

4th NORDIC CONFERENCE IN

WORK REHABILITATION

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND, SEPTEMBER 5–7 2016

The Relationship Between Sickness Absences (SA) and Sickness Presenteeism (SP) for Icelandic Employees

Presenter: Jónína Waagfjörð
VIRK Vocational Rehabilitation Fund

Development Project – “Active Workplace”

- **3-year project** ended in January 2015
- In partnership with **12 companies** and organizations in Iceland
 - 30 workplaces and about **1500 employees**
- About **prevention in the workplace** and the process of **returning to work** after illnesses or injury

Absence rate and frequency for all participants

	Average	Public workplace	Private workplace
Absence rate	6,3%	7,6%	3,8%
Number of days	16,3	19,7	9,9
Absence frequency/employee	4,6	5,3	3,4
Short term absence rate (≤ 5 days)	2,7%	3,0%	2,1%
Number of days	7,0	7,8	5,5
Moderate absence rate (6 – 20 days)	0,7%	0,8%	0,4%
Number of days	1,8	2,1	1,0
Long term absence (> 20 days)	2,3%	3,0%	0,9%
Number of days	6,0	7,8	2,3
Absence rate because sick children	0,7%	0,8%	0,4%
Number of days	1,8	2,1	1,0

Methods

- Electronically administered **cross-sectional survey**
- **Response rate** 63.5%, 75% women and 25% men
- **Sickness presenteeism (SP)** data was collected from a Yes/No question on SP in the last 3 months

Question: Even though you felt you were unable to perform your job at the best of your ability, have you in the past 3 months gone to work when you should have taken a sick day?

- **Sickness absenteeism (SA)** data from a question on number of days absent in last 12 months

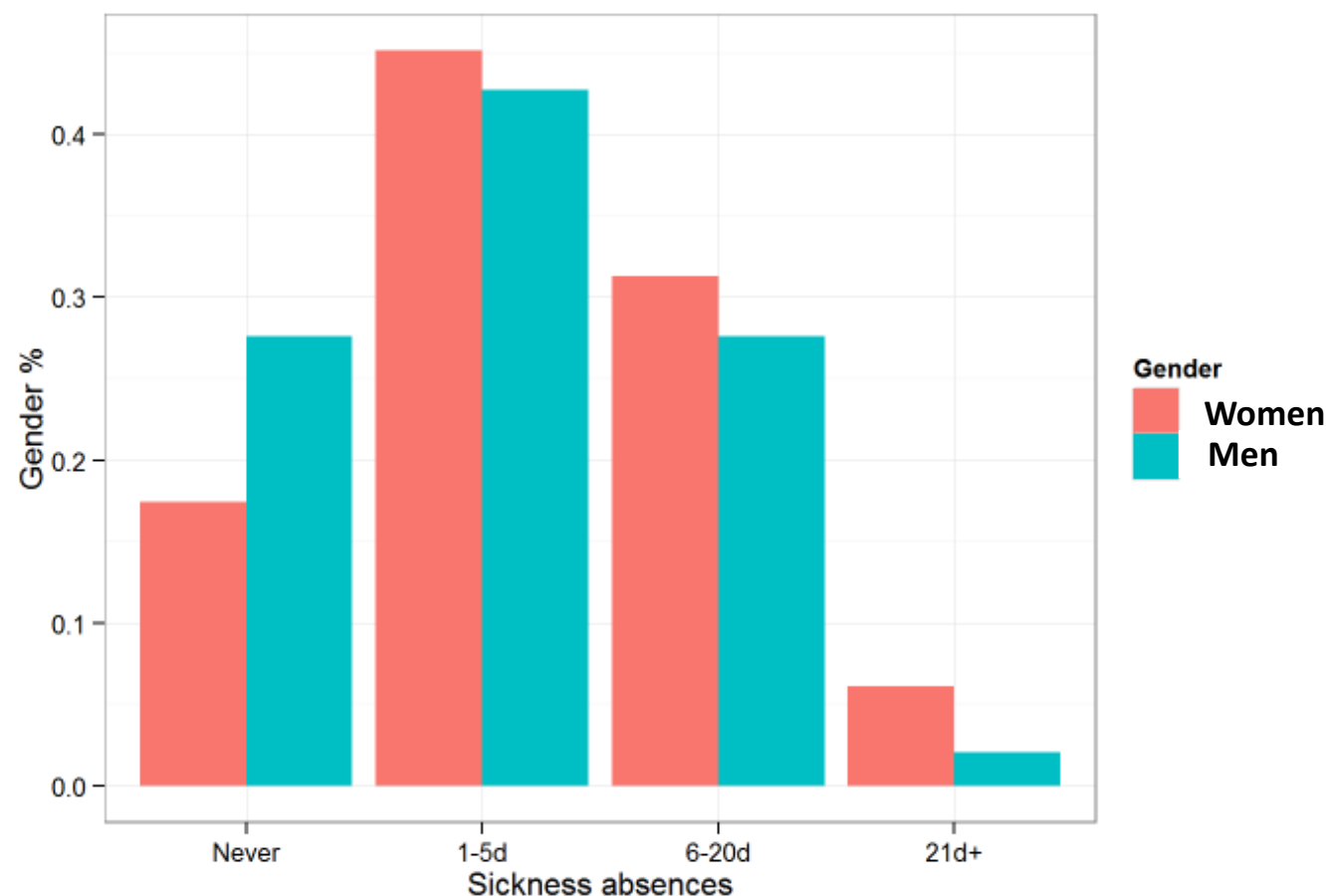
Question: How many days in the last 12 months were you absent from work because of an illness?

