



Webinar Magistrali 2022

Società Italiana di Medicina del Lavoro

**1994-2022:
ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY
OF CRITICALLY REVIEWING
THE METHODOLOGY OF
OCCUPATIONAL RISK
ASSESSMENT**





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Nottingham**

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

Psychosocial risk assessment and management in contemporary work life

Professor Stavroula Leka

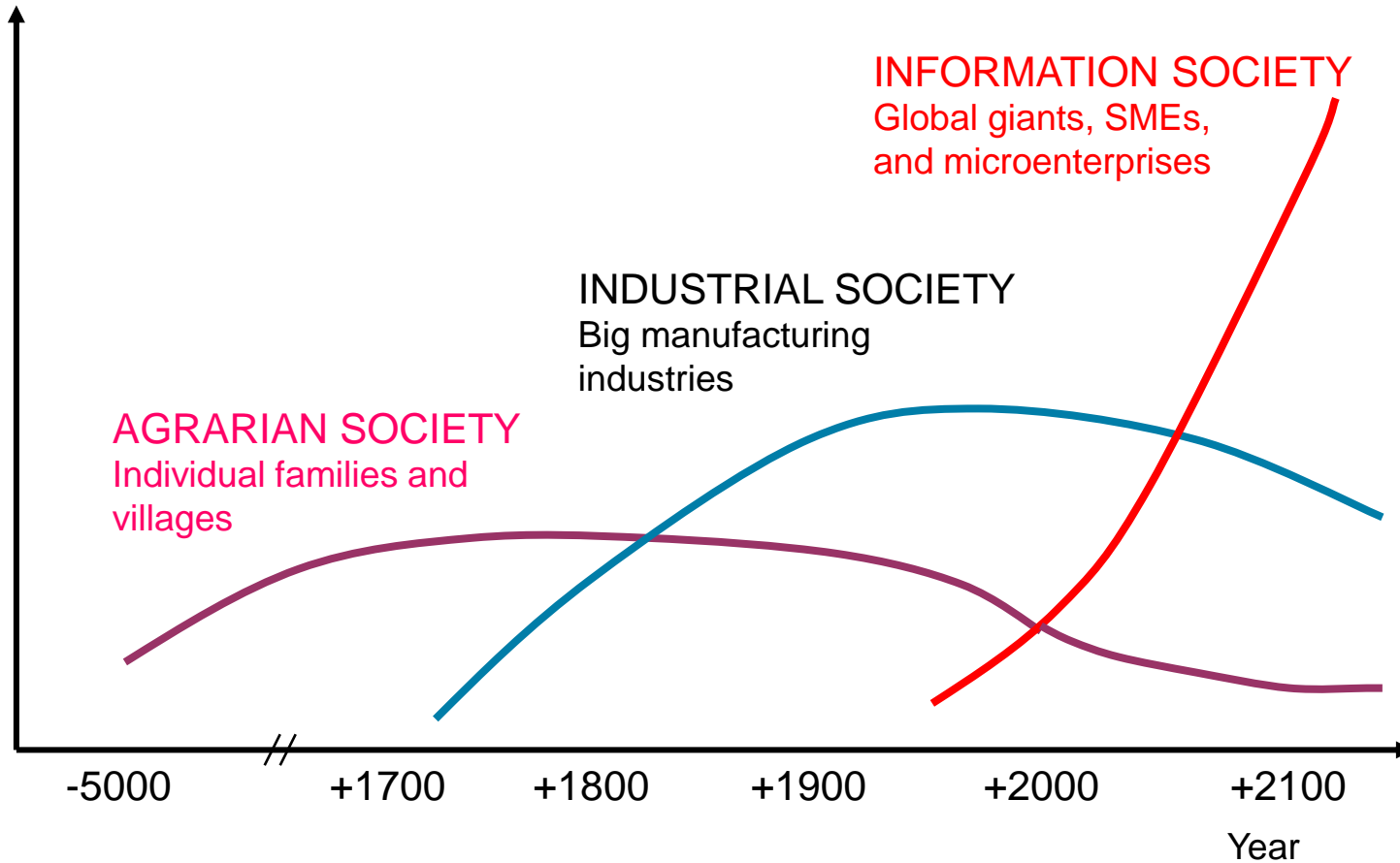
**Emeritus Professor of Work & Health Policy,
University of Nottingham, UK**

**Professor of Work Organization & Well-being,
University College Cork, Ireland**



Three phases of development of economic structures each with special type of enterprises

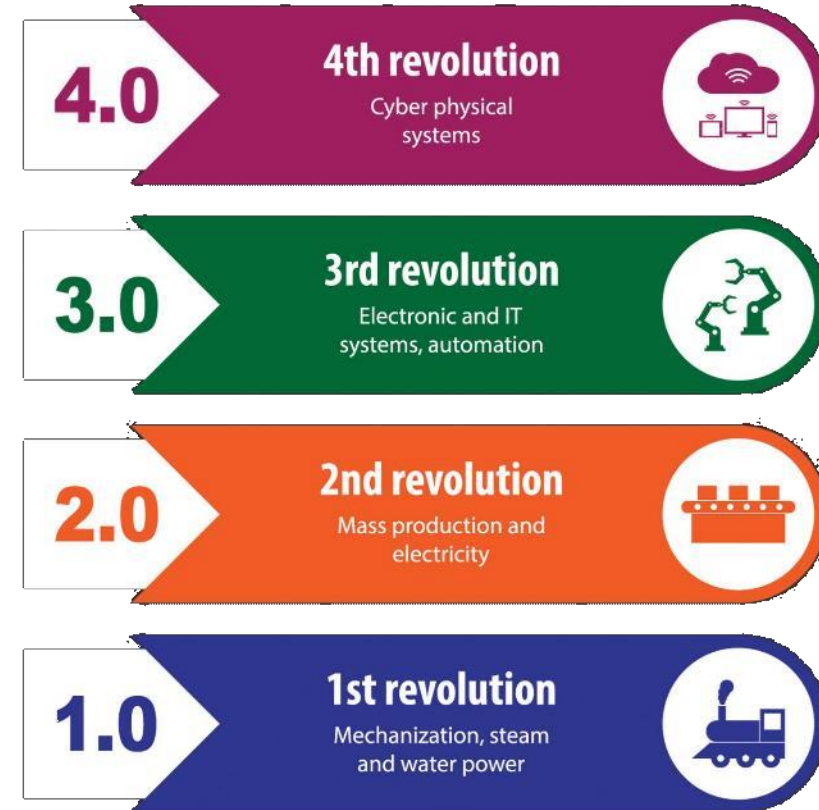
Share of GDP



AGRARIAN SOCIETY
Individual families and villages

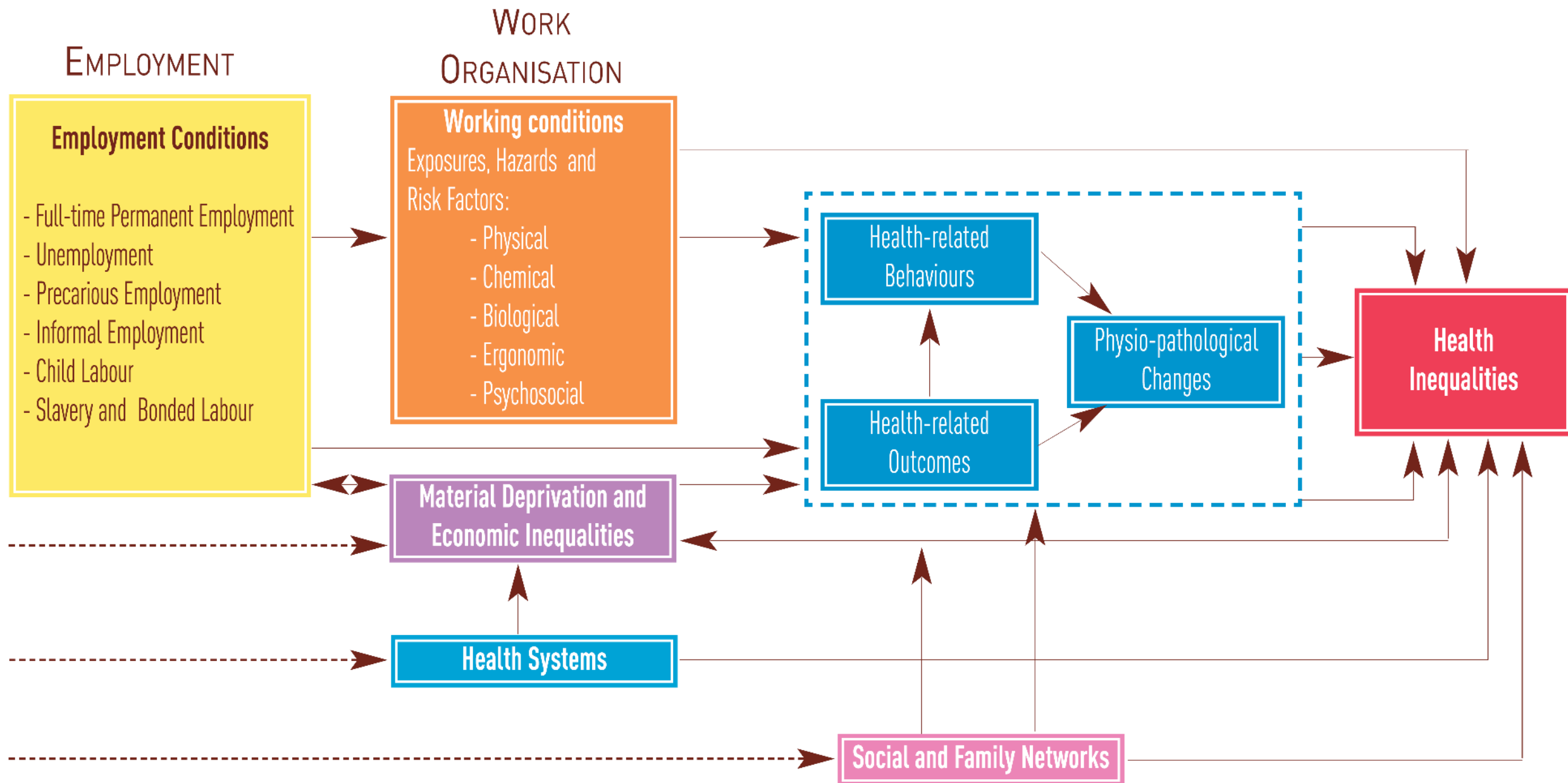
INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY
Big manufacturing industries

INFORMATION SOCIETY
Global giants, SMEs, and microenterprises





Work as a social determinant of health





Worker well-being is an *integrative* concept that characterizes quality of life with respect to an individual's health and *work-related environmental, organizational, and psychosocial* factors.

