

# Mental Health and the Workplace

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# Links with European Policy Agenda

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- EU goal for economic growth and competitiveness (Lisbon Process)
  - Targets towards **full employment**
  - Mindful of need for **greater social inclusion**
- Sustainability of social welfare systems
- Promotion/ protection of public health
- Occupational safety and health
- Framework Agreements on Stress/ Violence in Workplace
- Sustainable development strategy
- CSR Strategy

# Work and Mental Health

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- Work can be protective to MH
- Social status, sense of identity
- Good MH can help company performance
- Society benefits from economic growth & tax revenues
- But.....poor working environment can lead to undue stress and be adverse to MH

# Employment

- Nature of work changing: dynamic economies in global market
- Increasing sickness absence and reduced work performance
- Increasing early retirement rates
- Increasing long term disability rates
- Major impact on social welfare systems
- Demographic change –older workforce

# Total Costs of Depression in EU



Sobocki et al , J Mental Health Policy & Econ, 2006

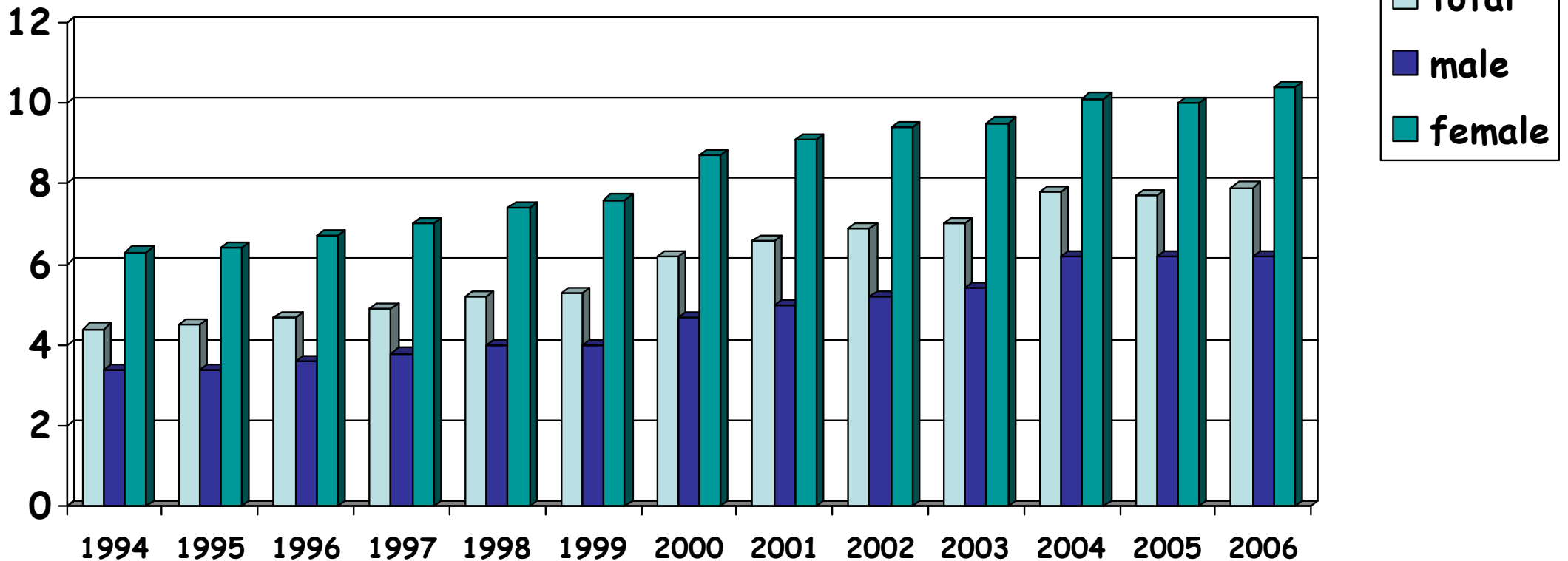
Leal et al, European Heart Journal, 2006

# Presenteeism

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- Significant economic costs associated with 'presenteeism' - work cutback
  - Data in Europe still limited
  - Five times greater than absenteeism (Kessler 1997)
  - Stewart et al (2002) Major depression associated with 7.2 hours per worker per week of lost productive time, or 86% of total time losses
  - WHO Instrument to measure presenteeism available but only used for migraine in Europe?

