psychosocial Job Quality (1)



## Psychosocial Job Quality (2)

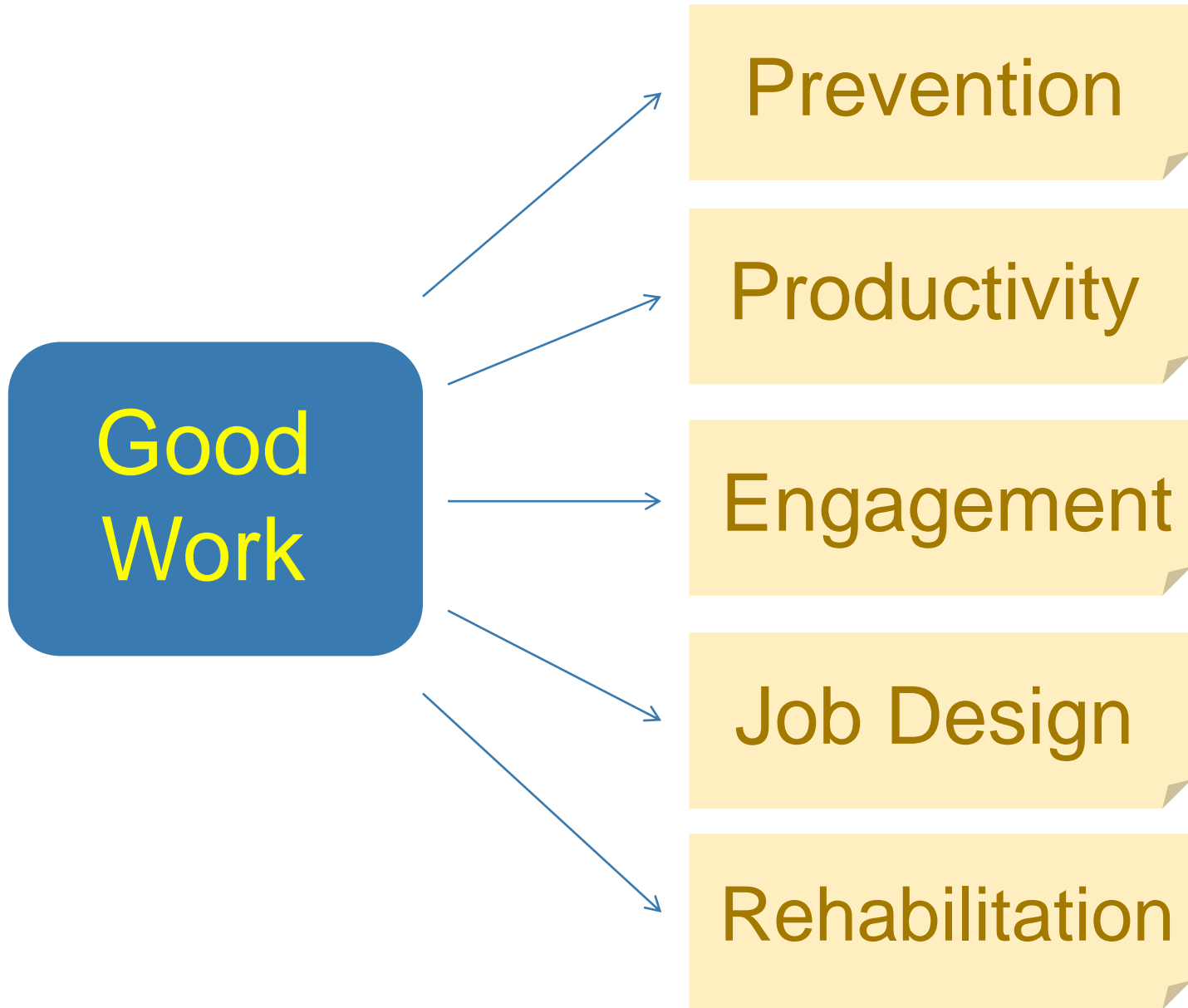
*“As hypothesised, we found that those respondents who were unemployed had significantly poorer mental health than those who were employed. However, the mental health of those who were unemployed was comparable or **more often superior** to those in jobs of the poorest psychosocial quality.”*

# Top Tips for Employers



# Good Work Good Practice

- In many ways 'Good Work' principles inform good HR practice, good line management, good communication and good job design
- Good health, high levels of 'discretionary effort', high performance and good retention rates are all by-products of Good Work