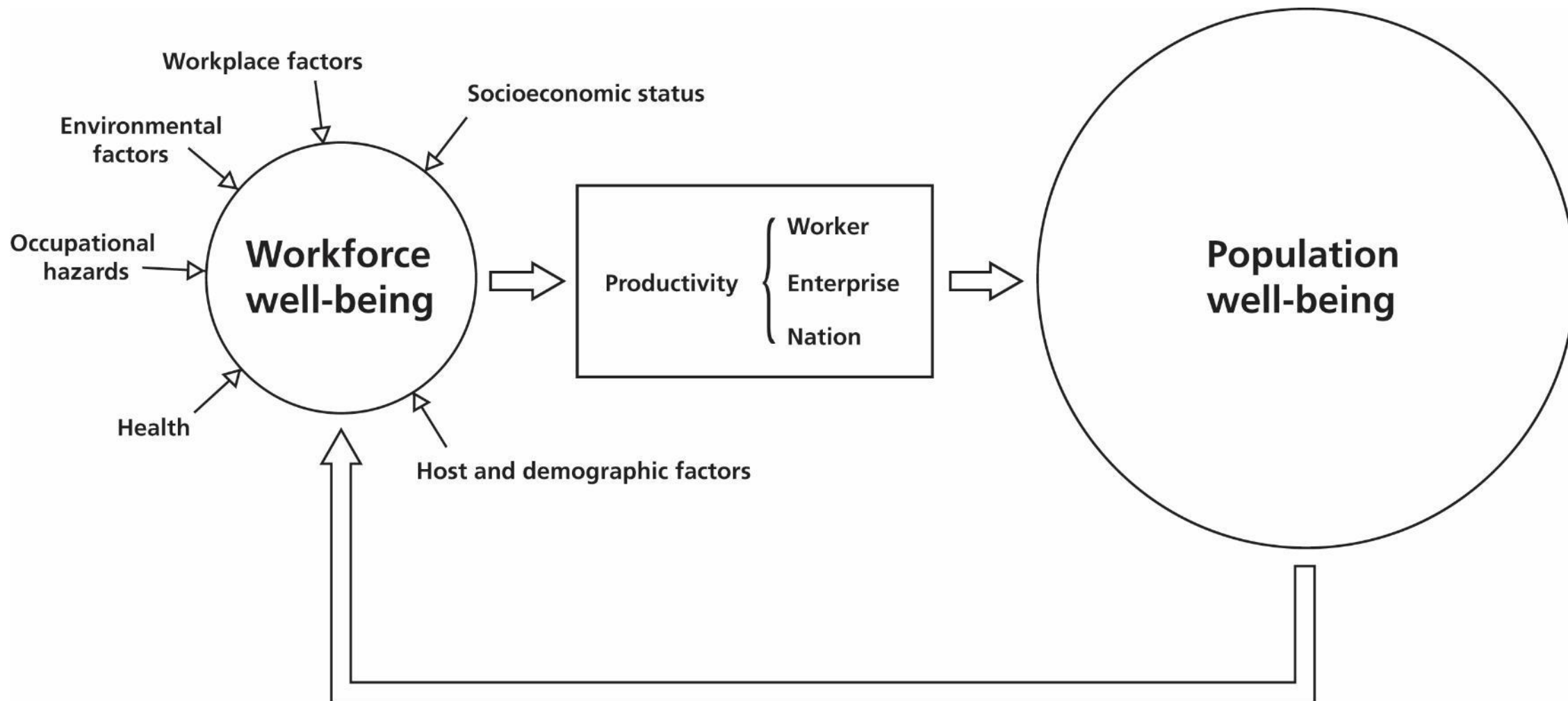
It is the experience of *positive perceptions* and the presence of *constructive conditions* at work and in *other areas of life* that enables workers to thrive and achieve their full potential.



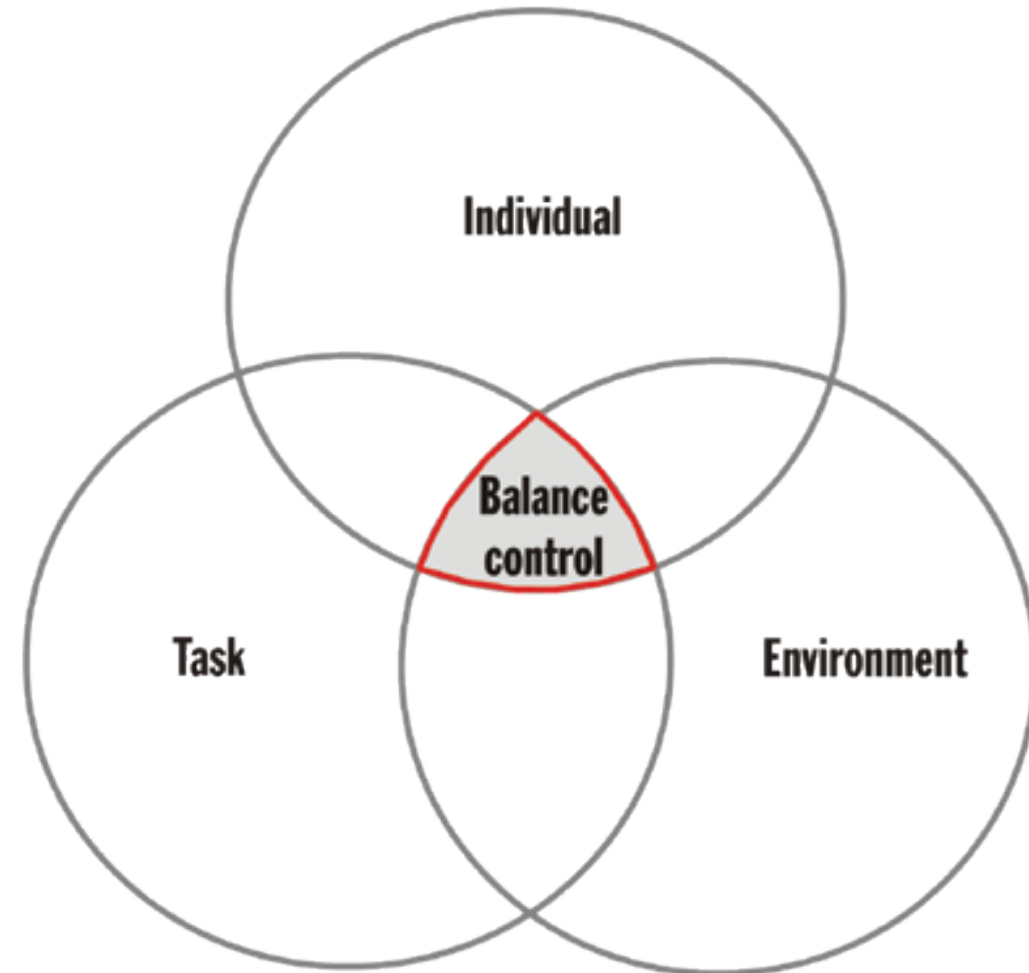
(Ramya et al 2018)



Heuristic well-being model



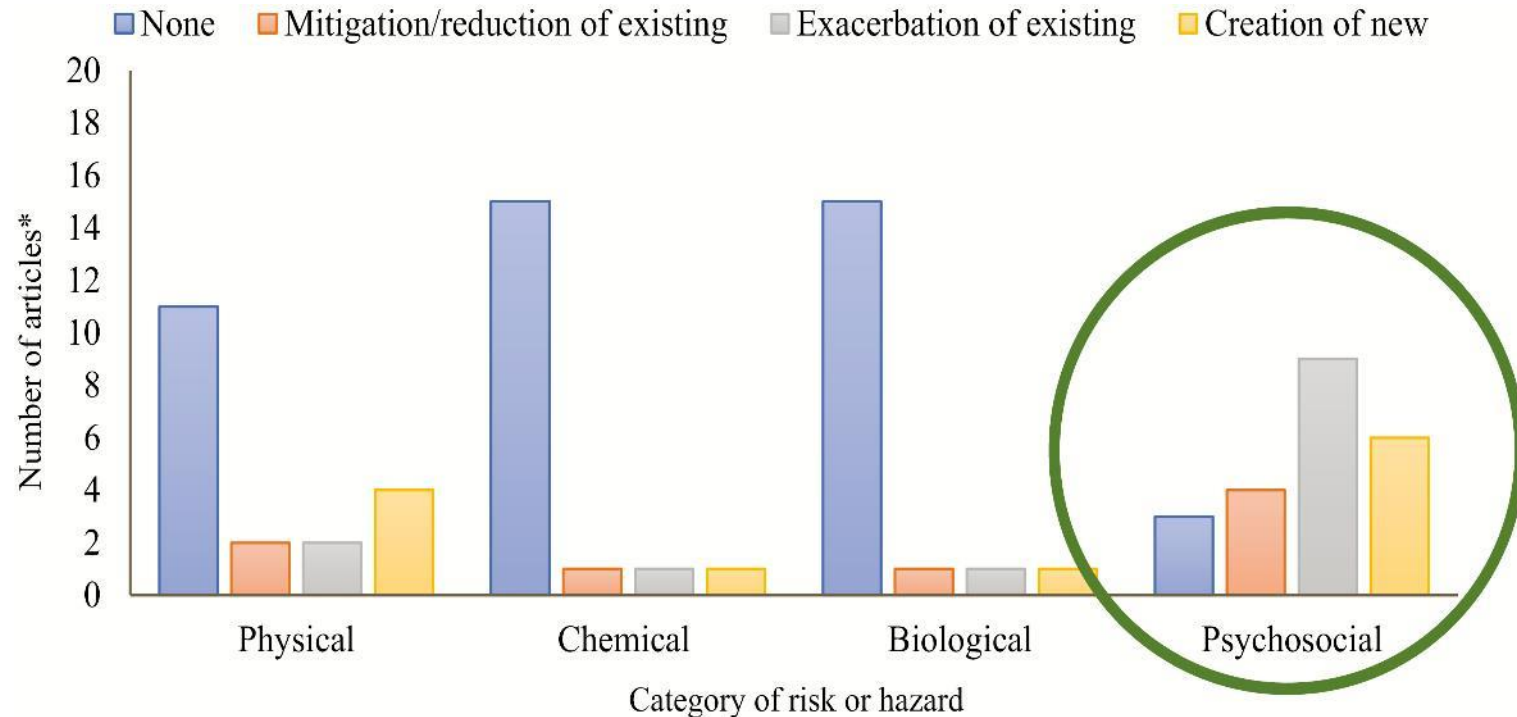
- The psychosocial work environment concerns psychological and social dimensions of the work environment relevant to aspects of work organisation, design and management, and interpersonal relationships
- It underpins every organisation's operations and is as old as work itself
- Increased focus is the result of accumulating evidence on negative outcomes of poor management of the psychosocial work environment in terms of potential harm to employee health, safety and well-being, and poor organisational performance with associated negative societal impacts
- However this is only half of the story...



- **Psychosocial factors:** aspects of work organization, design and management (e.g. work demands, organizational support, rewards, interpersonal relationships) > notice lack of negative connotation to the concept
- **Psychosocial hazards:** aspects of work organization, design and management that have the potential to cause harm (e.g. unrealistic job demands, lack of role clarity, lack of organizational support, harassment and bullying in the workplace) on individual health and safety, on organizations (e.g. sickness absence, reduced productivity, human error) and on society (e.g. increased disability pensions, healthcare costs, etc.)
- **Psychosocial risks:** potential of psychosocial hazards to cause harm

Source: Leka, Jain & Lerouge, 2017

Frequency of job risks and hazards anticipated for the future of work in the peer-reviewed literature.



* Categories of *mitigation/reduction*, *exacerbation*, and *creation* are not mutually exclusive. Totals sum to more than 17 in each risk/hazard category.