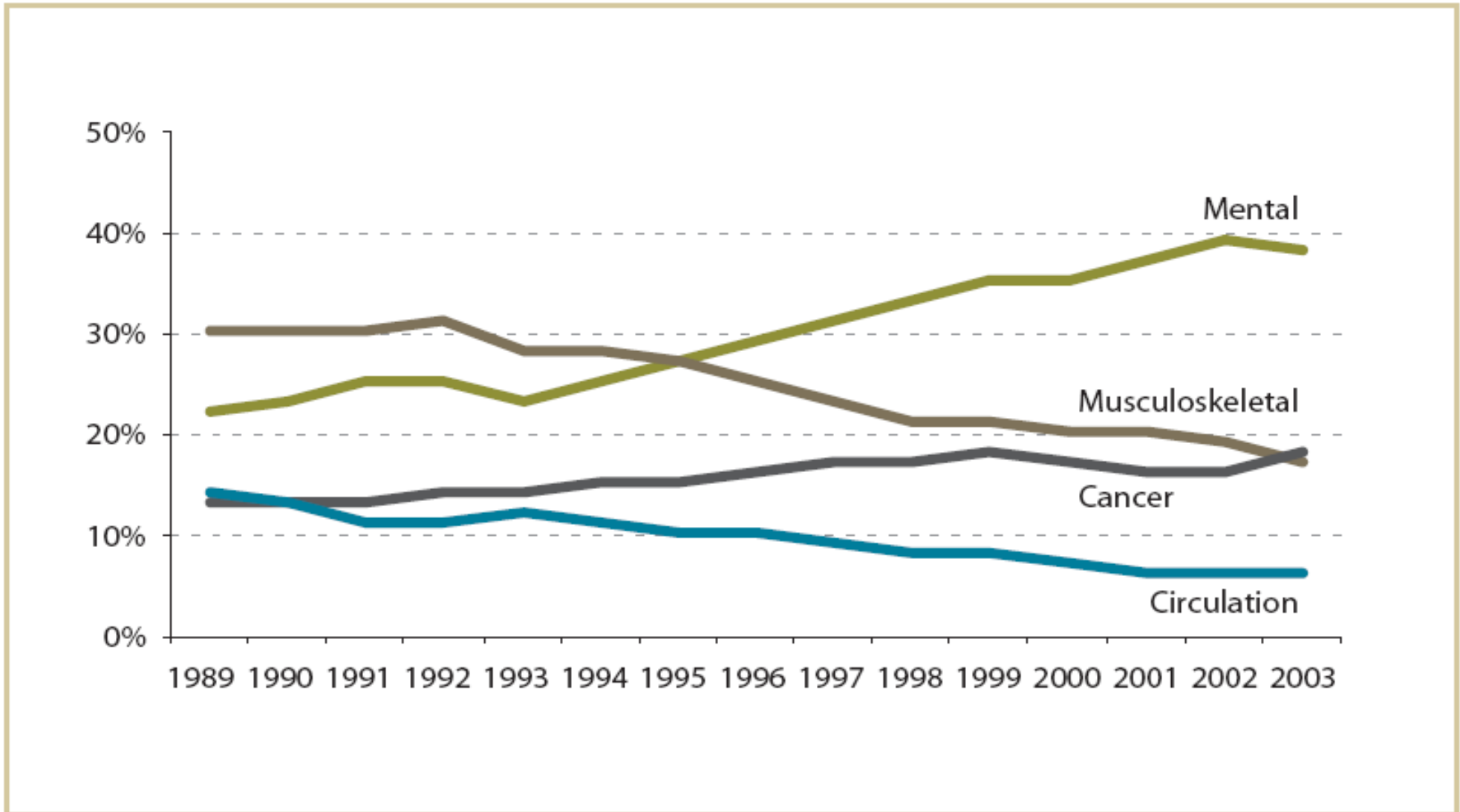
# Absenteeism due to mental illness (AOK Sickness Fund Germany)