- **Chi square** tests and **multiple logistic regression analysis** to study the relationship between SA and SP

Descriptive statistics - social and work related factors for all participants

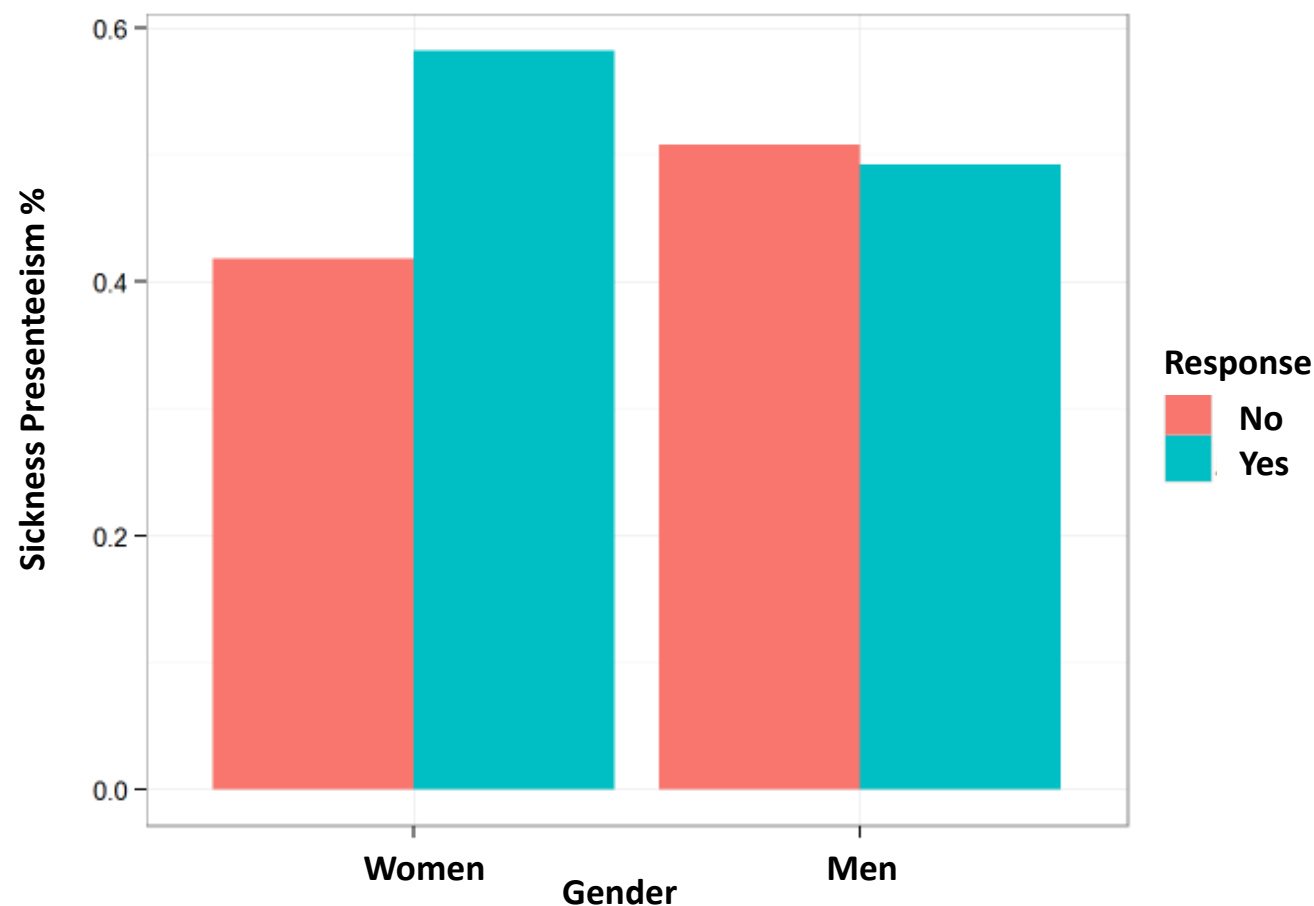
	All Participants	Women	Man
Participants n (%)	759	566 (75)	193 (25)
Social factors:			
Age Average (sd)	43.6 (12.72)	43.6 (12.74)	43.5 (12.71)
(17 – 24)	53 (7)	39 (7)	14 (7)
(25 – 34)	163 (21)	123 (22)	40 (21)
(35 – 44)	169 (22)	127 (22)	42 (22)
(45 – 54)	191 (26)	140 (25)	51 (26)
(55 – 68)	183 (24)	137 (24)	46 (24)
Education (n=749) n (%)			
University	317 (42)	255 (46)	62 (33)
Upper secondary / Technical college	260 (35)	176 (31)	84 (44)
Compulsory	172 (23)	128 (23)	44 (23)
Work related factors:			
Sickness presenteeism (n=744) n (%)			
No	329 (44)	232 (42)	97 (51)
Yes	417 (56)	323 (58)	94 (49)
Sickness absenteeism (n=748) n (%)			
Never	150 (20)	97 (18)	53 (28)
1 – 5d	333 (45)	251 (45)	82 (42)
6 – 20d	227 (30)	174 (31)	53 (28)
21d+	38 (5)	34 (6)	4 (2)
Workplace (n=759) n (%)			
Private	355 (47)	185 (33)	170 (88)
Public	404 (53)	381 (67)	23 (12)