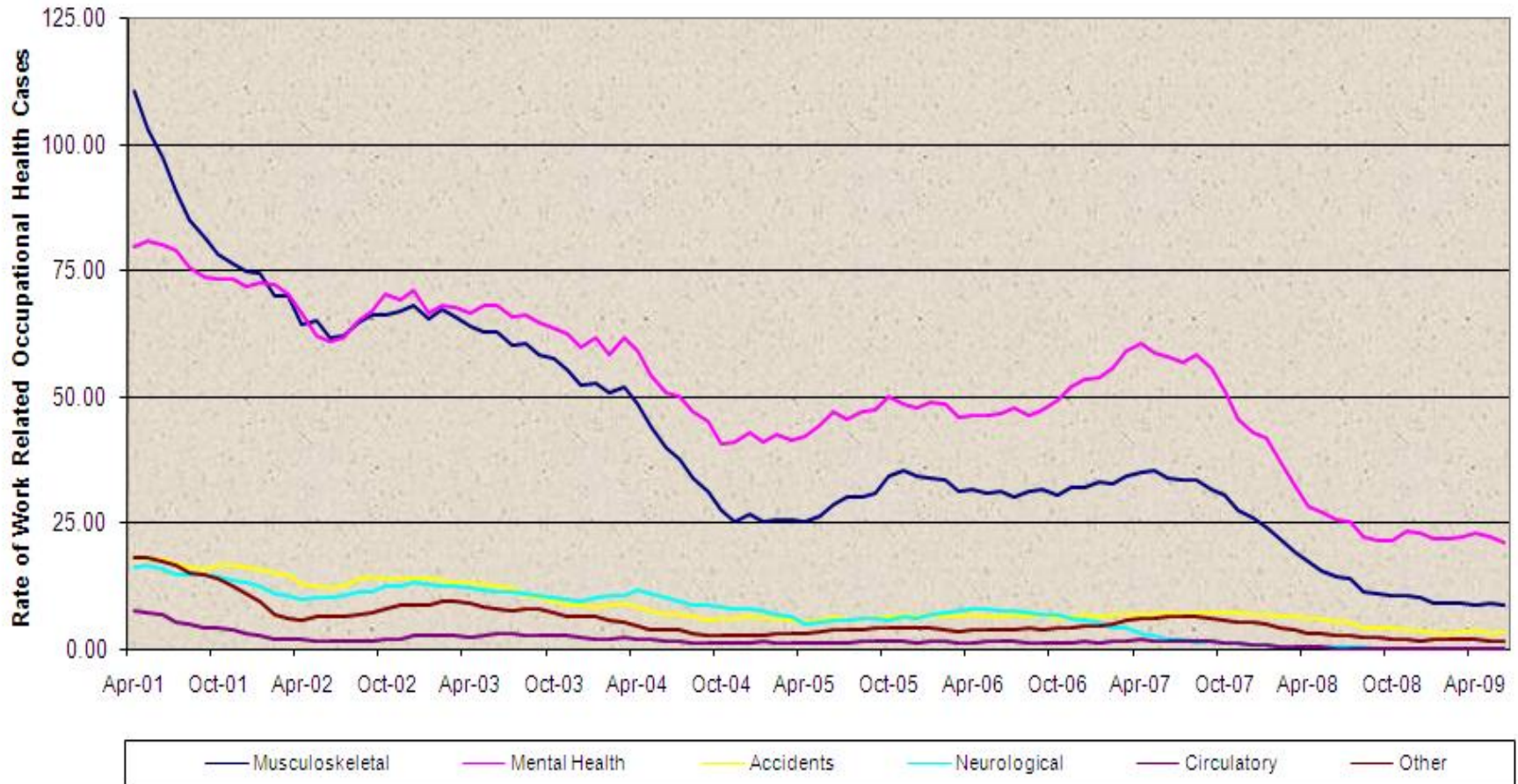
# Making it Happen

- Think about job redesign when recruiting, when responding to a 'right to request' & when supporting RTW
- Invest in line manager capacity-building
- Look at physical & psychosocial risk factors when managing absence
- Establish clear early referral pathways
- Don't over-medicalise 'absence' – job content & relationships at work matter too
- Consider Mental Health as an Asset rather than a Risk

# BT – Line Manager Mental Health Education

## BT Group PLC - Work Related Ill Health

Number of Cases per 10,000 People in Post



Cases meriting referral to the Occupational Health Service (or local equivalent outside the United Kingdom) which are classed by the examining health professional as likely to be due to work activity.