**Percentage of absenteeism due to mental illness on total days of absenteeism from 1994 to 2006 for members of the Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse (AOK) which is the biggest sickness fund in Germany**

**Source: Kilian & Becker 2007**

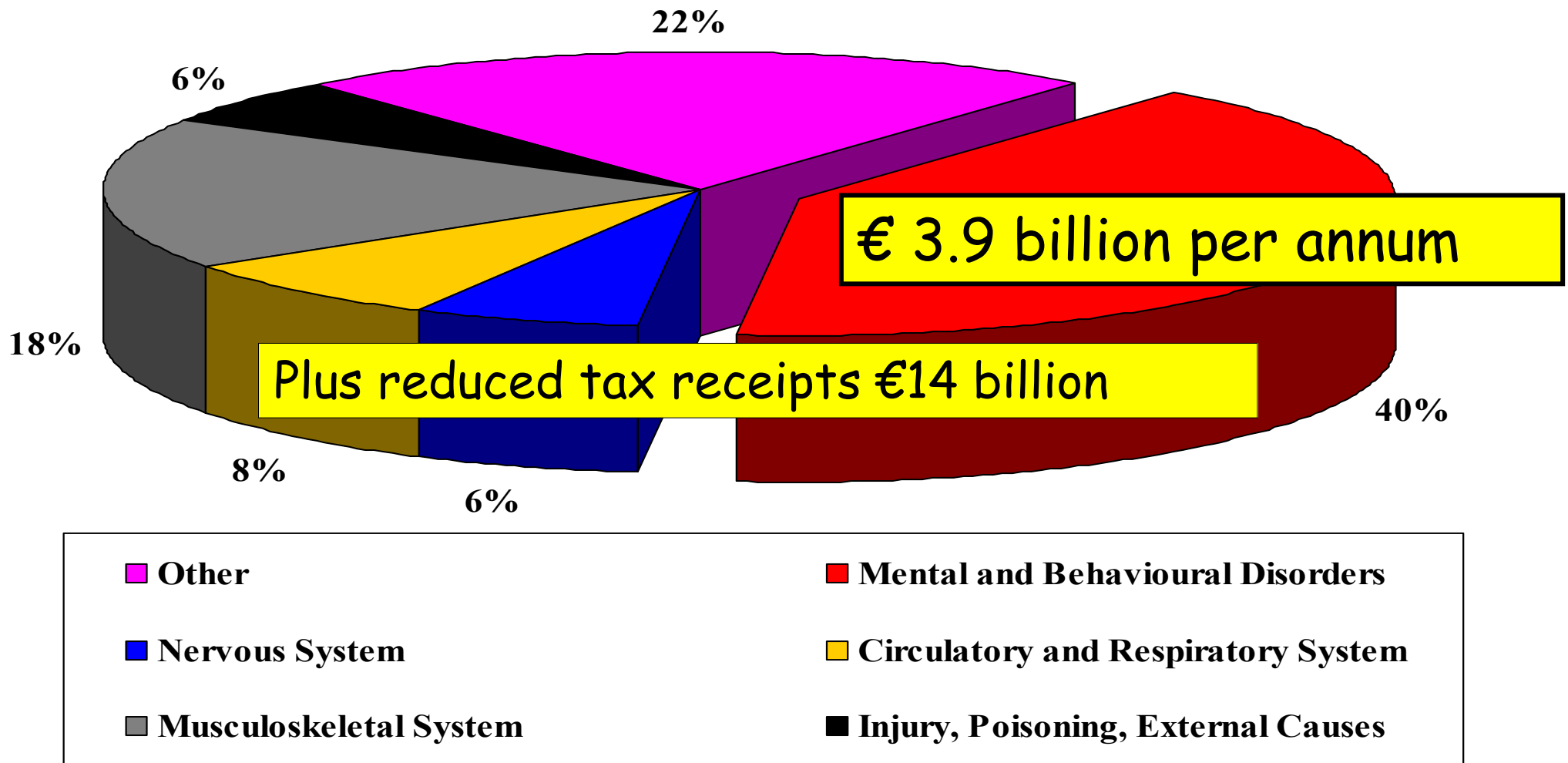
# Major Cause of Early Retirement



Source: German Federal Health Monitoring (2007)

# Disability Benefits GB 2007

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Source: Department of Work and Pensions, 2007