Source: Schulte et al., 2020 - *Ann Work Expo Health*, Volume 64, Issue 8, October 2020, Pages 786–816, <https://doi.org/10.1093/annweh/wxaa051>



Key dimensions 1

Job content	Lack of variety or short work cycles, fragmented or meaningless work, under use of skills, high uncertainty, continuous exposure to people through work	Meaningful work, appropriate use of skills, work retaining employee interest and engagement, appropriate support
Workload & work pace	Work overload or under load, machine pacing, high levels of time pressure, continually subject to deadlines	Appropriate level of workload, appropriate work pace, sensible and achievable deadlines
Work schedule	Shift working (especially irregular), night shifts, inflexible work schedules, unpredictable hours, long or unsociable hours	Sensible shifts and reasonable working hours to maintain work-life balance, flexible working practices
Control	Low participation in decision making, lack of control over workload, pacing, shift working	Participation in decision making, control at work
Environment & equipment	Inadequate equipment availability, suitability or maintenance; poor environmental conditions such as lack of space, poor lighting, excessive noise	Good physical working conditions according to good practice guidance

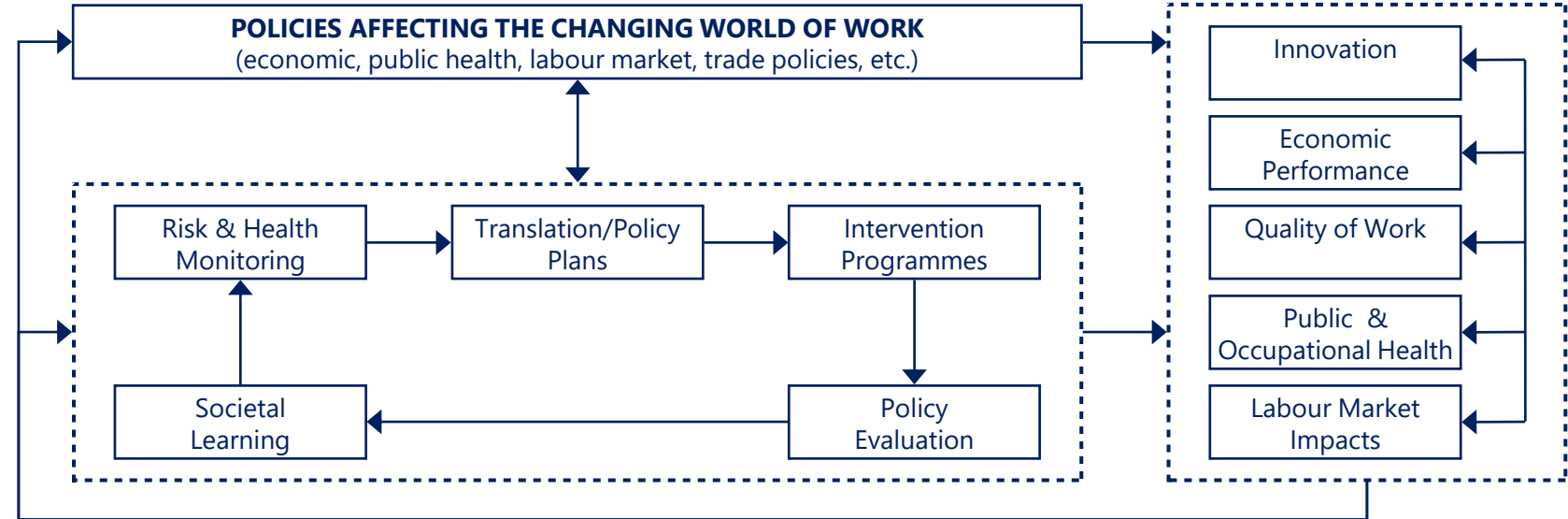


Key dimensions 2

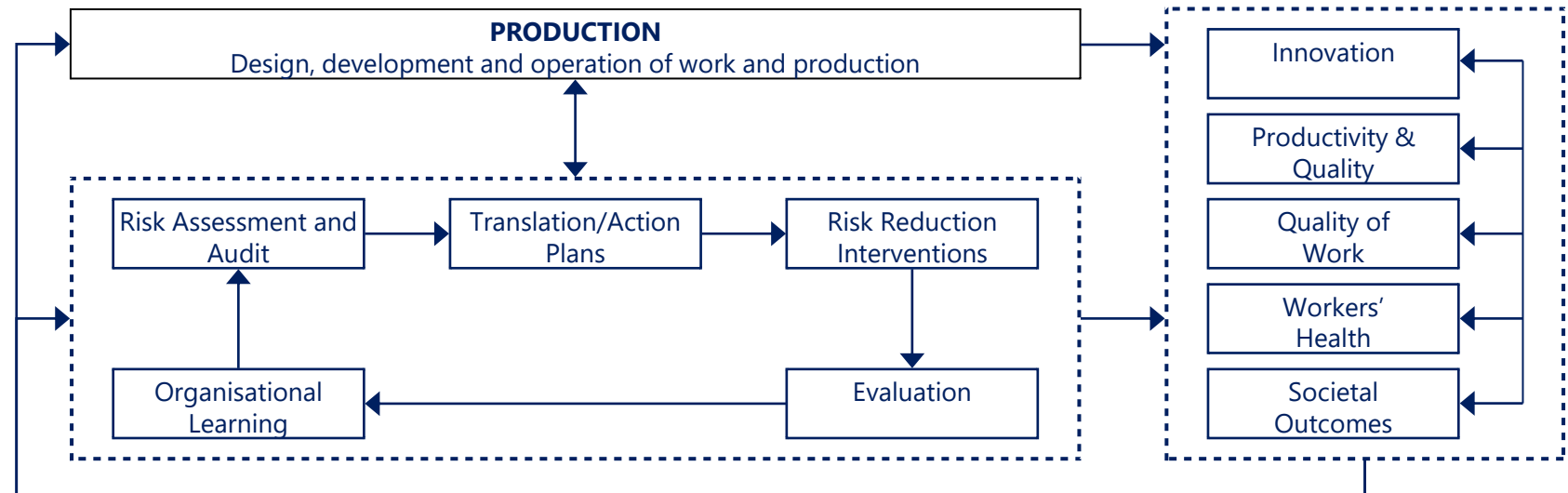
Organisational culture & function	Poor communication, low levels of support for problem solving and personal development, lack of definition of, or agreement on, organisational objectives	Clear organisational objectives, appropriate support for problem solving and personal development, good communication processes
Interpersonal relationships at work	Social or physical isolation, poor relationships with superiors, interpersonal conflict, lack of social support, harassment, violence	Good relationships at work, teamwork, social support, appropriate policies and procedures to deal with conflicts
Role in organisation	Role ambiguity, role conflict, responsibility for people	Clear roles and responsibilities, appropriate support to meet objectives
Career development	Career stagnation and uncertainty, under promotion or over promotion, poor pay, job insecurity, low social value to work	Appropriate career prospects & development matching skills & performance, effort reward balance, valuable/meaningful work, job security
Home-work interface	Conflicting demands of work and home, low support at home, dual career problems	Work-life balance, supportive organisational policies and practices to achieve 'life balance'



The macro level risk management policy process



Management and organisation of work processes



What is Work-related stress?

- Focus has been on *work-related stress*: the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope
- Health & Safety Executive definition:
“The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”
- European Commission (2002) definition:
“Work-related stress can be defined as a pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse and noxious aspects of work content, work organisation and work environment. It is a state characterised by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of not coping”
- ESENER (EU-OSHA, 2010, 2015, 2020) found that only about 20% of European enterprises inform their employees on psychosocial risks or work-related stress, let alone taking appropriate actions to tackle them

[Video: Working with Work-related stress](#)



Pressure vs Stress

- Often confusion between *pressure* or *challenge* and *stress* and sometimes it is used to excuse bad management practice
- *Pressure* at the workplace is unavoidable due to the demands of the contemporary work environment
- Pressure perceived as acceptable by an individual, may even keep workers alert, motivated, able to work and learn, depending on the available resources and personal characteristics
- When that pressure becomes excessive or otherwise unmanageable it leads to stress



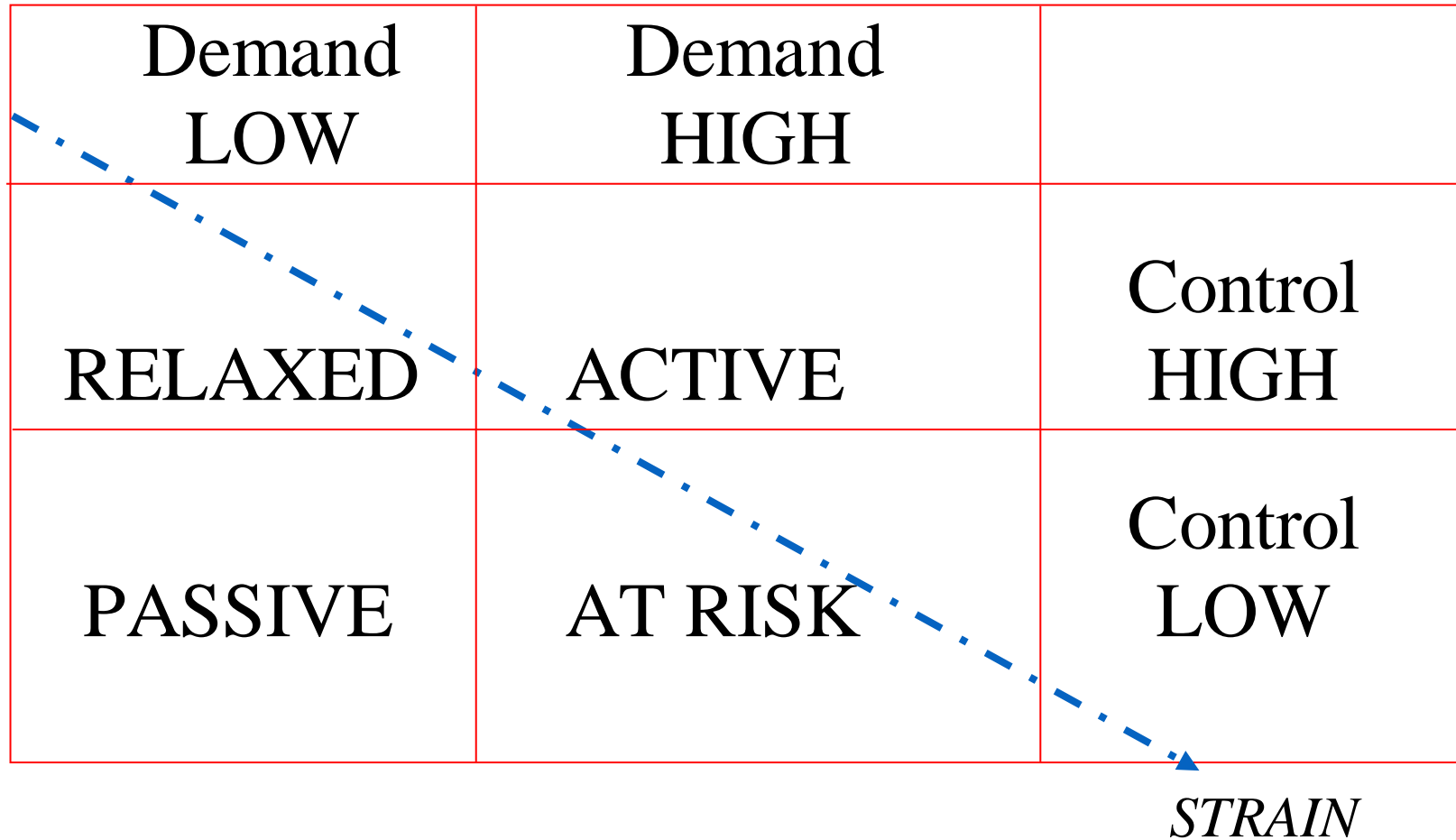
Burnout vs Work engagement

- *Burnout* is defined as a state of exhaustion where one is cynical about the value of his/her occupation and doubtful about his/her ability to perform. Characterised by:
 - *exhaustion* (being emotionally overextended and exhausted at one's work)
 - *cynicism* (an indifference or a distance attitude towards one's work)
 - *depersonalisation* (an unfeeling and impersonal response toward recipients of one's service)
 - *personal accomplishment/performance* (feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people)