# Resilience – two perspectives

*‘both the capacity to be bent without breaking and the capacity, once bent, to spring back’*



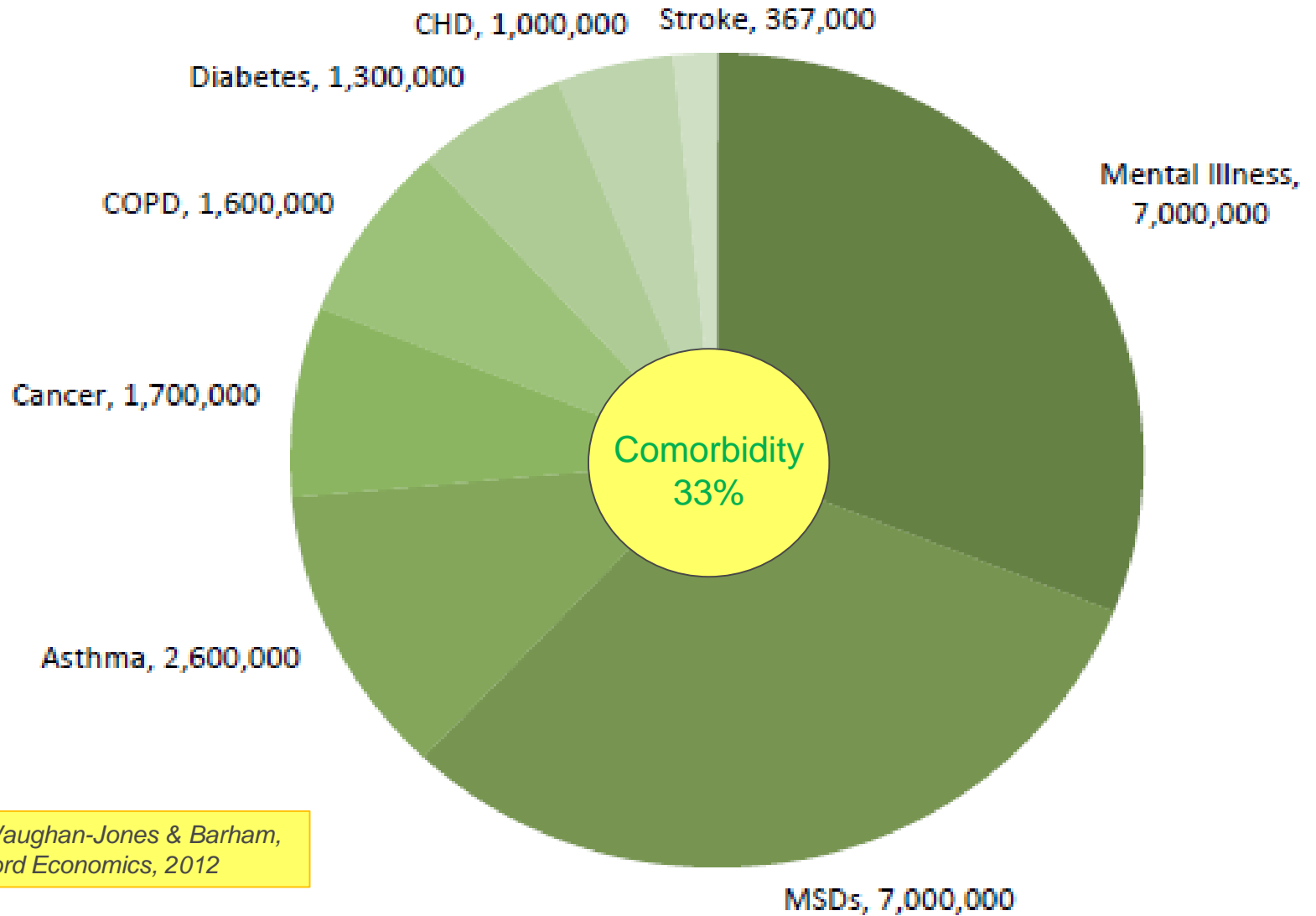
*Or...*



*‘something which helps inoculate our employees against work pressure, ambiguity, poor management and bullying’*



# LTCs in the UK Working Age Population - 2030



Sources: Vaughan-Jones & Barham, 2009; Oxford Economics, 2012



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## Further information:

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