

The Work Ability Index: Applications and challenges

Gerard Tiernan, Manager Health Surveillance, DEEDI Mines

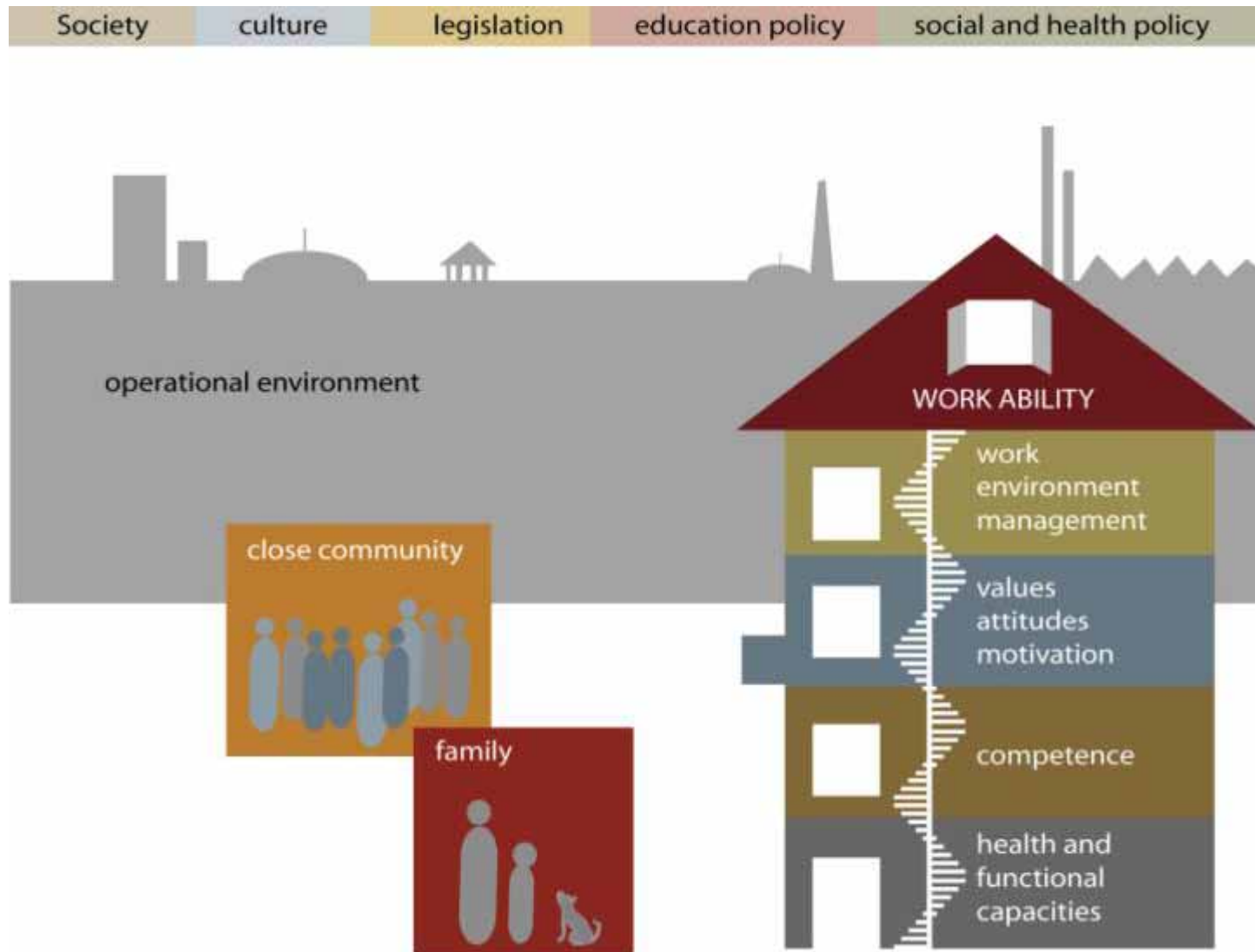
Trudy Tilbury, Senior Principal Ergonomist/Principal Human Factors Advisor, DEEDI Mines

What is the Work Ability Index?

- provides a measure of health status
 - uses factors such as the number of medical conditions
 - does not go into the medical detail of conditions
 - measures the worker's own perception of his or her work ability
 - it is a qualitative measure
-
- developed by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health



Work ability model



16.9.2010

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Safety and Health Work Ability Index survey

- Questionnaire sent to approximately 236 employees (≈ 16 on leave)
- 103 replied (47% response rate)
- 60 male (42%)
- 43 female (57%)
- 96 valid responses
- 56 anonymous responses
- 40 people requested feedback on their score
- Average age 47
- Age range 20 - 70