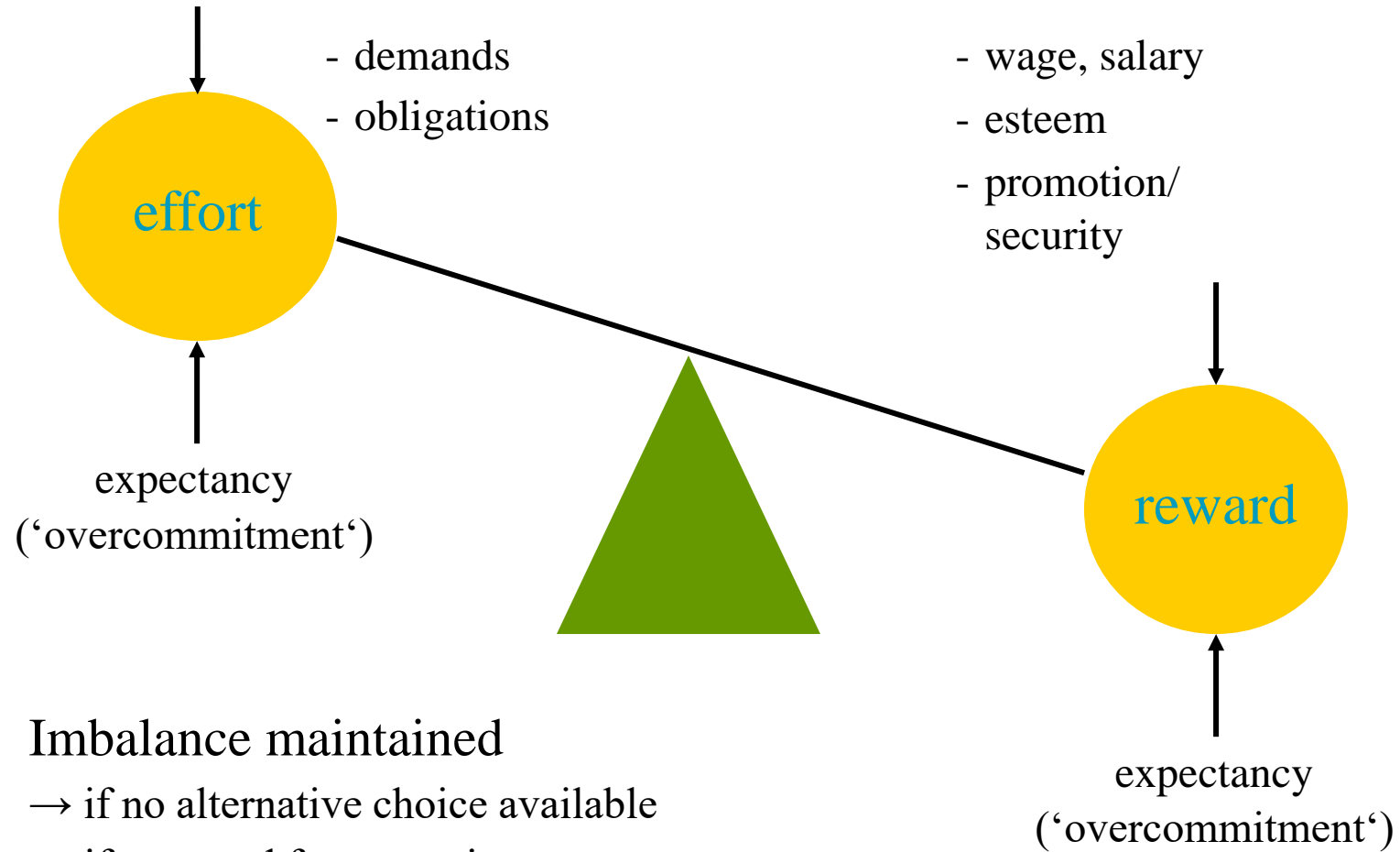


- *Work engagement* is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption
 - *Vigour* is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties
 - *Dedication* refers to being strongly involved in one's work, and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge
 - *Absorption* is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work

Job Demands - Job Control Model



The model of effort-reward imbalance at work

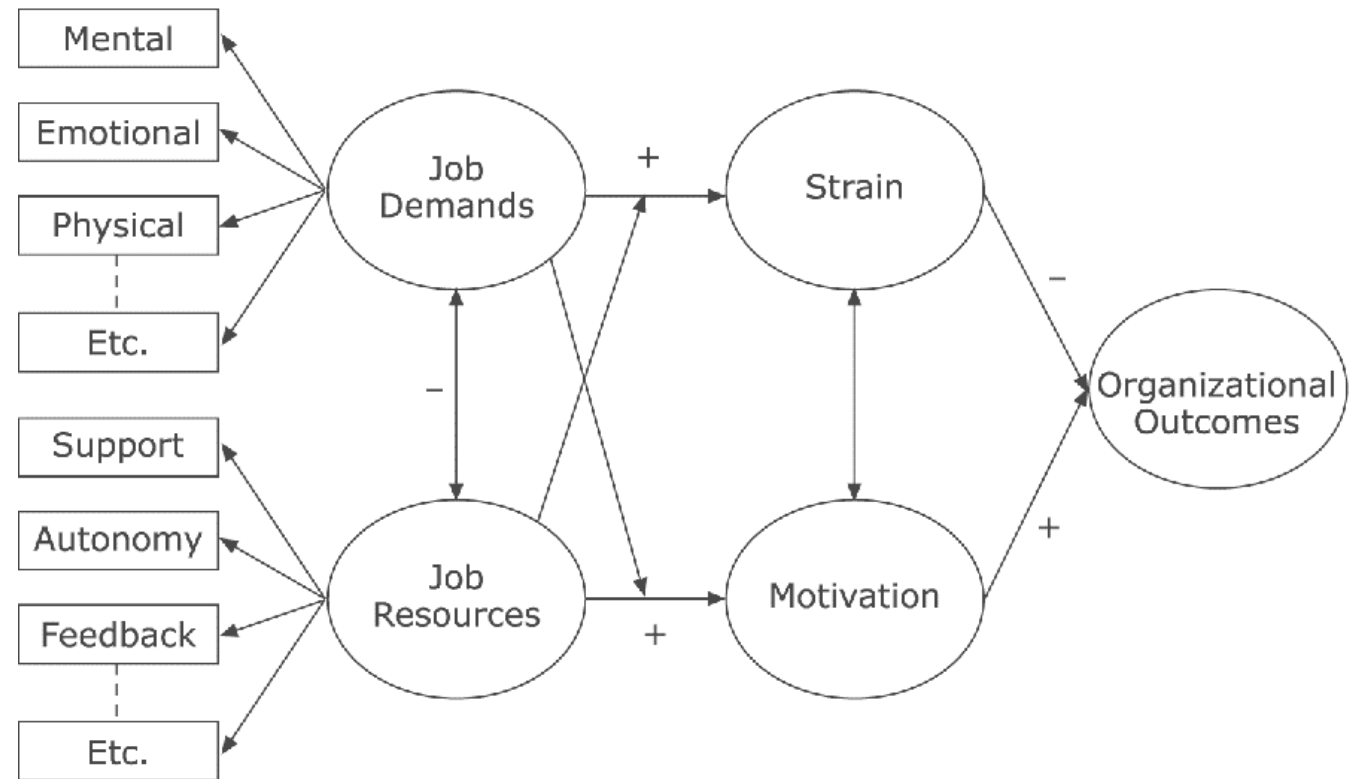


Imbalance maintained

- if no alternative choice available
- if accepted for strategic reasons
- if personal style of coping present (overcommitment)

Job Demands-Resources Model

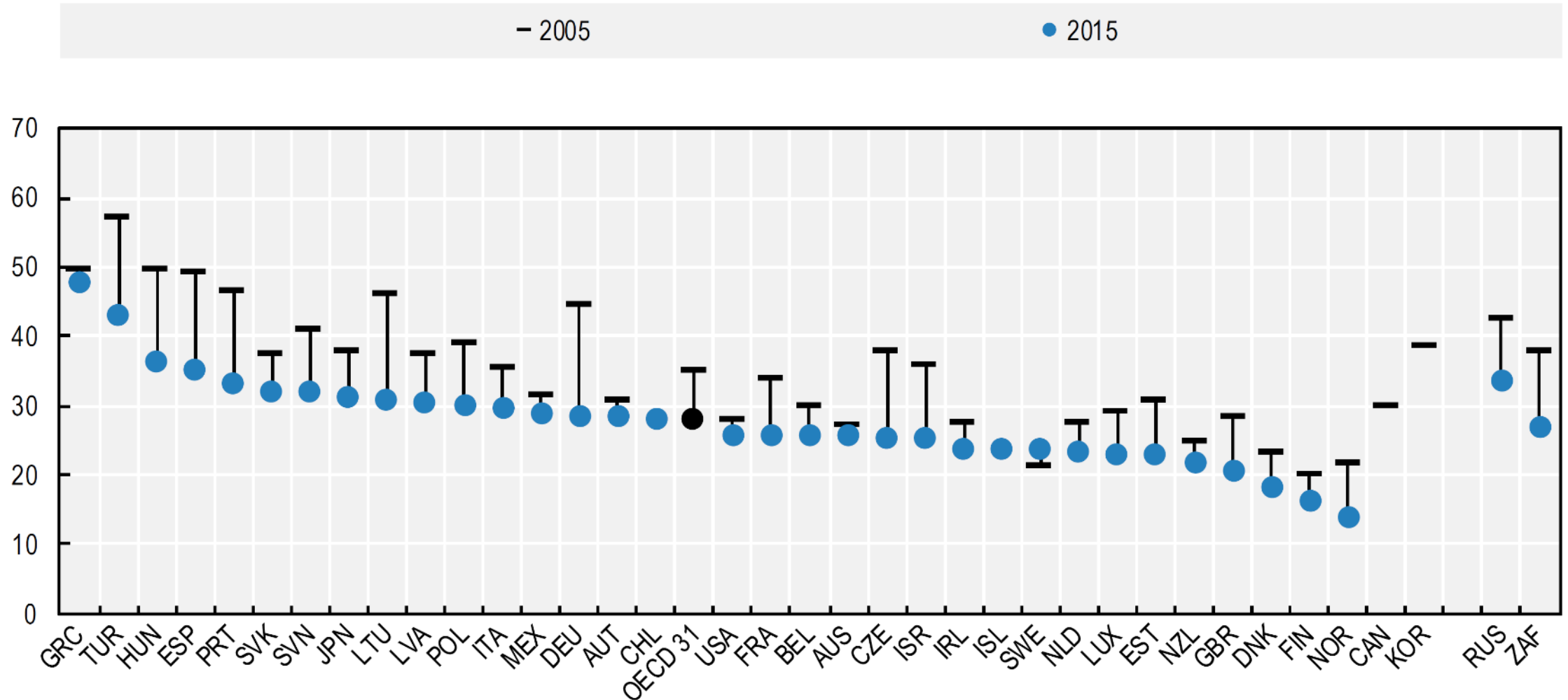
- How the combination of stressful and motivating job characteristics influences negative and positive aspects of well-being
- Working conditions can be classified in two general categories (i.e., job demands and job resources) that are applicable to virtually all occupations
- Job demands require effort and are therefore associated with physiological and psychological costs, such as fatigue, whereas job resources foster personal growth, learning, development, and have motivational qualities



