



**PRINCIPAL**  
HEALTH & WELLBEING SURVEY

**Principal Health & Wellbeing:  
Longitudinal Results from Australia  
and Ireland**

SACPPA Conference, Berri Resort Hotel  
August 14, 2015

Philip Riley

[www.principalhealth.org](http://www.principalhealth.org)



**Institute for Positive Psychology & Education**



# Thank you to 2014 funders

## **Australia**

Teachers Health Fund

Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA)

Catholic Secondary Principals Association (CaSPA)

Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA)

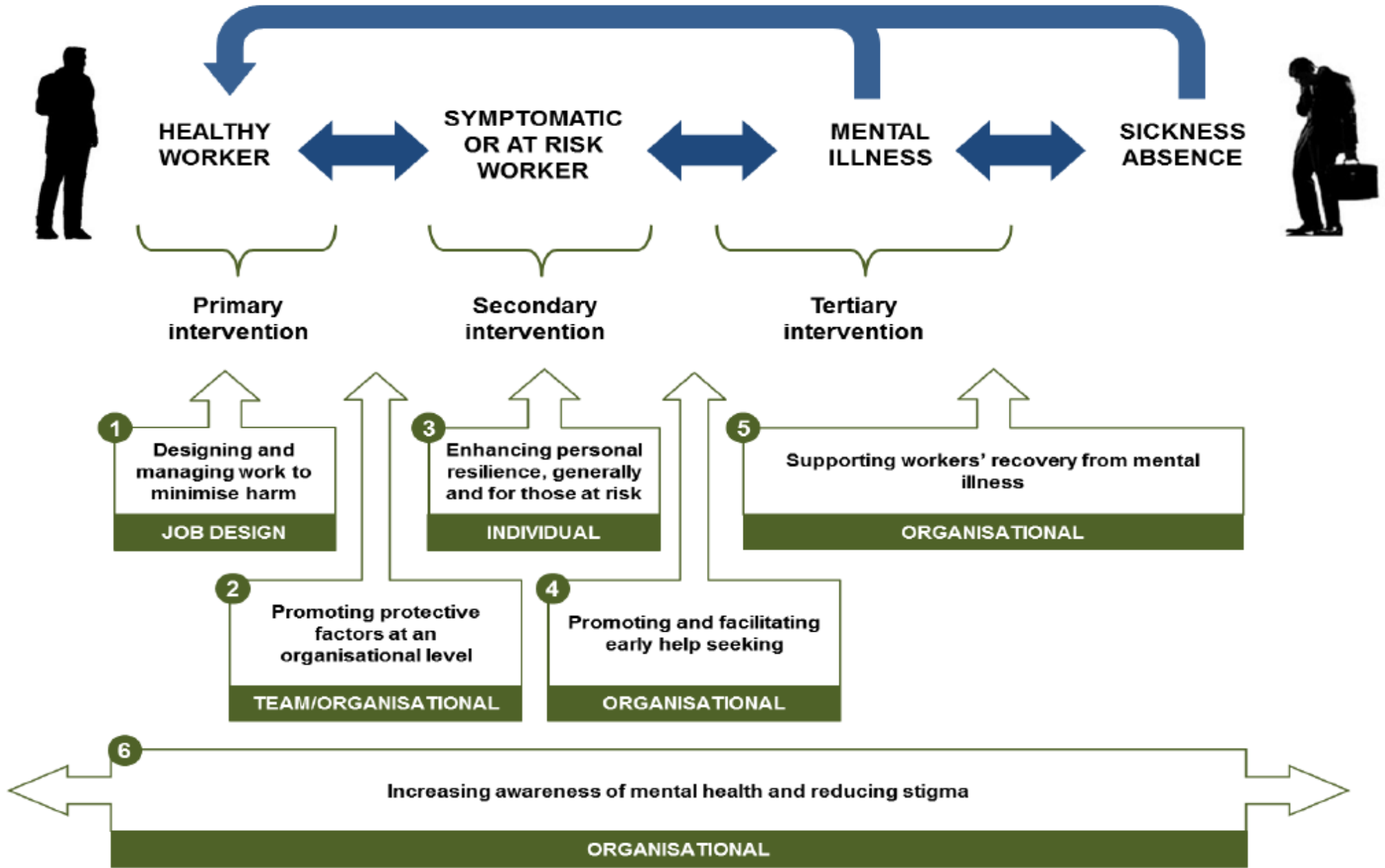
Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia (AHISA)

## **Ireland**

Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN)

National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)





Harvey, S. B., Joyce, S., Tan, L., Johnson, A., Nguyen, H., Modini, M., & Groth, M. (2014). *Developing a mentally healthy workplace: A review of the literature*: National Mental Health Commission and the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance.

# Workers' Compensation Claims for Mental Stress going down

“the number of compensation claims for mental disorders lodged due to work-related mental stress substantially underestimates the size of the problem”. Safe Work Australia (2013, p. 2)

<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/769/The-Incidence-Accepted-WC-Claims-Mental-Stress-Australia.docx>



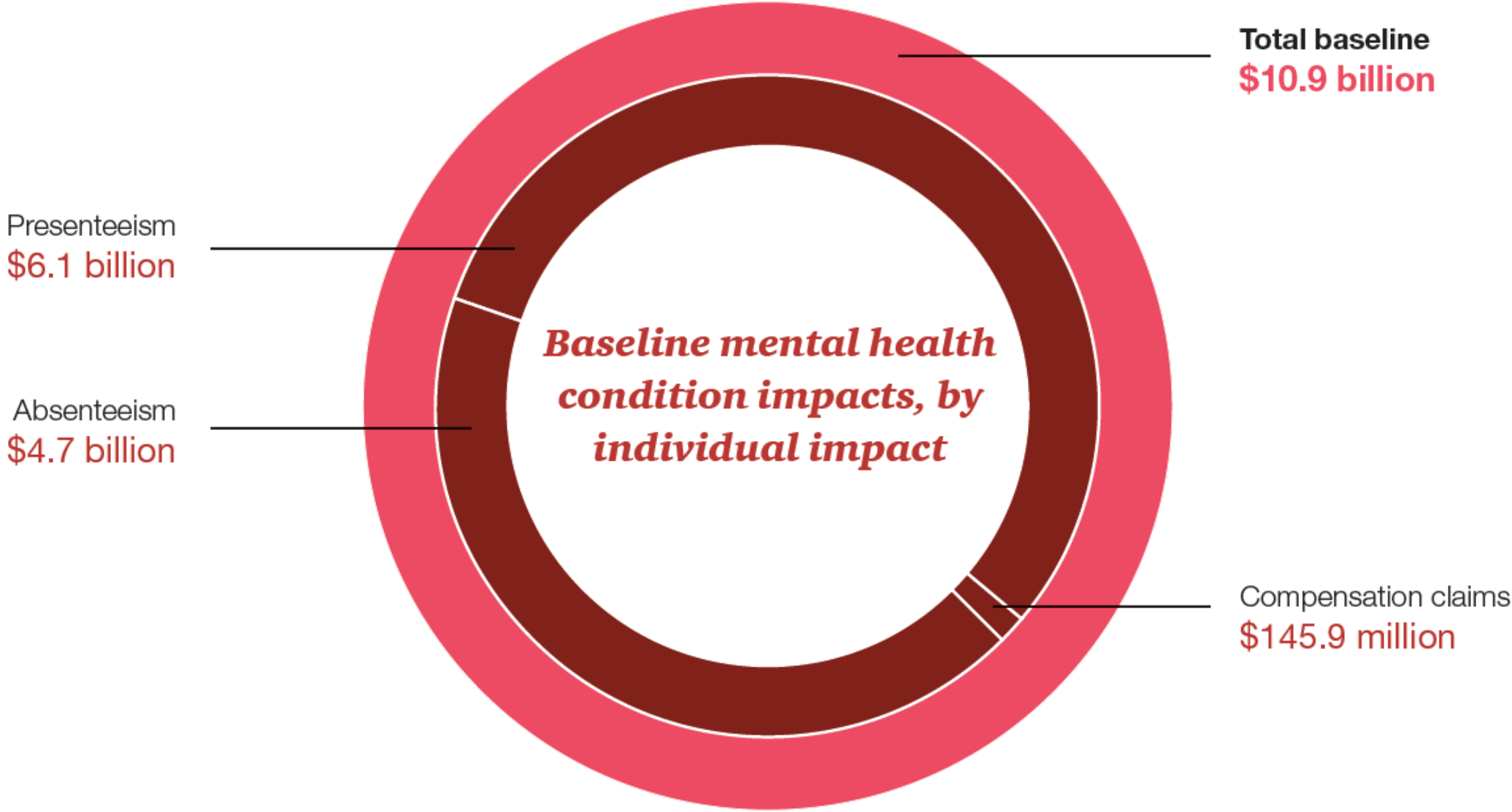
# Other forms of Evidence

- The need for mental health services from THF members almost doubled over the past four years.
- “This increase in demand, together with the outcomes of the report, highlight the need to better support our principals and teachers at a personal, community, industry and policy level, to ensure not only their health and wellbeing, but also the future of the children they guide and teach.”

*Teachers Health Fund CEO Brad Joyce (Nov, 2014)*



# Impact of not addressing mental health



# Return on Investment

Every \$ spent on effective workplace mental health actions may generate \$2.30 in benefits the organisation.

Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2014

<http://www.headsup.org.au/creating-a-mentally-healthy-workplace/the-business-case>



# Resilience starts today

What will you do to look after yourself today?

That is different from yesterday?

And lead to a new tomorrow?

Chains of habit are too light to be felt until they are too heavy to be broken” Warren Buffet, borrowed from Samuel Johnson



*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

*Margaret Mead*



[www.principalhealth.org/myreport](http://www.principalhealth.org/myreport)