Work Ability Index

Administered as a questionnaire

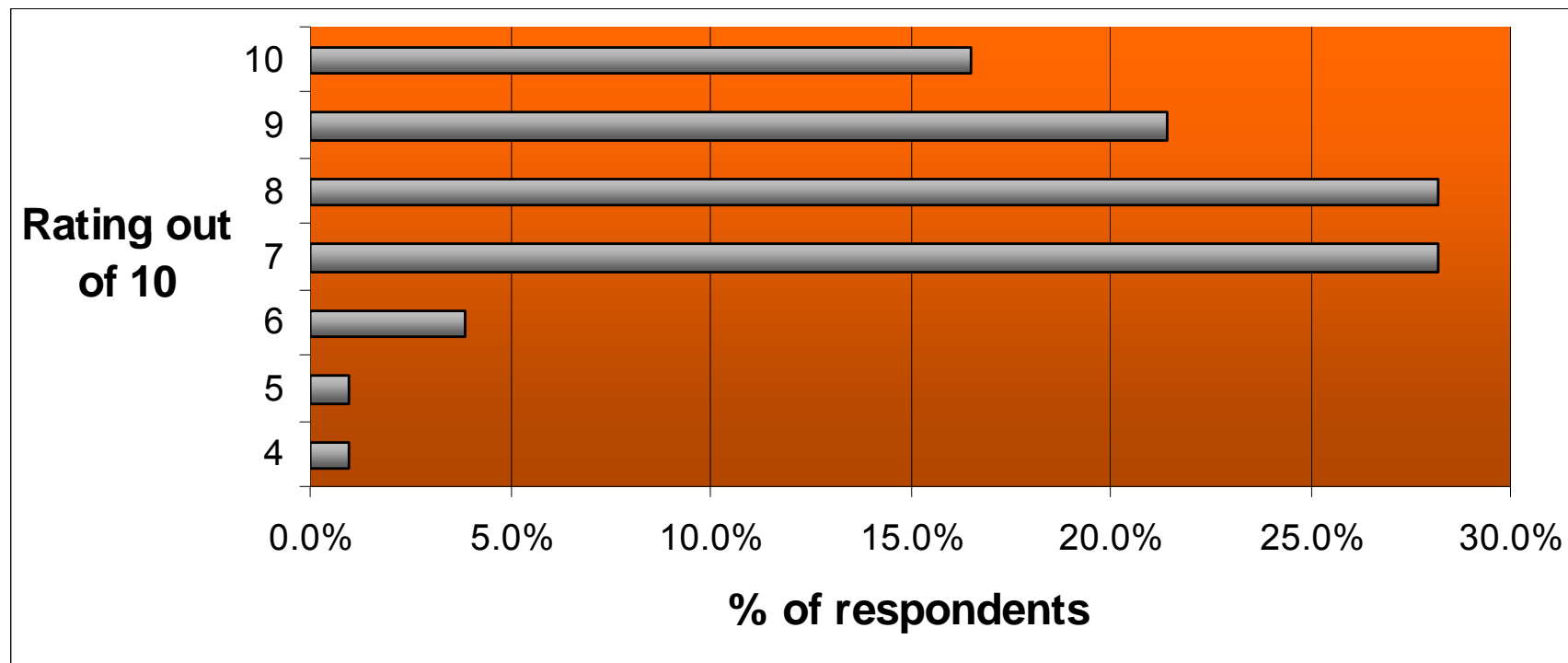
- Current work ability compared with the lifetime best

7 Items

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Work ability in relation to lifetime best



Work Ability Index

Administered as a questionnaire

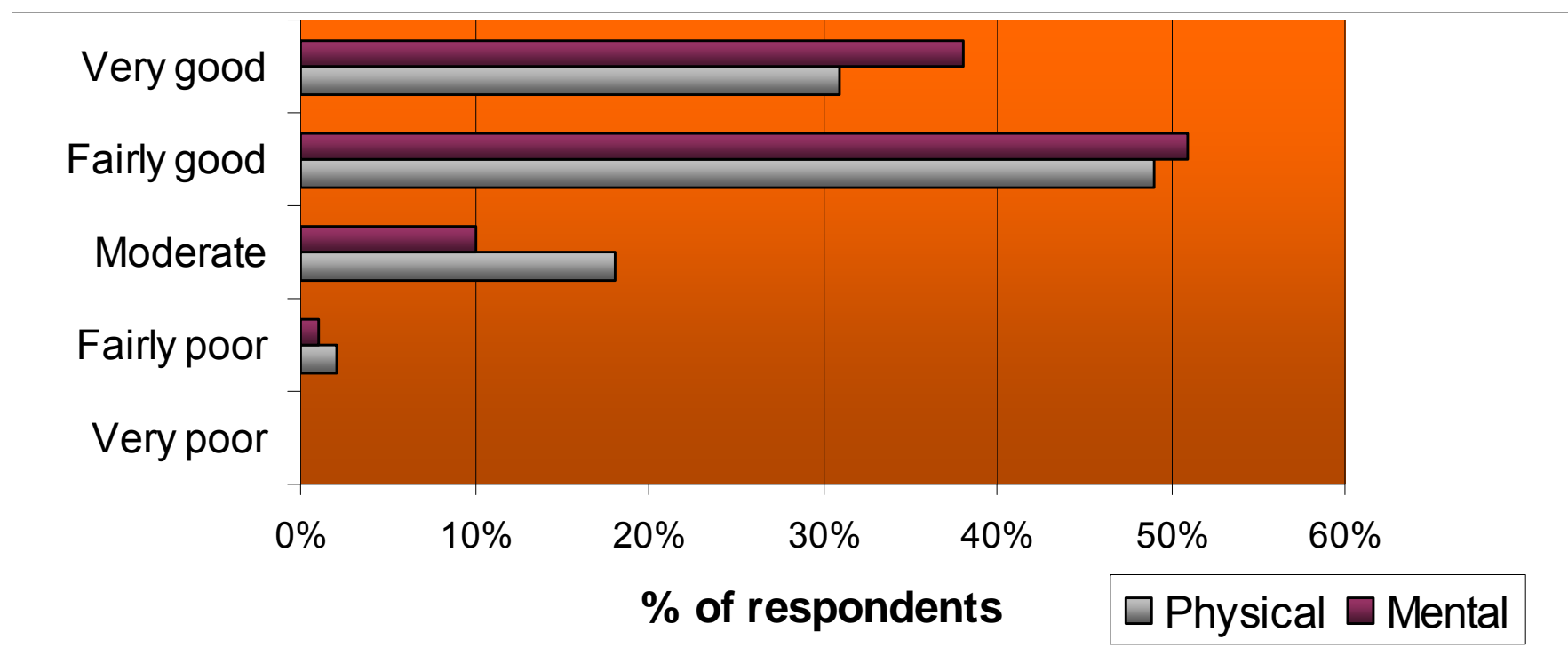
- Current work ability compared with the lifetime best
- Work ability in relation to the demands of the job