Why intervene – Negative Impact

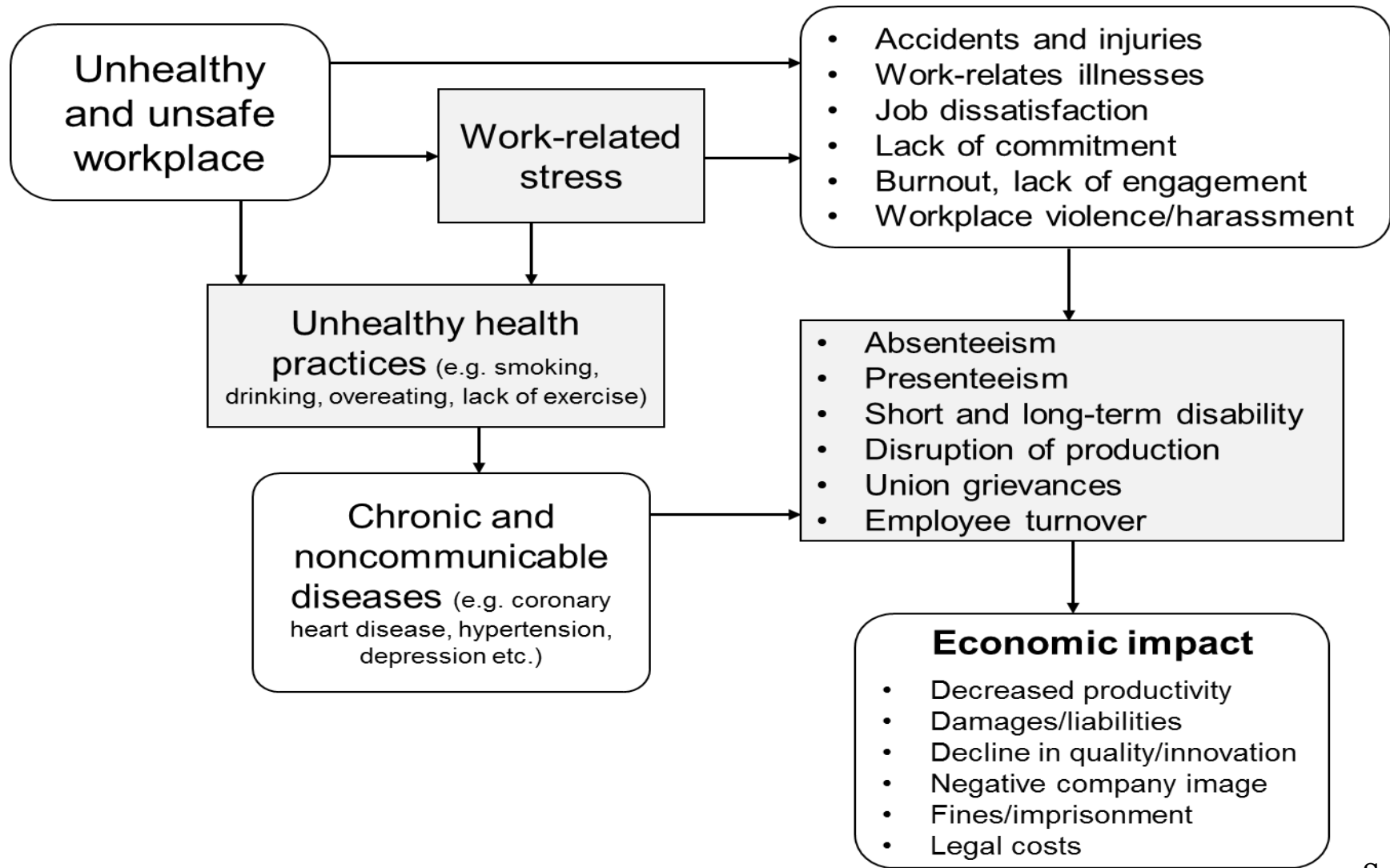
Job strain affects almost 1 in every 3 employees in OECD countries

Share of employees who experienced a number of job demands exceeding that of job resources, percentage

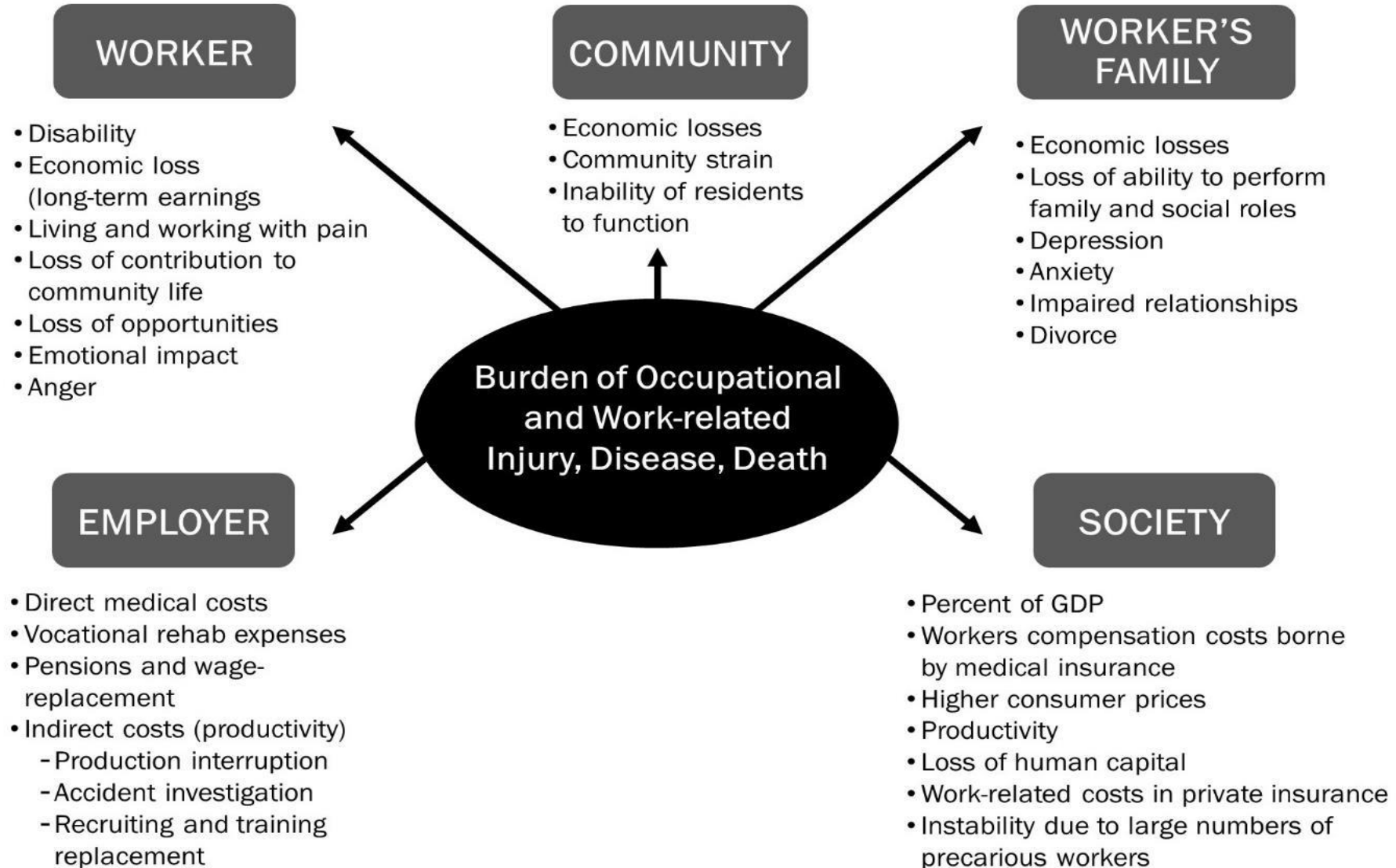




Psychosocial risks - negative impact

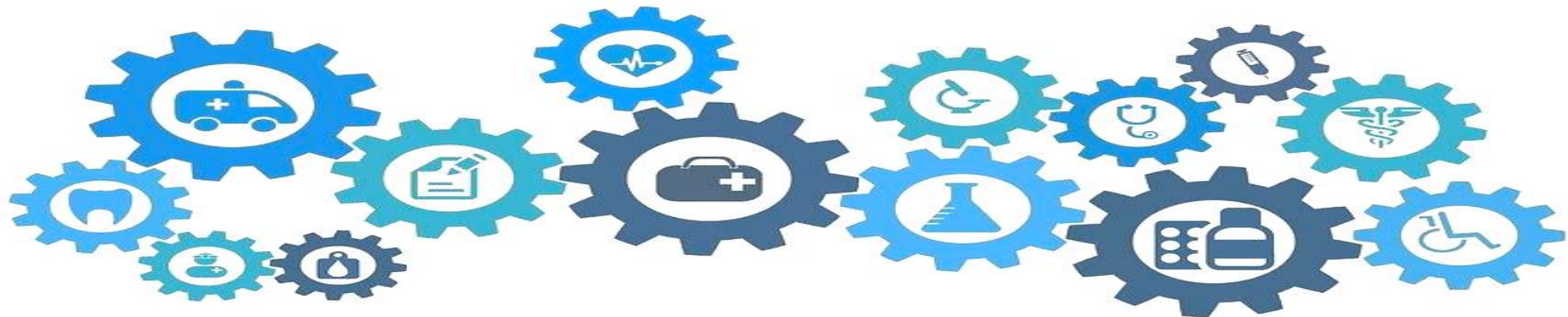


Burden of poor employment and working conditions



Negative health impact

- High job strain (high demands & low control) appears to independently affect the risk of future common mental disorders in midlife (Harvey et al., 2018)
- Job strain and long work hours longitudinally associated with moderate/severe suicidal ideation in the US (Choi, 2018)
- Job strain, effort-reward imbalance, and organizational injustice contributing to CHD (Jaskanwal et al., 2018)
- Job strain predicted degenerative MSDs among both men and women after 11 years of follow-up (Prakash et al, 2017)
- Risk of disability pension from depressive disorders 4.4–4.7-fold (95% CI 2.4–8.0) for combinations of job strain+ERI and job strain+ERI+injustice, and 1.9–2.5-fold (95% CI 1.1–4.0) for job strain and ERI alone (Juvani et al., 2018)



Economic impact



- In Europe, the estimated cost of work-related depression is €617 billion a year, which includes the costs to employers of absenteeism and presenteeism (€272 billion), loss of productivity (€242 billion), healthcare costs (€63 billion) and social welfare costs in the form of disability benefit payments (€39 billion) (Matrix, 2013)



- Depression costs Australian employers approximately AU\$8 billion per year as a result of sickness absence and presenteeism, and of that figure, AU\$693 million is due to job strain and bullying (Dollard et al., 2012; Safework Australia, 2013)
- In Canada, mental health problems cost employers an estimated CA\$20 billion annually (Anderssen, 2011)

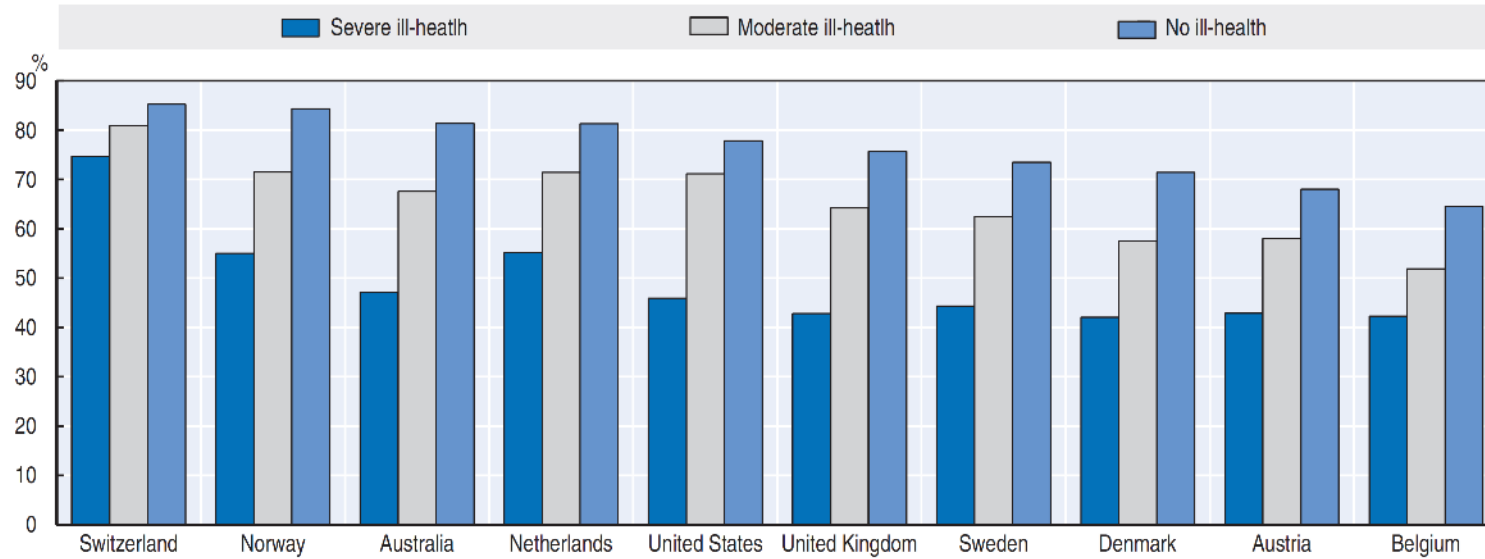


- Workplace stressors (Layoffs & unemployment; no health insurance; shift work; long work hours; job insecurity, work–family conflict; low job control; high job demands; low social support; low org. justice) cost employers in the United States \$187 billion, due to excess mortality and incremental health expenditures (Goh et al., 2016).