## Confidential Individual Report to Principals

12 Higher Order Dimensions made up of 45 separate dimensions

**Demands at Work**

**Work Organisation and Job Contents**

**Interpersonal relations and Leadership**

**Work-Individual Interface**

**Values at the workplace**

**Health and Wellbeing**

**Offensive behavior**

**Physical Superdimension**

**Psycho-Social Superdimension**

**Personal Wellbeing**

**Alcohol Use**

**Passion (2015: Harmonious vs Obsessive)**



# Participation Rates

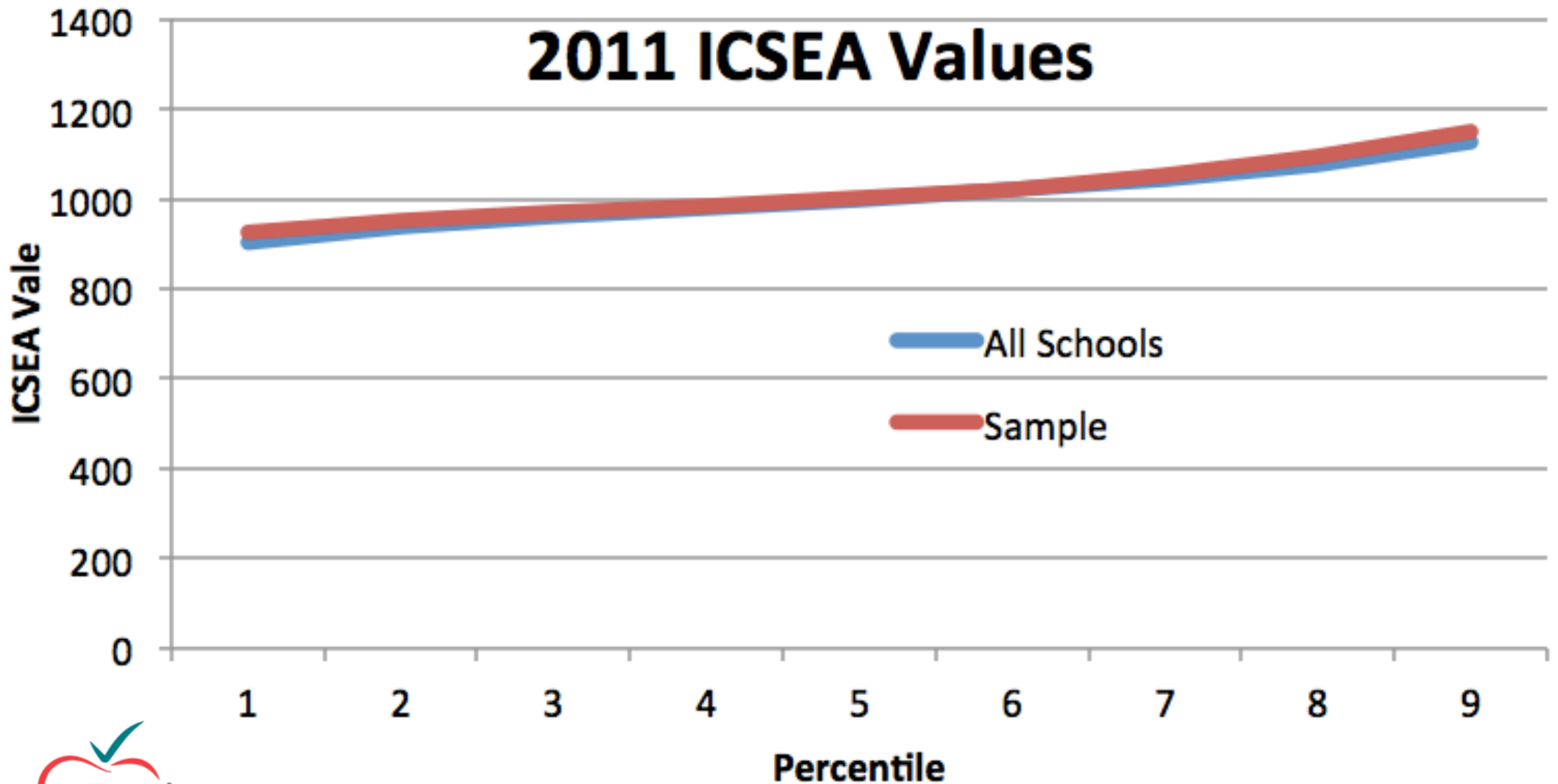
## Australia

- Year-on-Year: 20-25%
- **4 Year Total: 3675 ~33%**

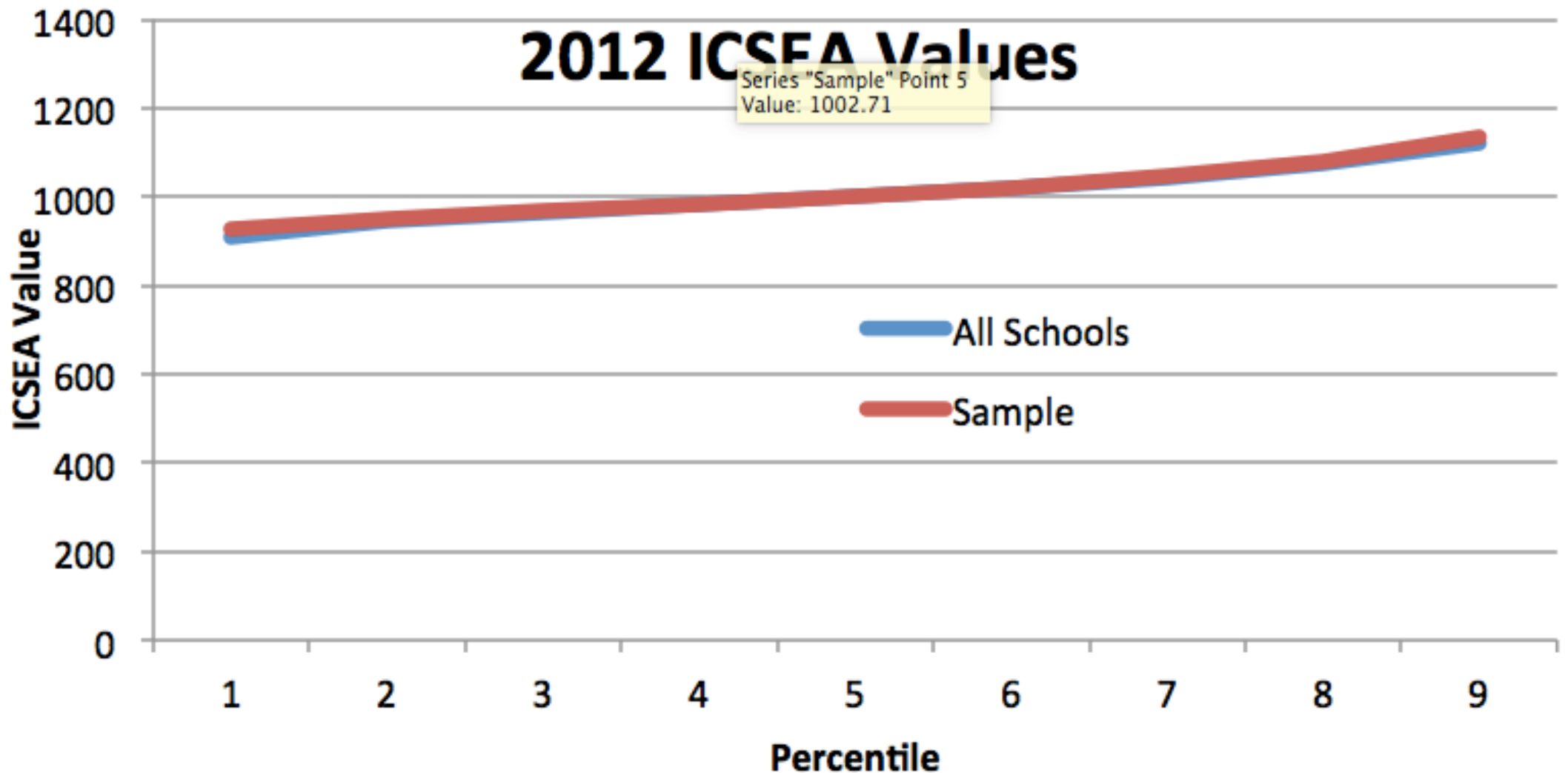
## Ireland

- Year-on-Year: 18-20%
