

# Countering stigmatisation and discrimination of people with mental health problems in Europe

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# Policy Context

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European Social Protection Social Inclusion  
Process

Lisbon Agenda: including inclusive workforce

WHO Declaration and Action Plan

Several national and local policy initiatives

# Aims

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- 1) Review literature on stigma / mental illness in Europe
- 2) Identify what is known about public attitudes towards mental health problems
- 3) Identify practical consequences of stigma
- 4) Identify what we know about effective interventions

# Stigma and Discrimination

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- Characterised by:
  - Lack of knowledge, ignorance, fear
  - Negative stereotypes and attitudes
- Impacts at Individual Level:
  - Increased social distance/social exclusion
- Impacts at Societal Level
  - Discrimination in access to goods/services or opportunities e.g. employment/education
  - Spill over effects on family and friends

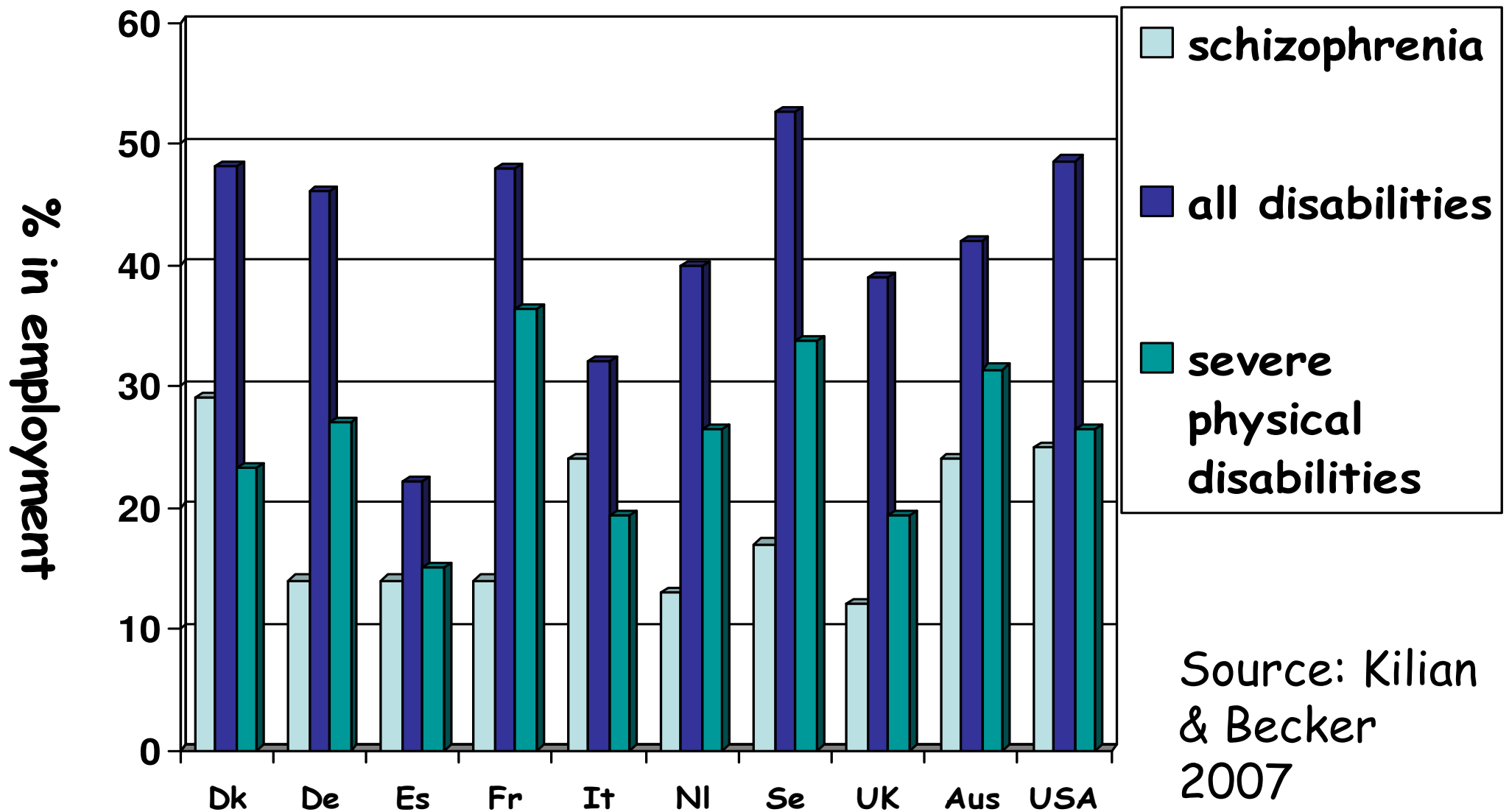
# Population Attitudes

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- Surveys conducted in several EU countries
- Consistently indicate negative attitudes in population e.g. 78% in England did not disagree that PWMHP are a burden to society
- 37% of Eurobarometer respondents felt PWHP dangerous; 44% felt they have themselves to blame: opinions stronger mainly in CEE countries
- Psychiatrists have same level of social distance from PWMHP as general public