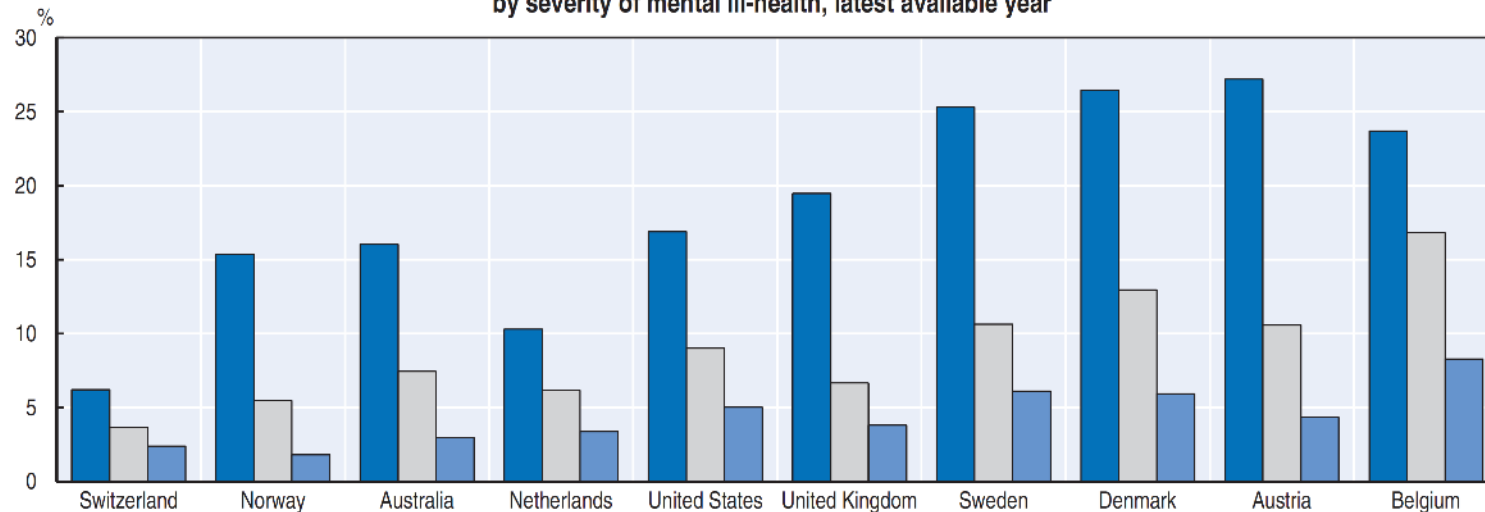


Employment and unemployment gaps are considerable for people with mental ill-health

A. Employment-population ratio (employed people as a proportion of the working-age population), by severity of mental ill-health, latest available year



B. Unemployment rate (unemployed people as a proportion of the labour force), by severity of mental ill-health, latest available year



OECD (2015). [Fit Mind, Fit Job - From Evidence to Practice in Mental Health and Work](#)

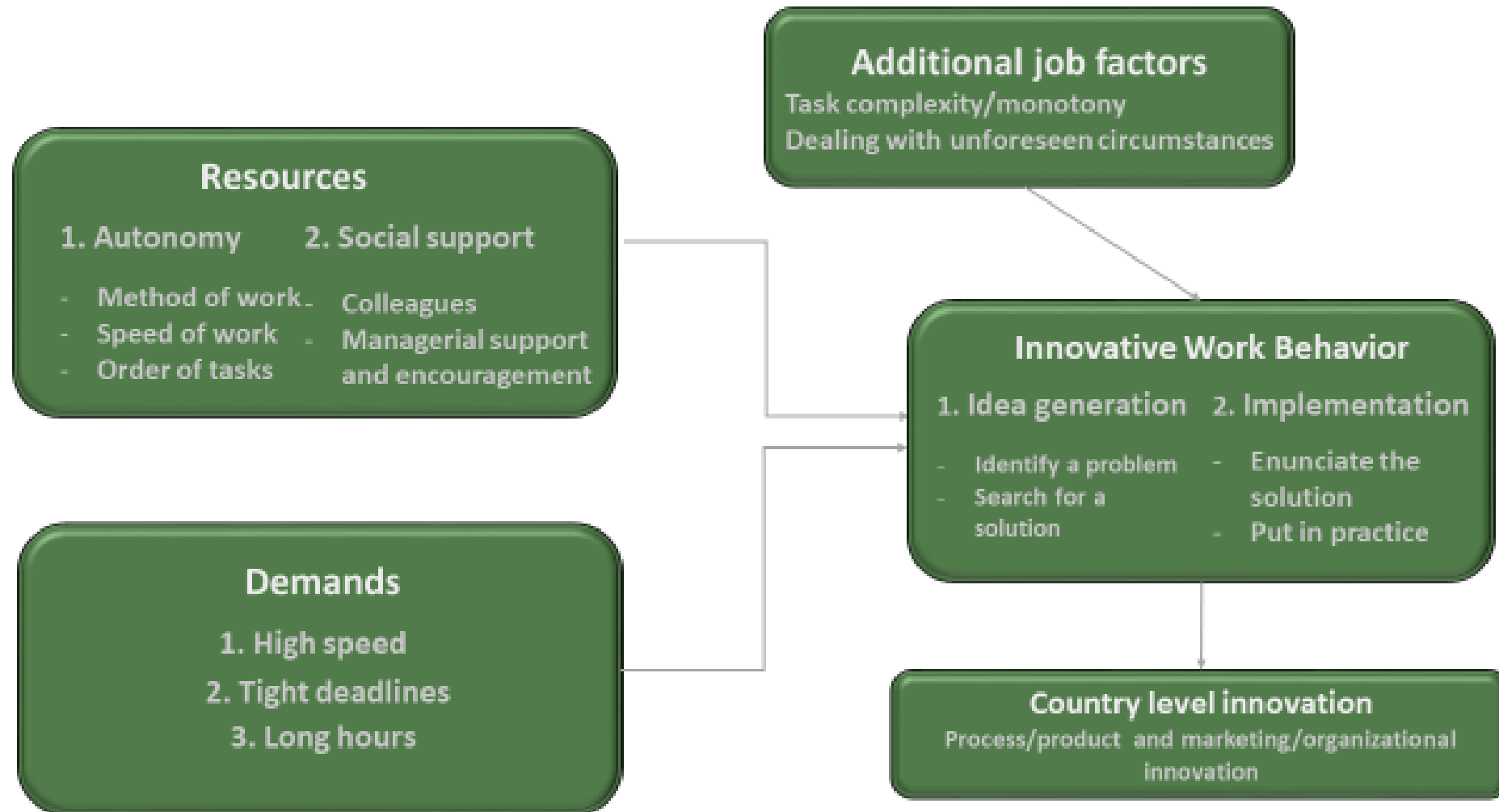


Positive impact

- Matrix (2013): net range of economic benefits generated by workplace mental health promotion programmes and mental disorder programmes over a 1 year period can range between €0.81 to €13.62 for every €1 spent
- ROI of workplace mental health promotion programmes ranged between 1:4.9 and 1:10.1 for the costs of absenteeism and between 1:2.3 and 1:5.9 in respect of health care costs avoided. A reduction in absenteeism rates and associated costs of between 12% and 36% was achieved through such measures (Kleinschmidt, 2013)



Link with innovation



DEDIU, V., LEKA, S. and JAIN, A., (2018). Job demands, job resources and innovative work behaviour: A European Union Study. *European Journal of Work & Organizational Psychology*, 27(3), 310-323.

Examples of psychosocial risk assessment tools



- **Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ):** <https://www.copsoq-network.org/licence-guidelines-and-questionnaire/>

COPSOQ

- **QPS Nordic Questionnaire:** https://www.qps-nordic.org/en/doc/QPSNordic_questionnaire.pdf

QPS_{Nordic}
General Questionnaire for
Psychological and Social
Factors at Work

- **Management Standards for Work-related Stress Indicator Tool:** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/downloads.htm>