- **2 Year Total: 1427 ~33%**

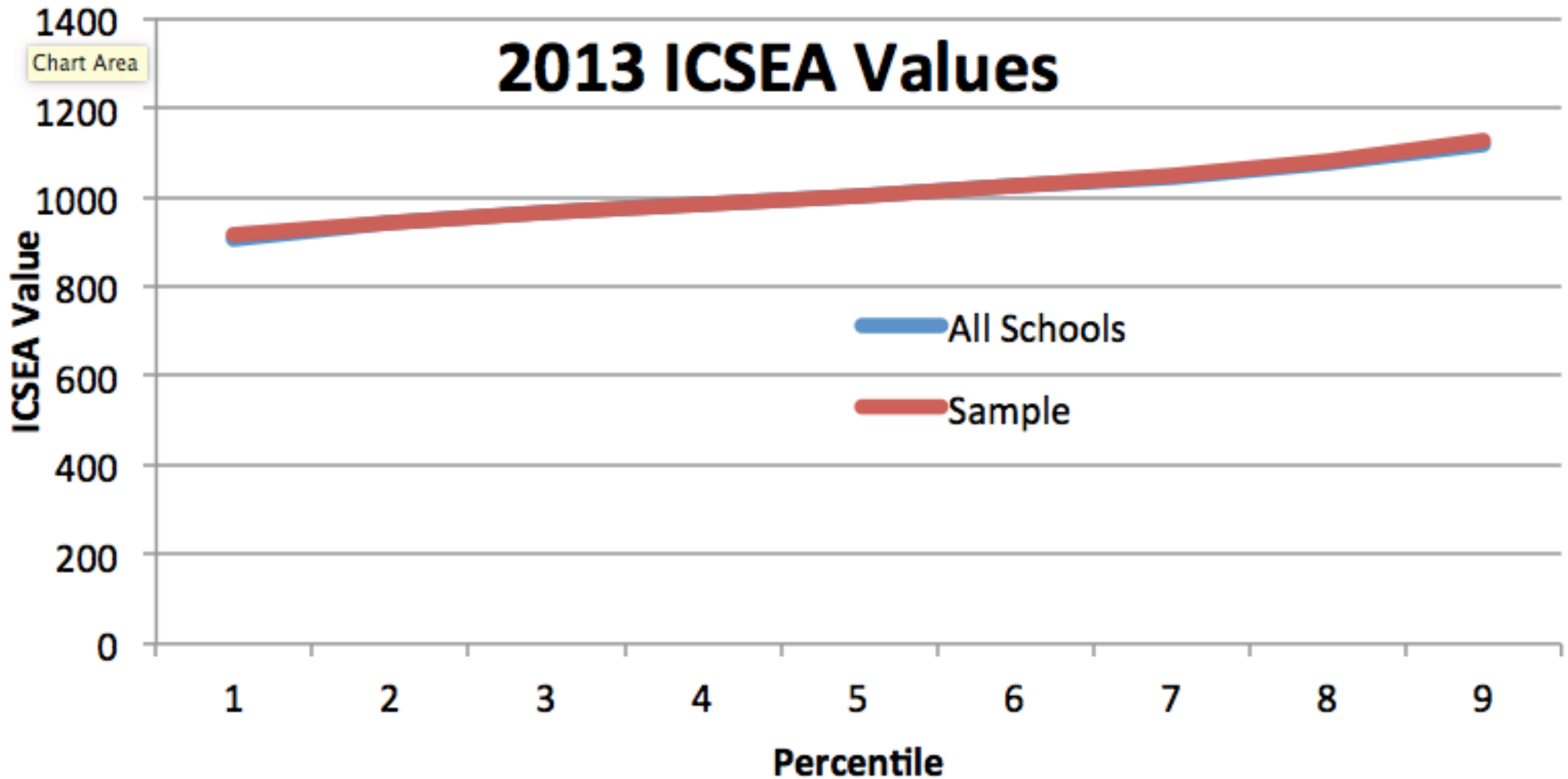
# Representativeness: Australia



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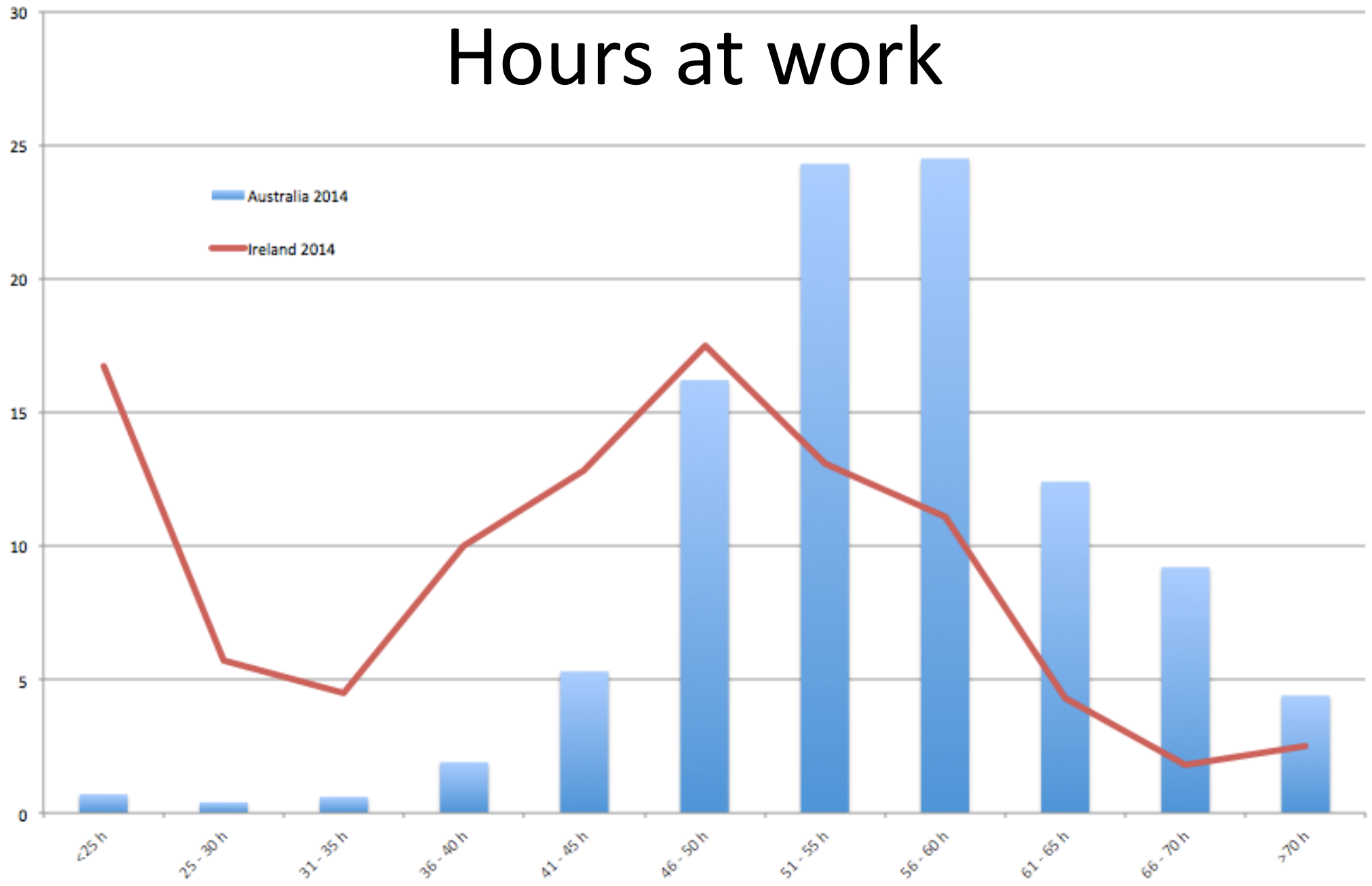
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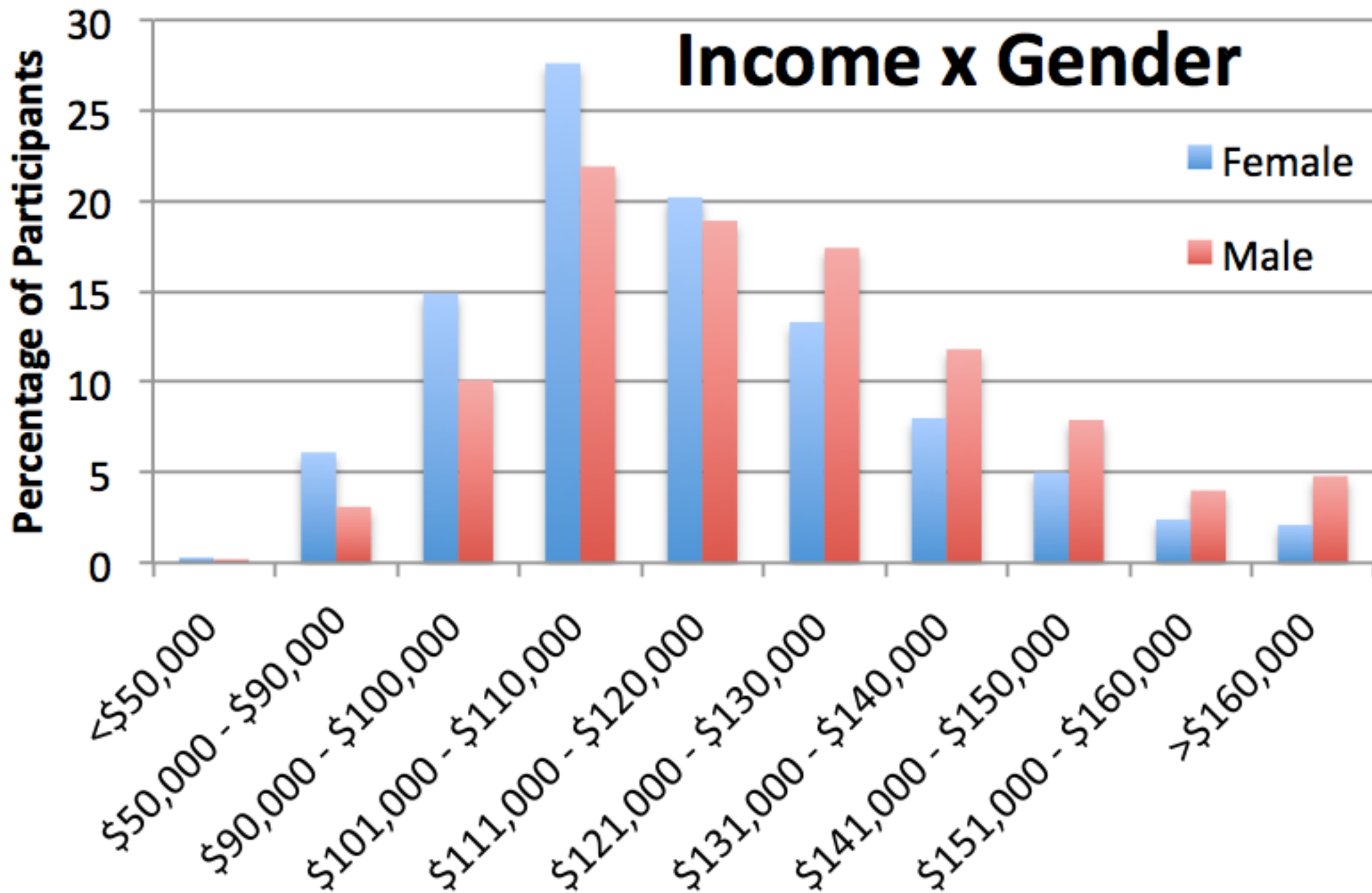


# Demographics

<b>Ireland</b>		<b>Australia</b>
<b>26-75</b>	Age	<b>24-72</b>
<b>48.05</b>	Mean	<b>51-53</b>
<b>81%</b>	Principals	<b>70%</b>
<b>20%</b>	Deputies	<b>30%</b>
<b>67%</b>	Primary	<b>61%</b>
<b>27%</b>	Secondary	<b>27%</b>
<b>90%</b>	Full time	<b>90%</b>
<b>~8.5</b>	Years in current role	<b>~5.5</b>
<b>~12</b>	Years in leadership	<b>~13</b>
<b>~13</b>	Years in teaching	<b>~12</b>