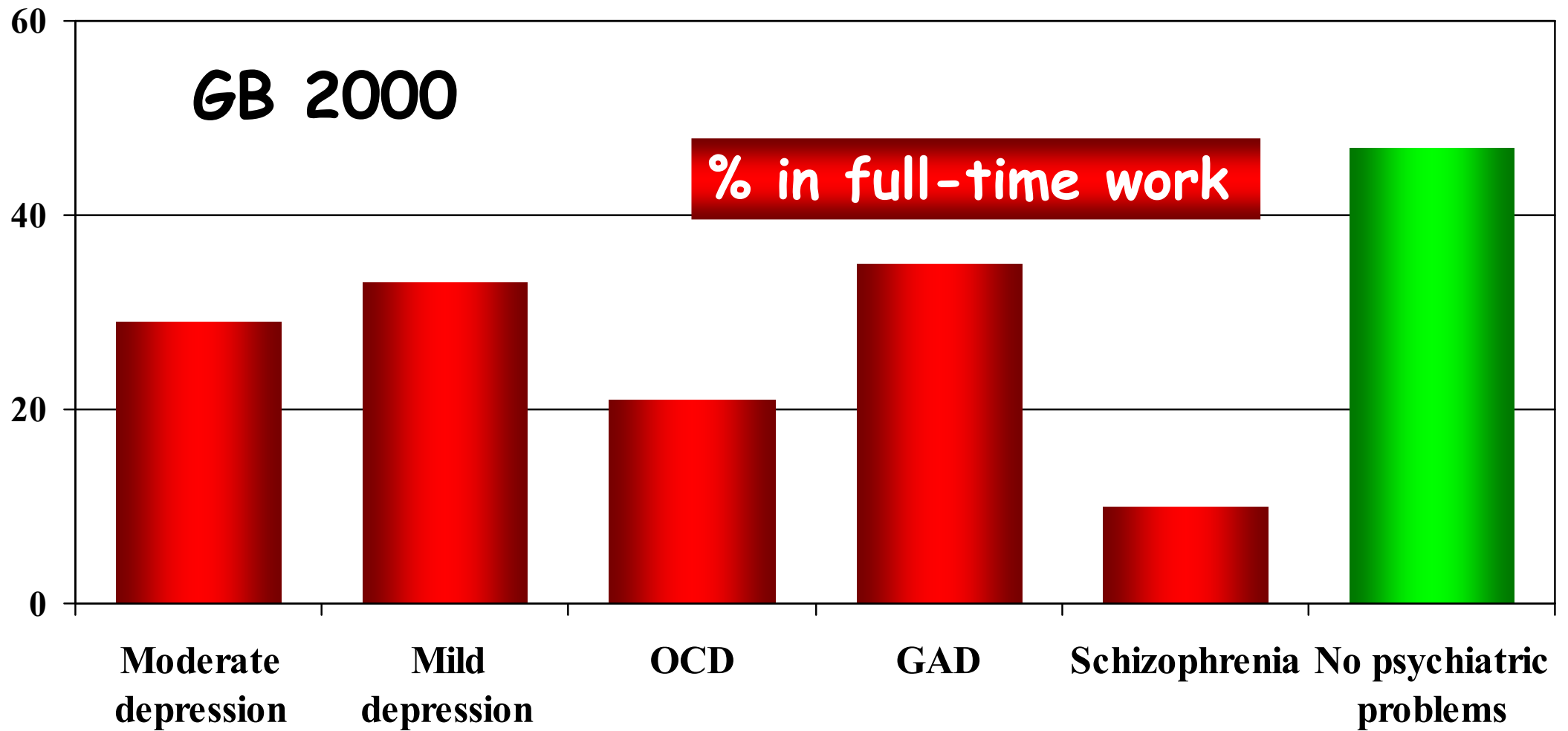
# Social Welfare Expenditure

- France - 25% of illness-related social security expenditure due to stress (Bejean & Sultan 2006)
- Finland - 1990 - 2003 disability benefits for mental health problems increased by 93%; now 42% of all benefits paid (Jarvisalo 2005)
- Spain - General Workers Union estimate that 50%-60% of sick leave and disability claims due to stress at work
- Netherlands - steady increase over last 30 years. By 2003 - 35% of those leaving work due to MH problems

