



Research to improve health and wellbeing

Mental Health

Psychological distress and comorbid physical conditions

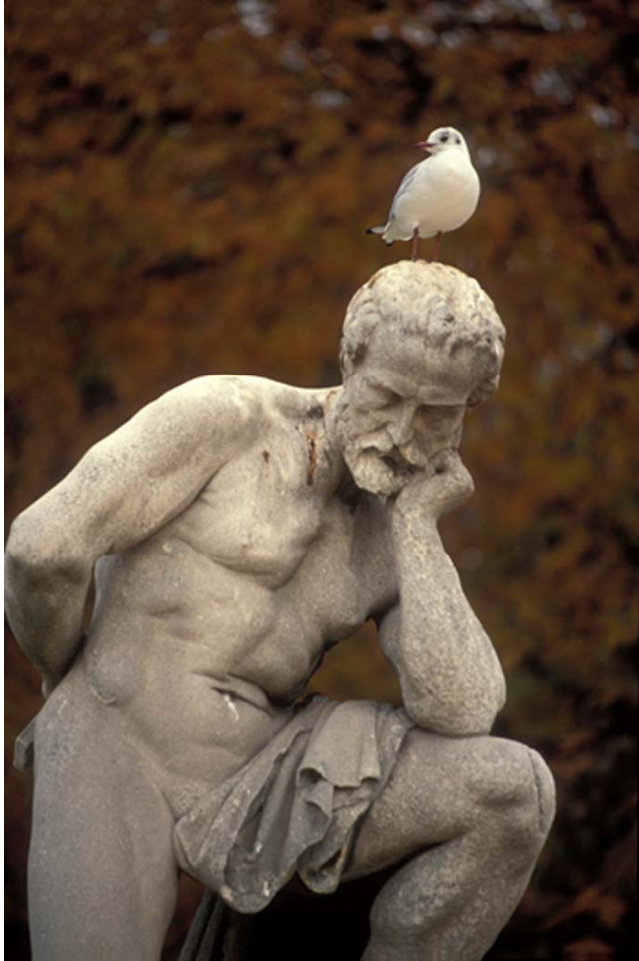
Diagnosis, demographics, or disability

Cancer

Richard Gibson

on behalf of Sax Institute and beyondblue

Our research question



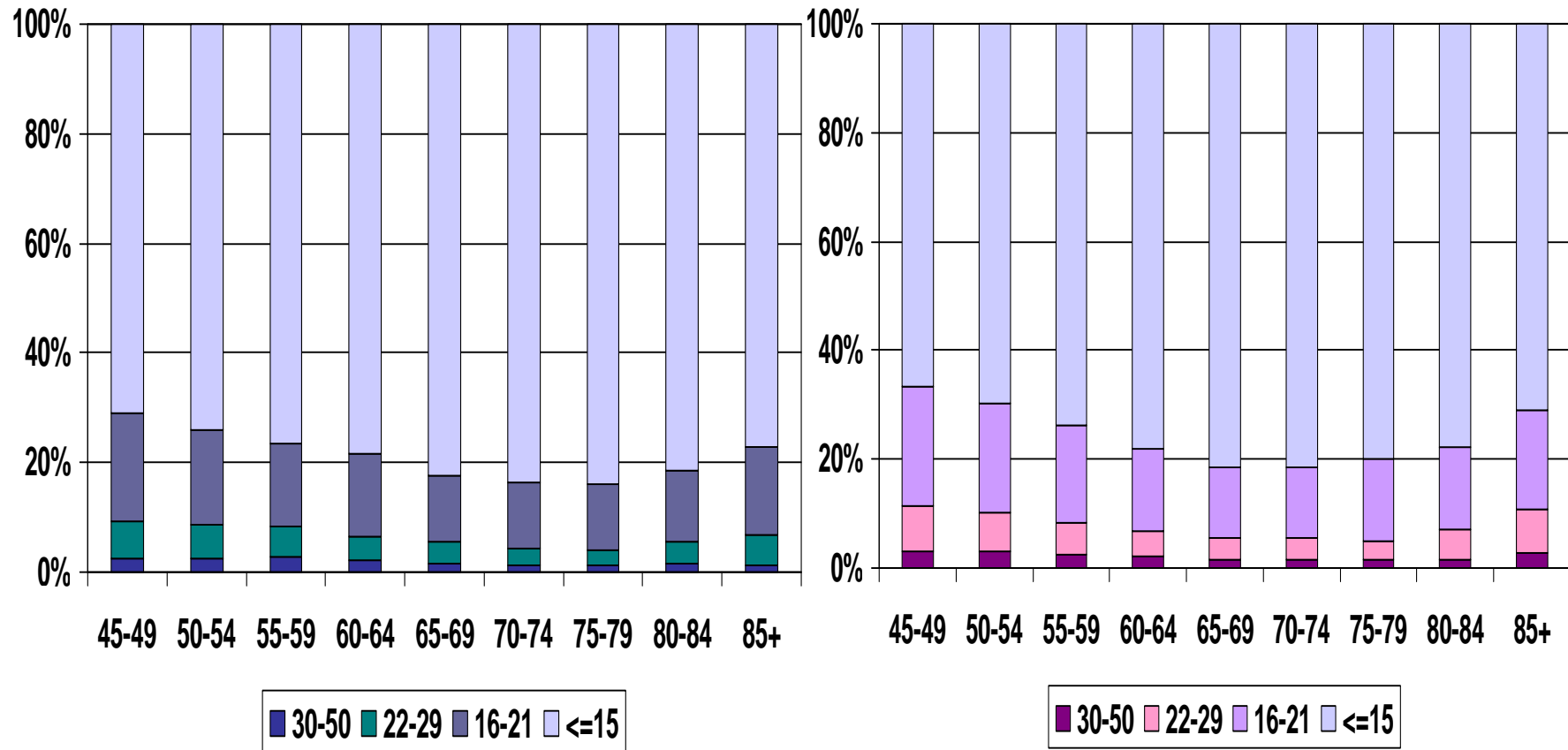
- To what extent is the association between physical conditions and psychological distress accounted for by associated physical disability and demographic circumstances?