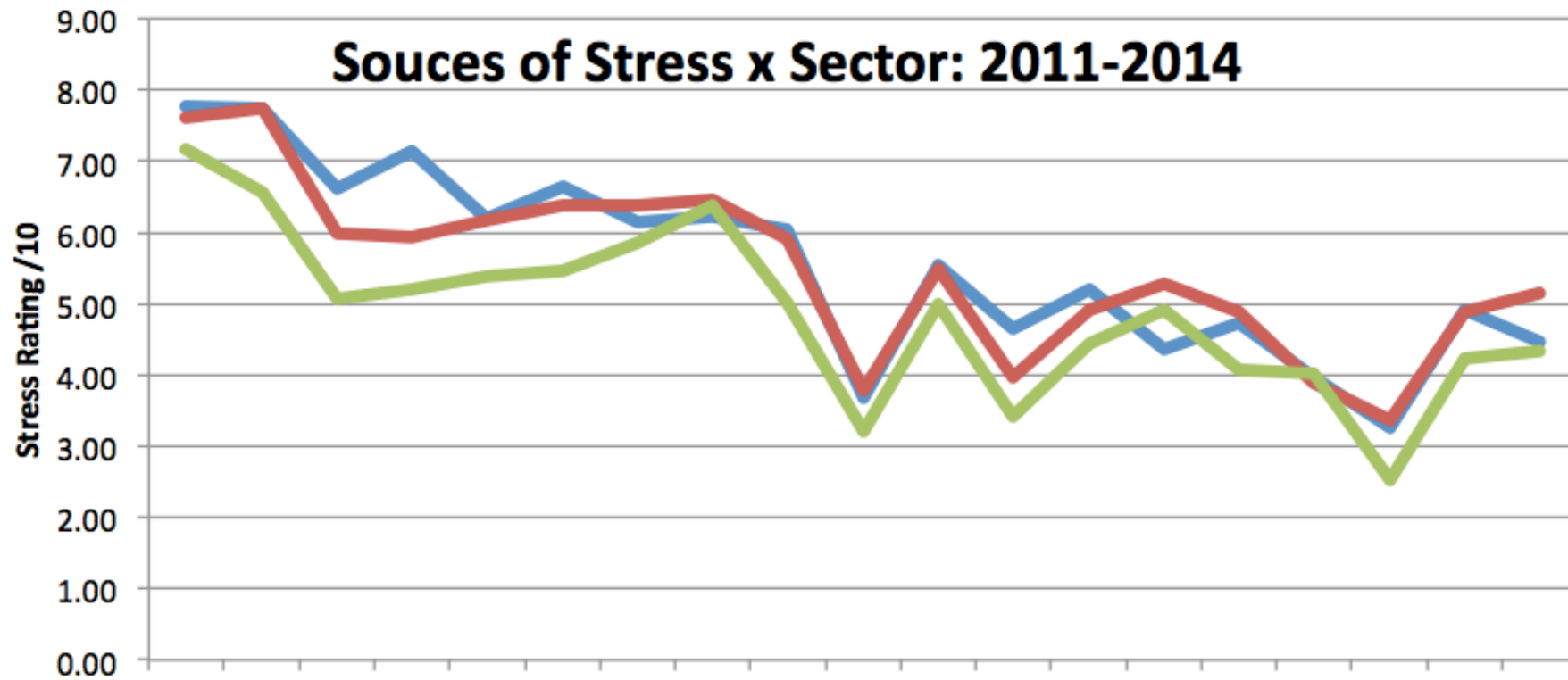
# Hours at work





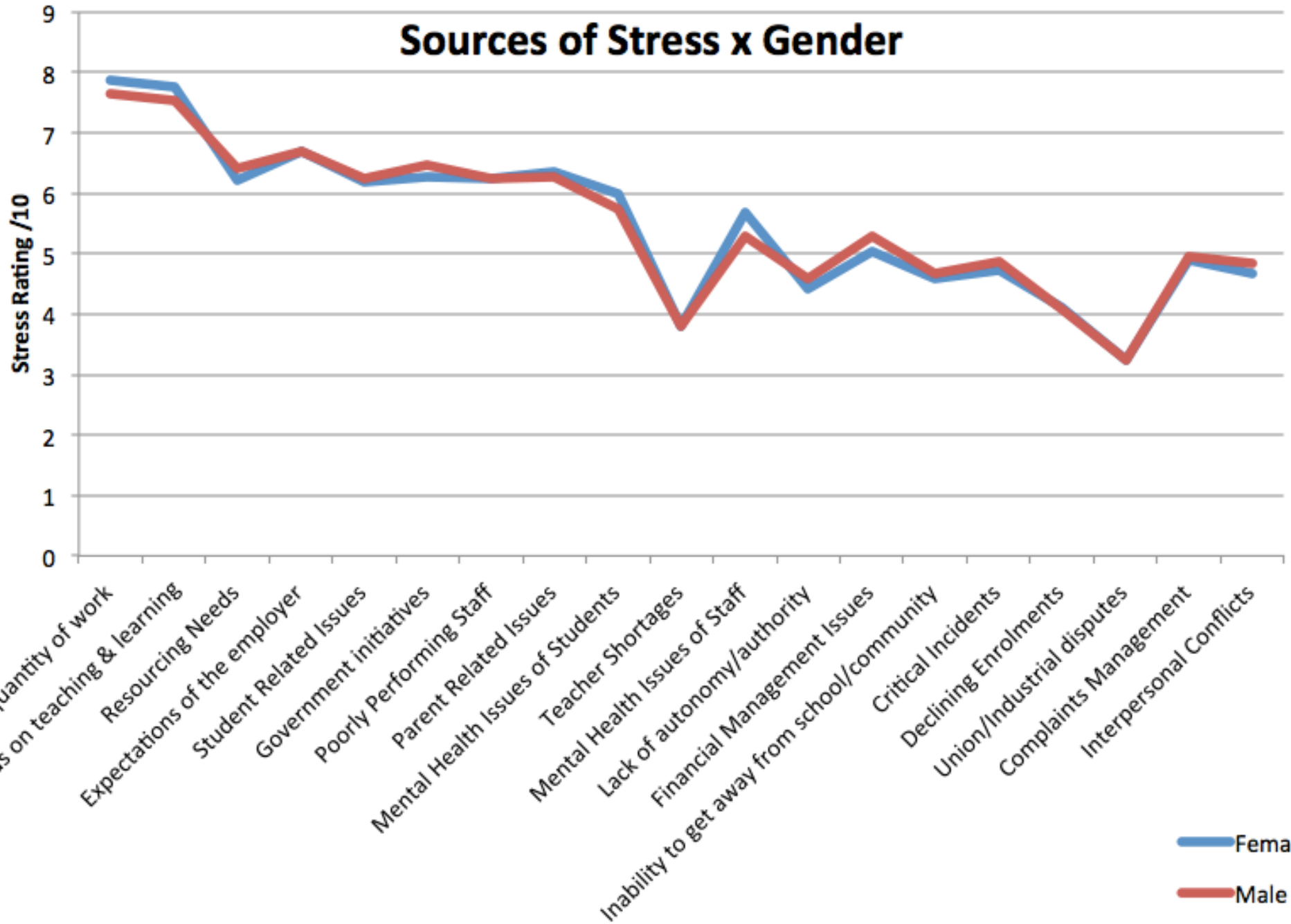


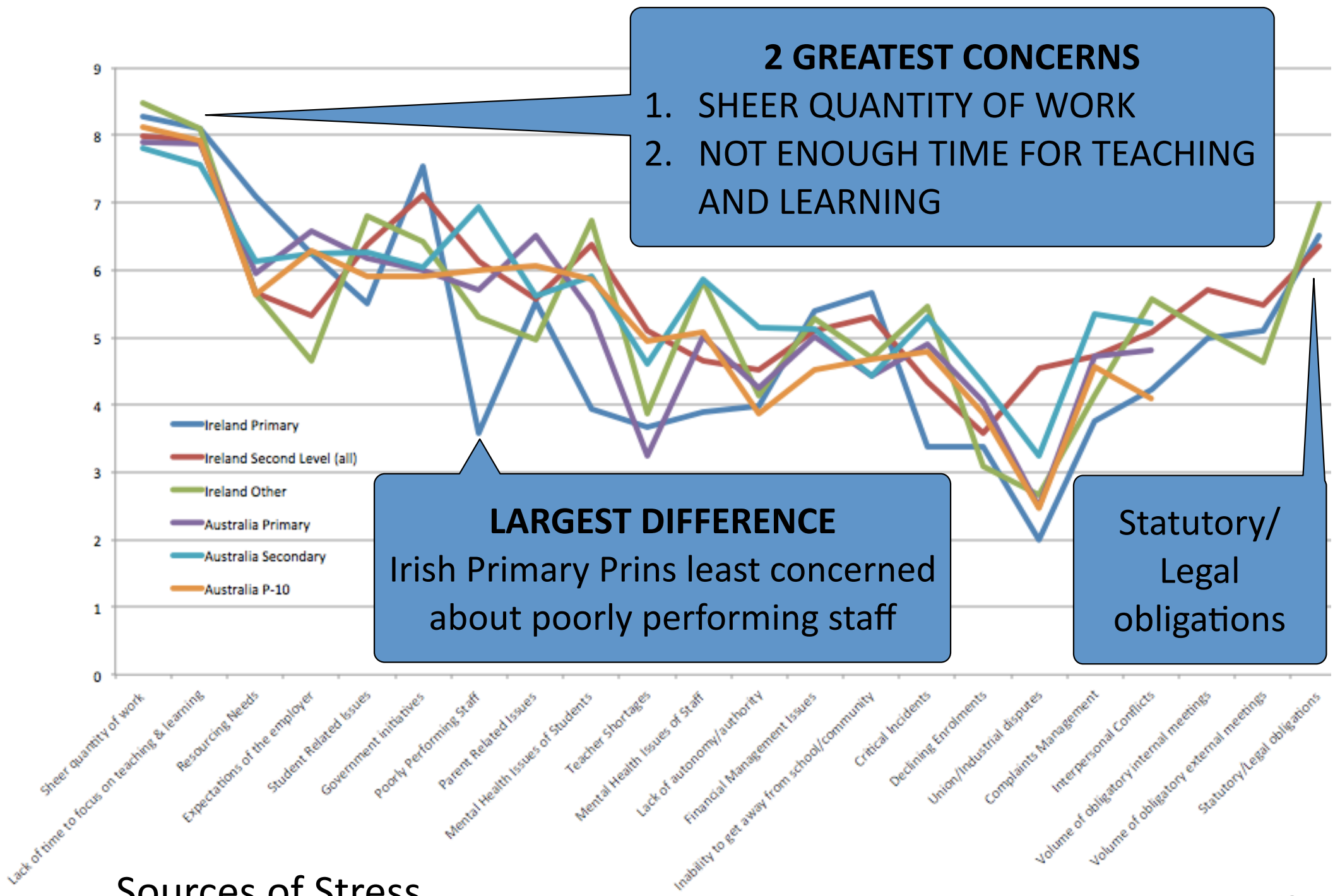
## Souces of Stress x Sector: 2011-2014



- Government
- Catholic
- Independent

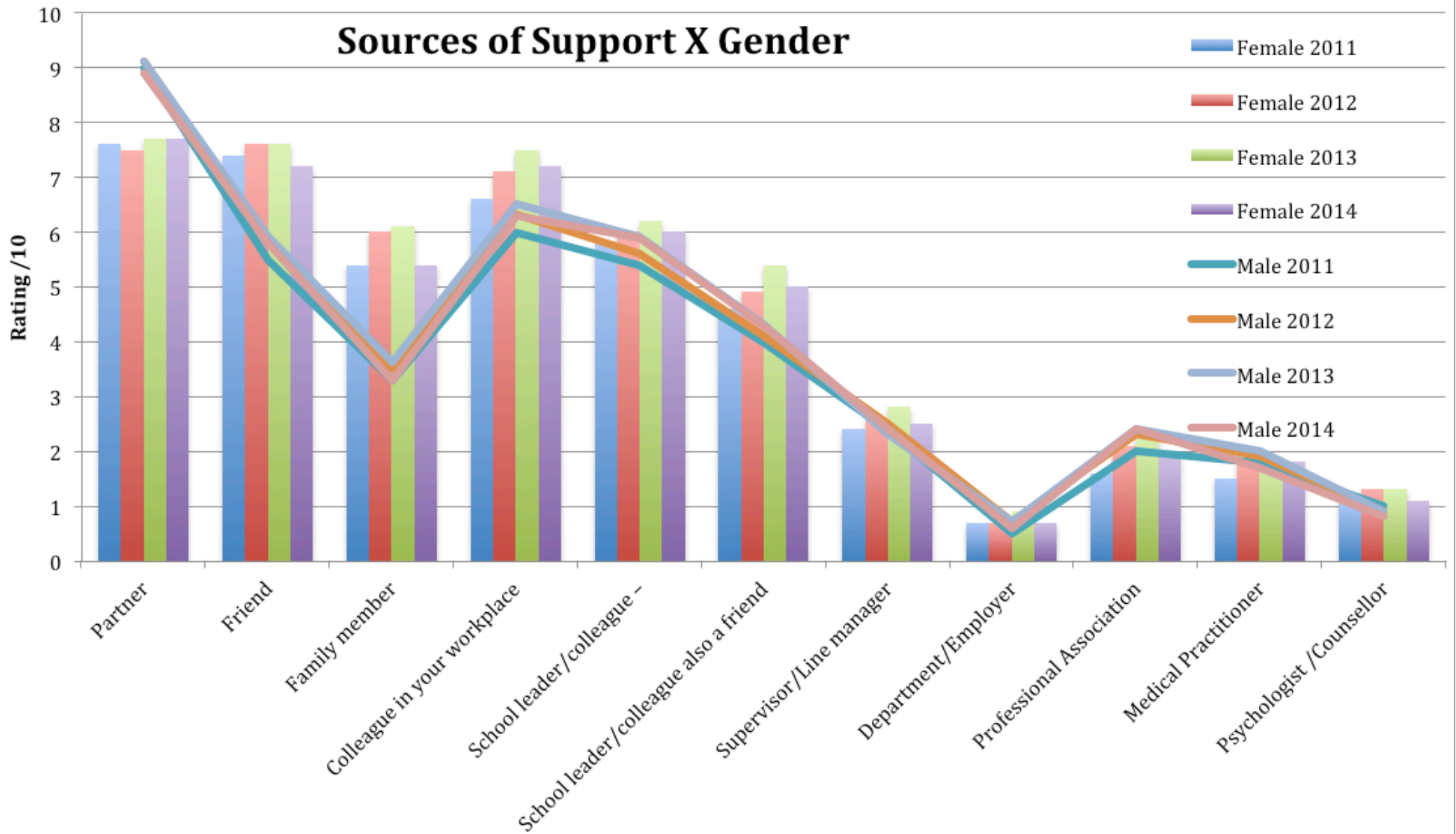
# Sources of Stress x Gender



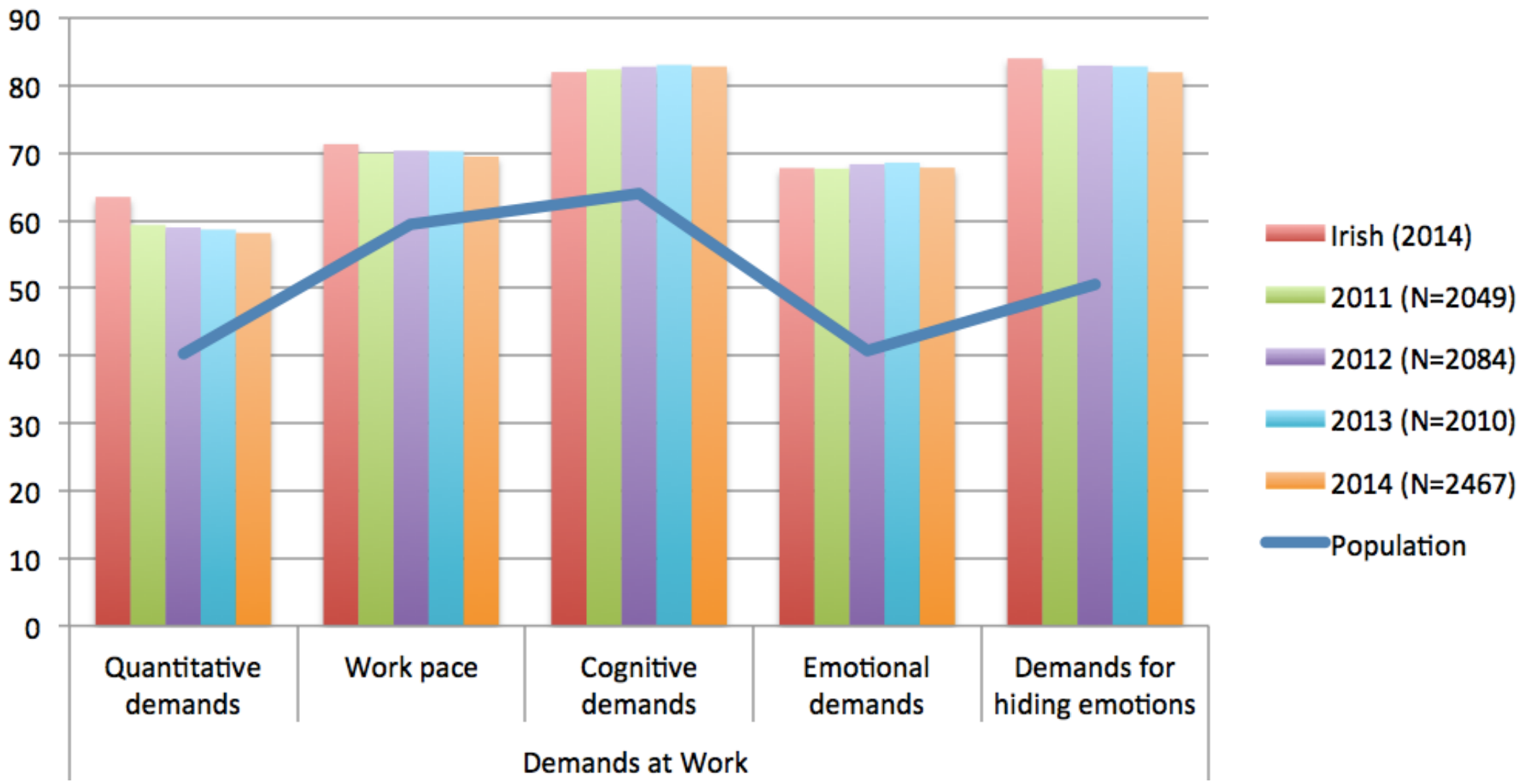


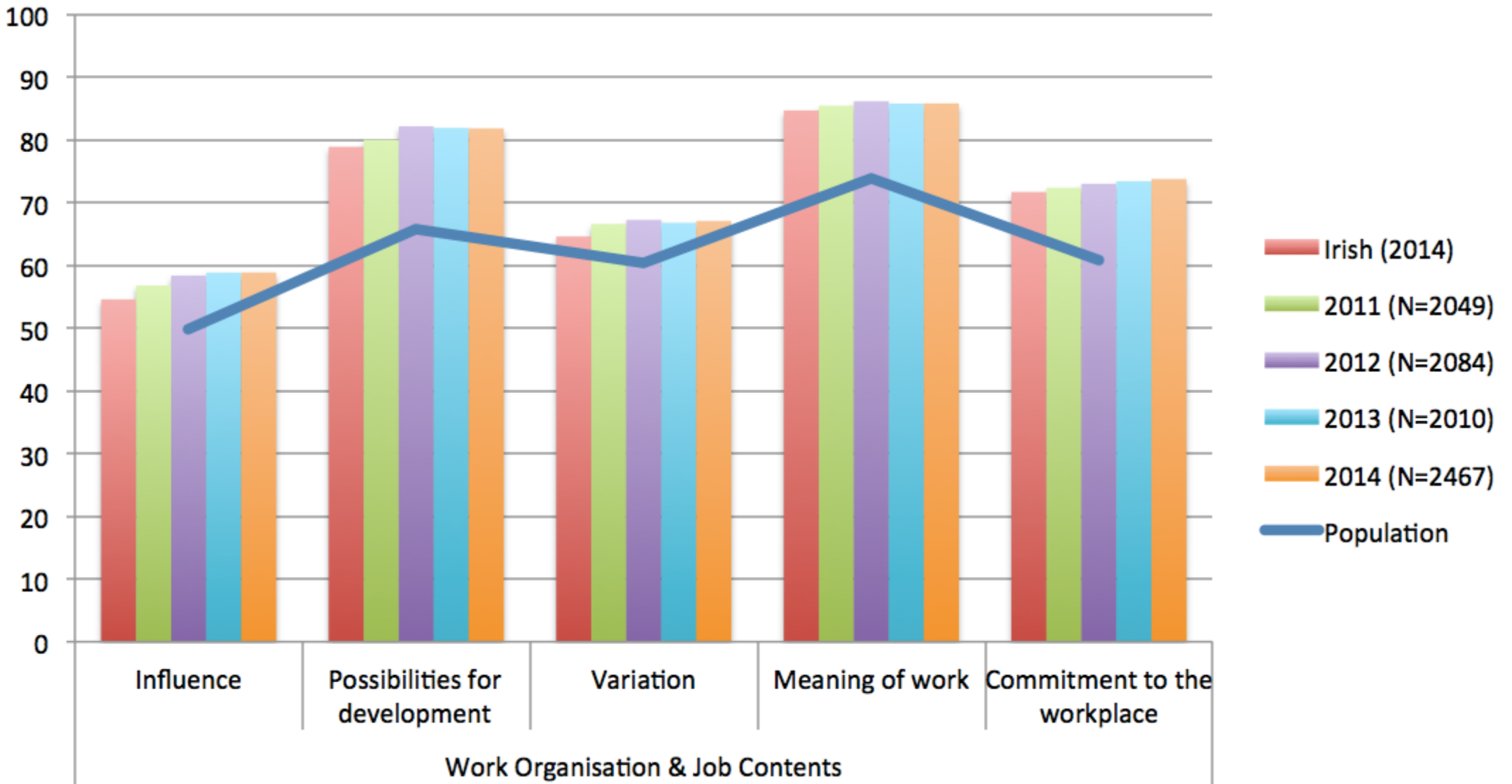