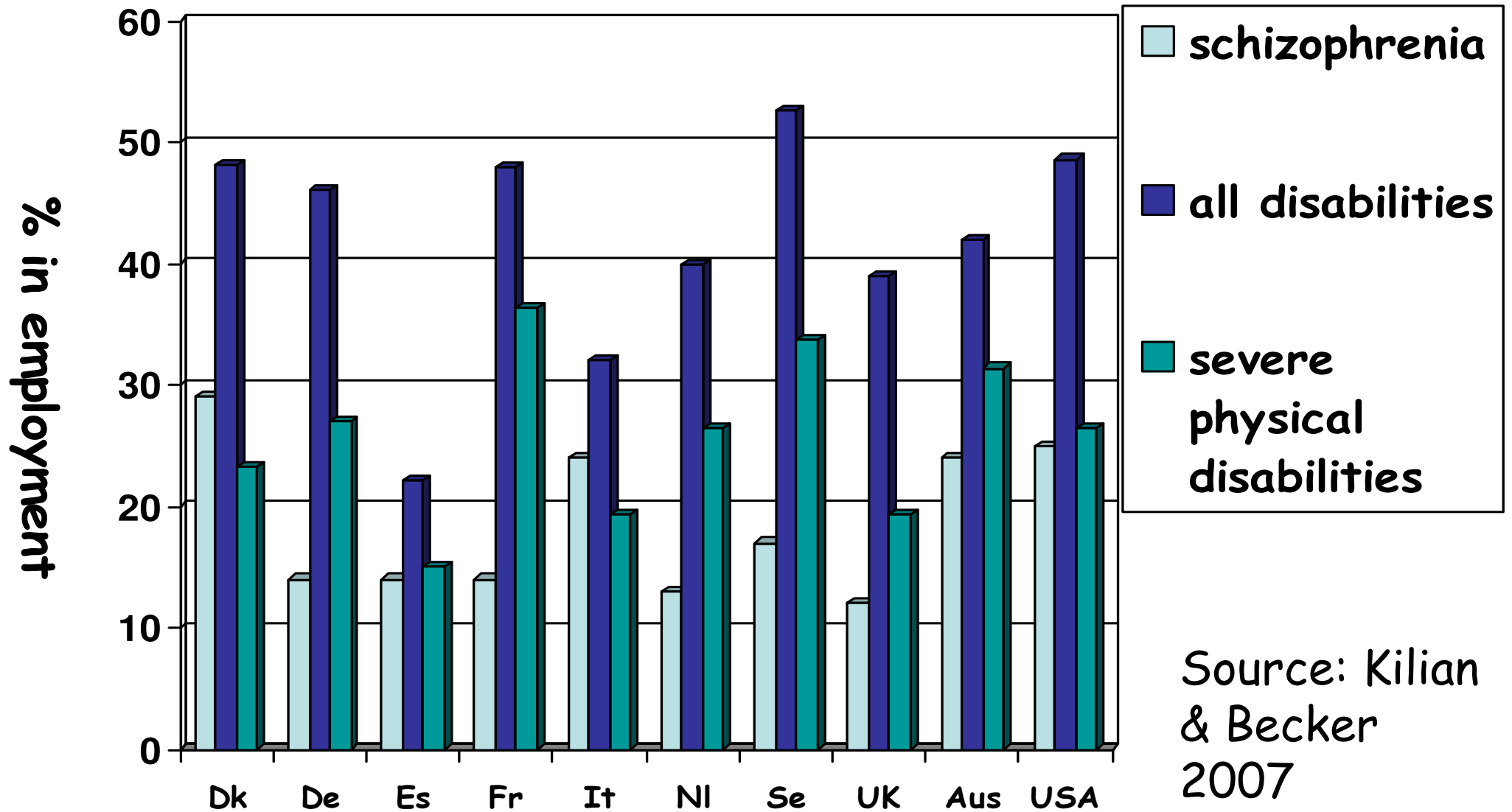
# Exclusion

- Individuals with mental health problems less likely to be in work
- Reinforces social exclusion
- Impacts on families
- Major impact on social welfare systems
- Benefit trap can be barrier to work
- But majority of individuals want to/ and are capable of working

# Employment and mental health



# Employment rates by disability



Source: Kilian  
& Becker  
2007

# Evidence base

Organisational measures: family friendly policies/ flexitime

Multicomponent wellbeing programmes (EAP)