What counts most:

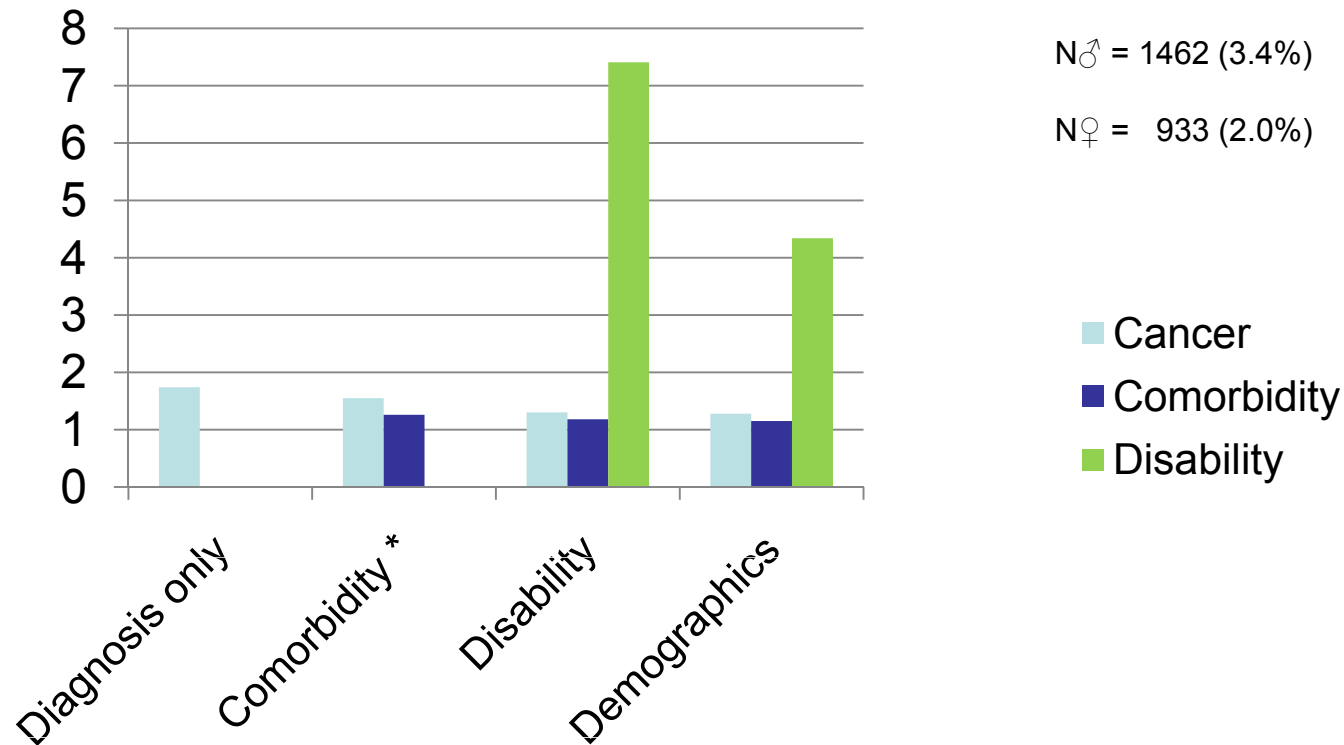
- ❖ The specific diagnosis?
- ❖ Comorbid diagnoses?
- ❖ Associated disability?
- ❖ Social circumstances?