Sources of Stress

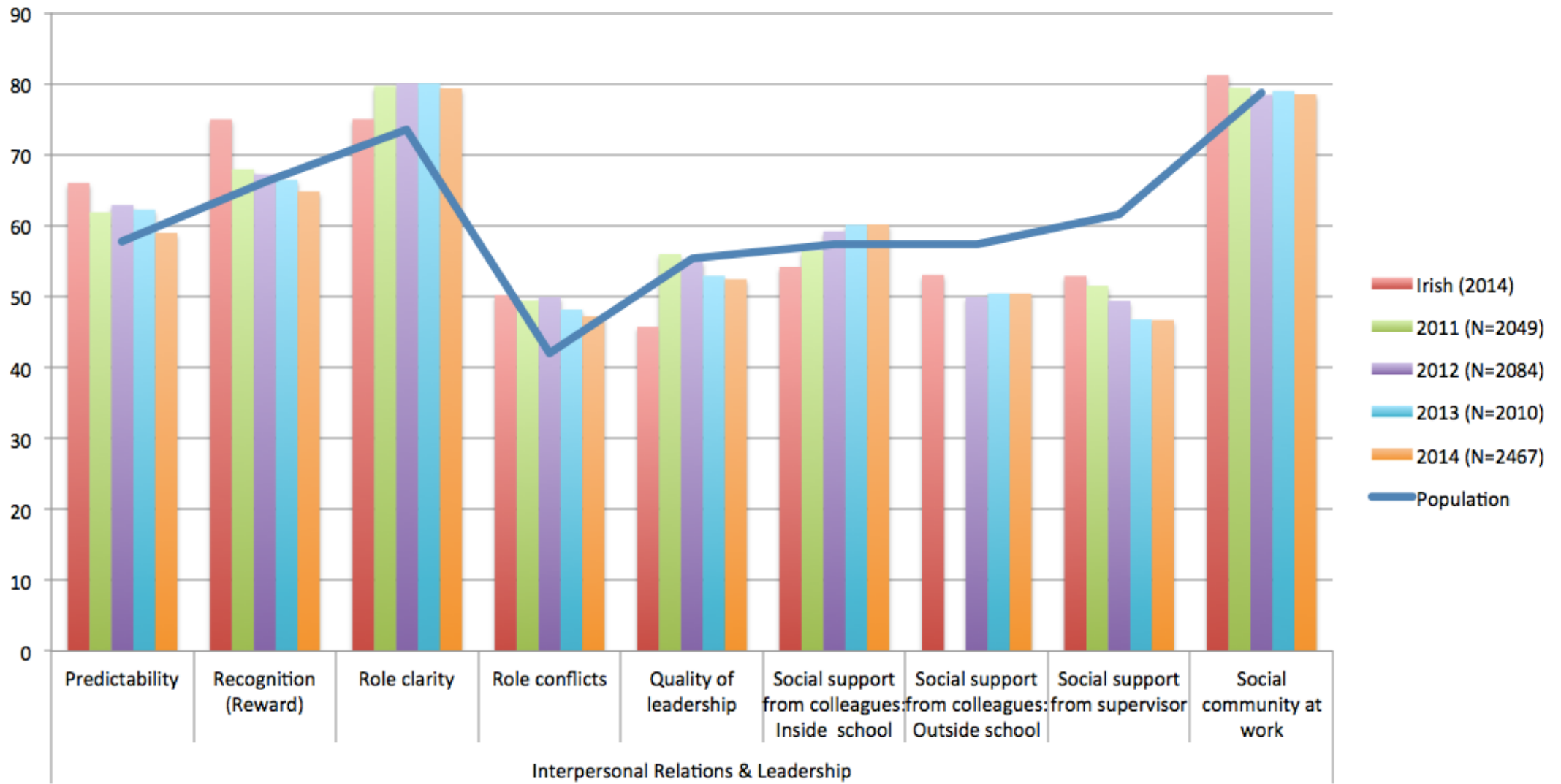
# Sources of Support X Gender

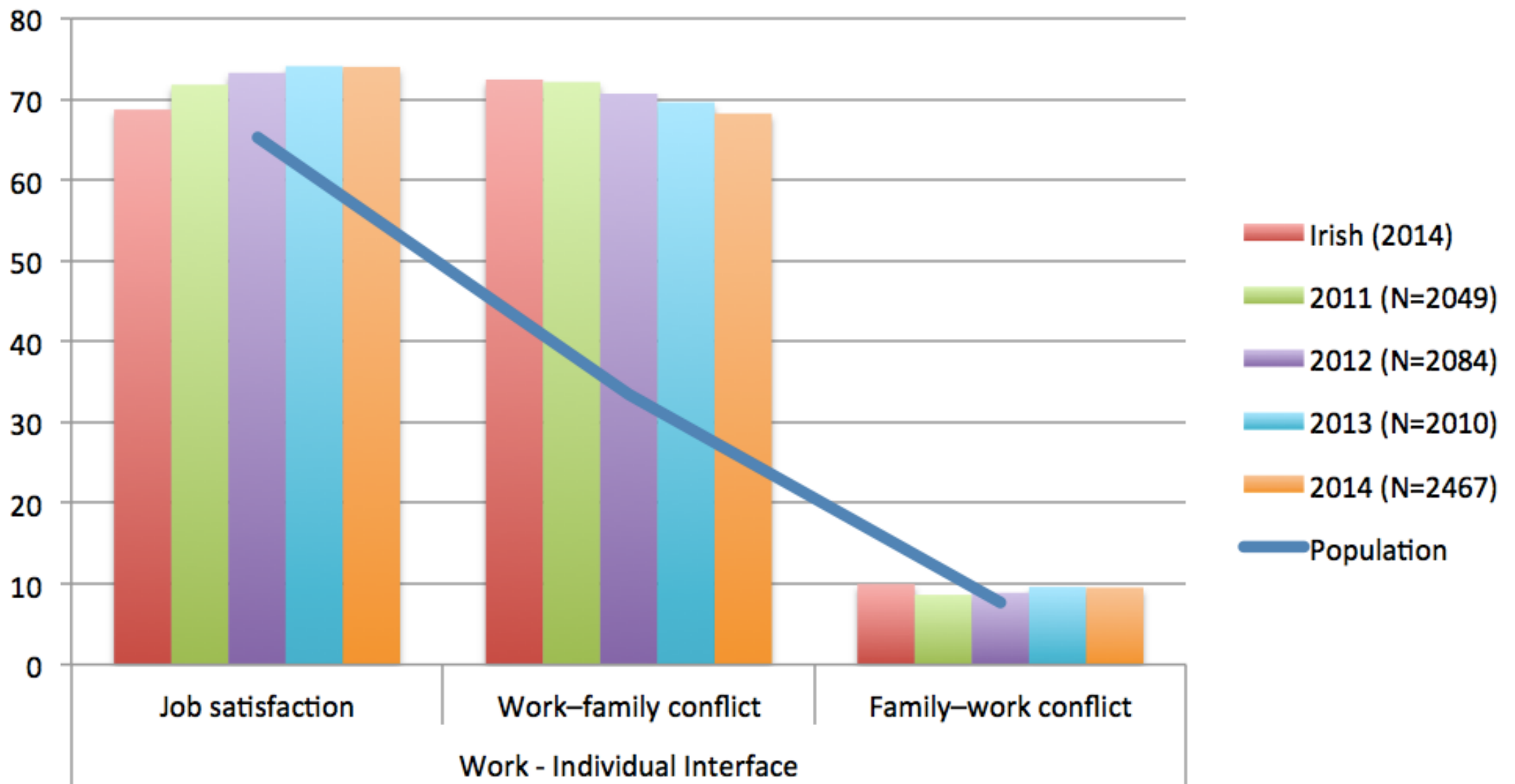


Australia

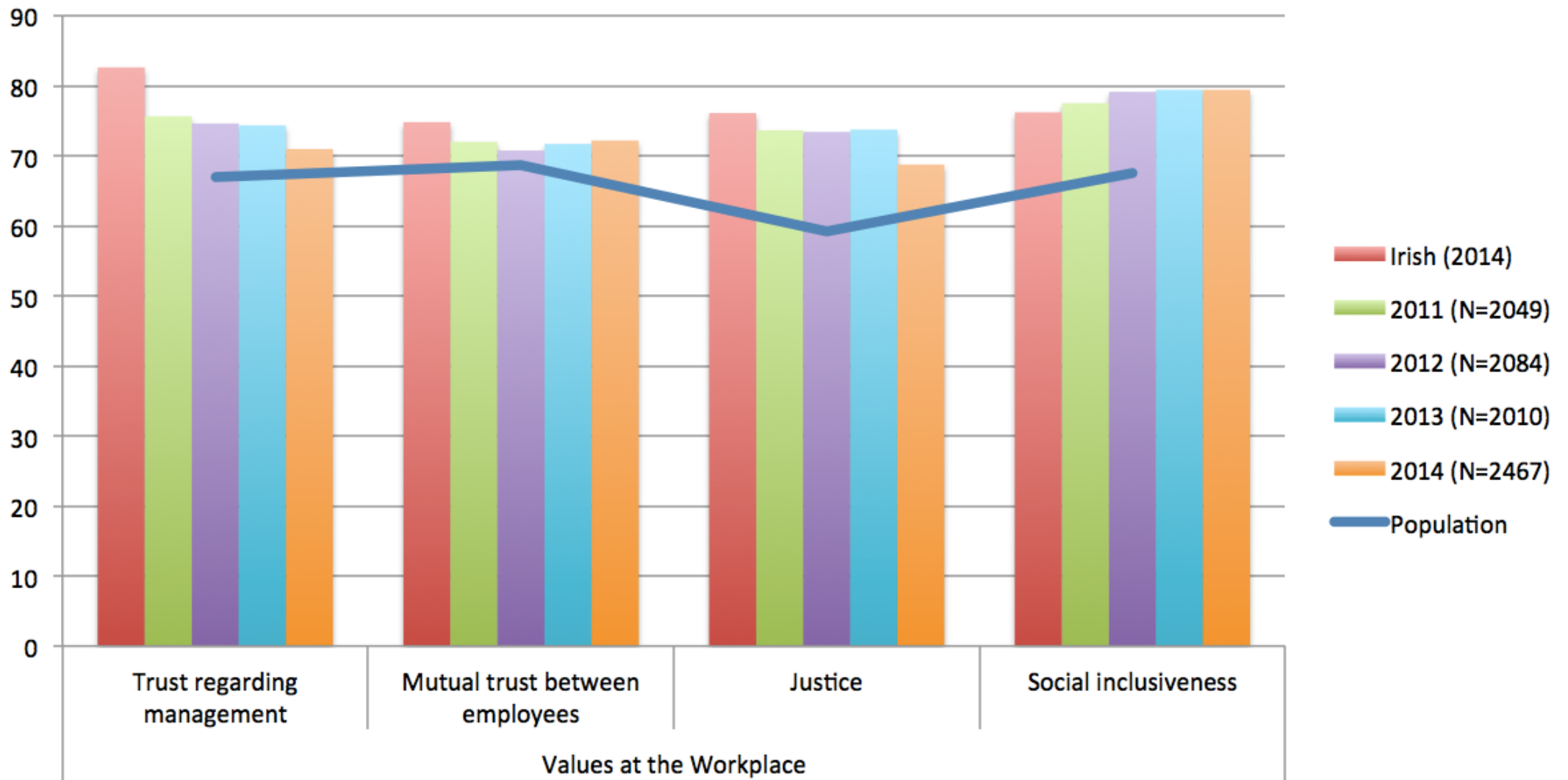


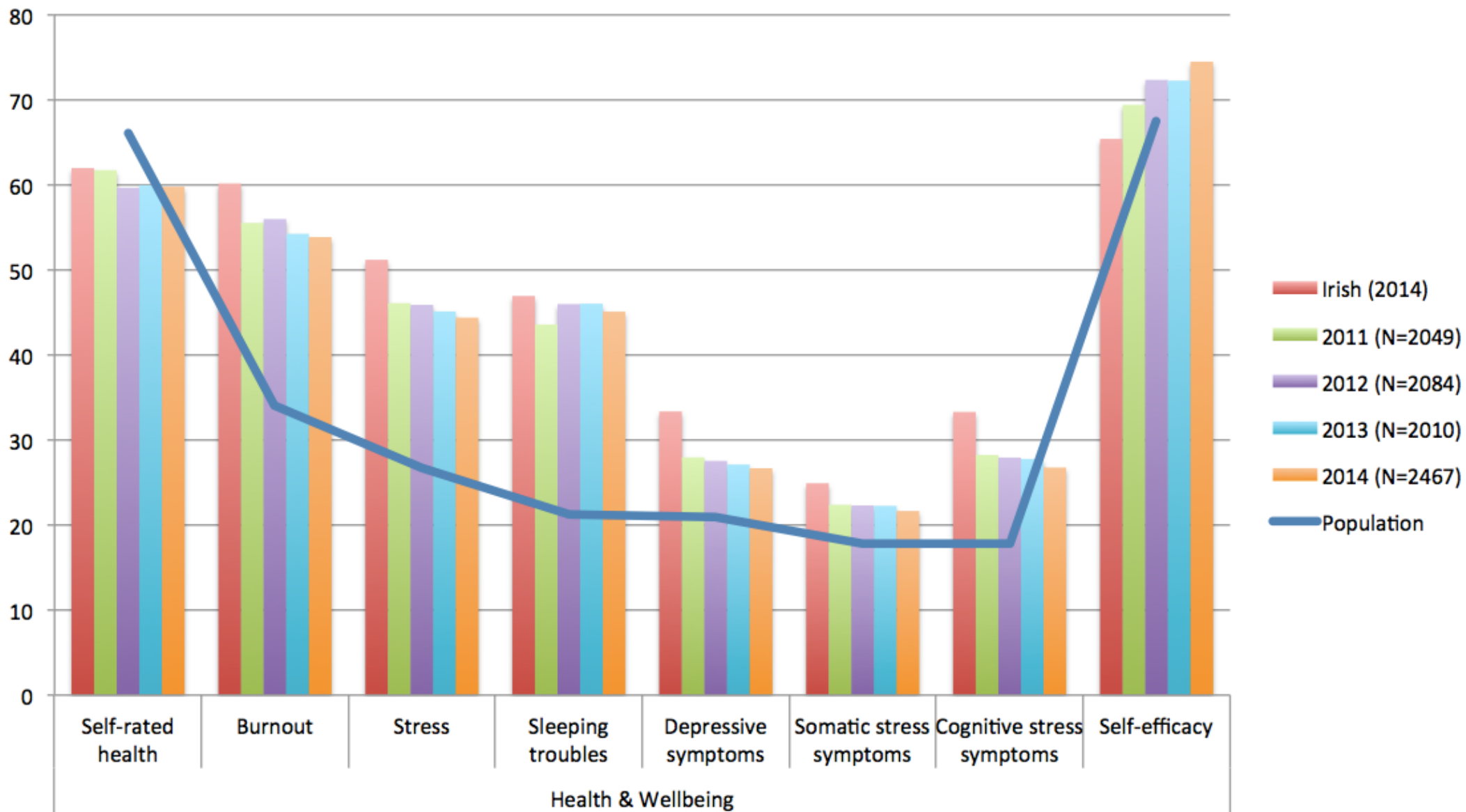




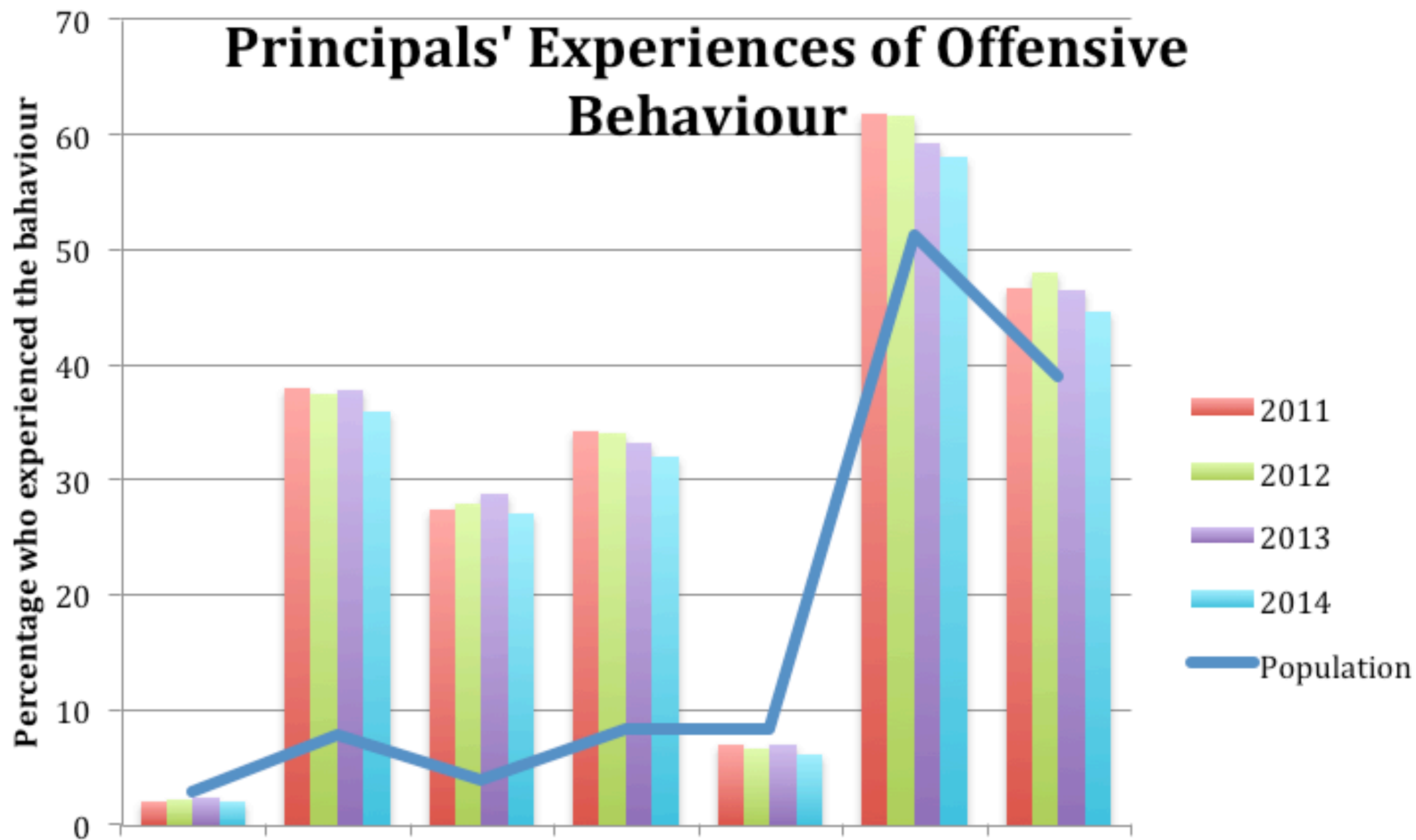






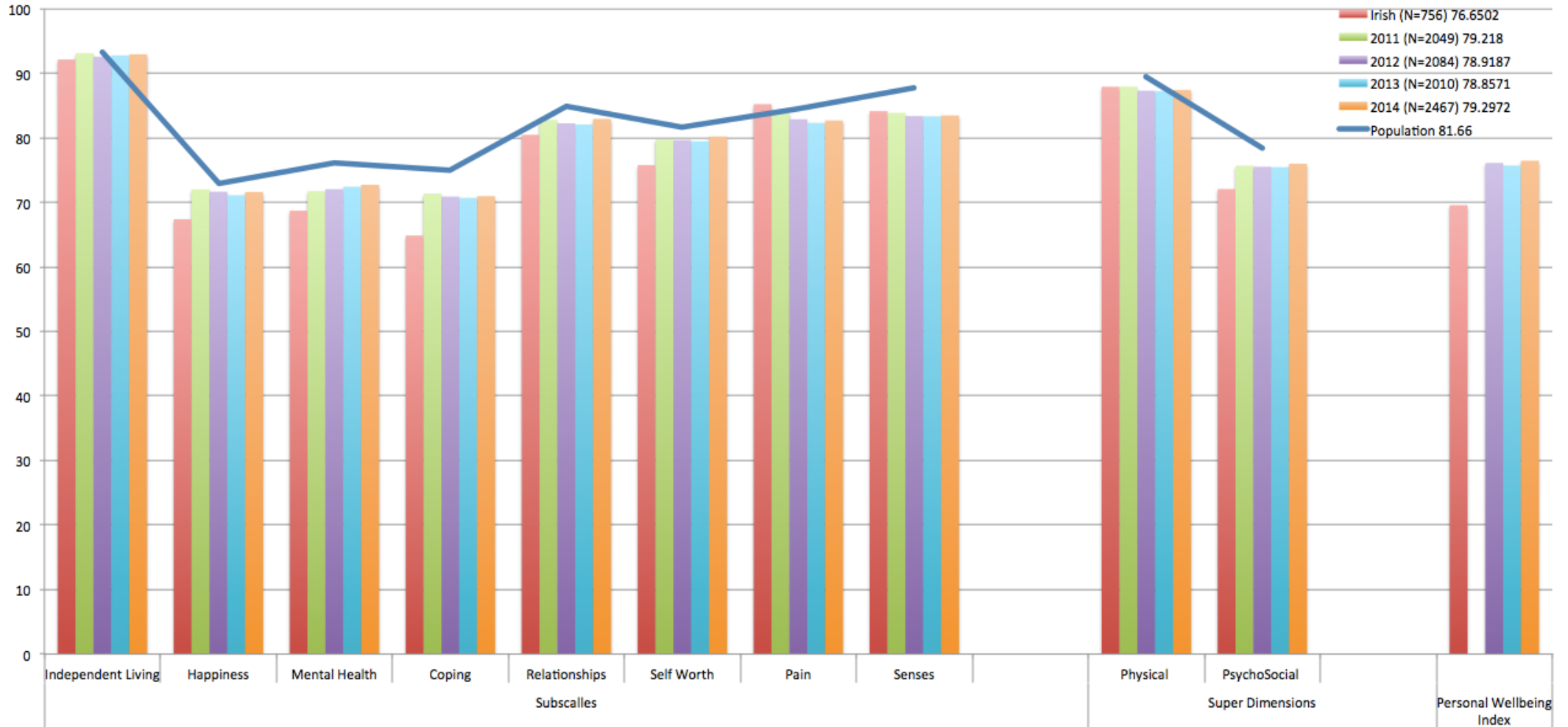


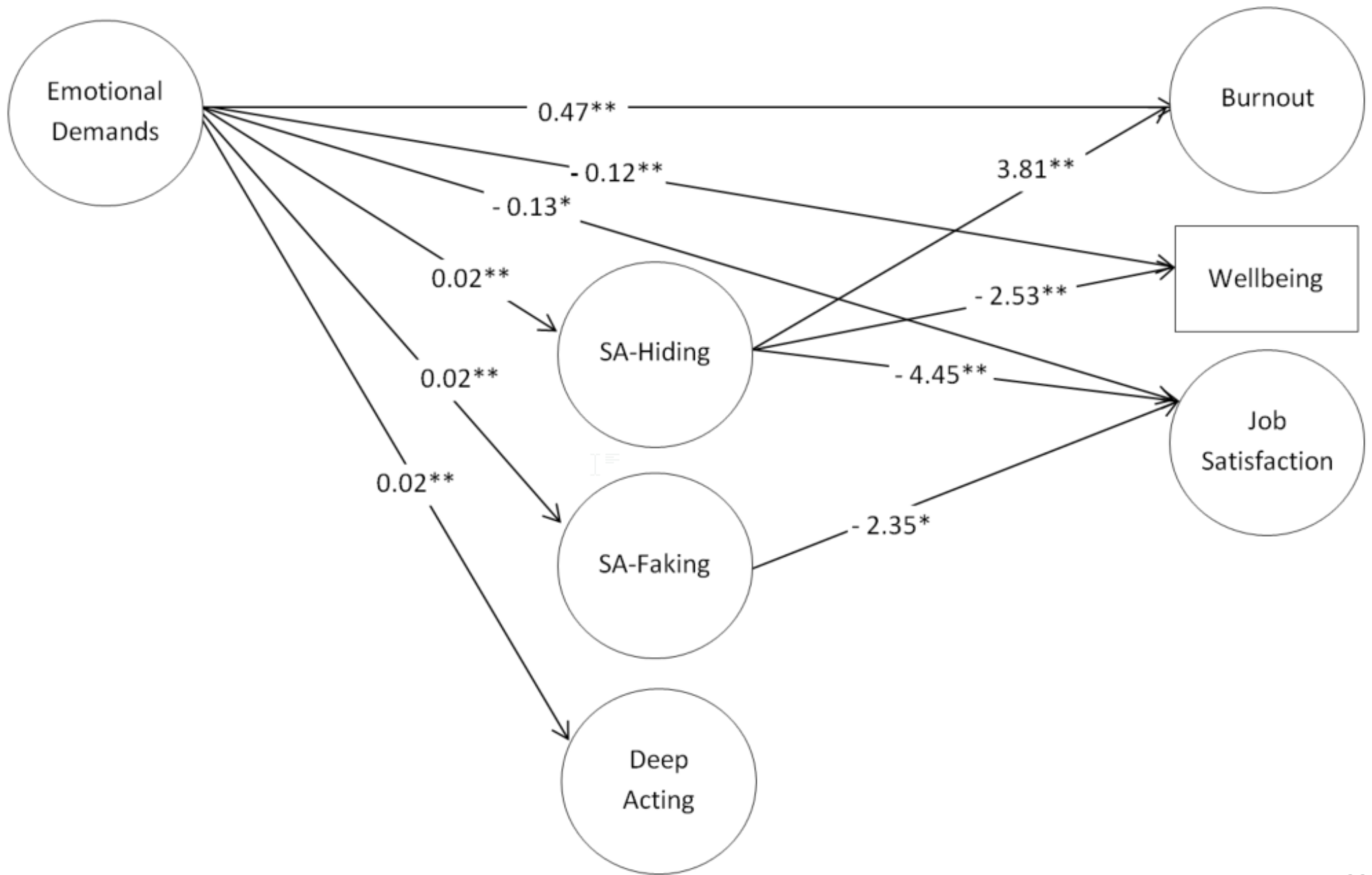