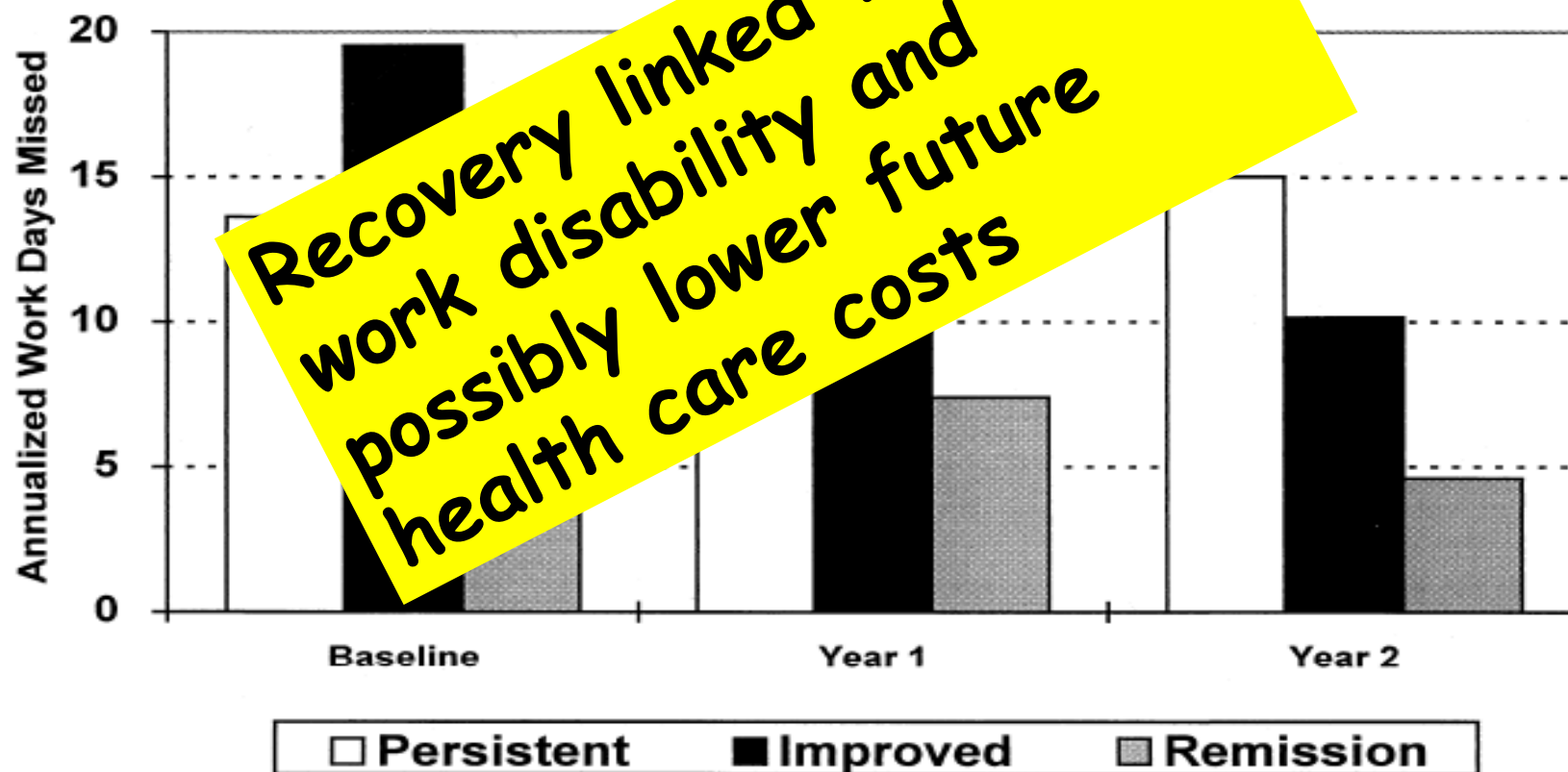
Physical exercise programmes

Job modification/career development

Early identification and enhanced care management (mh professionals rather than primary care workers),

Use of (computerised/telephone) cognitive behavioural therapy

# Workplace screening & early treatment



Source: Wang et al, JAMA, 2007

# Early identification at work : Electricite de France

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- *APRAND (Action de Prévention des Rechutes des troubles Anxieux et Dépressifs)*
- Early identification of anxiety and depressive disorders in 140,000 employees
- 10% to 20% increased probability of remission/recovery
- Now looking at impact on productivity underway

Source: Goddard et al *European Psychiatry* (2006)



# Stress Reduction

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CBT designed to help participants understand the effects of stress and establish a healthier approach to work and life. Often also used as part of a graded return to work.

Resulted in absence reduction, savings of £455,000  
- a return on investment of 8:1

Evidence of improved productivity and company culture

Source: IDS Human Resources, 2007

# Promoting Wellbeing at Work

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Multi-component 12 month health promotion programme delivered to 618 office based employees in three units of Unilever PLC.

Personalised health and well-being report; unlimited access to password-protected personalised health, well-being, and lifestyle web portal and interactive online behaviour-change programmes. Tailored emails every two weeks on personal wellness topics

Significantly reduced health risks (including stress//depression), reduced absenteeism, and improved workplace performance.

The cost of the intervention to the company was £70 per employee; costs were more than outweighed by improvements in absenteeism and work performance.