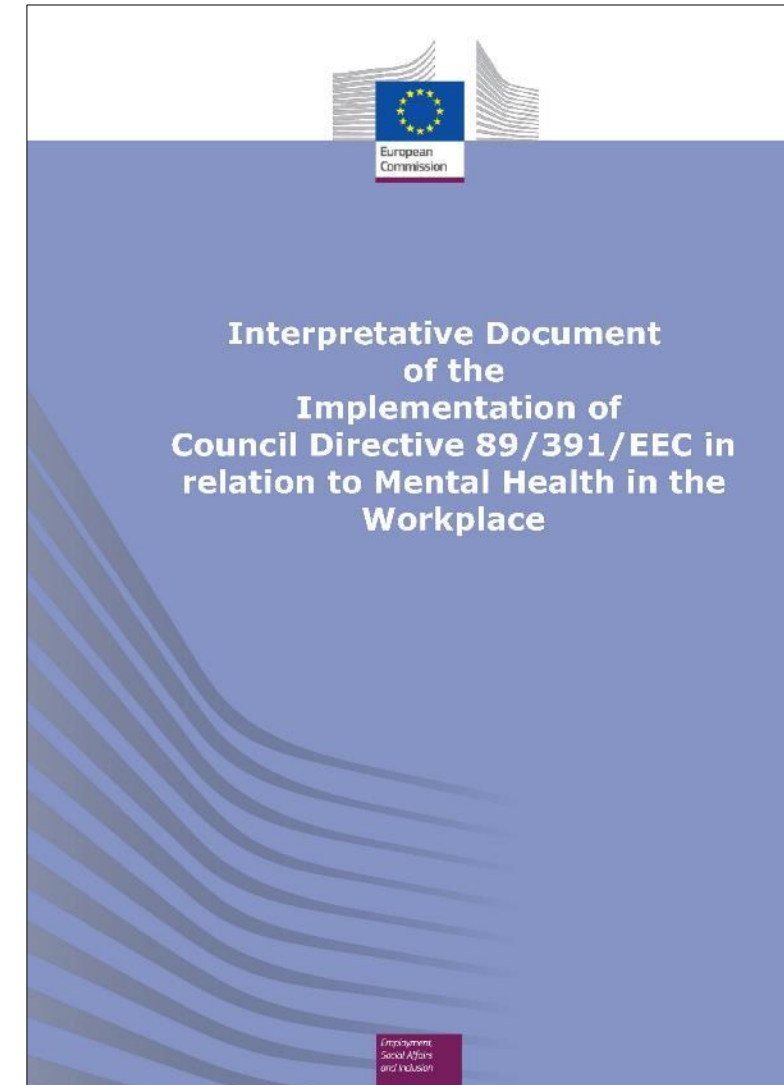
The Management Standards



Interventions to manage psychosocial risks

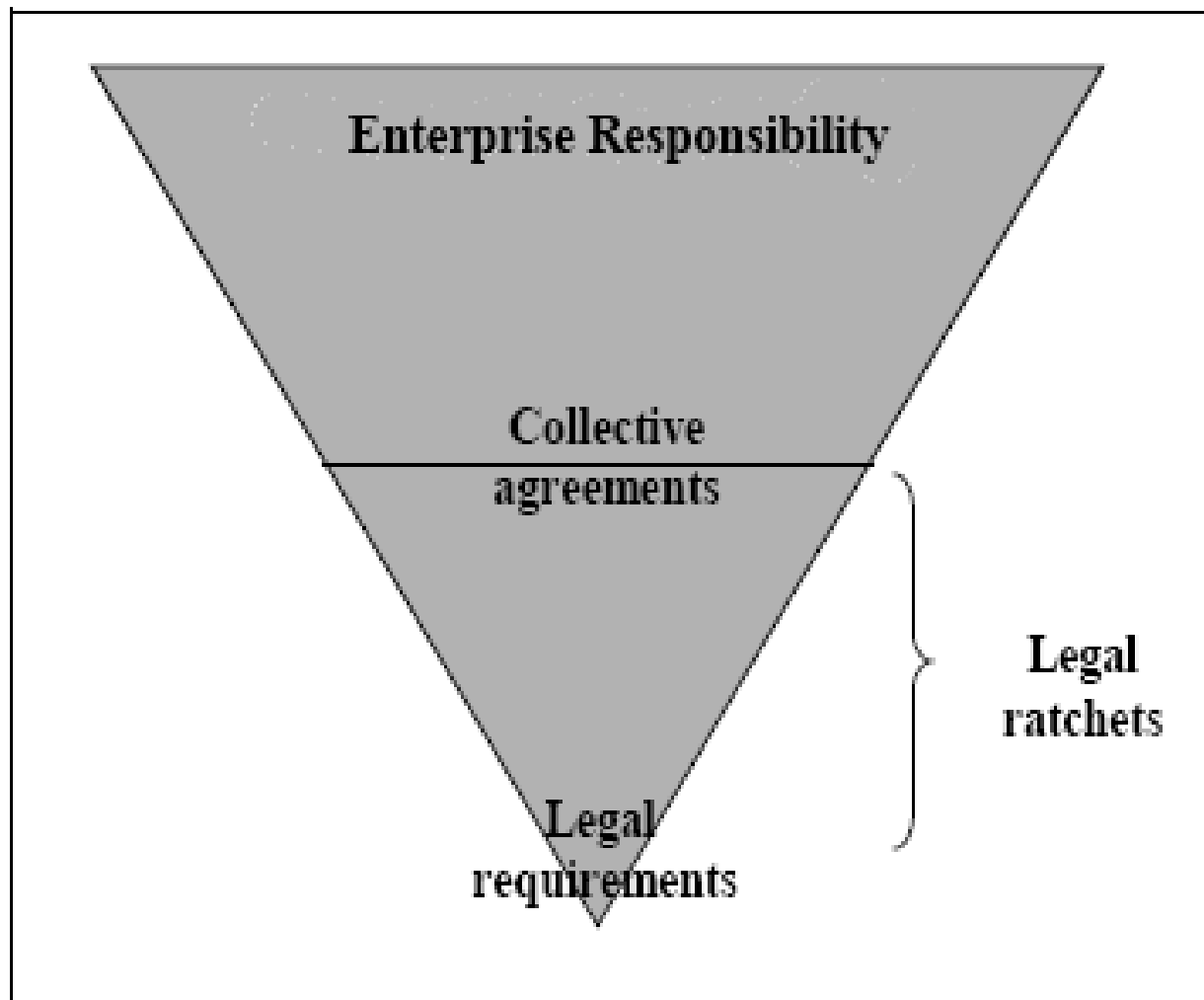
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Legislative/ policy	Health and safety laws, employment law, legislation to prohibit bullying, harassment, discrimination.	Worker compensation	Social security disability programmes
Employer/ organisation	Anti-bullying Policies Codes of Conduct Development of organizational culture Management training Organizational survey	Handling procedures Return to work programmes	Corporate agreements and programmes of after-care Company provided long-term disability
Job/ Task	Job/task redesign Risk analysis	Staff surveys Training Conflict resolution; Mediation	Group recovery programmes
Individual/job interface	Training (e.g. assertiveness training), Health promotion programmes	Social support, Counselling	Therapy, Employee assistance programmes

- Several approaches implemented to make employers engage in psychosocial risk management: regulatory approaches, and voluntary approaches in the form of standards, guidance, and specific tools and methods
- Legally binding ('hard law') instruments
 - ILO Conventions on workers health
 - EU Directives (e.g. Directive 89/391/EEC the European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work)
 - National legislation
- Voluntary ('soft law') instruments
 - Guidance ILO(1986, 2012) WHO (2003, 2007, 2008)
 - Standards (ISO 45003, CAN/CSA Z1003, PAS1010)
 - European Social Dialogue Agreements (e.g. Work-related stress 2004, Harassment and Violence at Work 2007)
 - Sustainability initiatives (e.g. Sustainable development goals (SDGs), European Commission Green Paper on CSR 2001)
 - National policy initiatives, (e.g. Health Covenants in Netherlands, HSE Management Standards for Work-Related Stress in UK)





What has been done: Hard and soft policy



As challenges in enforcing legislative requirements increase, due to issues of resources, creative compliance, lobbying for changes, blatant disregard for legislation, and less success in developing countries, responsible business practices, and **use of voluntary standards** are expected to continue to play a more important role for achieving higher standards of practice.

PAS 1010:2011

Guidance on the management of psychosocial risks in the workplace



Launch of two standards at national level

- British Standards Institution in 2011: first national guidance standard on the management of psychosocial risks in the workplace (BSI, 2011)
- National standard on psychological health and safety in the workplace in Canada in 2013 (BNQ, CSA Group and MHCC, 2013): the first standard that is auditable in this area



CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013
National Standard of Canada

Psychological health and safety in the workplace —
Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation

Disponible en français
Santé et sécurité psychologiques en milieu de travail —
Prévention, promotion et lignes directrices pour une mise en œuvre par étapes



Both are input texts for ISO 45003



ISO 45003

- Provides guidance with respect to managing psychosocial risk within an occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system to enable organizations to **prevent work-related injury and ill health of their workers and other interested parties, and to promote well-being and engagement**. It is applicable to organizations of all sizes and in all sectors for the development, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of safe and healthy workplaces.
- Psychosocial Risk: combination of the likelihood of occurrence of work-related hazard(s) of a psychosocial nature and the severity of injury and ill-health that can be directly associated with these hazards. Hazards of a psychosocial nature can include aspects of work tasks, work organization, management, work environment and organizational conditions that have the potential for psychological and physical harm.
- <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:45003:ed-1:v1:en>



How will 45003 benefit users?

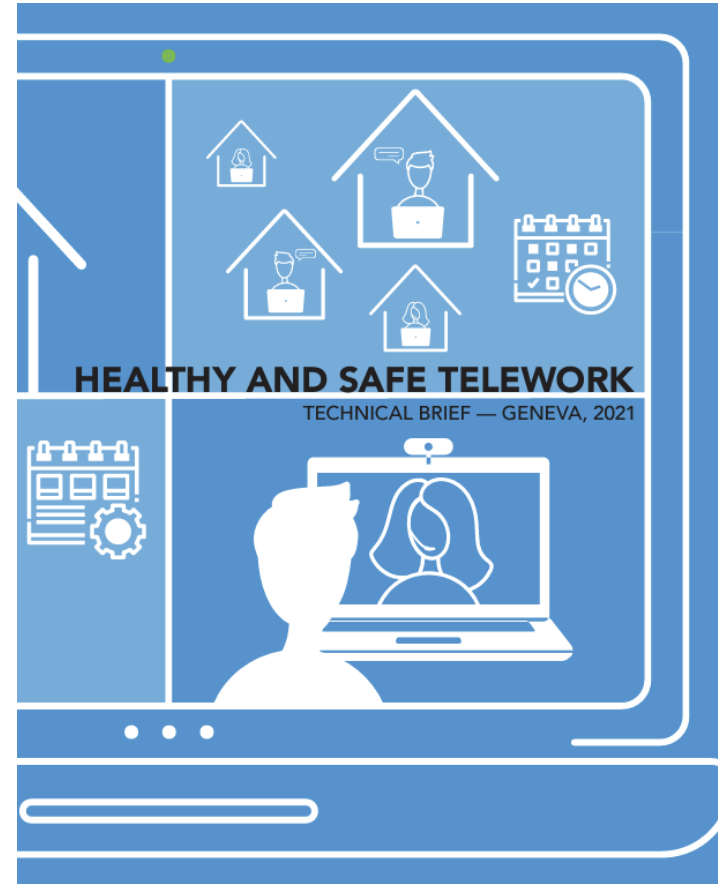
- While national standards and toolkits have been developed in recent years, ISO 45003 is the first international standard dealing with psychological health and safety in the workplace, providing guidelines to manage psychosocial risk.
- The credibility of a global standard will encourage more organizations to address this important issue enabling them to meet legal obligations and promote organizational sustainability.
- ISO 45003 provides guidance to organizations on:
 - How to identify the conditions, circumstances and workplace demands that have the potential to impair the psychological health and wellbeing of employees;
 - How to identify primary risk factors and assess them to determine what changes are required to improve the working environment; and
 - How to identify and control work-related hazards and manage psychosocial risk within an occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system.



Psychosocial risks and Covid-19



https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/resources-library/publications/WCMS_748638/lang-en/index.htm



https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---lab_admin/documents/publication/wcms_836250.pdf



Choosing appropriate interventions to tackle psychosocial risks and work-related stress

- “if we know *factor A* (a work characteristic) is linked to employee health – and the evidence for that linkage is good – we might want to intervene to ensure that *factor A* is well-managed. If for some reason this is not possible then we might look to protect employees against the effects that *factor A* might have on them. **If we know that we cannot achieve either of these things we might then look to see how the damage caused by *factor A* can be repaired.**”

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

TERTIARY

- (Randall & Nielsen, 2010)



Examples of interventions

Work Redesign

- Changing the demands of work (e.g., by changing the way the job is done or the working environment; assigning clear roles, avoiding role conflict & ambiguity; sharing workload differently).
- Ensuring that employees have or develop the appropriate knowledge and abilities to perform their jobs effectively (e.g., by assigning tasks according to experience and competence; by selecting and training employees properly and by reviewing their progress regularly).
- Improving employees' control over the way they do their work (e.g., by introducing flexi-time, job-sharing, more consultation about working practices).
- Increasing the amount and quality of support they receive (e.g., by introducing 'people management' training schemes for supervisors, allowing interaction among employees, encouraging co-operation and teamwork; encouraging employees to discuss any conflicting demands between work & home).

Stress Management Training

- Asking employees to attend classes on relaxation, time management, assertiveness training or health promotion such as exercise, healthy eating etc.

Ergonomics and Environmental Design

- Improving equipment used at work and physical working conditions.

Management Development

- Improving managers' attitudes towards dealing with work stress, their knowledge and understanding of it and their skills to deal with the issue as effectively as possible.

Organizational Development

- Implementing better work systems and management systems.
- Developing a more friendly and supportive culture.
- Ensuring fairness and transparency.
- Maintaining a workplace that is free of physical and psychological violence.