7 Items

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Work ability in relation to job



Work Ability Index

Administered as a questionnaire

7 Items

- Current work ability compared with the lifetime best
- Work ability in relation to the demands of the job
- Number of current diseases diagnosed by physician

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Work Ability Index

Administered as a questionnaire

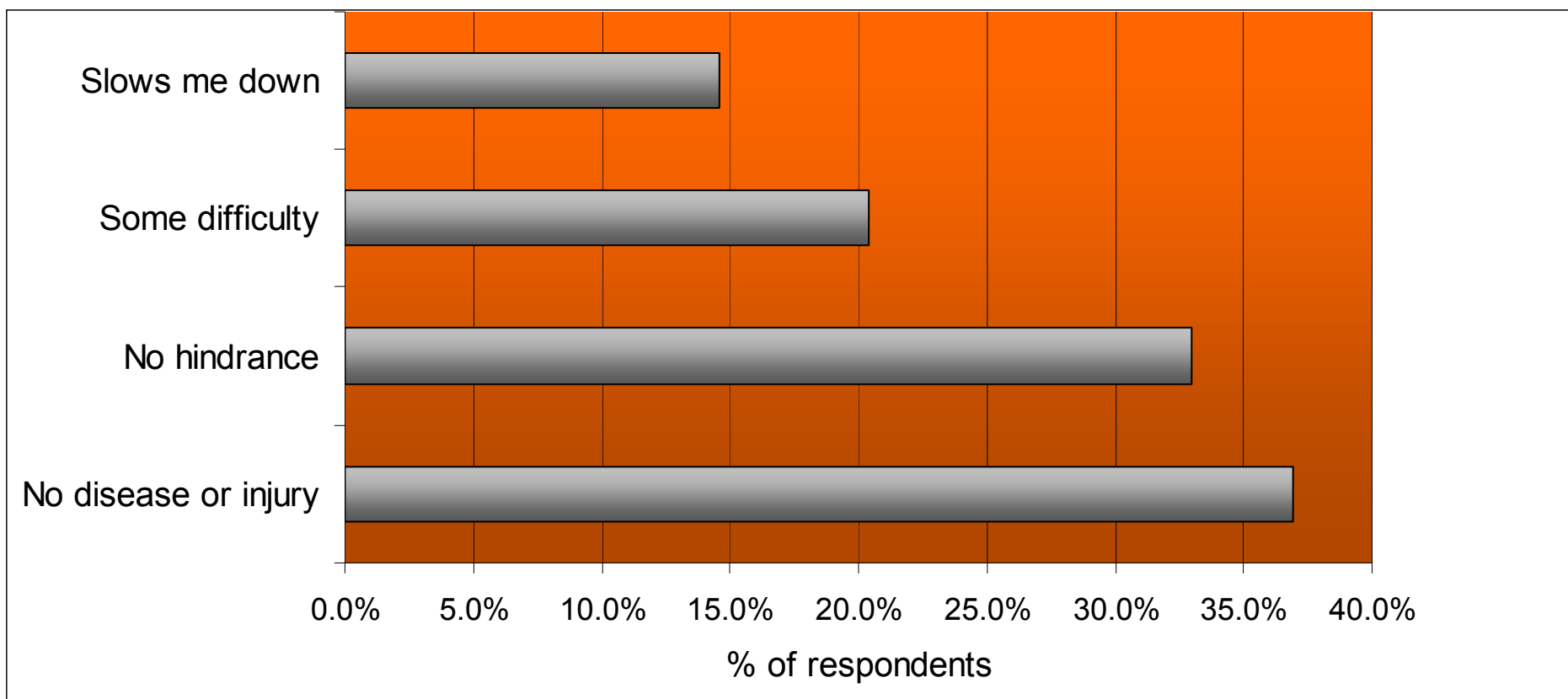
7 Items

- Current work ability compared with the lifetime best
- Work ability in relation to the demands of the job
- Number of current diseases diagnosed by physician
- Estimated work impairment due to diseases

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Work impairment due to injury or disease