Number of sickness absence days for men and women



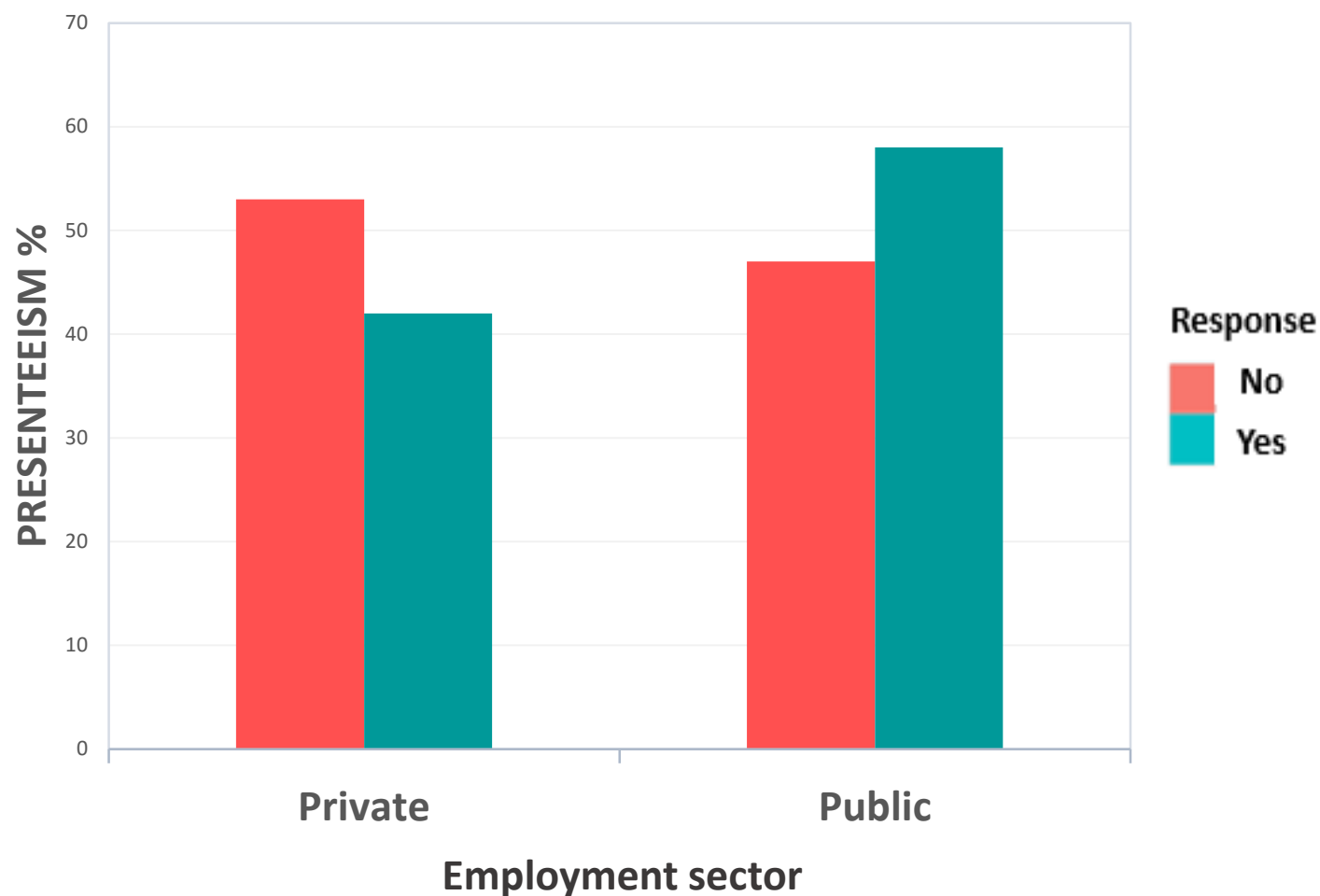
- 80% reported **Sickness Absences (SA)** in the last 12 months
- Significant difference between man and women ($\chi^2 = 9.19$, $p < 0.002$).
- Man are **less likely** to report sickness absence than women (OR=0.55, 95% CI (0.38 – 0.82))