K-10 scores by age

N = 43394 Men N = 46180 Women

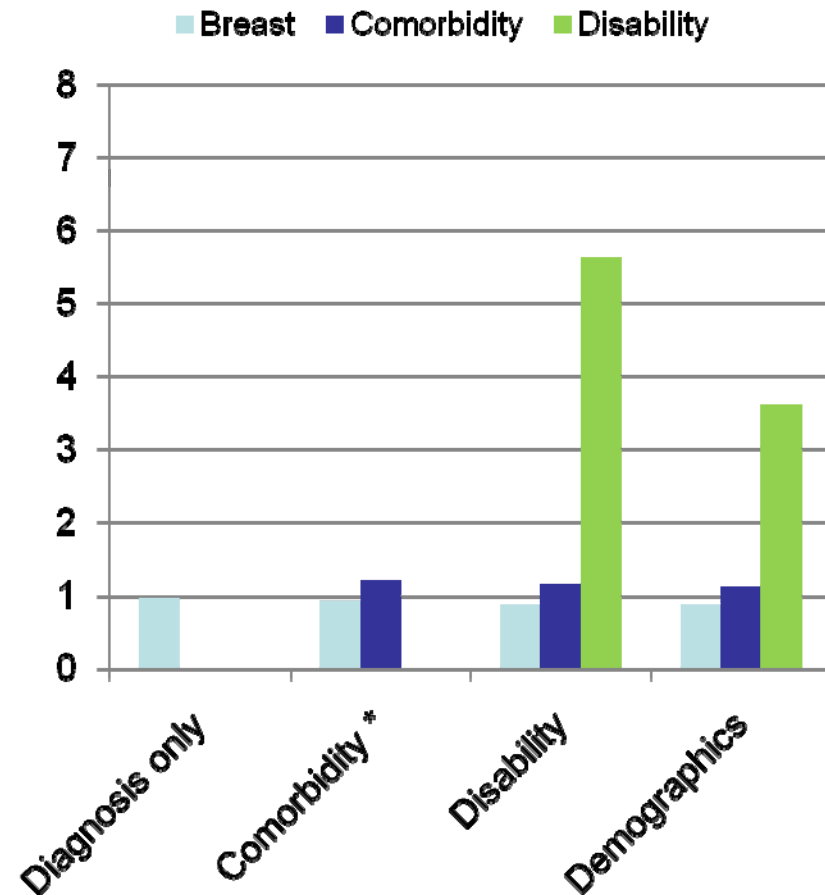
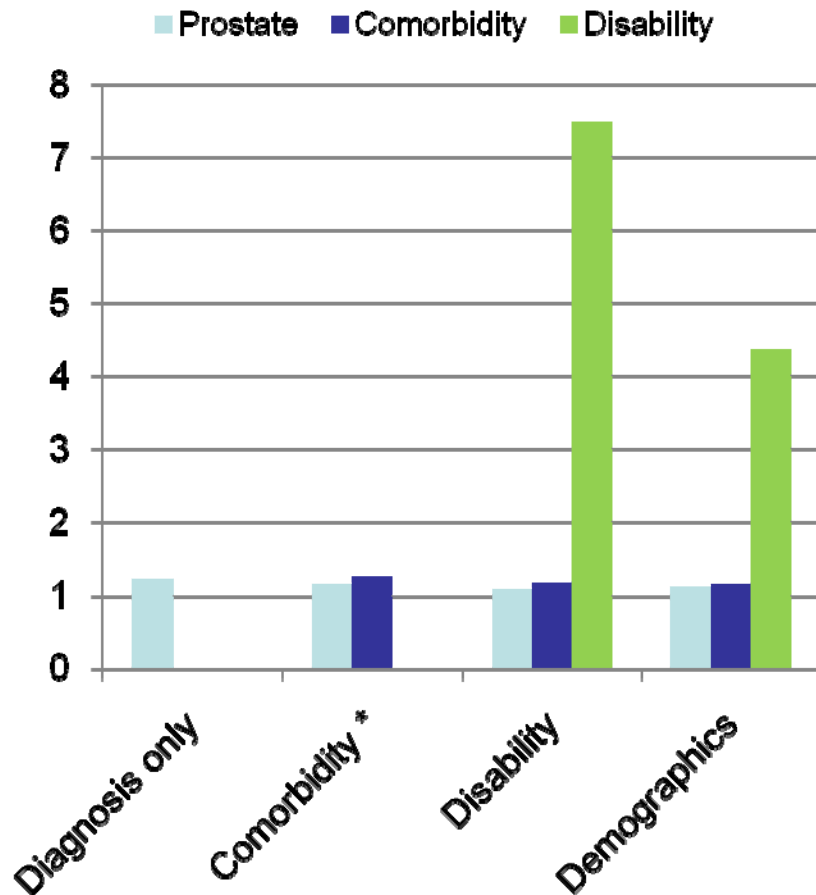