Work Ability Index

Administered as a questionnaire

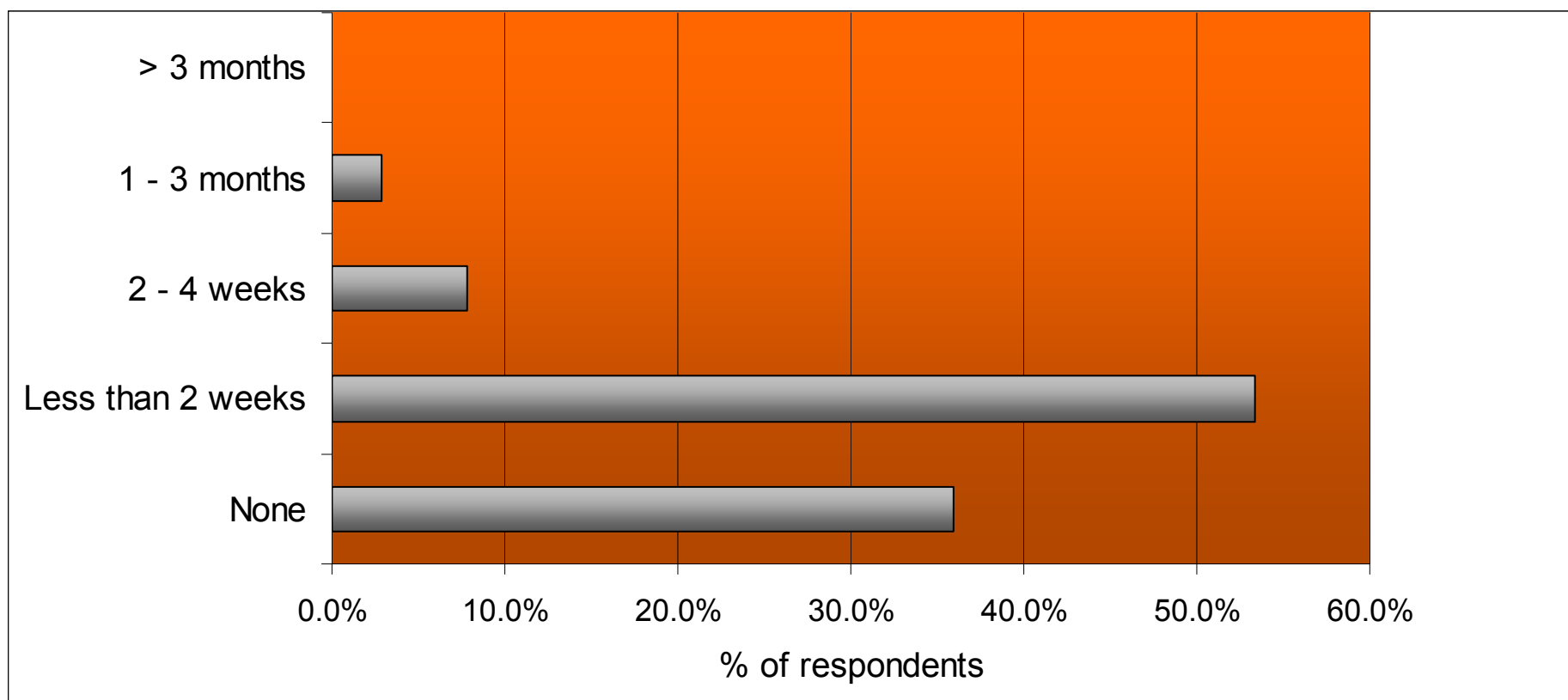
7 Items

- Current work ability compared with the lifetime best
- Work ability in relation to the demands of the job
- Number of current diseases diagnosed by physician
- Estimated work impairment due to diseases
- Sick leave during the past year (12 months)

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Sick leave last 12 months



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- Current work ability compared with the lifetime best
- Work ability in relation to the demands of the job
- Number of current diseases diagnosed by physician
- Estimated work impairment due to diseases
- Sick leave during the past year (12 months)
- Own prognosis of work ability two years from now
- Personal resources

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Own prognosis two years from now

- >90% believe they will be able to do their current job





Own prognosis two years from now

- >90% believe they will be able to do their current job

Personal resources

Enjoy daily activities	>80%
Active and alert	>90%
Optimistic about future	>70%



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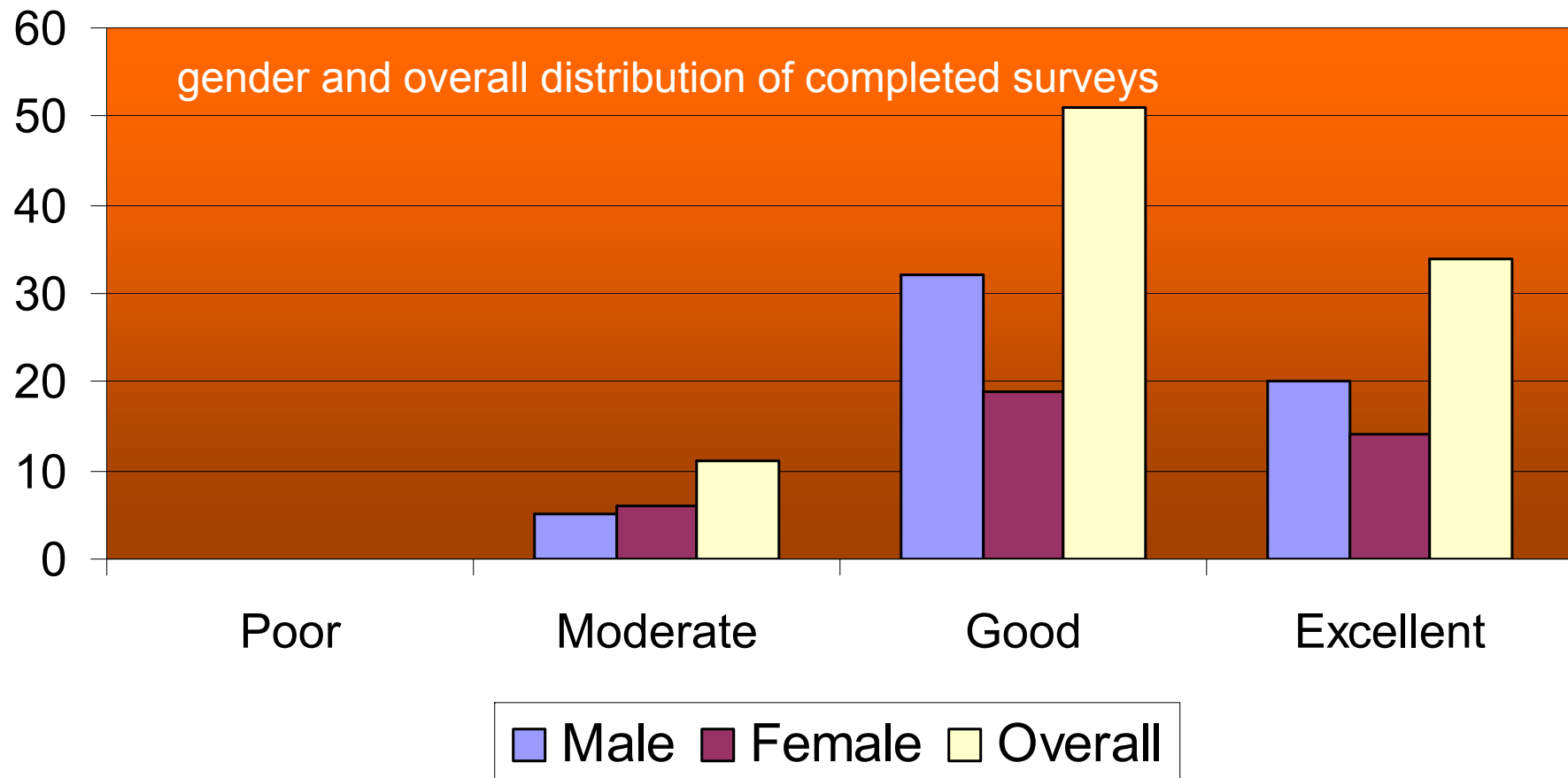


Scoring of the Questionnaire (range 7- 49 points)

Points	Work ability	Objective of measures
7-27	Poor	Restore work ability
28-36	Moderate	Improve work ability
37-43	Good	Support work ability
44-49	Excellent	Maintain work ability

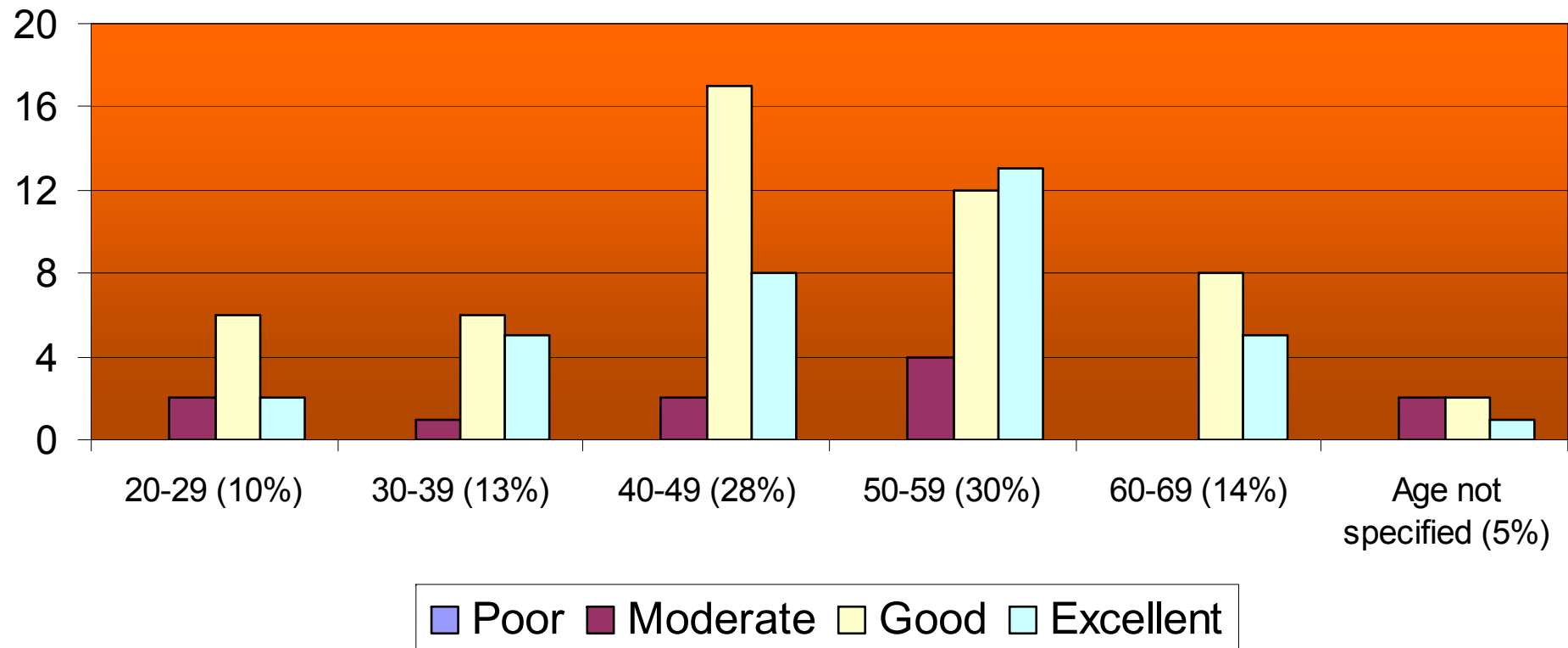
Lea Katajarinne, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Safety and Health Work Ability Results



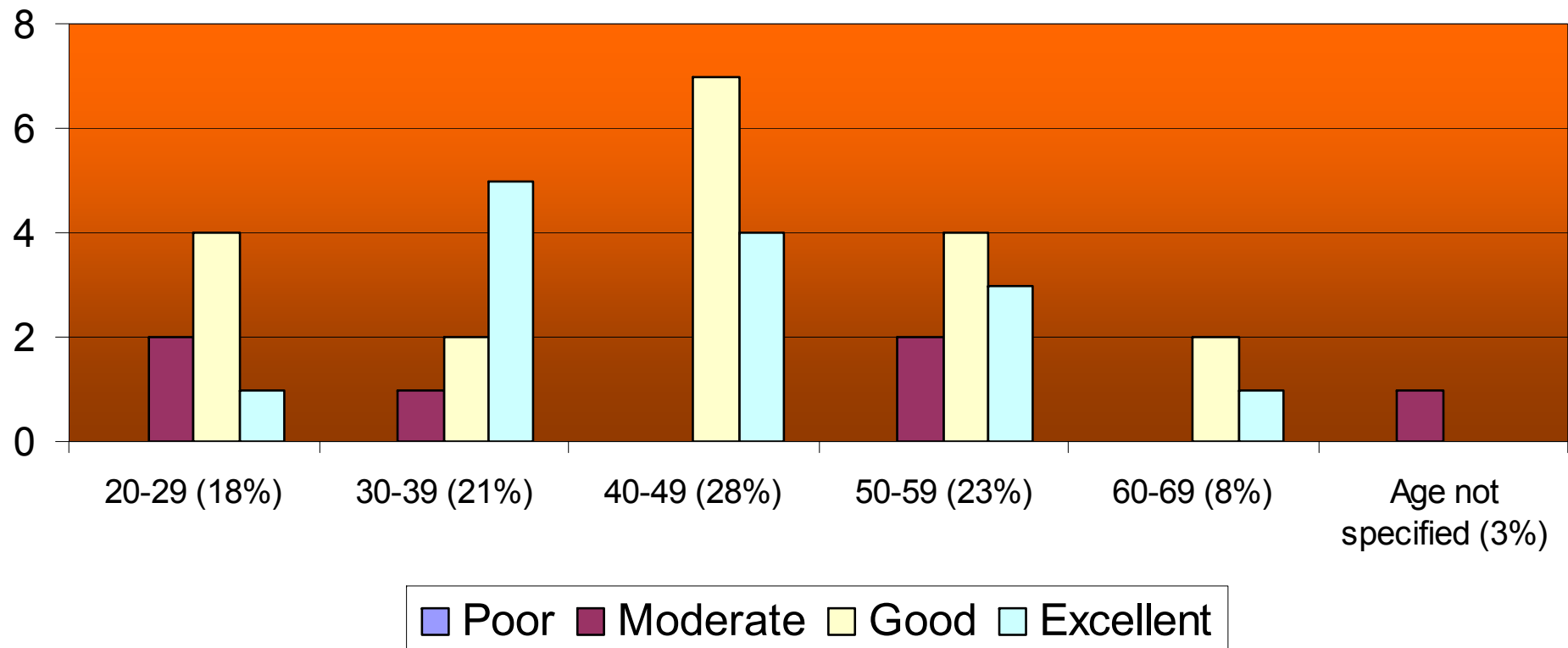
Safety and Health Work Ability Results

Age distribution of completed surveys



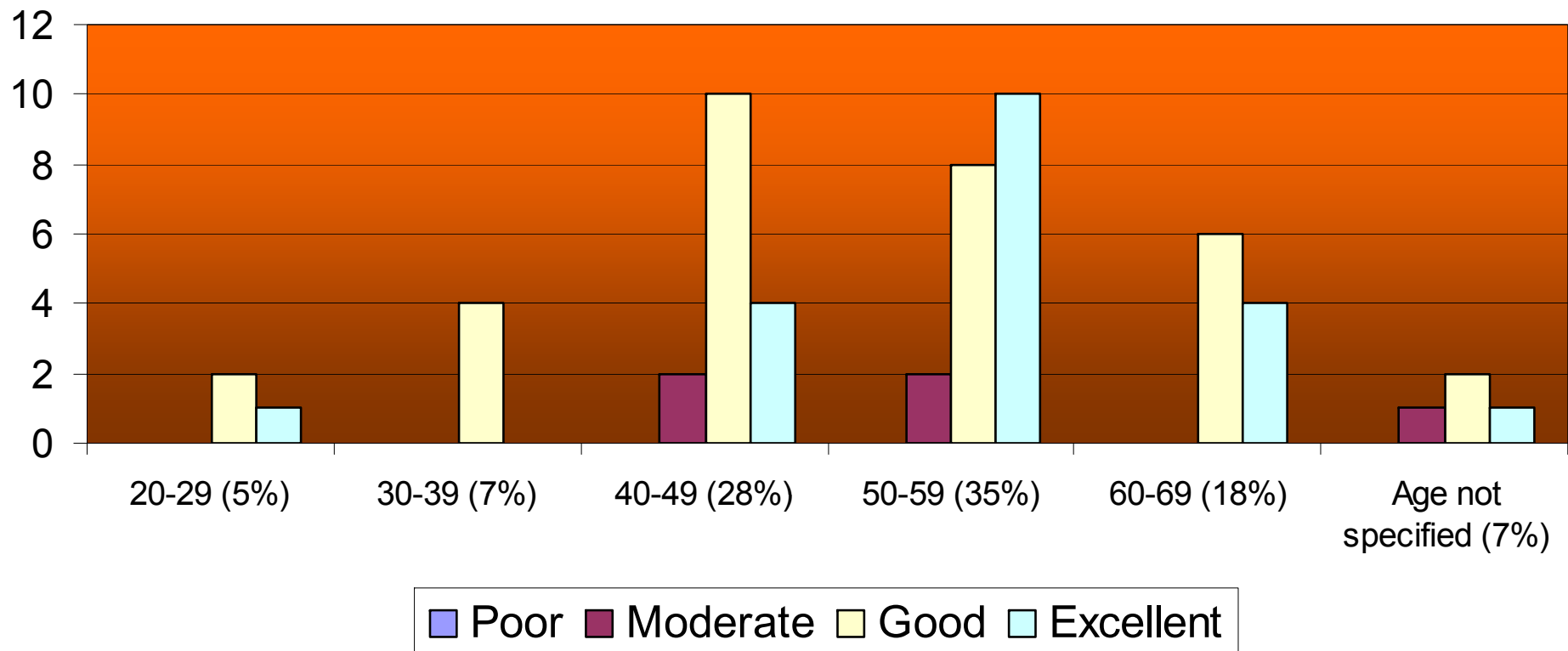
Safety and Health Work Ability Results

Female results by age group



Safety and Health Work Ability Results

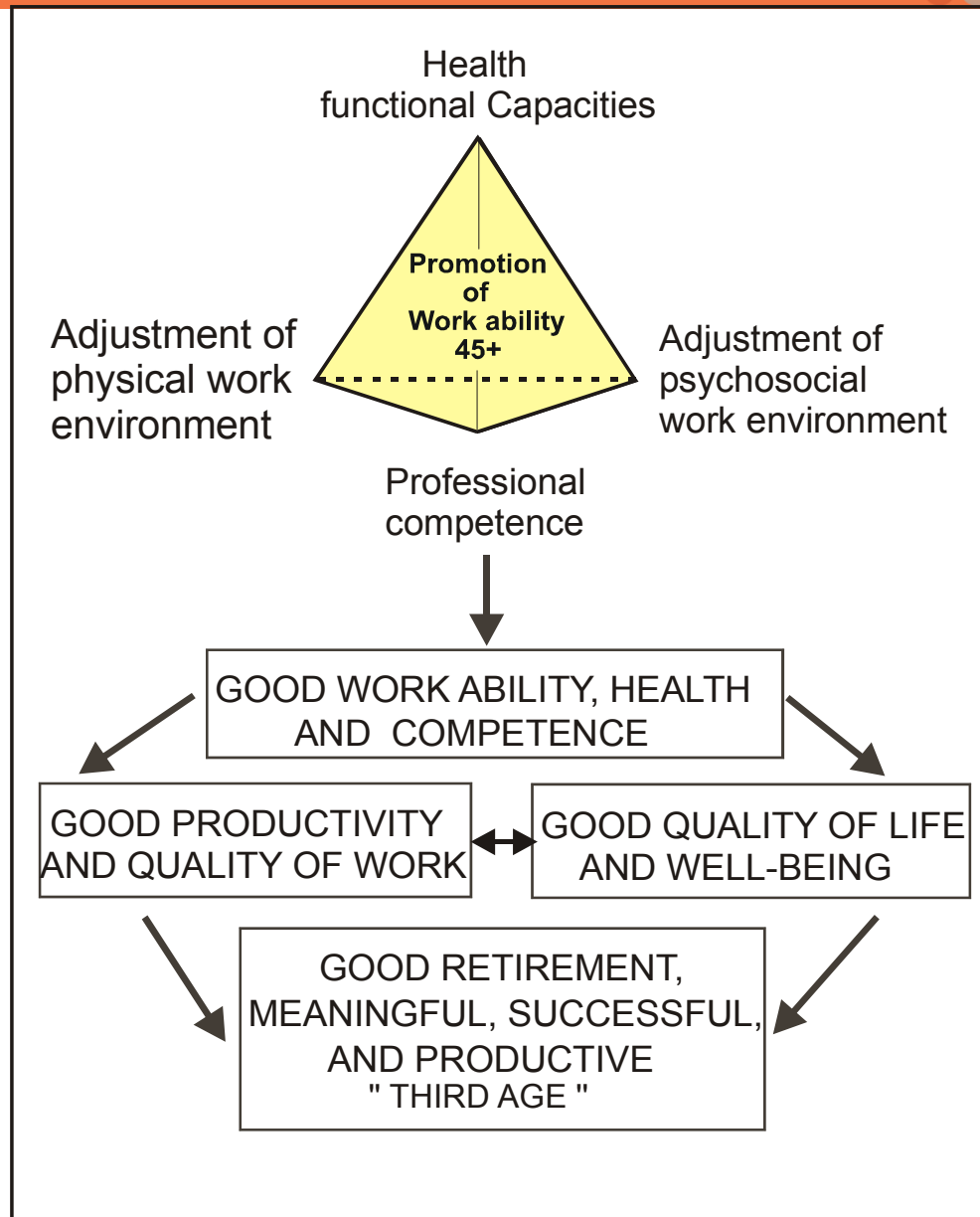
Male results by age group



Workability and mining



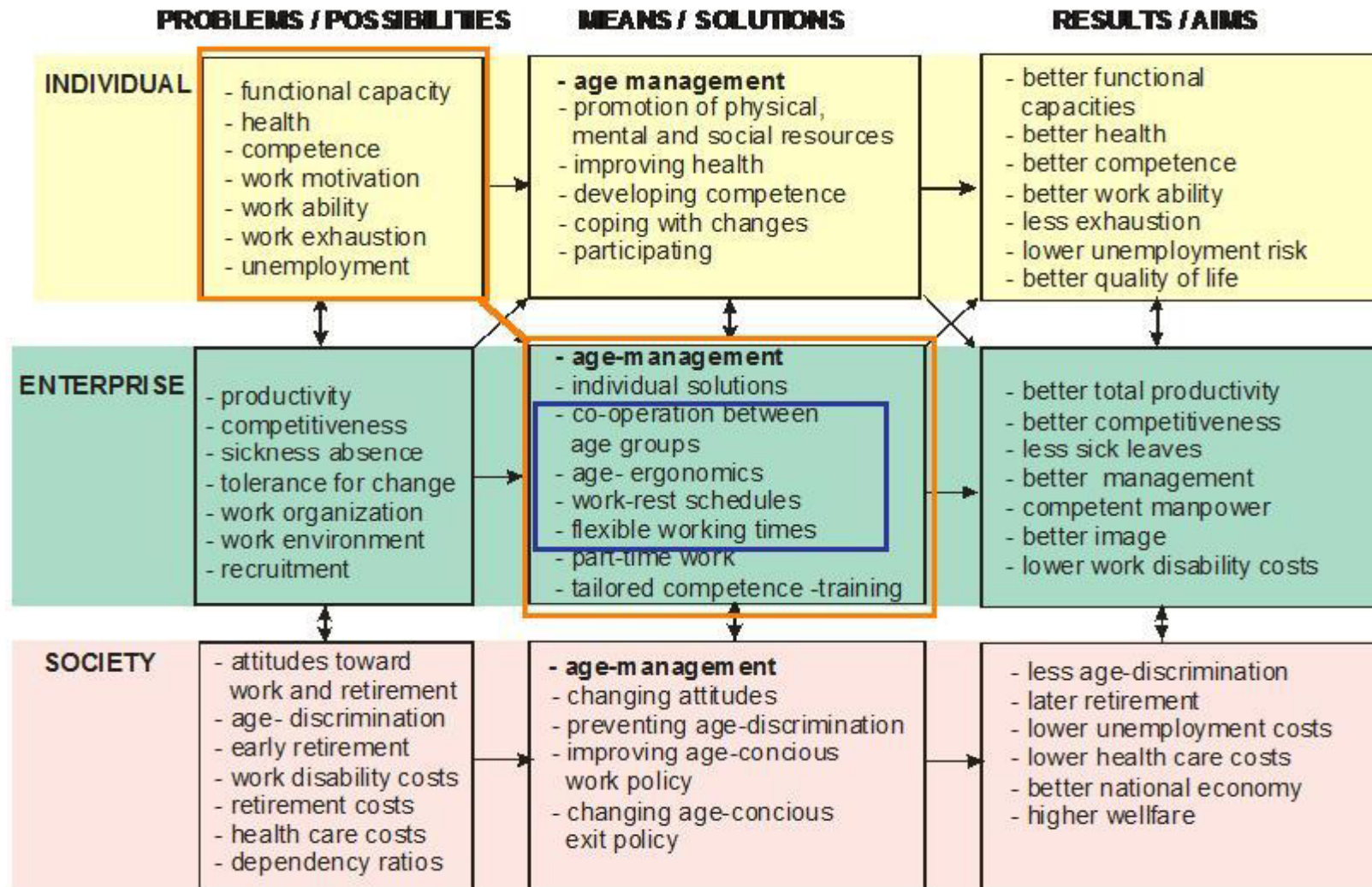
Effective workability outcomes requires adjustment of work environment



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Management of effective workability involves multiple strategies



Slide from Philip Taylor, Swinburne University

Problems/possibilities Individual

- Functional capacity
- Health
- Competence
- Work motivation
- Work ability
- Work exhaustion
- Unemployment

Means/Solutions Enterprise

- Co-operation between age-groups
- Age ergonomics
- Work-rest schedules
- Flexible working times



Applying WAI principles in Australia

“It is also important to note that Finland has a long tradition of institutions, expertise and networks on work health and safety”



Goal: all can enjoy their sunset years



Questions? Gerard Tiernan 07 3234 0723 or Trudy Tilbury 07 4760 7412