Gender responses to sickness presenteeism



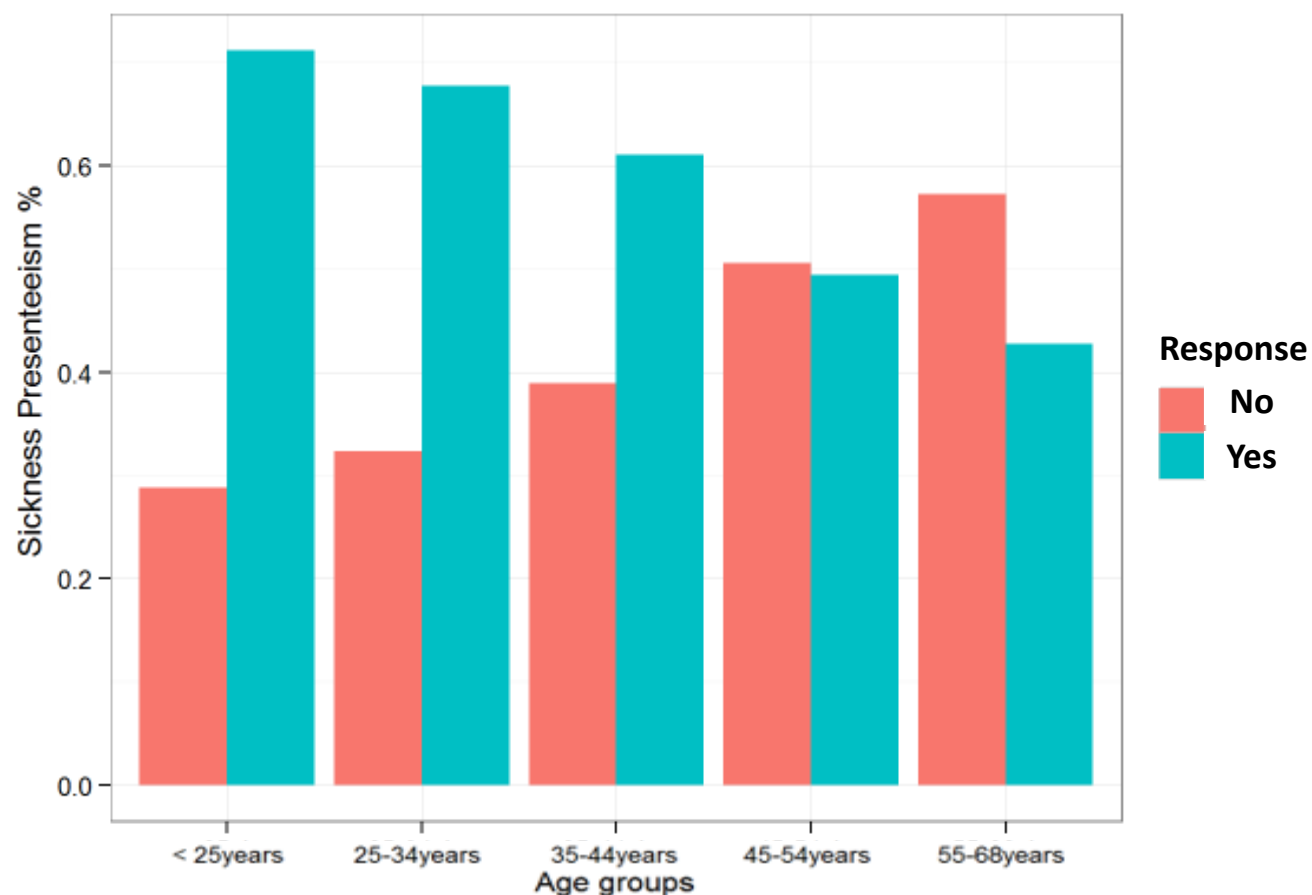
- 56% reported **Sickness Presenteeism (SP)** in the last 3 months
- Significant difference between men and women ($\chi^2 = 4.65$, $p = 0.031$)
- Men are **less likely** to go to work sick than women (OR=0.70, 95% CI(0.50 – 0.97))