# Stigma has an impact on employment

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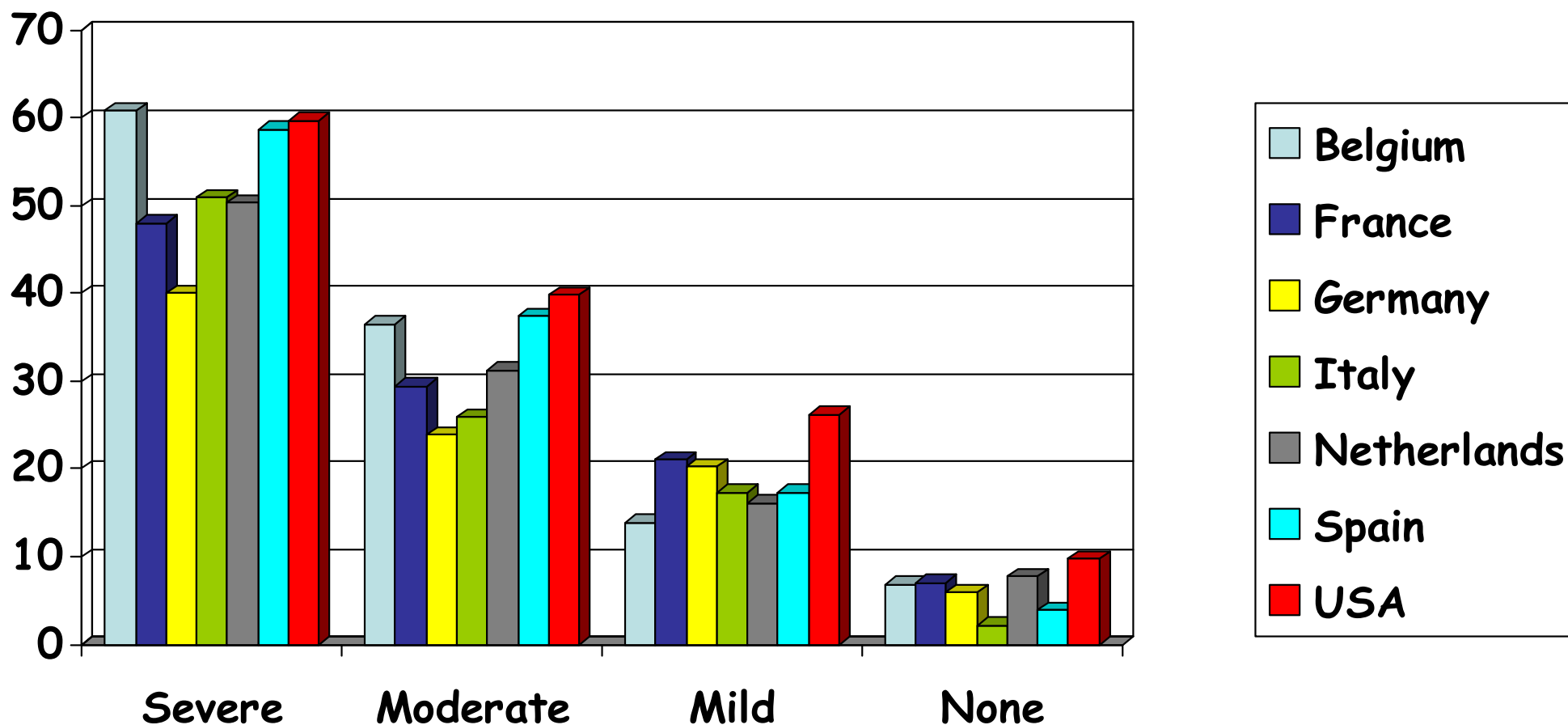
Source: Kilian & Becker 2007