# Principals' Experiences of Offensive Behaviour



Australia

# Quality of Life: AQoL-8D; PWI





# Creating Resilience: Prevention

This should not be optional...

But too often is

# PHWP - Elements

## Psychologically Health Workplace

- Supportive Leadership
- Employee Engagement
- Role Clarity
- Learning, Development & Growth Opportunities
- Appraisal & Recognition
- Work-Life Balance

(Littlefield, 2013, p.7)

# Supportive Leadership

Perceived organisational support

Supervisory support

Supportive leadership

– Neither over-directive or laissez-faire

Emotional intelligence

Empathy (mentalization)

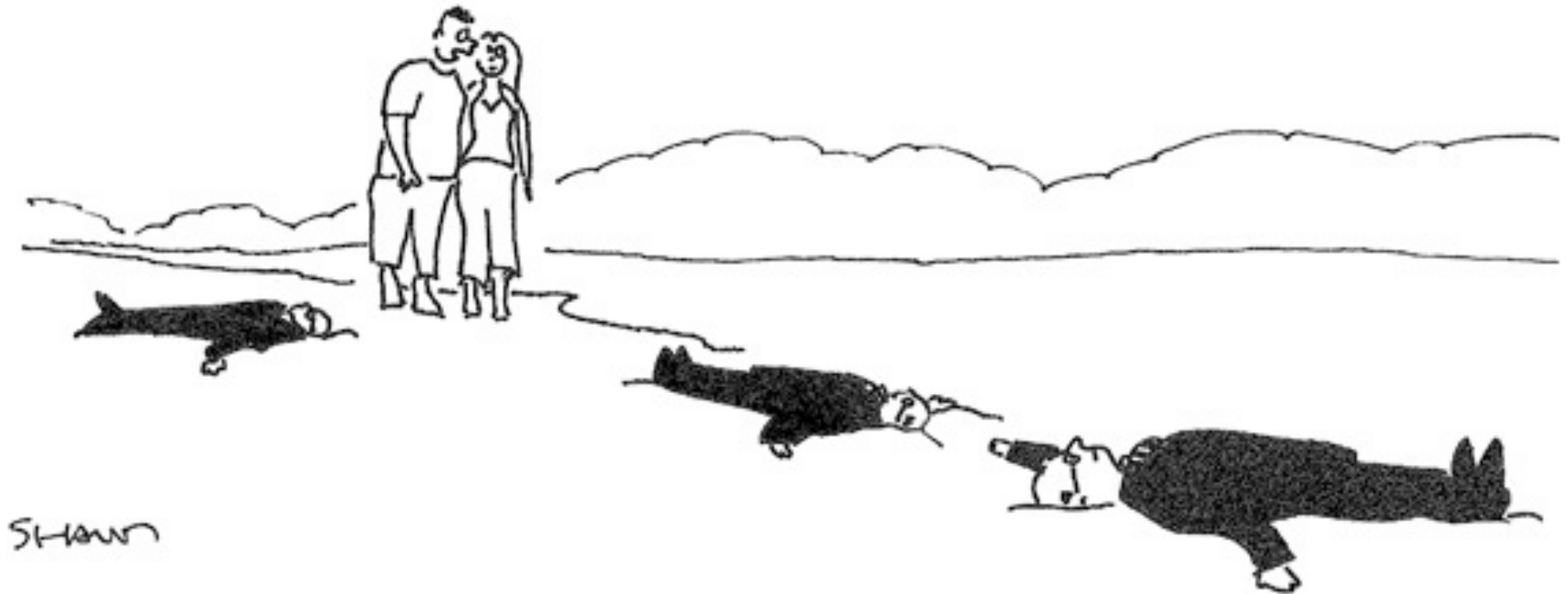
Roll-modelling

Delegation

Proactive management of at-risk staff



# Supportive Leadership



"It's always sad when senior management beaches itself."