Employment sector and presenteeism



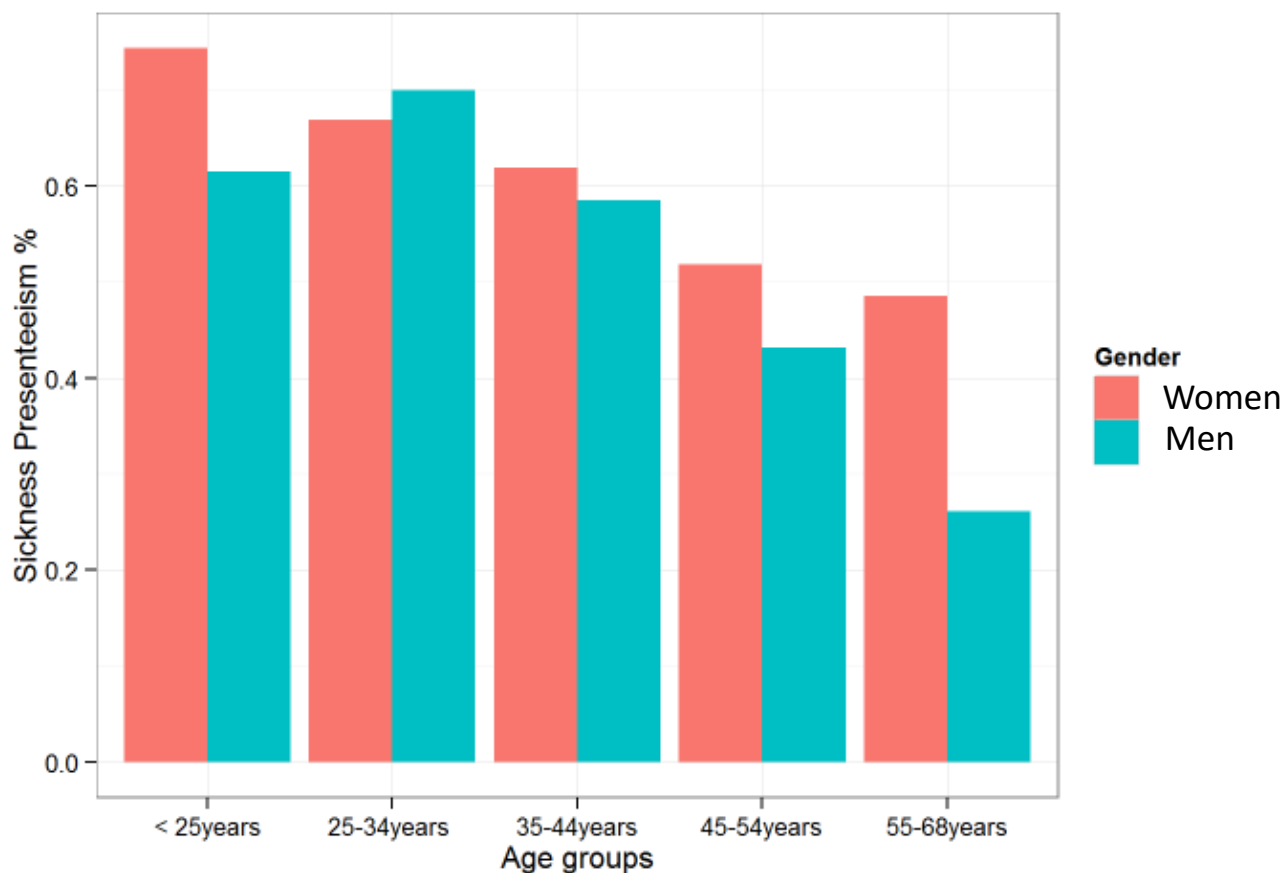
- Significant difference between the public and private sector employees ($\chi^2 = 8.86$, $p = 0.003$)
- Public sector employees **more likely** to come to work sick (OR=1.57, 95% CI (1.16 – 2.10))