# Reintegration

Supported employment programmes (Place & Train) more effective than vocational rehabilitation for most individuals

Adaptations in workplace/flexible working arrangements

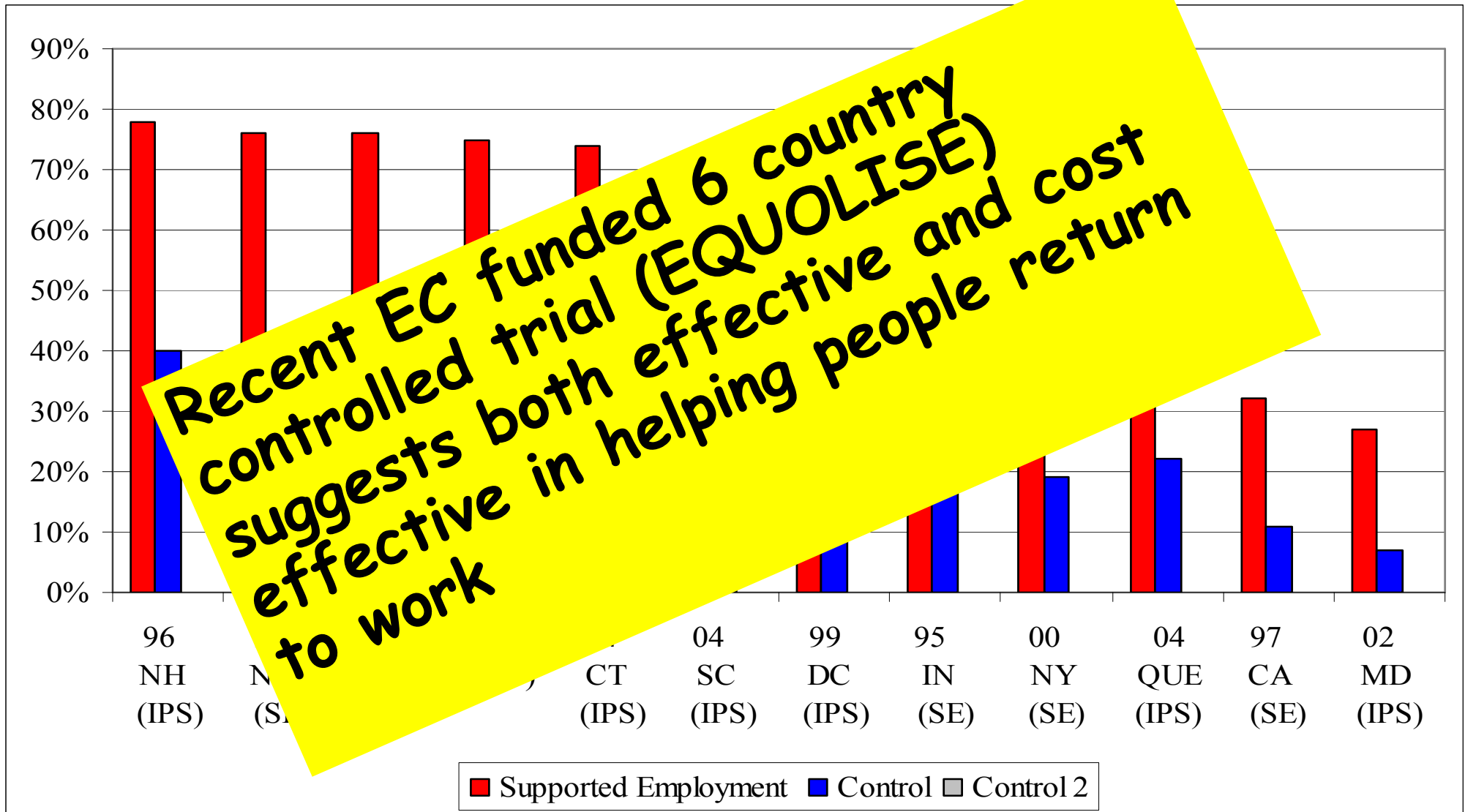
Incentives for employers

Flexible social welfare benefits

Education/Awareness in workforce

# Reintegrated into Employment: Supported Employment Schemes

Latimer et al, 2005



# So why act? What are the drivers?

- Business Case
- CSR
- Human Resource Issues
- Costs to taxpayers