Separating effects of cancer treatment in the past month, accounting for other conditions, disability, and socioeconomic circumstances (men)



- Bars show the odds ratio for having very high or high K-10 scores
- Comorbidity scores = sum of gender and condition specific weights assigned according to association between each (other) condition and very high or high K-10 scores

Prostate and breast cancer accounting for other conditions, disability, and socioeconomic circumstances



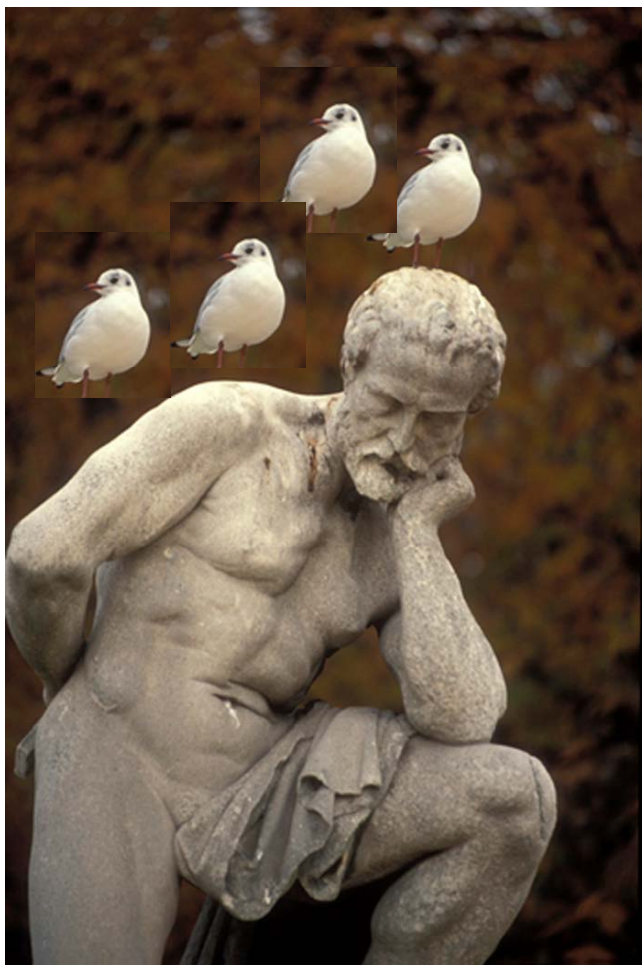
Bars show the odds ratio for having very/high K-10 scores

Comorbidity scores = sum of gender and condition specific weights assigned according to association between each (other) condition and very/high K-10 scores

Interpretation

- There was an association found between a number of physical diagnoses (including cancer) and psychological distress
- Some of this association, due to the specific (index) condition, was attenuated:
 - By other comorbid conditions
 - By disability and psychological distress
 - By socioeconomic circumstances (eg. Employment status, income, marital status)
- There was a very strong association between disability and psychological distress
- We observed few gender differences

More research questions



- What factors are associated with psychological distress among people at older ages?
- What is the association between psychological distress and retirement status?
- What is the extent of undiagnosed and untreated distress?
- What is the pattern of use of anti-depressant medications?
- What is the uptake of new Medicare mental health items?
- How does psychological distress effect peoples need for and use of other services: GP visits, hospital admissions, HACC services?
- How are these patterns affected by age, gender, socio-economic circumstances, urban rural residence etc.

Kessler-10

Self Reported Psychological Distress Scale

Psychological Medicine 2002 32:959-976

During the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel?

- Tired out for no good reason
- Nervous
- So nervous that nothing would calm you down
- Hopeless
- Restless or fidgety
- So restless that you could not sit still
- Depressed
- So sad that nothing could cheer you up
- That everything was an effort
- Worthless

- Screening scale
- Short, easy
- Good precision
- Internal reliability
alpha=0.92
- Equally sensitive across subsamples
- Criterion validity (Global Assessment Functioning)