Sickness presenteeism in age groups



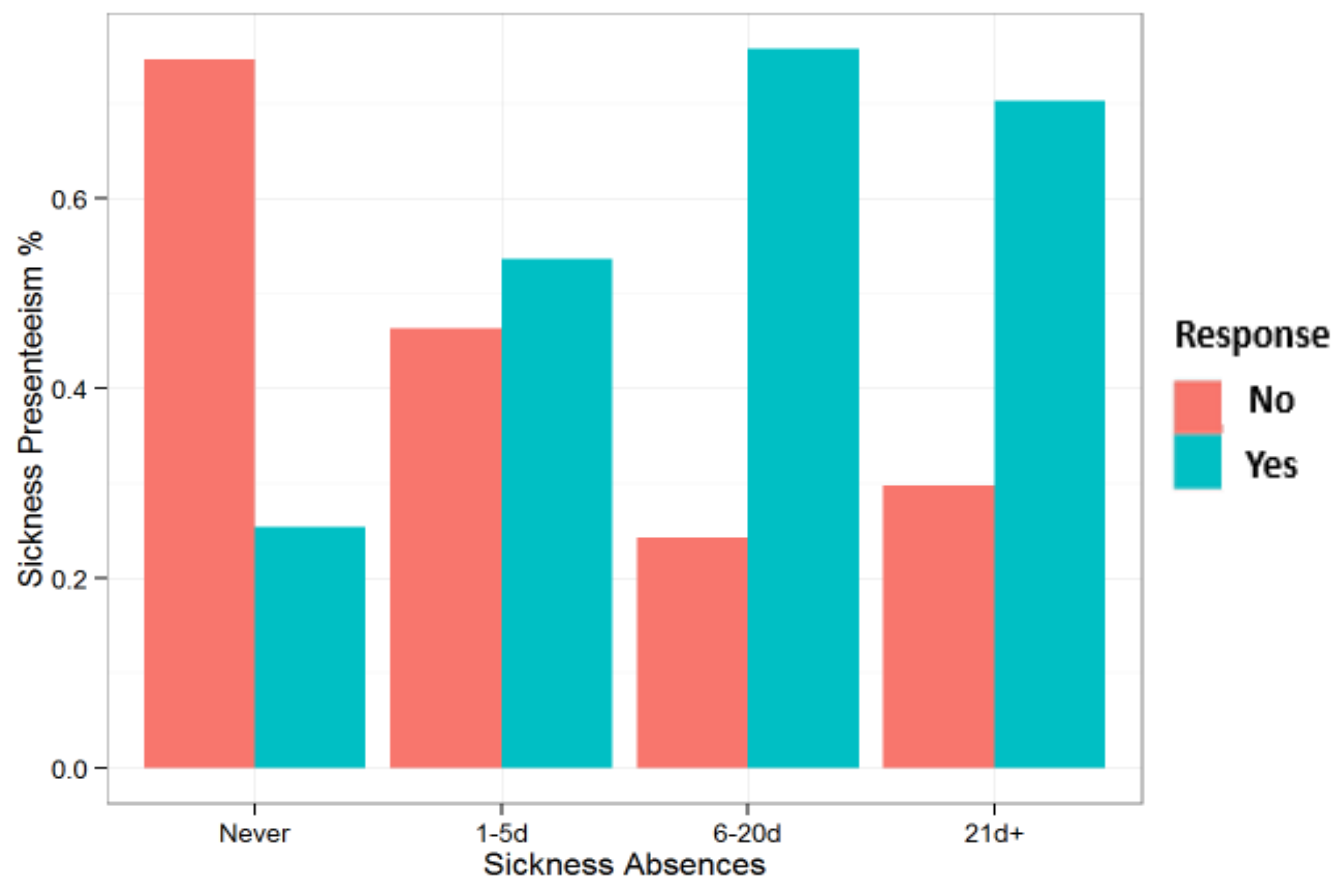
- The younger the **more likely** they answered yes to the question of going to work sick.

Sickness presenteeism plotted by age groups



- **Significant linear trend** towards younger employees (both man and women) having a higher rate of SP than older employees ($\chi^2 = 30.8$, $p < 0.001$)

Sickness Absences vs Sickness Presenteeism



- Significant relationship between **high SP and high SA**
- The more employees are away from work because of sickness the more likely they are also to come to work when sick

Crude and adjusted Odds Ratio (OR) for sickness absences (SA) and sickness presenteeism (SP) adjusted for sex, age, education and employment sector

