

Employment, Working Conditions and Stress: From Research to Practice

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Human Performance Management Group

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EFPA Expert Conference

Psychology for Health

A red, multi-pointed starburst graphic with a white outline, containing text.

EFPA 2012

Brussels

Belgium

The TU/e logo, consisting of the letters 'TU' in a large, bold, blue font, followed by a red diagonal line and the letter 'e' in a smaller, blue font.

Technische Universiteit
Eindhoven
University of Technology

Physical activity also important as an off-job recovery strategy...

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**TCS AMSTERDAM
MARATHON 2012**
TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Sunday 21 October 2012

37th edition

Overview

- ◆ What is Work and Organizational Psychology?
- ◆ Why is 'work' important to look at?
- ◆ Changes in working conditions over time
- ◆ Job stress theories in W/O Psychology
- ◆ From research to practice
- ◆ Occupational stress management interventions
- ◆ Conclusions



What is W/O Psychology?

- Work and Organizational (W/O) Psychology:
 - investigates determinants of human behavior in work situations
 - applies psychological principles, theory, and research to the work setting



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 - investigates determinants of human behavior in work situations
 - applies psychological principles, theory, and research to the work setting
- Work and Organizational psychologists:
 - facilitate responses to issues and problems involving people at work by serving as advisors and catalysts
 - goal: 'healthy and sustainable work'



Why is 'work' important to look at?

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- ◆ Urgent need for increasing labour productivity
 - Decreasing workforce
 - Ageing population

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 - Make new technology work through innovative work organization ('social innovation')
 - Workplace innovation explains a larger part of innovation success than technological innovation
 - Employee health, well-being and performance are linked to psychosocial risk factors at work

Why is 'work' important to look at?

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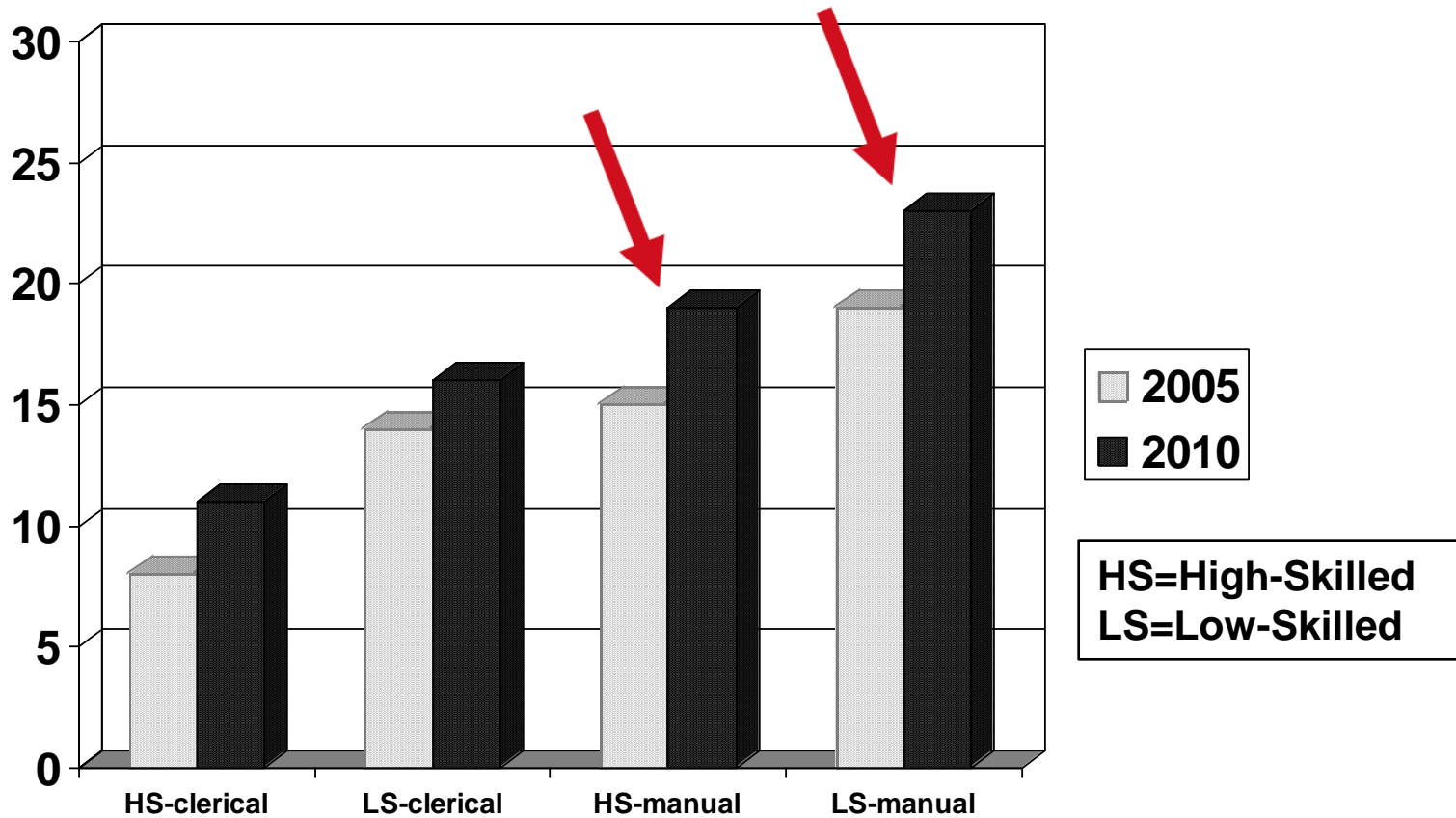


Changes over time in working conditions (EWCS, 2012)

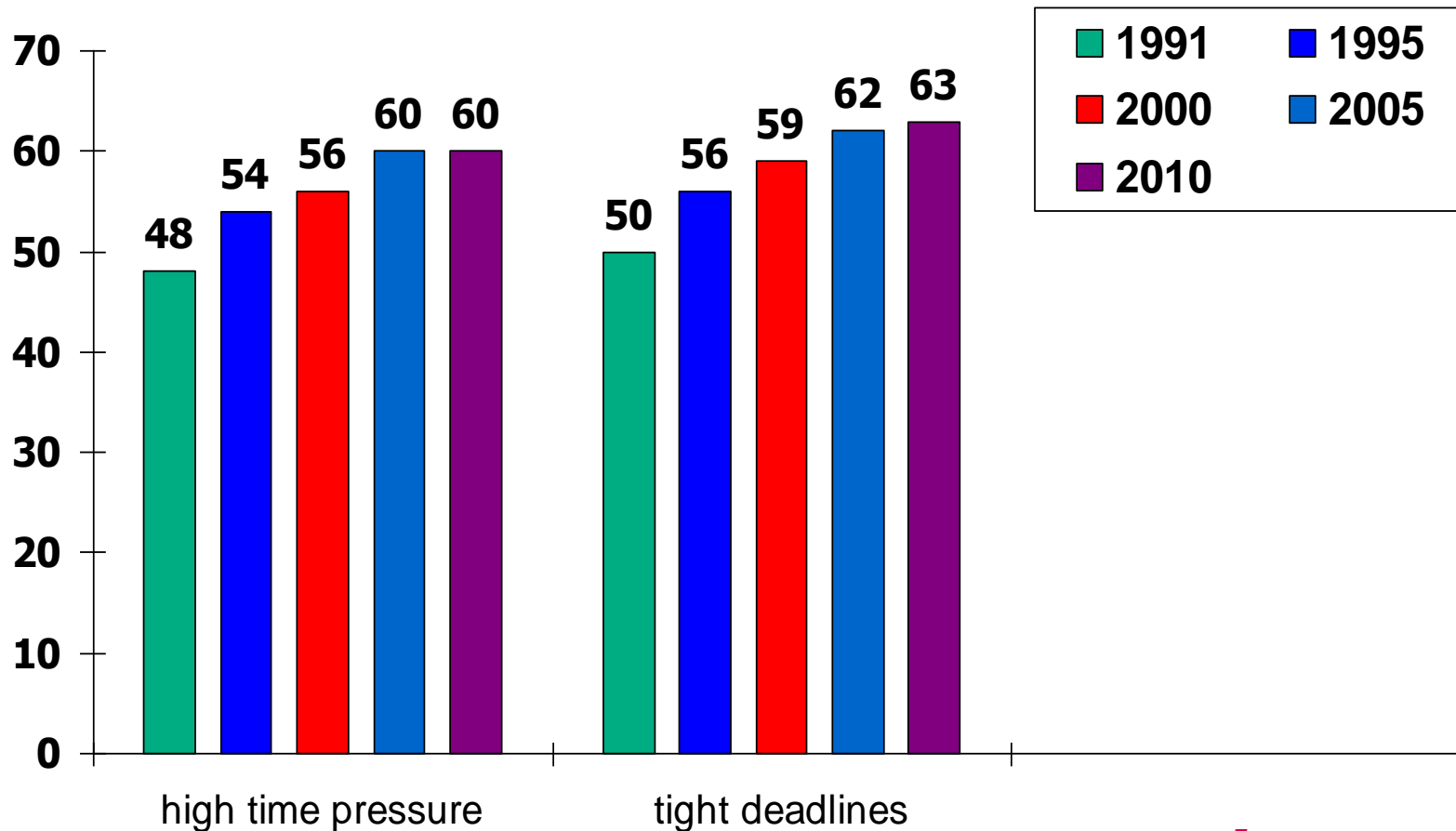
- ◆ Key trends 1991-2010 (n=44,000):
 - More temporary contracts and more job insecurity, particularly for manual workers
 - Work intensity remains at a high level
 - Pace of work particularly caused by clients ('emotion work')
 - One fifth of workers have difficulties with work-home balance
 - Level of job autonomy remains the same
 - Social support from managers and colleagues increased, but merely for high-skilled workers
 - Fair salary decreased to some extent ('occupational rewards')



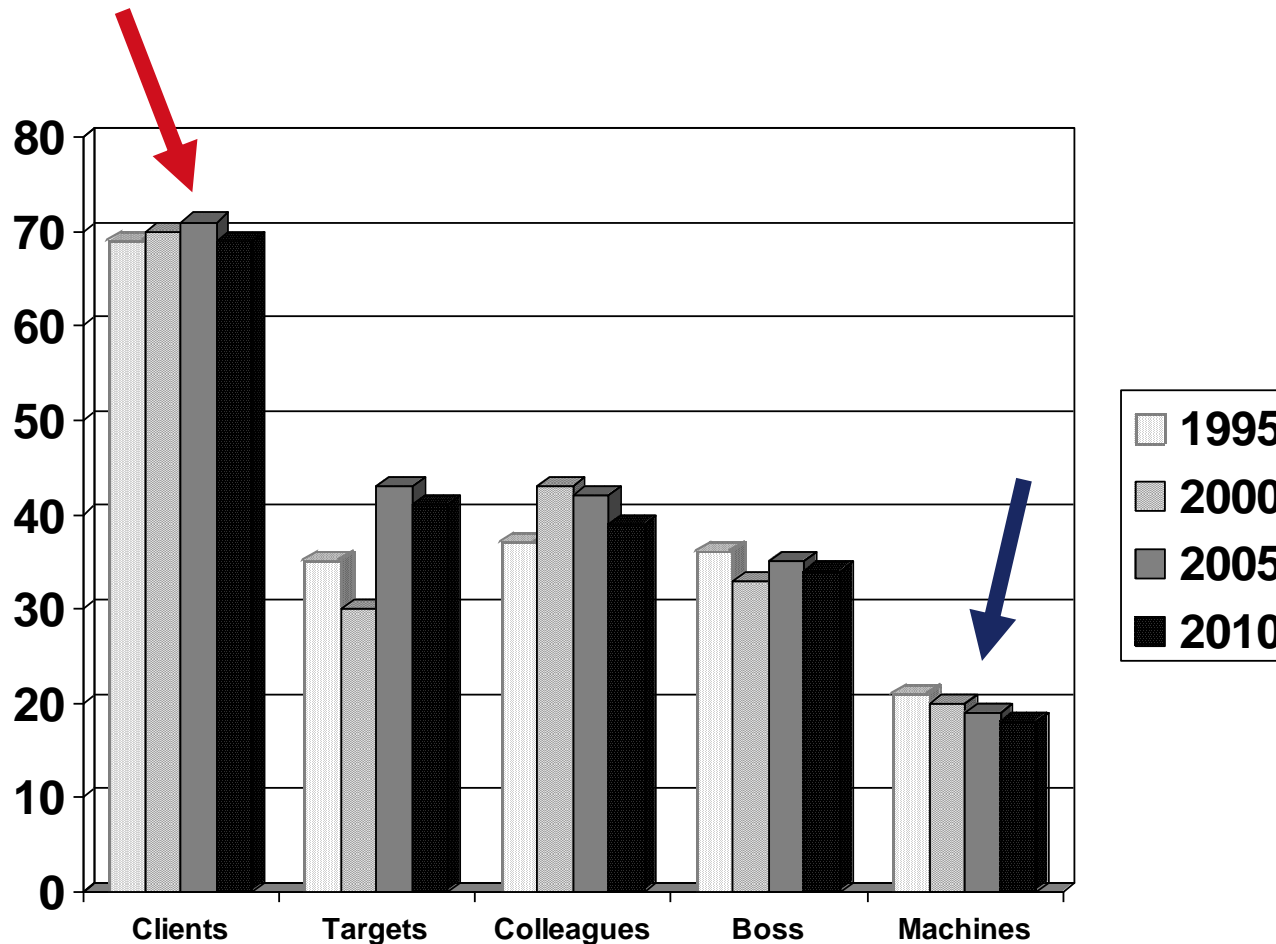
Perceived Job Insecurity by Occupation (EWCS, 2012)



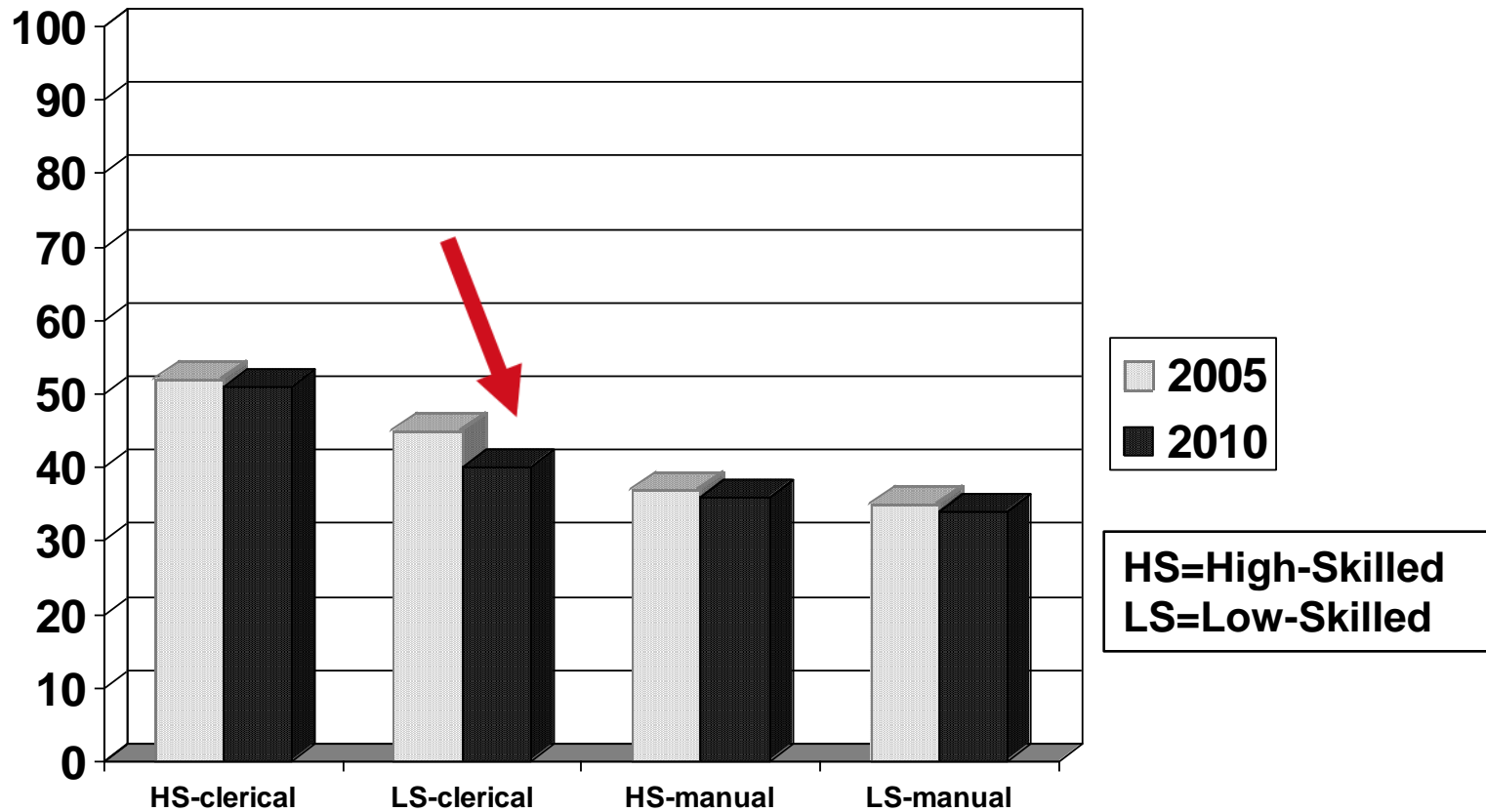
Work Intensity in European Union (EWCS, 2012)



Factors Dictating Pace of Work (EWCS, 2012)



Perceived Occupational Rewards by Occupation (EWCS, 2012)



Development of Job Stress Models in W/O Psychology

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- ◆ Theoretical frameworks in W/O Psychology have been advanced to explain job stress and health/well-being/performance relationships

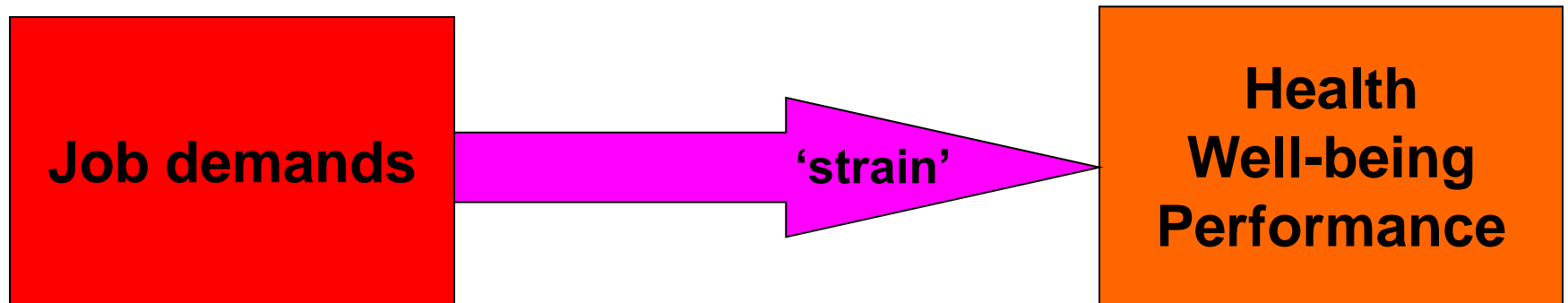
Development of Job Stress Models in W/O Psychology

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- ◆ Theoretical frameworks in W/O Psychology have been advanced to explain job stress and health/well-being/performance relationships
- ◆ Gold nuggets:
 - Job demands
 - Situational resources
 - Job resources
 - Occupational rewards
 - Recovery at / after work
 - Personal resources

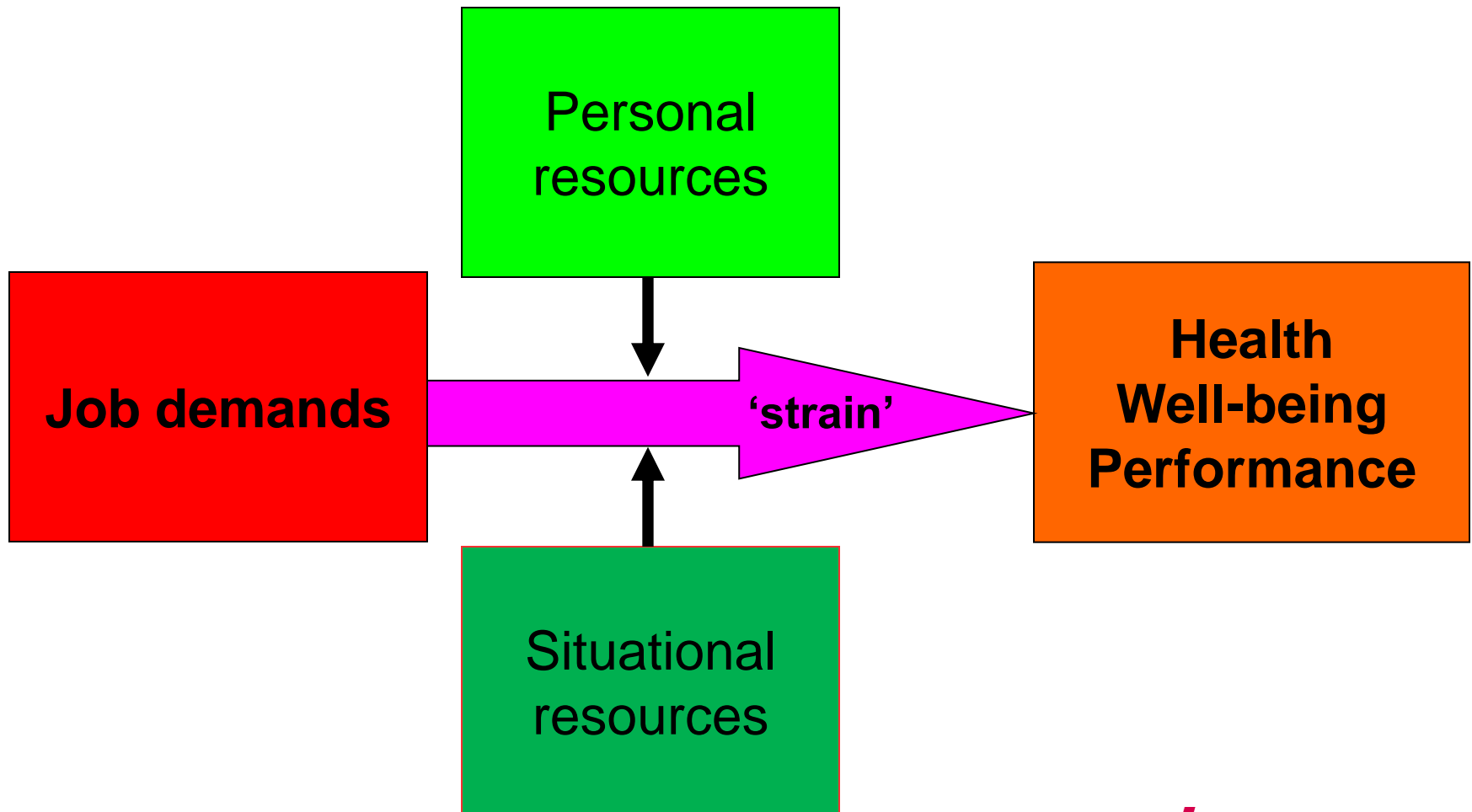


Common job stress framework (Le Blanc, De Jonge, & Schaufeli, 2008)

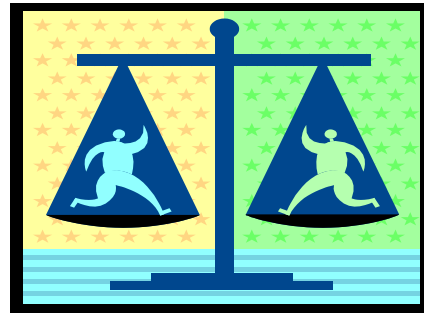


Common job stress framework (Le Blanc, De Jonge, & Schaufeli, 2008)

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Job stress due to imbalance



Job demands



Job control



Skill opportunities



Social support

Investments



Rewards

Effort



Recovery

W-H conflict



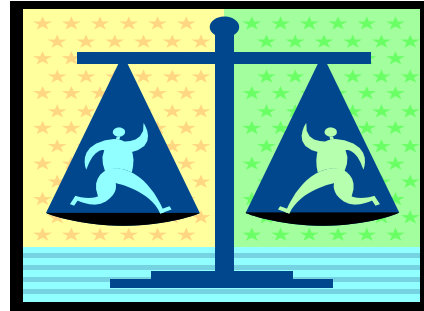
W-H support

Work load



Individual load potential

Job stress due to imbalance



DEMANDS

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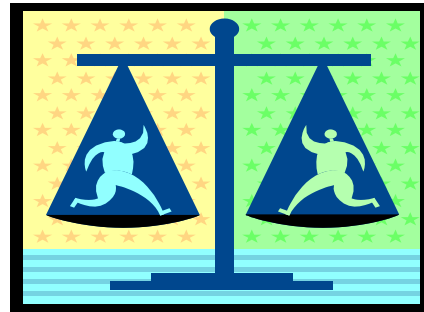
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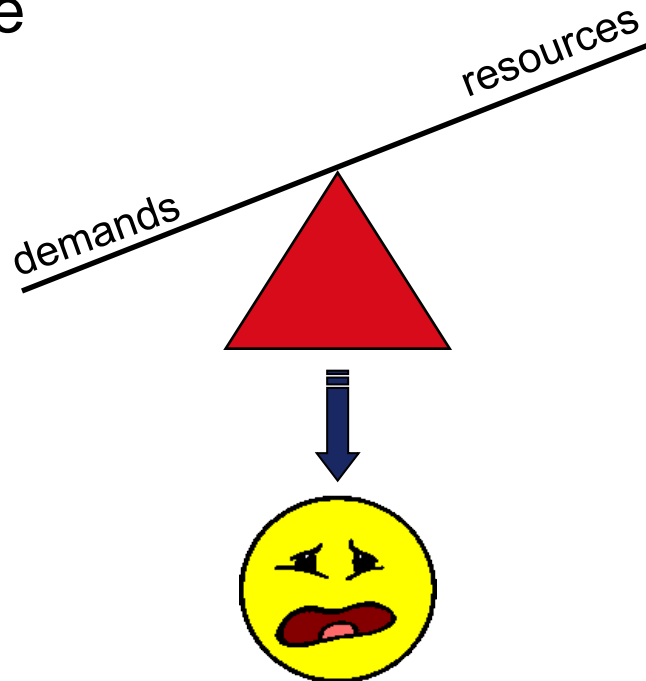
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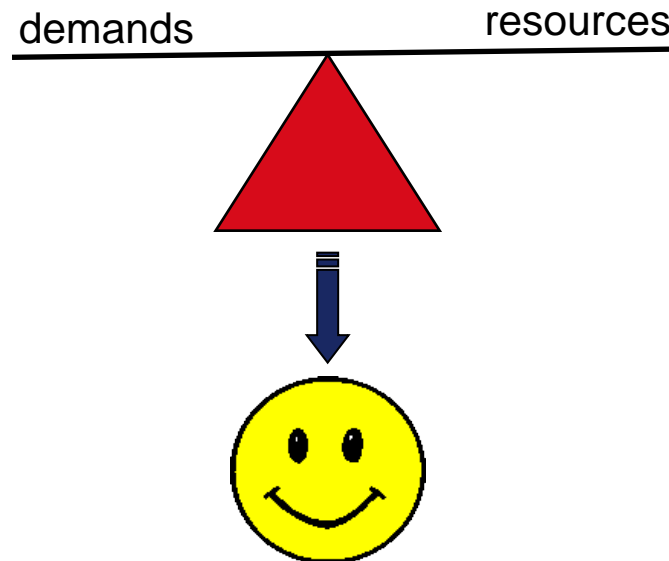
Review of empirical evidence (1)

- ◆ Majority of research shows that high job demands accompanied with low situational resources will cause adverse health, poor well-being and low job performance



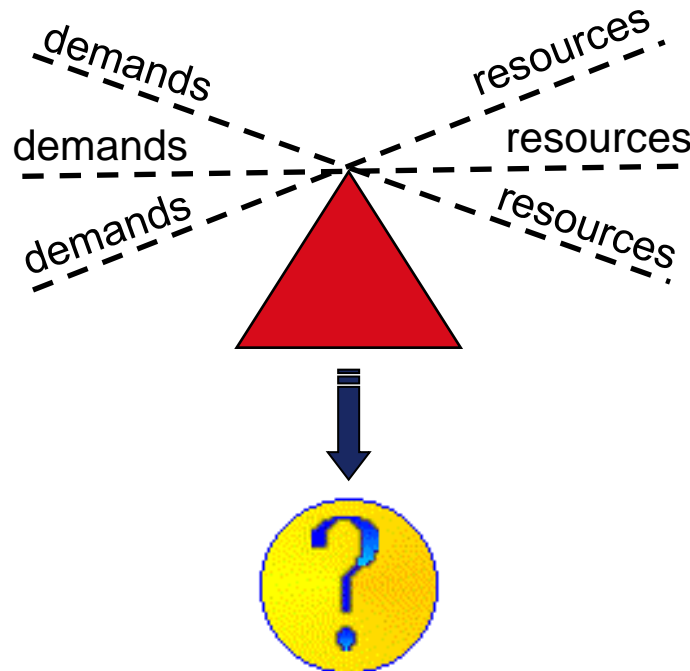
Review of empirical evidence (2)

- ◆ Research also shows that high job demands accompanied with high situational resources will lead to higher work motivation, creativity, active learning behavior, and job performance

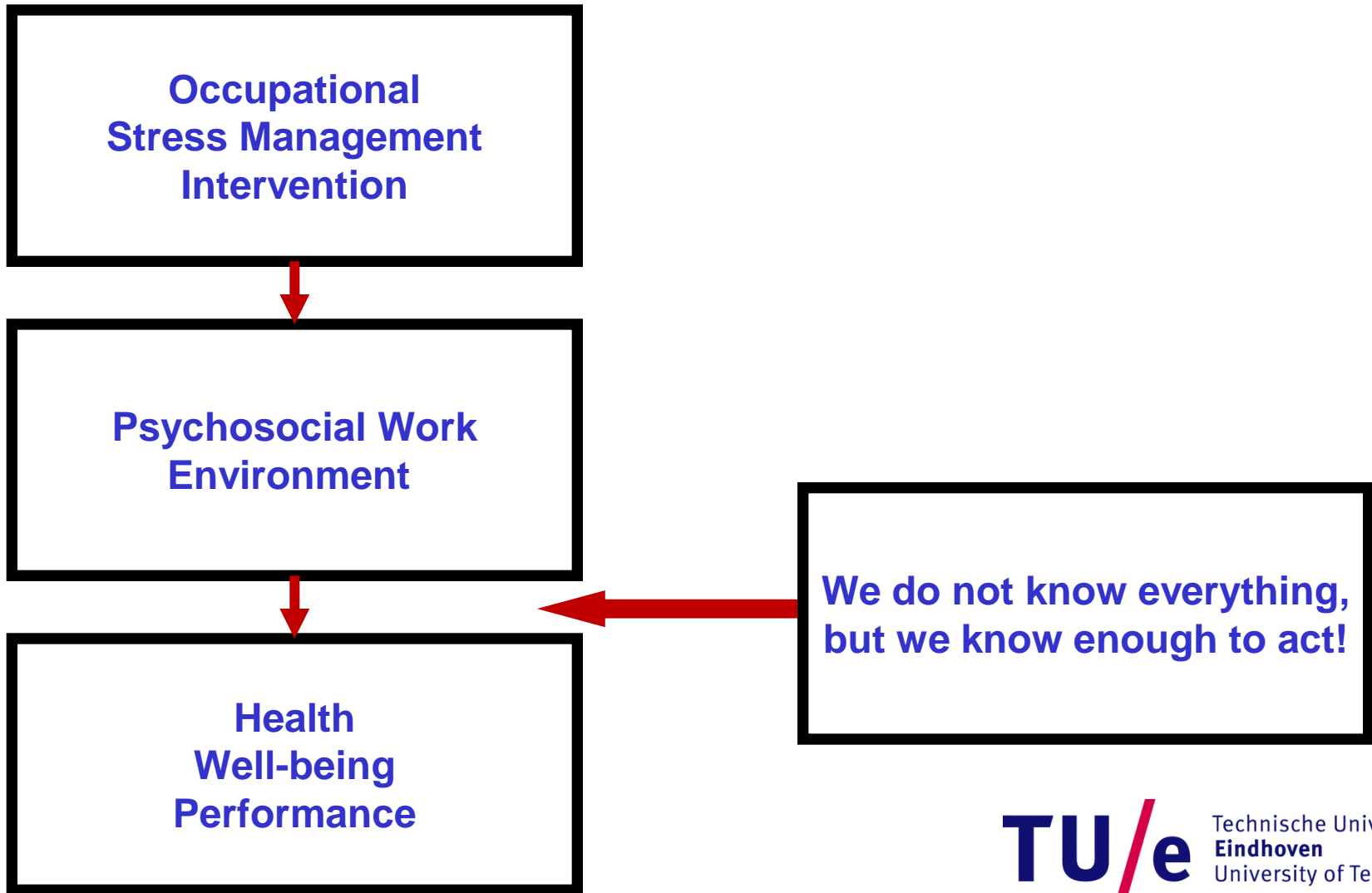


Review of empirical evidence (3)

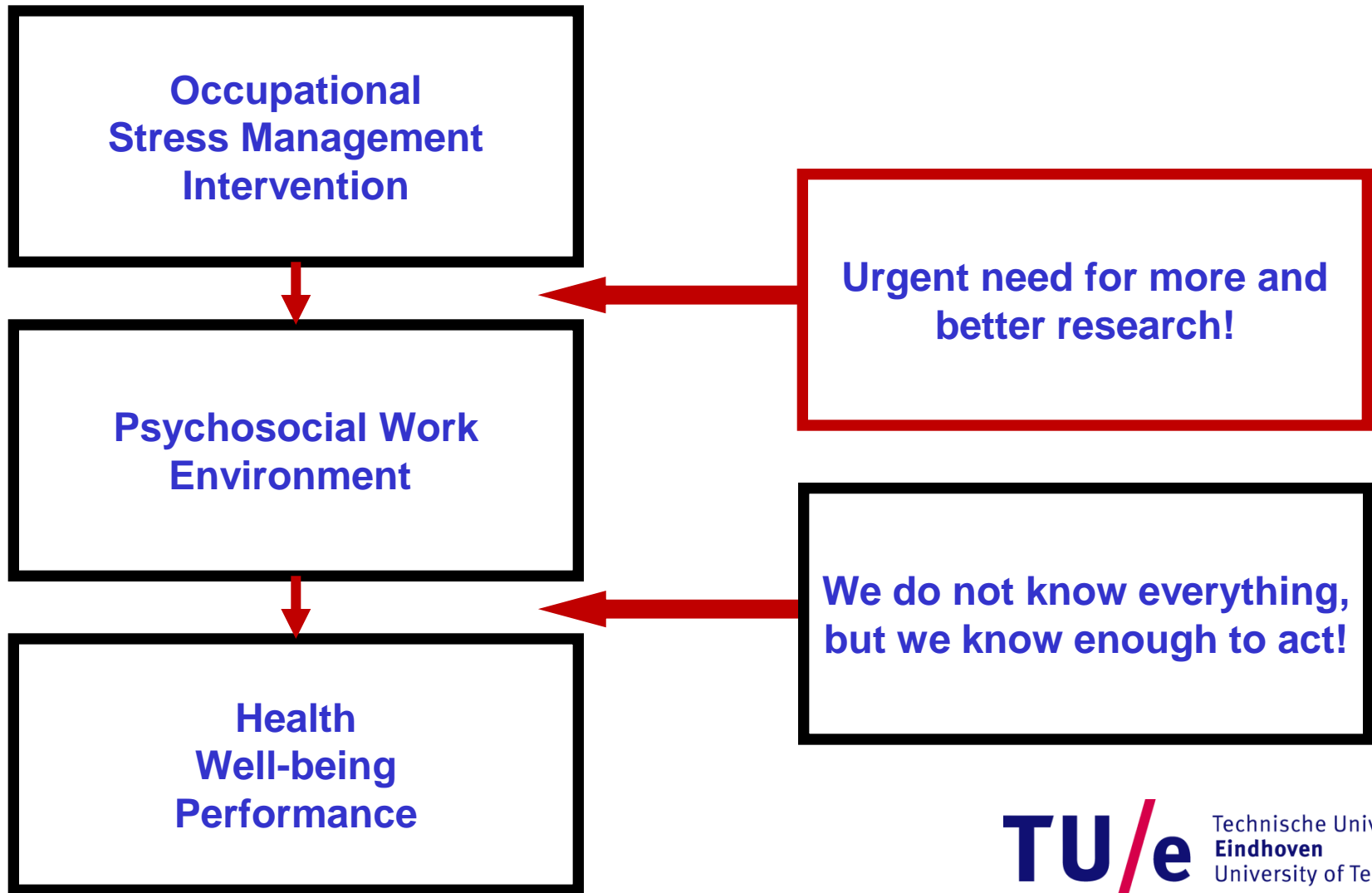
- ◆ Research on the buffering role of personal resources is still in its infancy and, hence, less conclusive



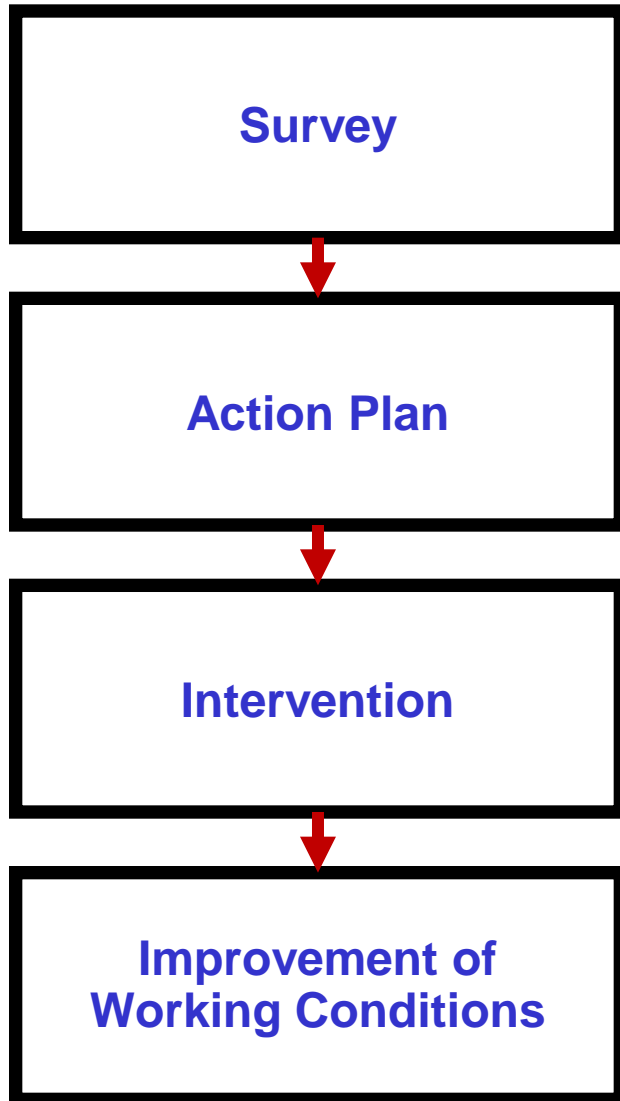
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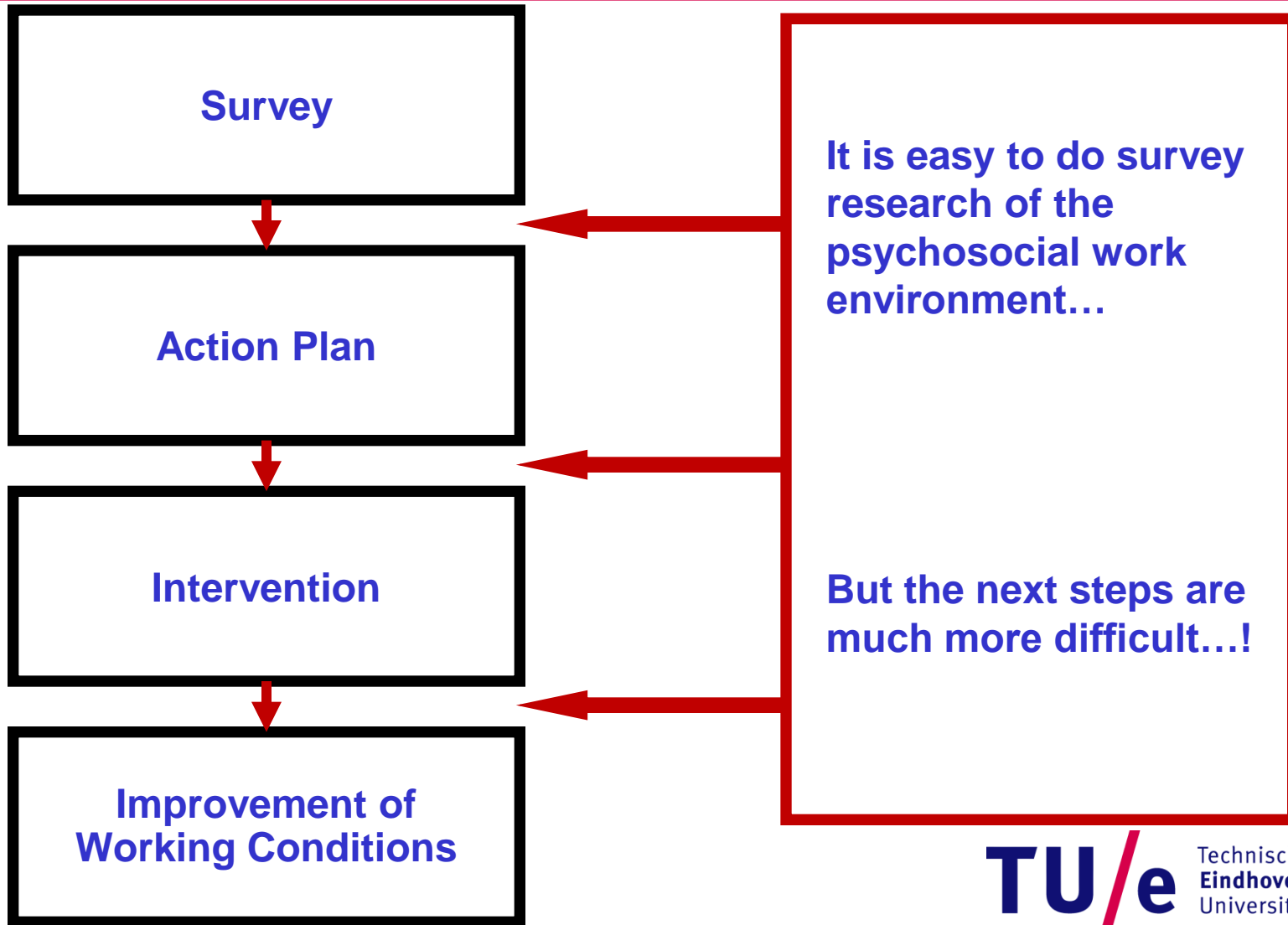
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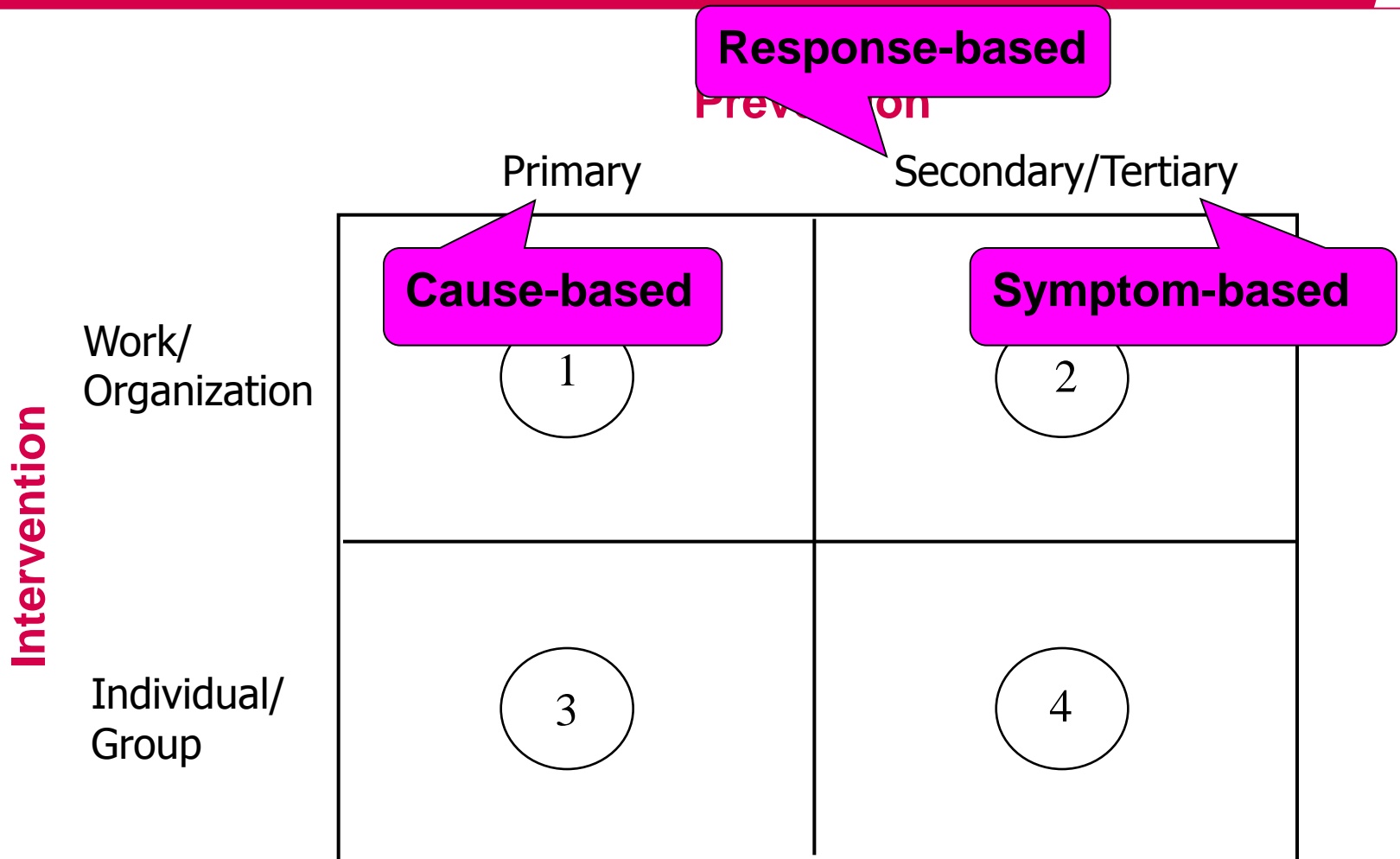
From research to practice...(2)