# Employee Engagement

The extent to which you feel involved in your job

- Have a say in what happens
- Have control over what happens

Alignment between personal and organisational views and values

# Employee Engagement



“This had better be good”

# Role Clarity

Understand work objectives

Understand the link between individual and organisational objectives

Clear guidance about

- Expected roles
- Behaviours associated with the job

# Learning, Development & Growth Opportunities

Access to *Appropriate* Professional  
Development

Opportunities to expand knowledge, skills and  
abilities

Opportunities to apply competencies gained

# Appraisal & Recognition

Appropriate rewards for contribution to the workplace

Recognition of achievement of professional and personal milestones

Quality of performance assessment and feedback

# Work-Life Balance

Acknowledgement of employee's responsibilities and lives outside work

Provides help to manage these multiple demands

## Stress vs. Burnout

Stress	Burnout
Characterized by overengagement	Characterized by disengagement
Emotions are overreactive	Emotions are blunted
Produces urgency and hyperactivity	Produces helplessness and hopelessness
Loss of energy	Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope
Leads to anxiety disorders	Leads to detachment and depression
Primary damage is physical	Primary damage is emotional
May kill you prematurely	May make life seem not worth living

Source: *Stress and Burnout in Ministry*



# Burnout: Causes

## Work-related causes of burnout

- Feeling like you have little or no control over your work
- Lack of recognition or rewards for good work
- Unclear or overly demanding job expectations
- Doing work that's monotonous or unchallenging
- Working in a chaotic or high-pressure environment

## Lifestyle causes of burnout

- Working too much, without enough time for relaxing and socializing
- Being expected to be too many things to too many people
- Taking on too many responsibilities, without enough help from others
- Not getting enough sleep
- Lack of close, supportive relationships

## Personality traits can contribute to burnout

- Perfectionistic tendencies; nothing is ever good enough
  - Pessimistic view of yourself and the world
    - The need to be in control; reluctance to delegate to others
      - High-achieving, Type A personality



# Burnout: Signs and Symptoms

## Physical signs and symptoms of burnout

- Feeling tired and drained most of the time
- Lowered immunity, feeling sick a lot
- Frequent headaches, back pain, muscle aches
- Change in appetite or sleep habits

## Emotional signs and symptoms of burnout

- Sense of failure and self-doubt
- Feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated
- Detachment, feeling alone in the world
- Loss of motivation
- Increasingly cynical and negative outlook
- Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment

## Behavioral signs and symptoms of burnout

- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating, taking longer to get things done
  - Using food, drugs, or alcohol to cope
  - Taking out your frustrations on others
    - Skipping work or coming in late and leaving early

# Combating Burnout

Develop Realistic Attitudes and Expectations

Accept that Burnout is Normal

Deal Actively with Burnout using the 3R approach

# 3 Rs

## **Recognize**

Watch for the warning signs of burnout

## **Reverse**

Undo the damage by managing stress and seeking support

## **Resilience**

Build your resilience to stress by taking care of your physical and emotional health

# Creating Resilience

## 3. Secondary Interventions

- Becoming Different
- Becoming Present
- Becoming Responsible

# Develop a Growth Mindset

Carol Dweck: *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*

Fixed mindset kids harbour grudges for longer

Growth mindset kids are suspended less and have less absences

Growth Mindset: Just add the word “yet”

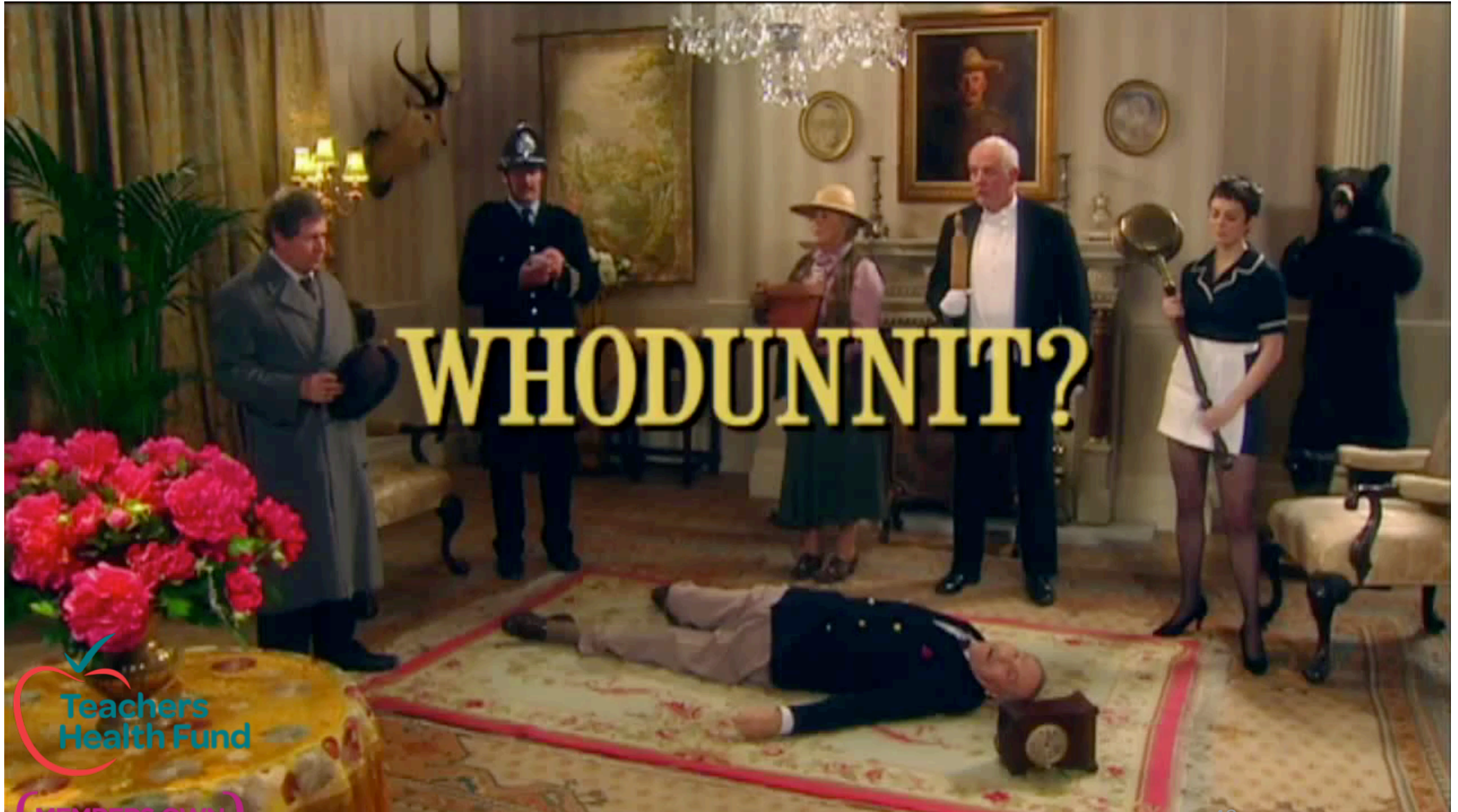
“I’m no good at maths yet”

“Who had a fabulous struggle today?”

# Mindfulness

- Watch carefully, be fully present, observe everything

Test your awareness





"There is a host of practical wisdom, showing how  
mindfulness can become a vital part of daily living." - Huffington Post

# Mindfulness FOR DUMMIES

## Learn to:

- Develop constructive attitudes and become happier and healthier
- Incorporate mindfulness meditation into your daily routine
- Use mindfulness to overcome stress, anger, anxiety, depression and more
- Follow the guided meditations on the audio-CD to achieve calm and well-being

Shamash Alidina

Mindfulness teacher, lecturer and author



# Why develop mindfulness?

“if we can effect the stress response, we can affect the process. There is a reason why experienced meditators live so long and look so young”

– Eva Selhub, Harvard Medical School

Transcendental meditators who practice for  $\geq 5$  years show average biological age 12 years below chronological age

Wallace 1982

# Why develop mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the opposite of the fight-flight response. The “relaxation response”

Raises pain threshold, reduces wear and tear on the body.

Relaxation response sends slows heart rate and respiration

A concentrated form of rest and recovery



– Benson, 1975



# How to develop mindfulness

## Formal

- Expanding awareness meditation (breathing body sounds emotions... open awareness)
- Body scan meditation (toes to head)
- Mindful movement (tai chi)

## Informal

- Any task done with full attention
- Leads to greater pleasure and less worrying (washing the dishes)



# 1 Minute Mindfulness

do one thing at a time

stop between activities and take a breath

Use email pings, texts as a mindfulness bell

Where are my feet?

– (reduces anxiety by moving attention from the head)

Daily quiet time.

# Improve with Age: The Rules

Increase Gratitude, Forgiveness & Humour

Become a Lifelong Learner

Get excited. Do things you love and love the things you do. Excitement releases acetylcholine & dopamine in the brain. Stress decreases both

Cultivate Healthy Relationships (find the right person and marry them)

# Counter Clockwise Study, 1979

elderly men lived for a week as though it was 1959 showed dramatic improvements hearing, memory, dexterity, appetite, and general well-being.

Langer challenges the idea that the limits we assume and impose on ourselves are real.

Counterclockwise offers a transformative and bold new paradigm: the psychology of possibility.

Ellen J Langer (2009).



# Forgiveness

“To err is human. To really stuff up you need a computer”

“The best revenge is forgiveness”

“You should always forgive your enemies because nothing annoys them more” Oscar Wilde

“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong” Ghandi



# Forgiveness

boosts immune system

lowers blood pressure

reduces both anxiety and depression

improves sleep

(Fred Luskin, forgiveness project, Stanford University)

# Humour

Laughter has an analgesic effect (especially for chronic pain of arthritis)

releases endorphins into the bloodstream

relieves muscle tension

suppresses cortisol release (stress hormone)

increases heart rate

breath more deeply

Improves allergic responses and boosts immunity

stretches many facial and upper body muscles

“It’s a mini workout” Richard Wiseman



# Summary: Personal Wellbeing

- Think Counter clockwise
- Make a point of exercising.
- Maintain a healthy diet, even on busy days.
- Power naps can be useful, but sometimes prevent a good night's rest. You need to “rest peacefully to prevent resting in peace” (Gelb & Howell, 2012)

# Summary: Personal Wellbeing

- Lose “anti-aging” from your vocabulary
- Replace it with “Aging Gracefully”
- Find something that you really enjoy and make time to do it everyday for example reading a chapter in a book or enjoying a television program.
- Nurture yourself.

# Summary: Personal Wellbeing

- Break bigger goals down into manageable goals, so that you experience success more frequently.
- Take time to enjoy your success, before moving on to your next goal.
- Allow yourself leisure time, without feeling guilty about it.
- Accept any support and help offered you.

# Famous Last Words

“I think I’m beginning to learn something about art”

**Renoir**

“Get my swan costume ready”

**Pavlova**

“Oh my it is very beautiful over there”

**Edison**

“Oh wow, oh wow, oh wow”

**Steve Jobs**

# Famous Last Words

“Either that wallpaper goes or I do”

**Oscar Wilde**, while sipping champagne

“I should never have switched from Scotch to Martinis”

**Humphrey Bogart**

“Die my dear? Why that’s the last thing I’ll do”

**Groucho Marx**

“I am about to – I am going to – die: either expression is correct”

**Domonique Bouhours,**

French Jesuit, essayist & grammarian

# GFH

I am grateful that I was invited to speak

I am grateful that you considered listening

I forgive you for drifting off while I spoke

I hope I helped you laugh at least once