# Access to health services

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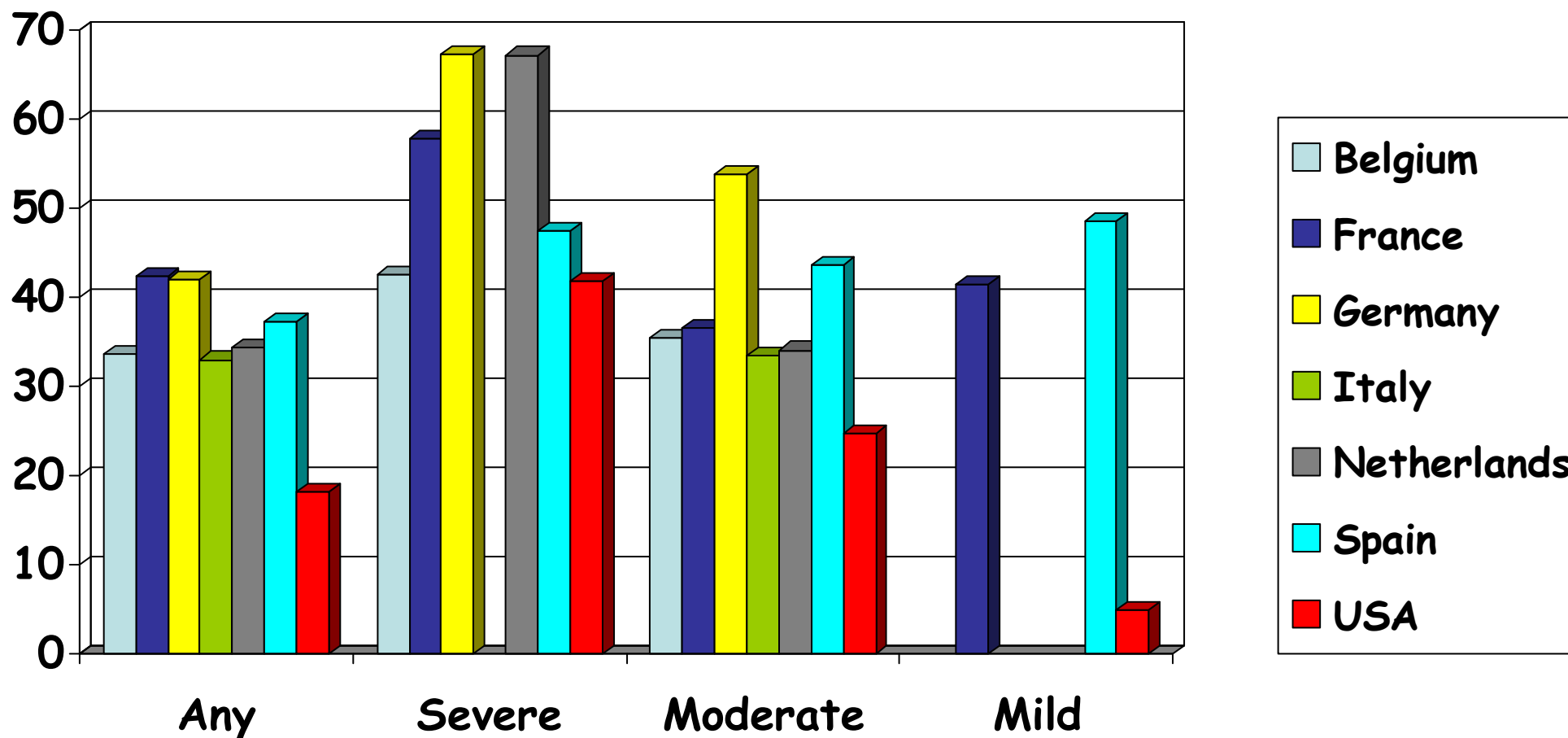
- Regardless of structure of health care system, only one third of PMHP make use of services
- Where treatment received, even in high income countries, majority do not receive adequate treatment

# 12-month service use by severity of anxiety mood and substance disorders in World Mental Health Survey (% of target population)



Adapted from Wang et al 2007

# Minimally adequate treatment use for respondents using services in the WMH surveys in previous 12 months (% of target population)



Adapted from Wang et al 2007

# What works?

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- Limited impact of population wide anti-stigma campaigns - need reinforcement
- Targeted measures to reduce social distance
- Educational, training and awareness interventions for police and school children shown to change attitudes
- **But changing attitudes may not change behaviour**
- Actions to help support return /retention in employment
- Personal budgets to promote better use of health and social care services
- Robust enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation