



**Occupational Health Clinics
for Ontario Workers Inc.**

**Union Rep/OHCOW
Mental Injury Tool Group:
Can we measure workplace
stress for compensation and
prevention purposes?**

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Occupational Hygienist

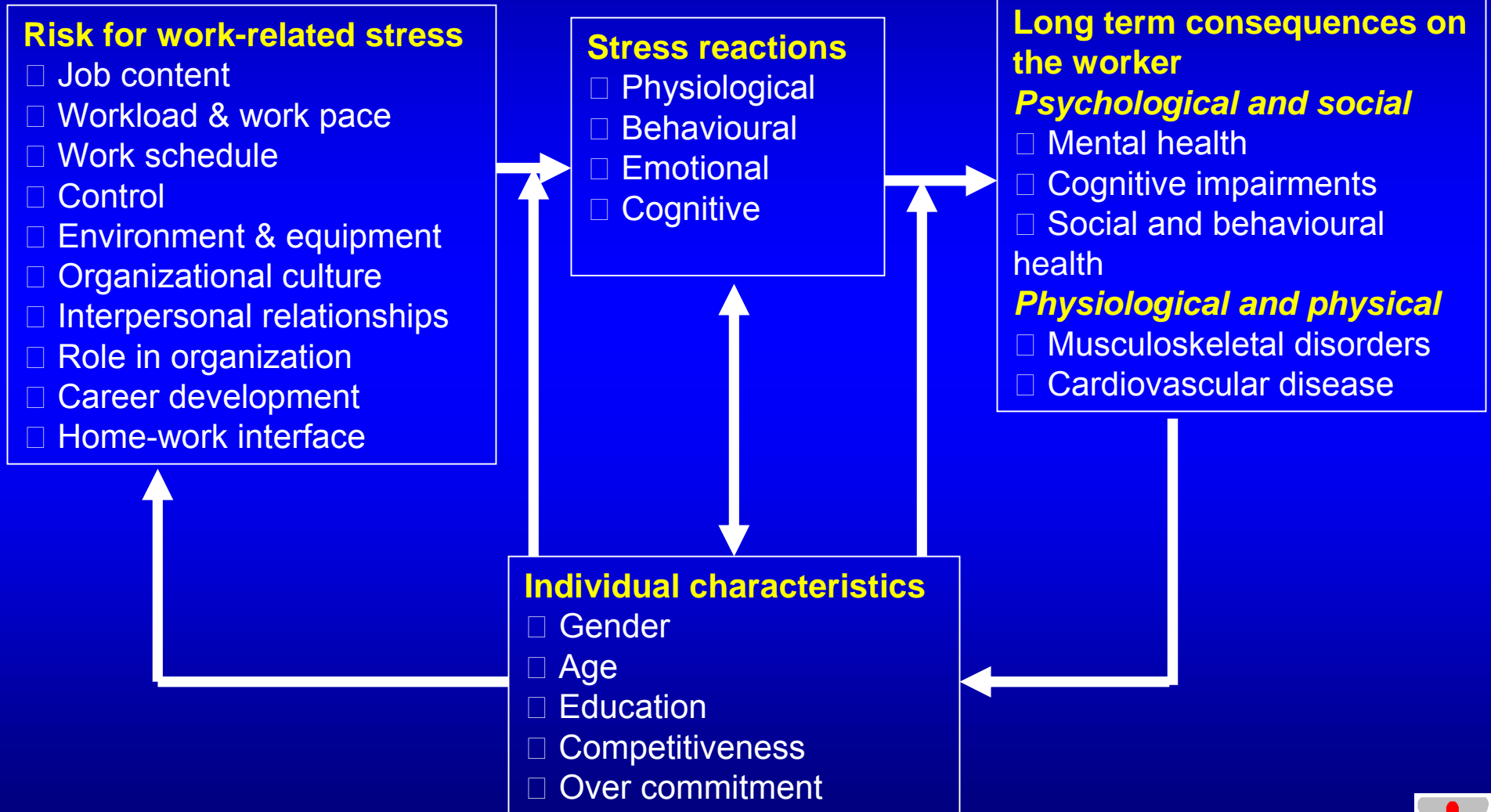


OHCOW/Union Rep Group:

- Sub-group of OHCOW/Union Rep consultation meetings
- Nick DeCarlo led group to look for ways the unions and OHCOW can work together to develop tools to help unions mobilize workers around issues
- Had workshop outlining various topics/tools
- Mental injuries most popular choice – Terri Aversa led sub-sub-group (Mental Injuries Tool Group or MIT)



PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS (WHO theoretical framework)



Prevention levels:

Primary prevention (at the source)

- job design, organizational adaptations, flexibility – collective agreement, H&S Committee, mgmt policy/program

Secondary prevention (early detection)

- educate people about symptoms and on coping skills – wellness programs, screening

Tertiary prevention (help the victims)

- get good treatment, compensation recognition, return to work support – EAP, therapy, RTW



Two types of perspectives:

Biomedical Model: "...disease the result of disruption of psychological processes wherein subjective perceptions, behaviors and personality factors (e.g., neuroticism) are of primary importance (i.e., disease proceeds from the individual to the environment)."
– Occupational Psychology

Social Epidemiological Model: "negative health outcomes (illnesses) are due to the impact of social epidemiologic factors (in general class, work, race and gender)"
– Occupational Sociology

P. Schnall, Session # 1 – Part 1: Introduction to “Work and Health”,
UCLA SPH EHS 270/CHS 278 Spring 2009 (March 31, 2009)



Overall strategy:

- collect data on the shop floor in a way that helps reps make workplace change
- also feed back to the union so that they can produce sector-specific supports
- then, together with other unions push for legislative and compensation changes



it's been done before ...

- in Spain the unions got together with some researchers (ISTAS) and developed a tool to address psychosocial hazards at work
- it's based on a survey developed in Denmark (COPSOQ)
- it's been used in thousands of workplaces (a few in Canada too)



COPSOQ



Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire:

- 3 versions (short, medium & long)
- short (40 questions) ideal for screening
- medium (87 questions) good for in-depth evaluation
- long (128 questions) appropriate for research only



COPSOQ dimensions:

- Quantitative demands
- Work pace
- Emotional demands

- Influence
- *Possibilities for development*
- Meaning of work
- Commitment to the workplace

- Trust regarding management
- *Mutual trust between employees*
- Justice and respect

- Predictability
- Rewards (recognition)
- Role clarity
- *Role conflicts*
- Quality of leadership
- Social support from supervisor
- *Social support from colleagues*
- *Social community at work*

- Job satisfaction
- Work-family conflict

- Sexual harassment
- Threats of violence
- Physical violence
- Bullying



COPSOQ health measures:

- Self rated health
- Burnout
- Stress
- *Sleeping troubles*
- *Depressive symptoms*
- *Somatic stress symptoms*
- *Cognitive stress symptoms*



Union conferences:

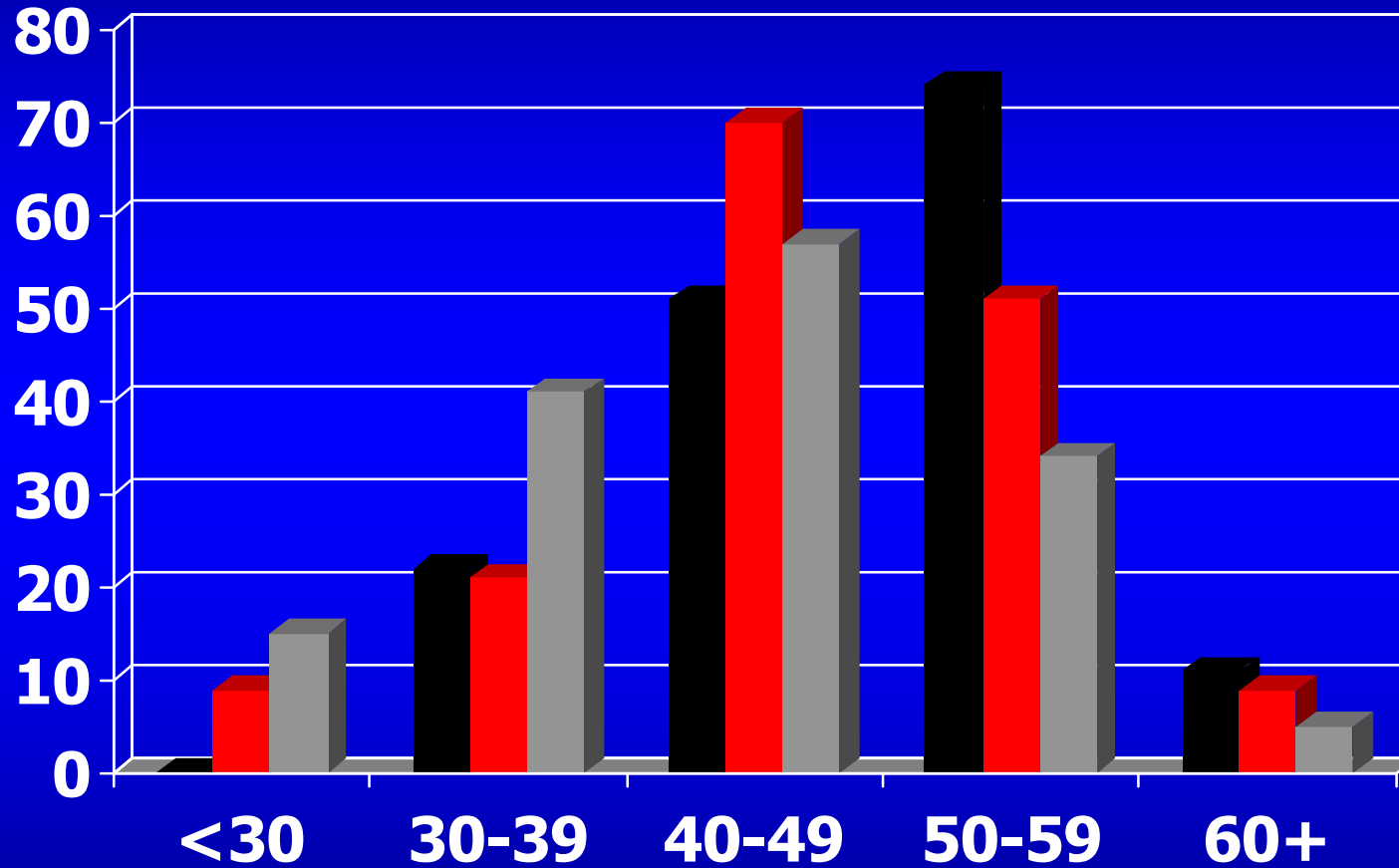
USW HS&E Conference, Vancouver, April 2011 (220 attendees)

OPSEU BPS Conference, Toronto, June 2011 (200 attendees)

CAW Women's Conference, Port Elgin, August 2011 (200 attendees)



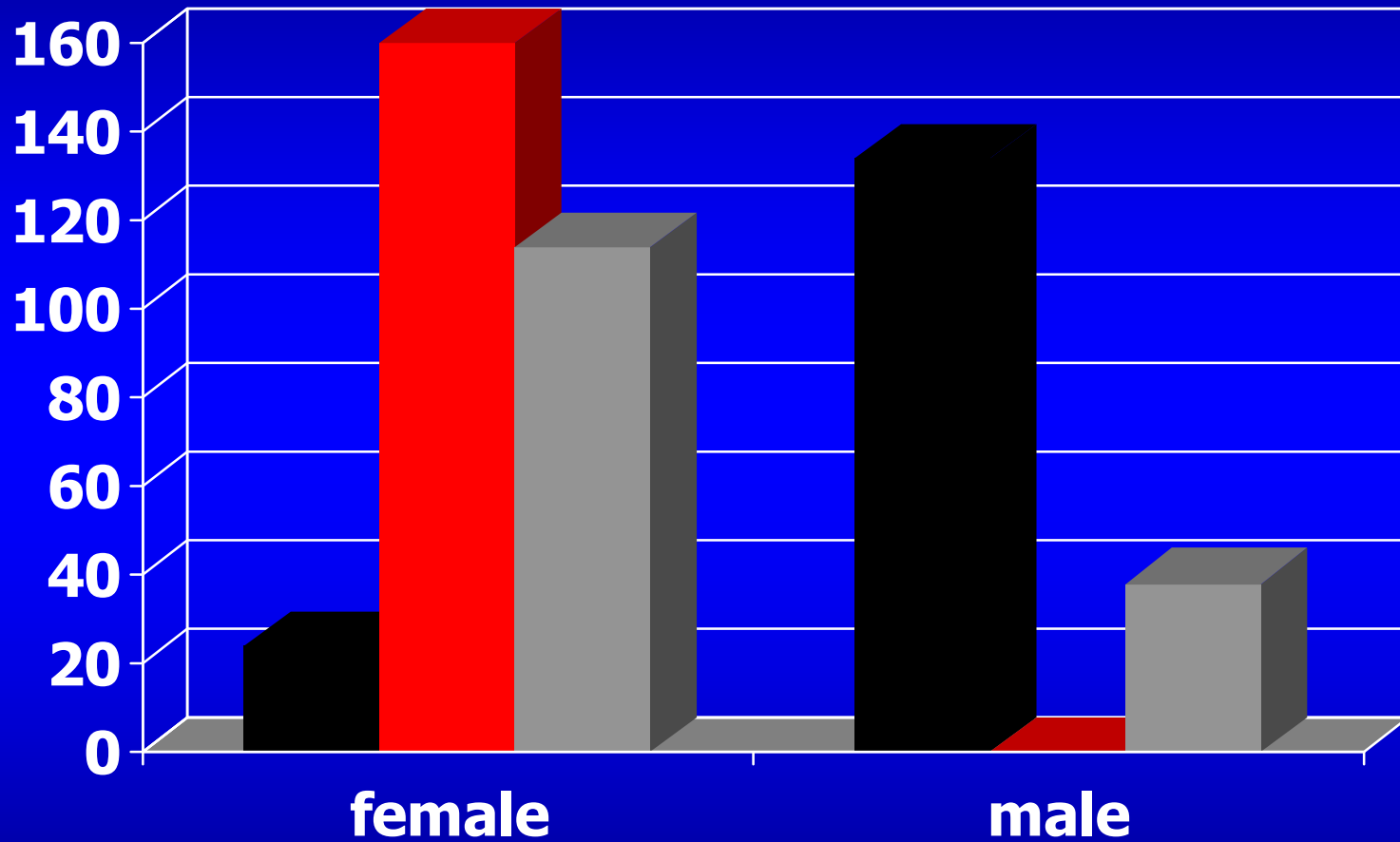
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■ USW ■ CAW Women's Conf ■ OPSEU BPS Conf



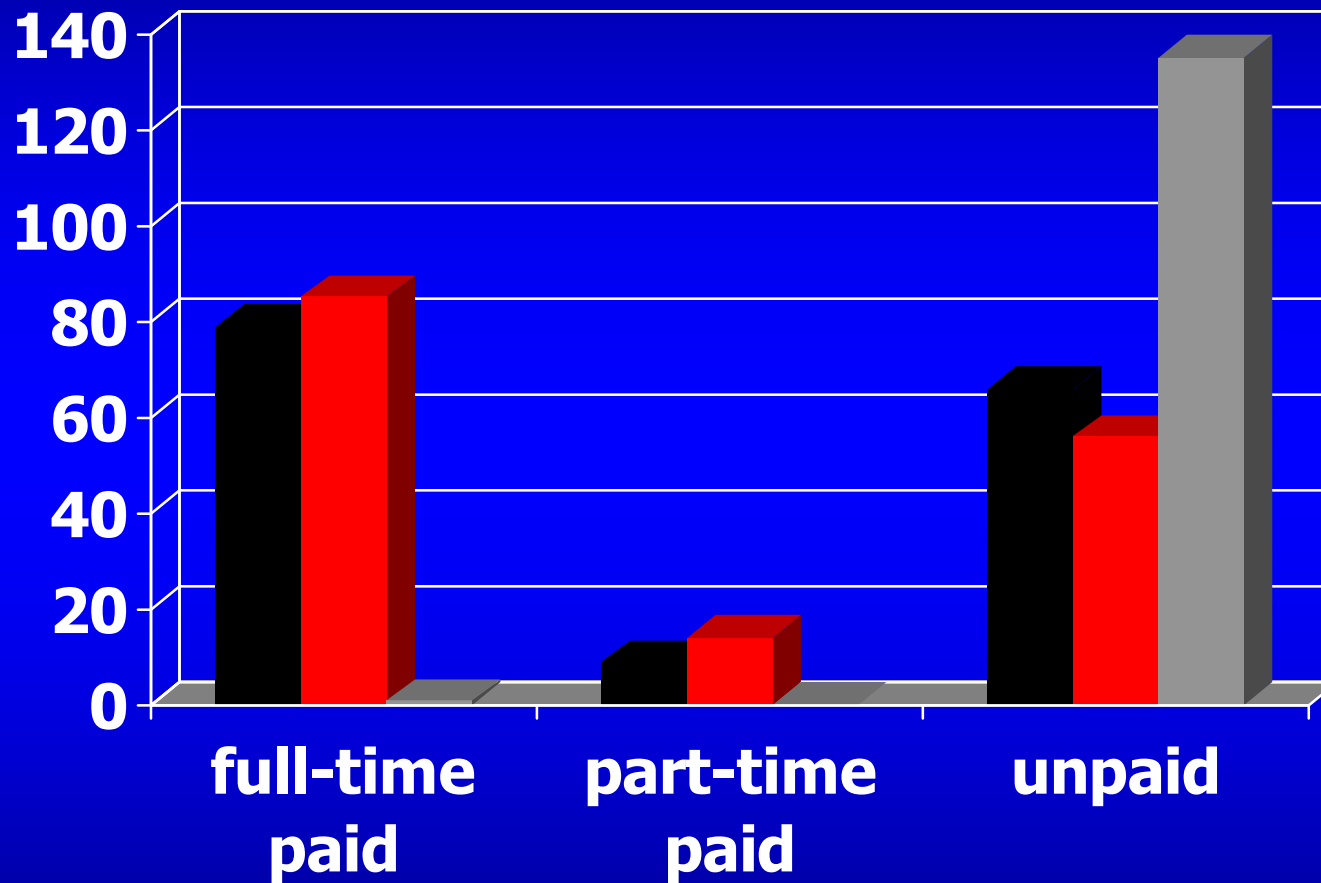
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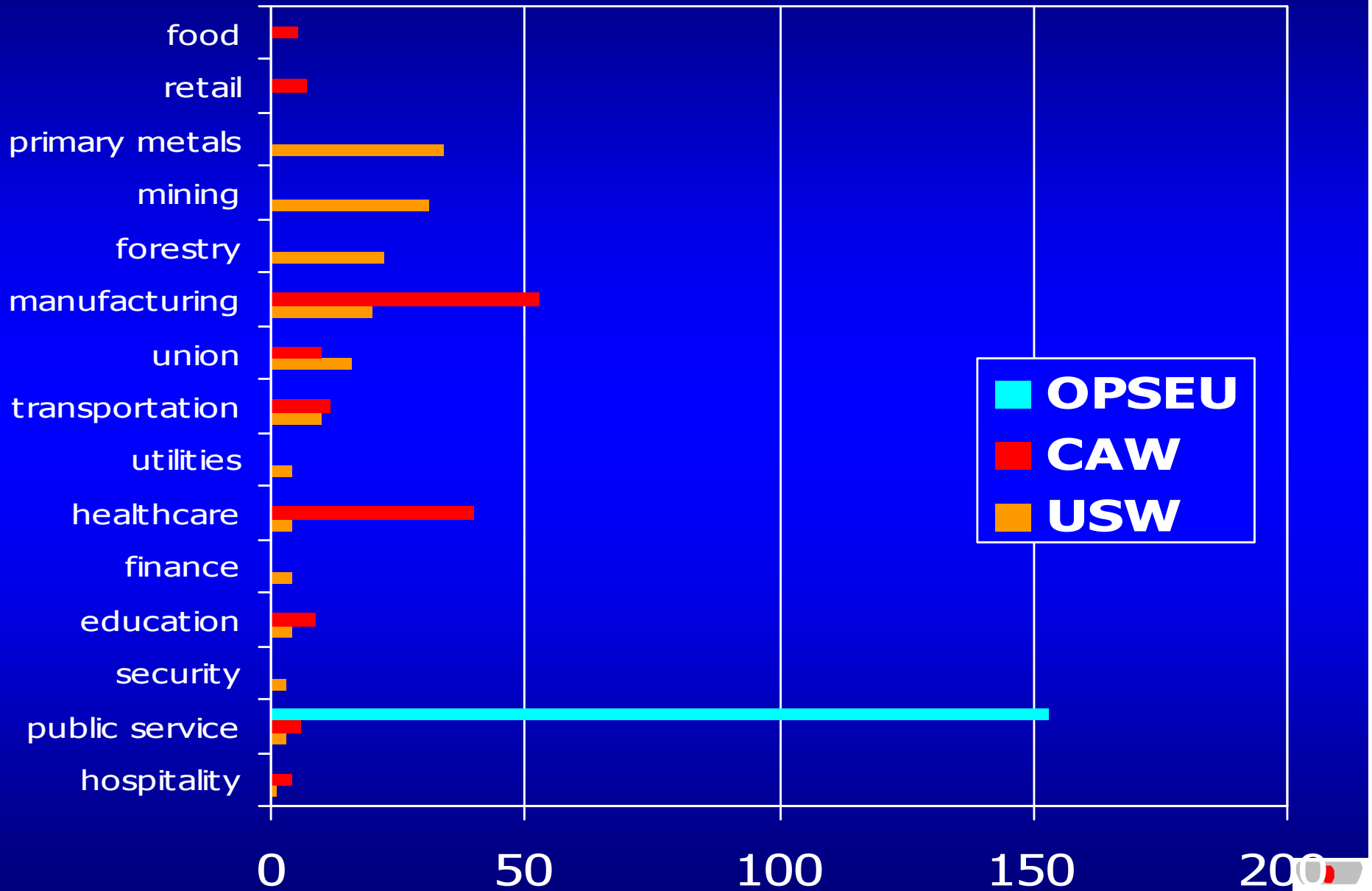
Union position:



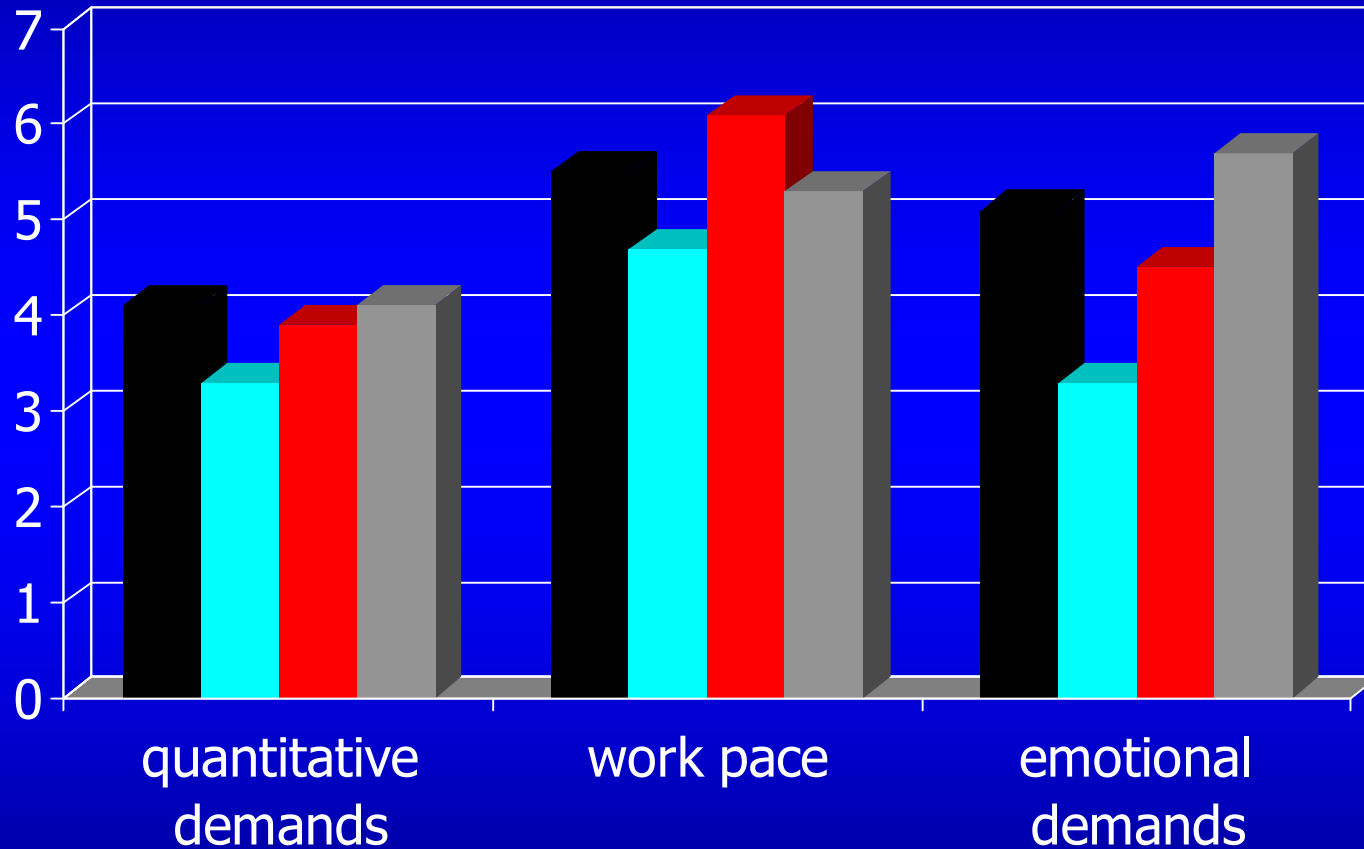
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CAW, OPSEU & USW Sectors :



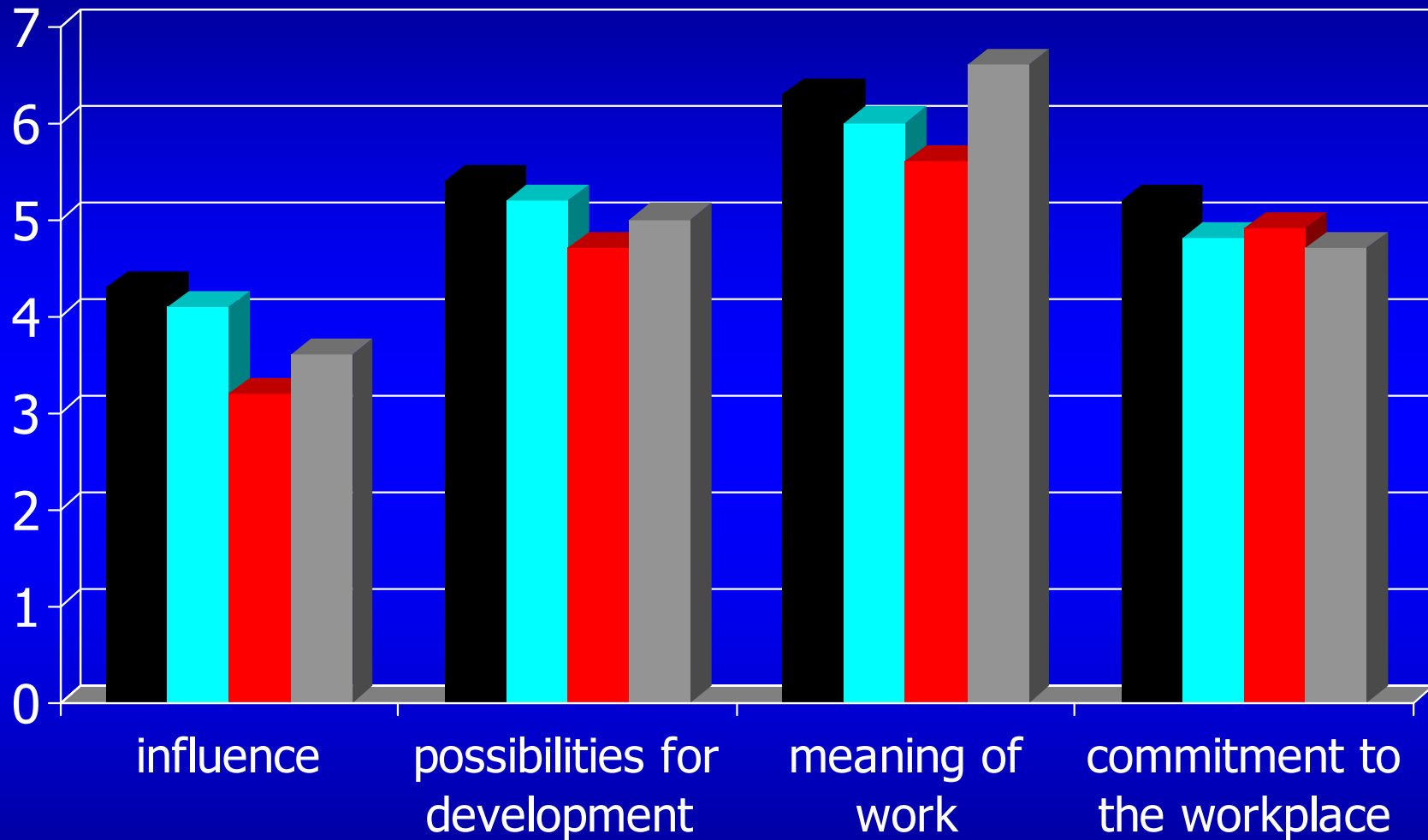
results (Danish comparison):



■ USW HS&E Conference 2011 ■ Danish average
■ CAW Womens' Conference 2011 ■ OPSEU BPS conference



results (Danish comparison):



■ USW HS&E Conference 2011

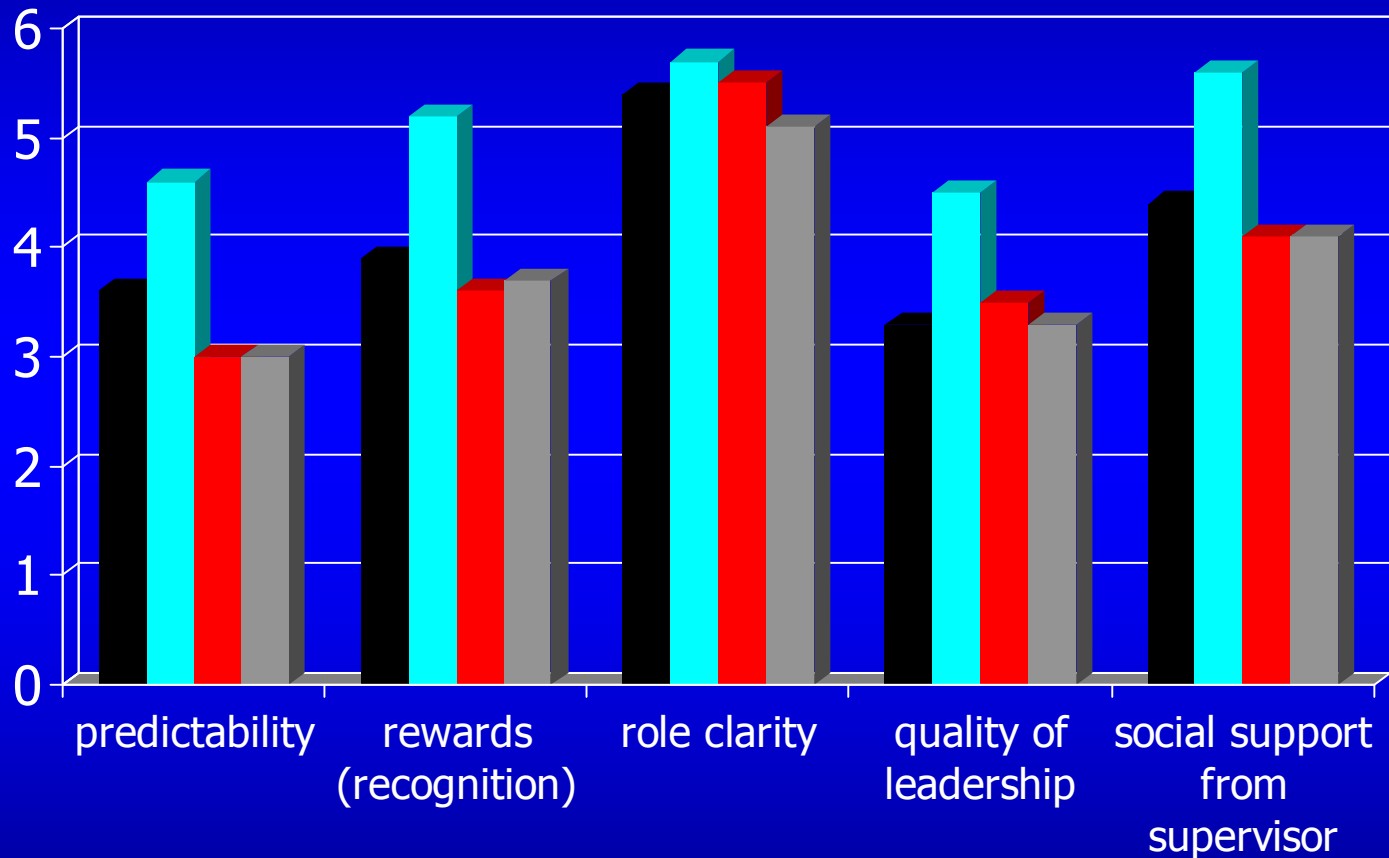
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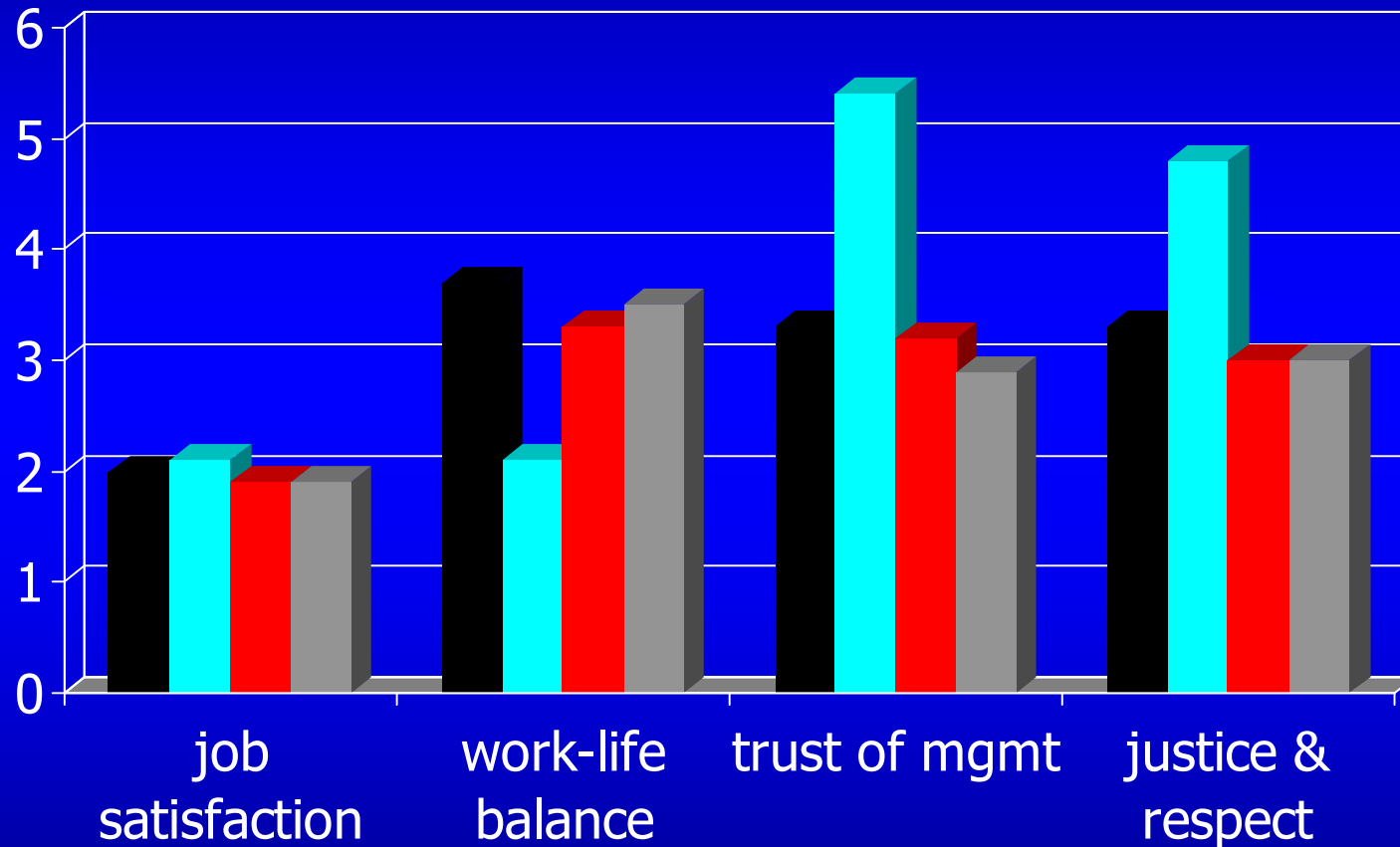
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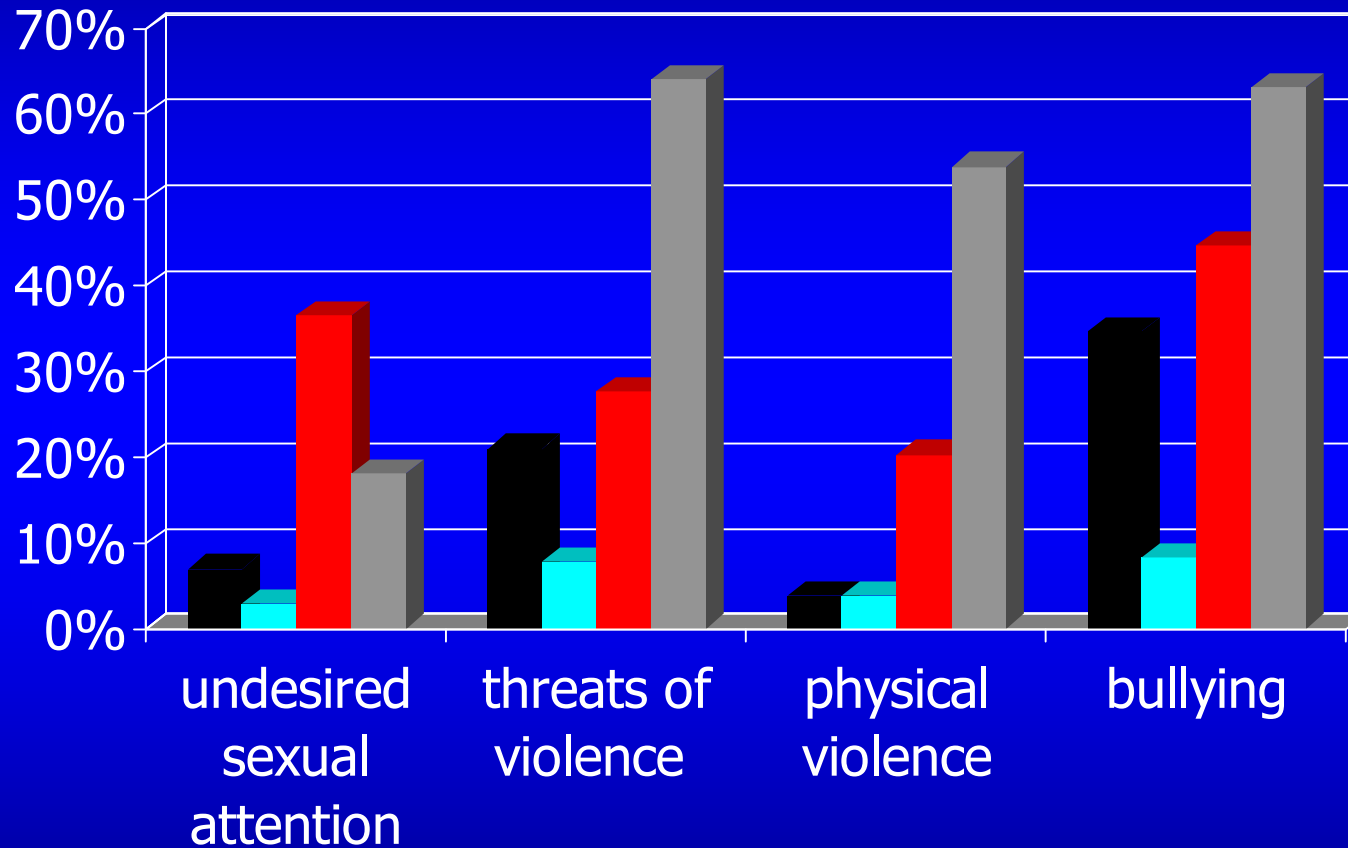
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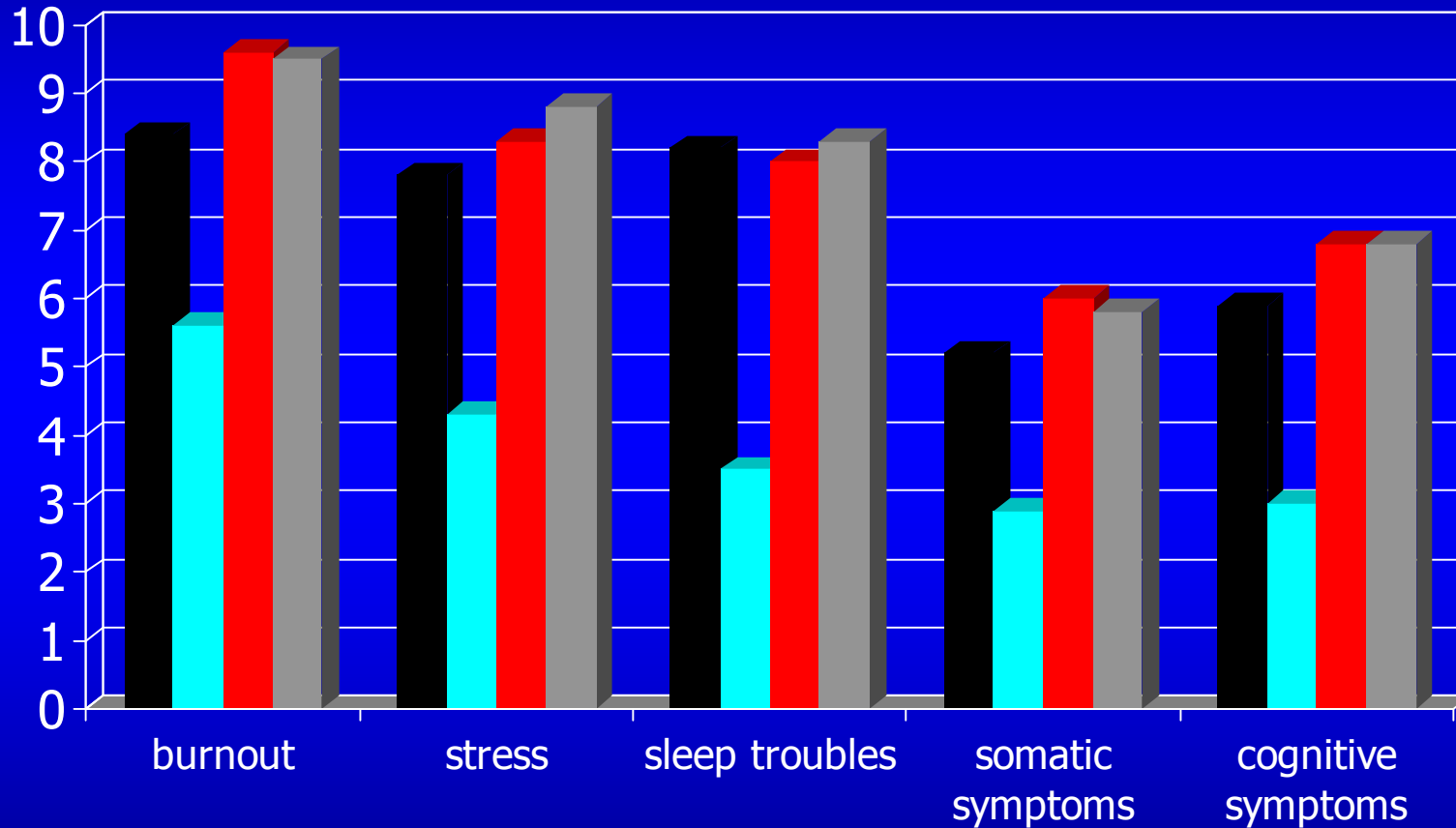
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Predictors of stress symptoms:

"Exposure" Dimensions	USW	OPSEU	CAW
Quantitative demands	X		
Work pace	X	X	X
Emotional demands	X	X	X
Meaningful work			X
Commitment to the workplace		X	X
Rewards (recognition)	X	X	
Threats of violence	X		
Bullying	X		X



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... now what?

If this were a single workforce, what would the priorities be?

- **Bullying**
- **Demands** (emotional, pace)
- **Rewards/Commitment**



Tool kit (under development):

- Shop floor, general interest sparker (one page checklist/questionnaire)?
- H&SC/activist survey tool kit (how independent?)
- Training program to support H&SC/activists to respond to survey results (1-2 days? WHSC?)
- Union wide collection/interpretation of results
- Province wide co-ordination for policy/regulatory change (OFL?)