Comprehensive Approach

- Secondary and tertiary interventions are likely to be insufficient in maintaining employee health without complementary primary interventions
- A comprehensive approach is required > multi-modal intervention programmes
- (Giga et al., 2003; Noblet & LaMontagne, 2006; Semmer 2006; Leka et al., 2008; Leka, 2018)

What is needed



Researchers and practitioners must play a key role in addressing these gaps so as to allow research and practice to further develop and promote employee health, safety and well-being through a sustainability approach



SGD Goal 8



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



Global unemployment increased from 170 million in 2007 to nearly 202 million in 2012 of which about 75 million are young women and men



470 million jobs are needed globally for new entrants to the labour market between 2016 and 2030



Small and medium-sized enterprises that engage in industrial processing and manufacturing are the most critical for the early stages of industrialization and are typically the largest job creators
They make up over 90% of business worldwide and account for between 50-60% of employment

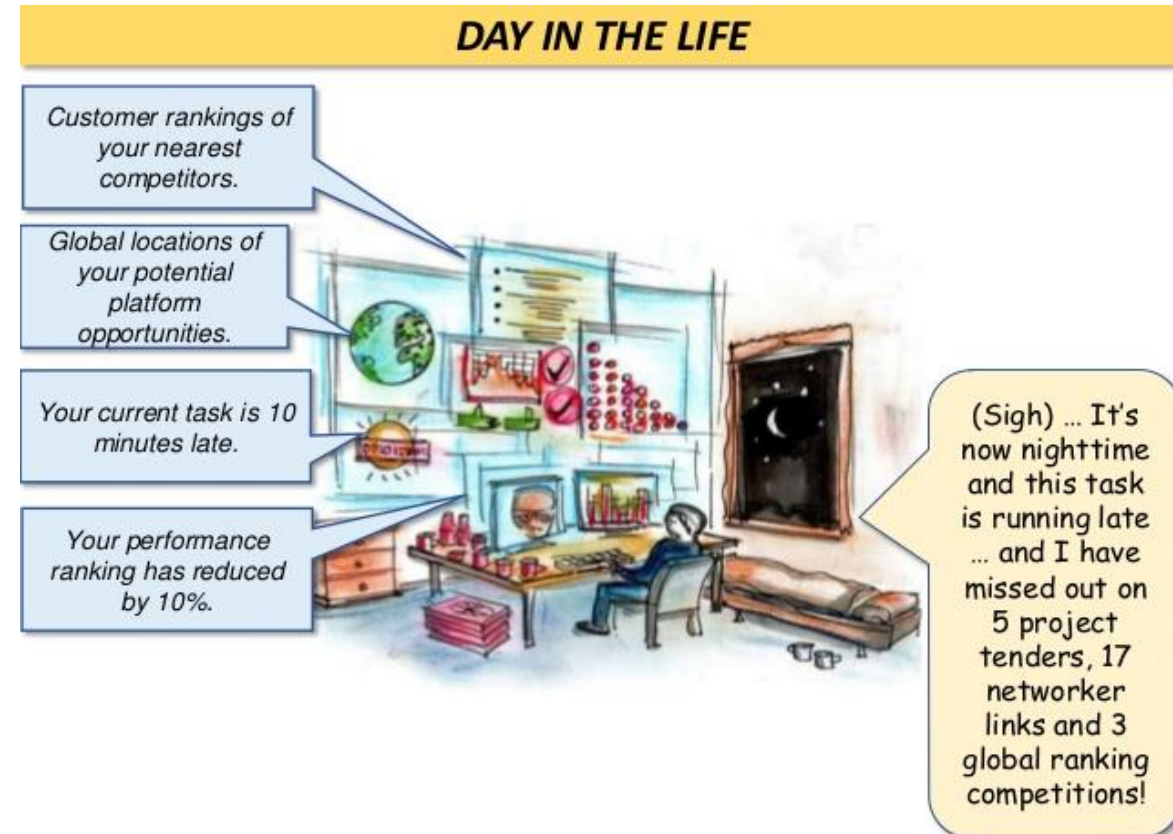


Nearly 2.2 billion people live below the US\$ poverty line
Poverty eradication is only possible through stable and well-paid jobs

- Target 8.5: by 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- Target 8.7: take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- Target 8.8: protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment

OSH challenges in the future of work 1

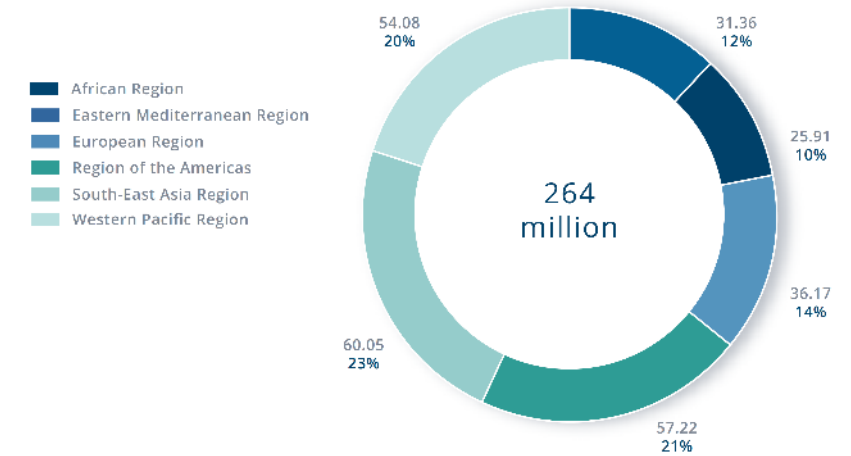
- Changes in technology will bring about frequent changes in work processes, job insecurity will increase and there will be more frequent job changes
- With the ability to work virtually from anywhere, and many workers doing so from home, the boundaries between work and private life may become blurred
- Workers may work longer hours and have difficulty to disengage from work, feeling physically and emotionally exhausted, especially where there is lack of experience of virtual work and lack of support
- Many workers will exhibit online addiction (wanting to always be on)
- The use of performance-enhancing drugs might increase, especially in the case of addiction, longer working hours and strict performance monitoring based on digital algorithms



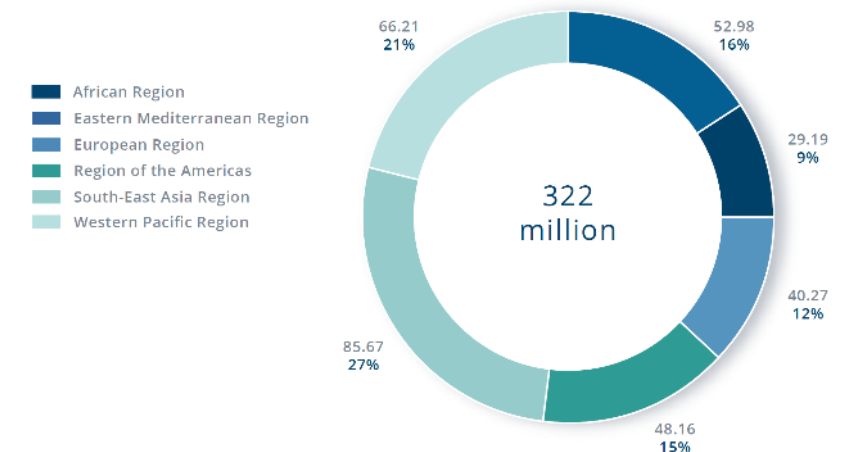
OSH challenges in the future of work 2

- Psychosocial risks and work-related stress will increase since the pace of work will be faster and employees might have less control over their work, especially if this is machine dictated
- Remote virtual work from home may increase feelings of isolation and loneliness - Lack of social interaction and support might emerge as challenges despite technological advancements supporting better communication
- More diverse workforce participation might make communication more challenging while cyberbullying may increase in virtual work, especially since more workers will work in virtual teams
- These issues will result in a rise in mental ill health problems such as anxiety and depression

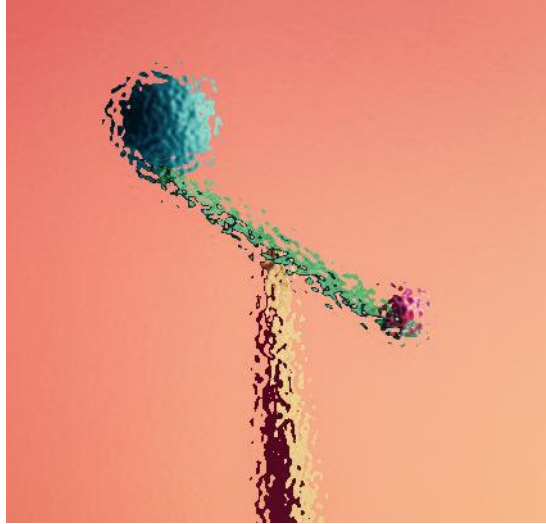
Cases of anxiety disorder (millions), by WHO Region



Cases of depressive disorder (millions), by WHO Region



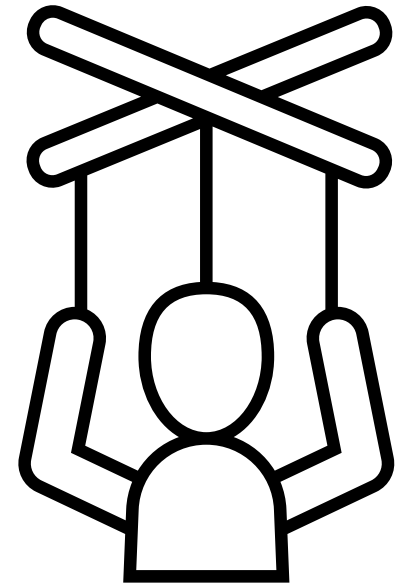
OSH challenges in the future of work 3



- Female workers might face additional burden without appropriate support since they might have to juggle remote virtual work from home with additional care responsibilities
- Working from home has implications in terms of suitability of work stations, equipment and connectivity and could pose ergonomic risks, leading to MSD problems
- Sedentary work is common in virtual work and can lead to obesity, heart disease, diabetes and MSD problems. Increased virtual work and use of 5G technology will also mean more exposure to electromagnetic fields (EU-OSHA, 2018)

OSH challenges in the future of work 4

- Faster data processing, algorithmic management and audible command technologies means that the pace of work will become faster and workers might have less control and autonomy over their work
- Algorithmic management of work and workers, AI, monitoring technologies, such as wearables, together with the Internet of Things and Big Data may lead to cyber-security (which is also related to the use of social media) and data protection issues, ethical issues, and information inequality with regard to OSH (EU-OSHA, 2018; Moore, 2019)





Future dilemmas

Responsibility	How to define employer and worker responsibility in relation to risk management while working in new virtual work contexts and conditions (e.g. remote virtual work; virtual work from home; working in a VR environment). How can social protection be ensured even for independent workers?
Policy	How to achieve a good balance between regulation and other types of policy in order to address new and emerging risks in virtual work while not hindering rapid progress. How can inspections be more agile?
Autonomy and control	How to balance flexibility through virtual work with worker autonomy and control over their work. How can worker participation and collective bargaining be supported?
Privacy	How to protect worker privacy in a virtual environment while using algorithmic monitoring and surveillance. How can ethical hiring, appraisal and evaluation processes be developed maintaining human dignity?
Technology interface	How to incorporate new technological interfaces (e.g. enhanced sensory stimulation, robotics) in virtual work processes while ensuring human sensitive and human-in-control design. How can SME infrastructure and worker skills be developed appropriately?
Productivity	How to balance organisational economic performance against social performance. How can health, safety and well-being be addressed in a preventative way in the context of virtual work? How can an economy of well-being perspective be promoted and adopted?
Workforce diversity	How to support more participation of diverse groups (e.g. female, older, younger, different ability, migrant, low educated workers) in virtual work while developing their skills and providing appropriate support. How can a lifelong perspective to the development of the workforce be promoted?

Thank You!!!

Stavroula.Leka@nottingham.ac.uk