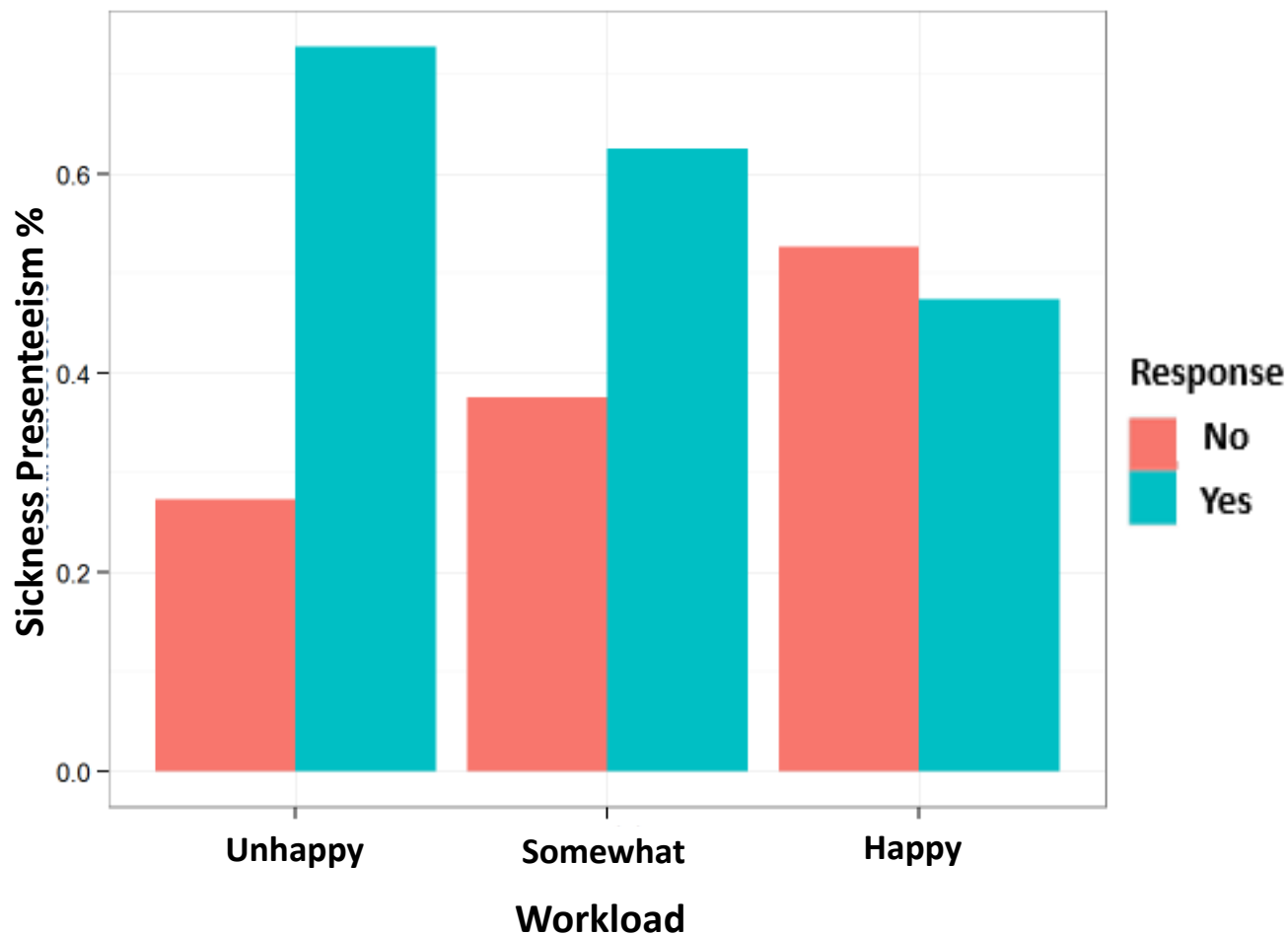
	Sickness presenteeism					
	Total study group (n=759)		Women (n=566)		Men (n=193)	
	Crude OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	Crude OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)	Crude OR (95% CI)	Adjusted OR (95% CI)
Sickness absences						
1 – 5d	1	1	1	1	1	1
6 – 20d	2.70*** (1.87 – 3.94)	2.01** (1.31 – 3.11)	2.23*** (1.47 – 3.42)	2.02** (1.32 – 3.13)	5.11*** (2.33 – 12.06)	5.22** (1.85 – 19.40)
21d+	2.04 (1.00 – 4.43)	2.48* (1.09 – 6.22)	2.07 (0.95 – 4.88)	2.50* (1.10 – 6.25)	1.19 (0.14 – 10.31)	2.86 (0.17 – NA)

*p=0.05, **p=0.01, ***p=0.001. 95% CI = 95% confidence interval.

Conclusions

- Significant relationship between **high SP** and **high SA** was demonstrated
- Significant **linear trend** was demonstrated towards **younger employees having a higher rate of SP** than older employees

Workload vs Presenteeism

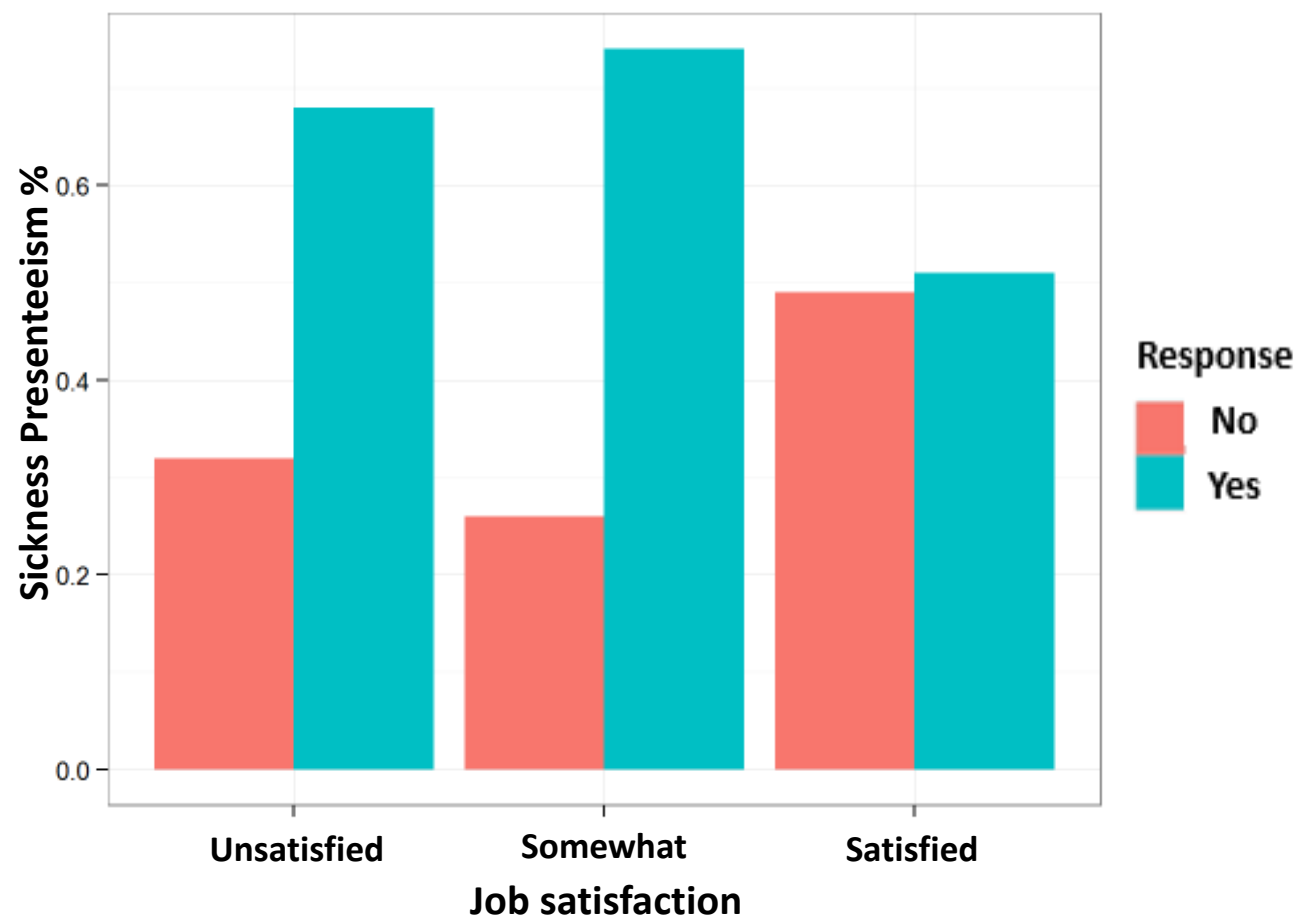


Question:

How happy or unhappy are you with your workload?

- Significant difference between happy and unhappy employees ($\chi^2 = 30.86$, $p < 0.001$)
- Employees who are happy with their workload are **less likely** to go to work sick (OR=0.34, 95% CI (0.22 – 0.51))

Job satisfaction vs Presenteeism



Question:

Overall, how satisfied or unsatisfied are you in your work?

- Significant difference between satisfied and unsatisfied employees ($\chi^2 = 25.48$, $p < 0.001$)
- Employees who are satisfied in their work are **less likely** to go to work sick (OR=0.49, 95% CI (0.26 – 0.89))

Conclusions

- SP is thought to cause **more productivity loss** and higher organizational costs compared to SA
- SP are believed to **increase the risk** of serious illnesses in the future
- These employees can be in **more danger** of leaving the labour market because of these serious illnesses
- Emphasising the importance for managers to consider these **two concepts together** when dealing with SA
- Employers have the **opportunity to identify** them and intervene i.e. increase job satisfaction or alter the workload/accommodate
- The employees also need to be aware of the **possible consequences** of high SP on their future SA figures

Thank You!

4th NORDIC CONFERENCE IN

WORK REHABILITATION

REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND, SEPTEMBER 5–7 2016