From research to practice...(2)



General Framework for Reducing and Managing Job Stress



Examples of prevention / intervention

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◆ Primary prevention:

- Work: job (re-)design
- Individual: cognitive training



◆ Secondary prevention:

- Work: flexible work schedules for older employees
- Individual: stress management training

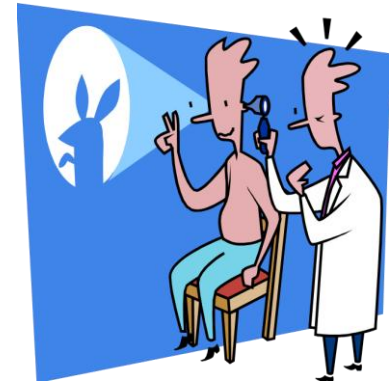
◆ Tertiary prevention:

- Work: outplacement program
- Individual: disability management

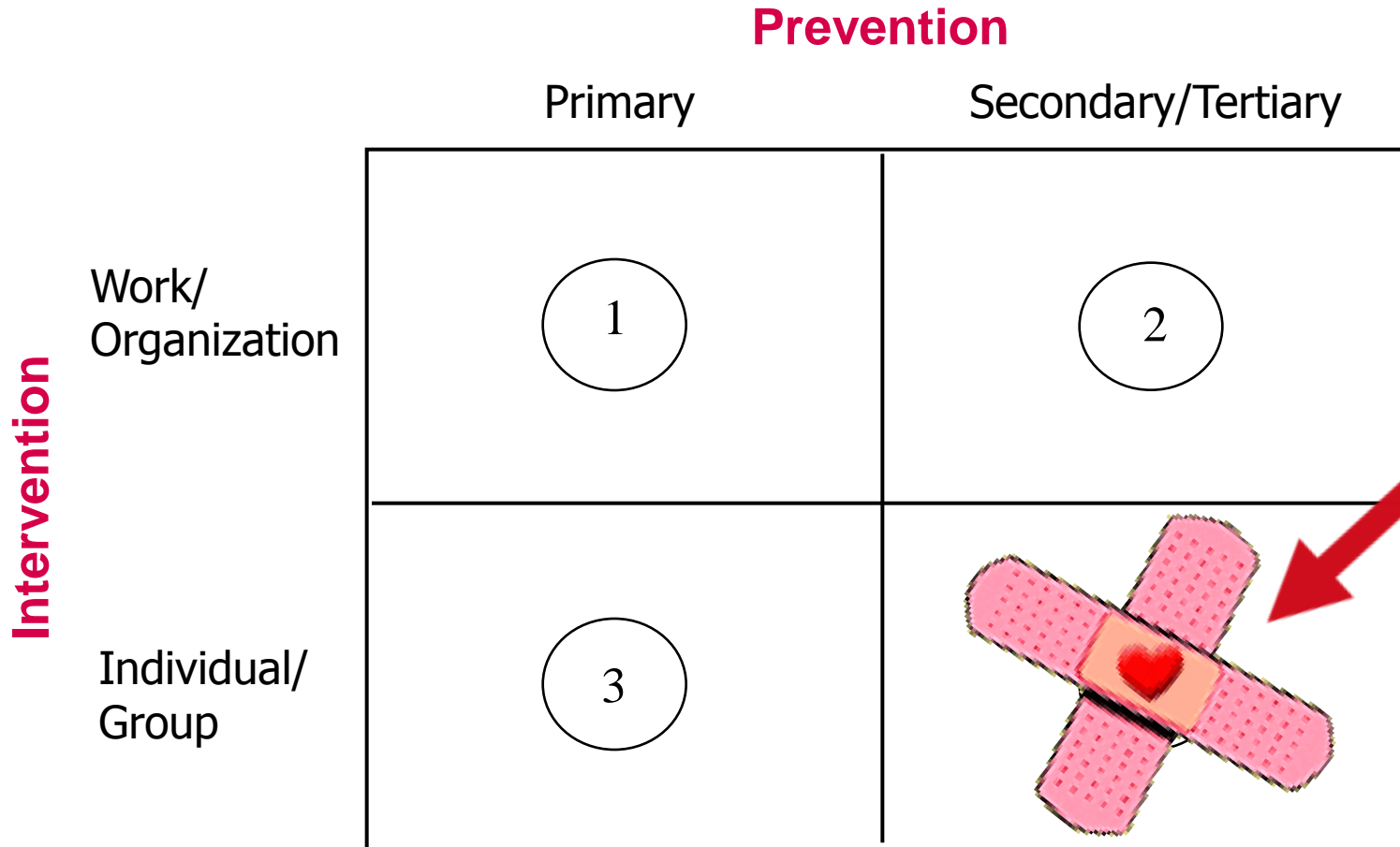


Review of occupational stress management interventions

- ◆ Majority of interventions are individual and reactive

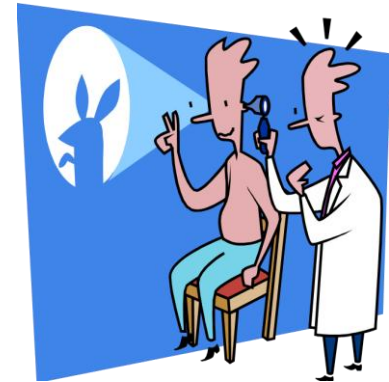


Reducing and Managing Job Stress



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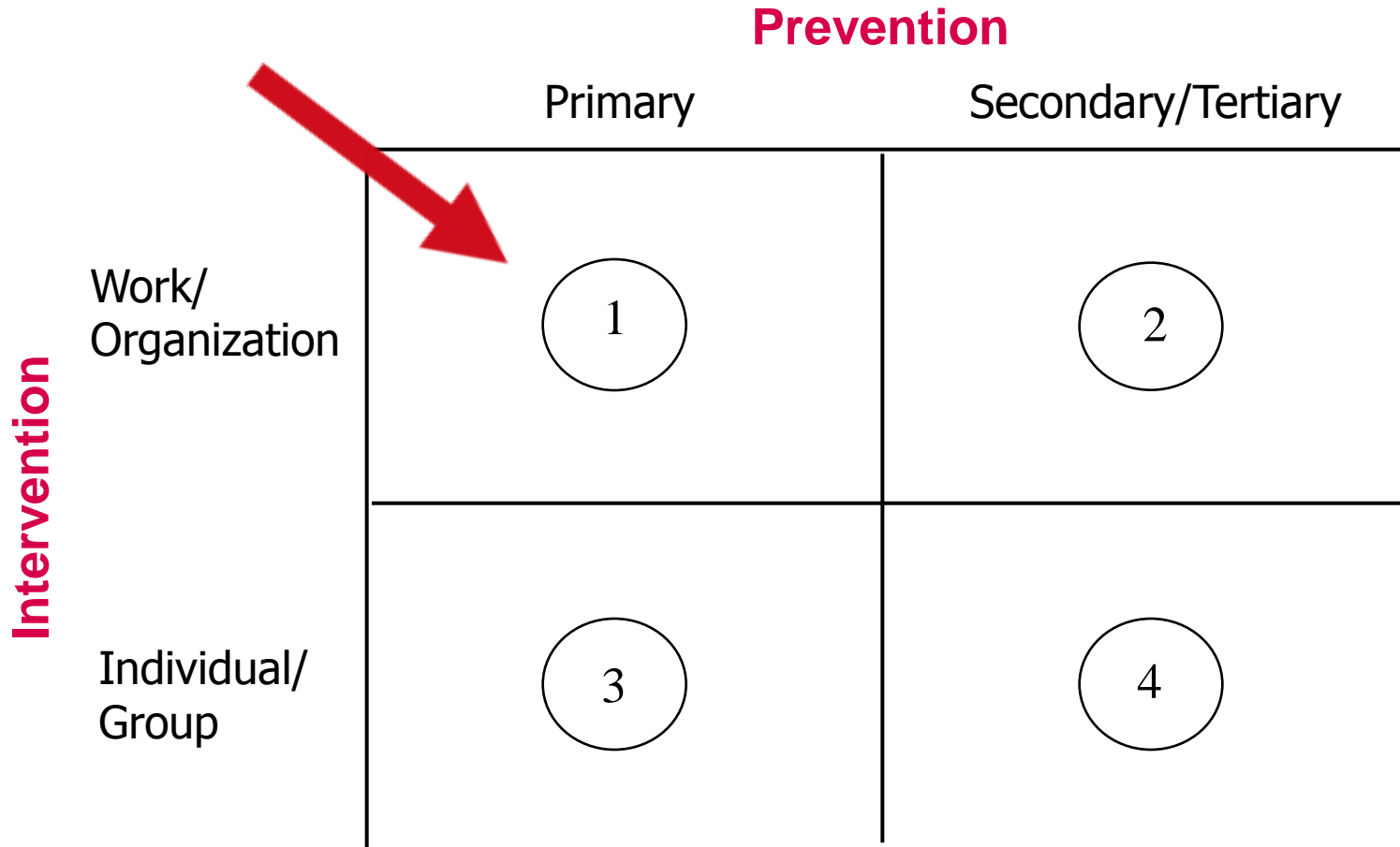


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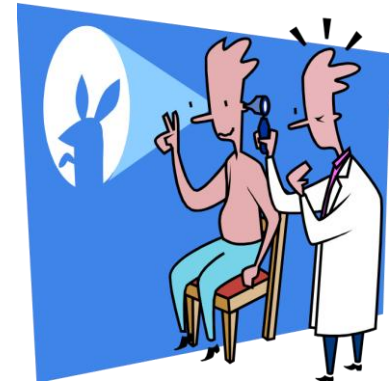


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- ◆ Psychosocial risk factors can best be combated by work-directed approaches based on primary prevention
- ◆ The more rigorous the research design, the more modest the results of interventions



Ten elements of successful intervention studies (1)

- ◆ Use good, 'proven', theories as a solid base for any intervention
- ◆ Use multiple research methods to focus not only on *what works for whom*, but also *why* and *under what circumstances*



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- ◆ Ask other disciplines to participate in intervention projects (multidisciplinary approach)
- ◆ Use interventions that combine work-directed and individual-directed actions



Ten elements of successful intervention studies (2)

- ◆ Interventions should be ideally based on primary prevention (proactive rather than reactive)
- ◆ Use a participative intervention approach
- ◆ Use tailor-made interventions ('intervention-person fit' and 'intervention-environment fit')



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- ◆ Carefully develop an implementation framework:
 - ongoing monitoring of processes
 - SMART goals
 - clear role allocation and responsibilities
 - clear communication plans



Ten elements of successful intervention studies (3)

- ◆ Integrate solutions in normal business practice
- ◆ External pressure (senior management, government, legislation) may act as major stimulants:
 - developing organizational responsibility
 - ownership
 - proactive approach to psychosocial risk factors, job stress, and health/well-being/performance



Conclusions



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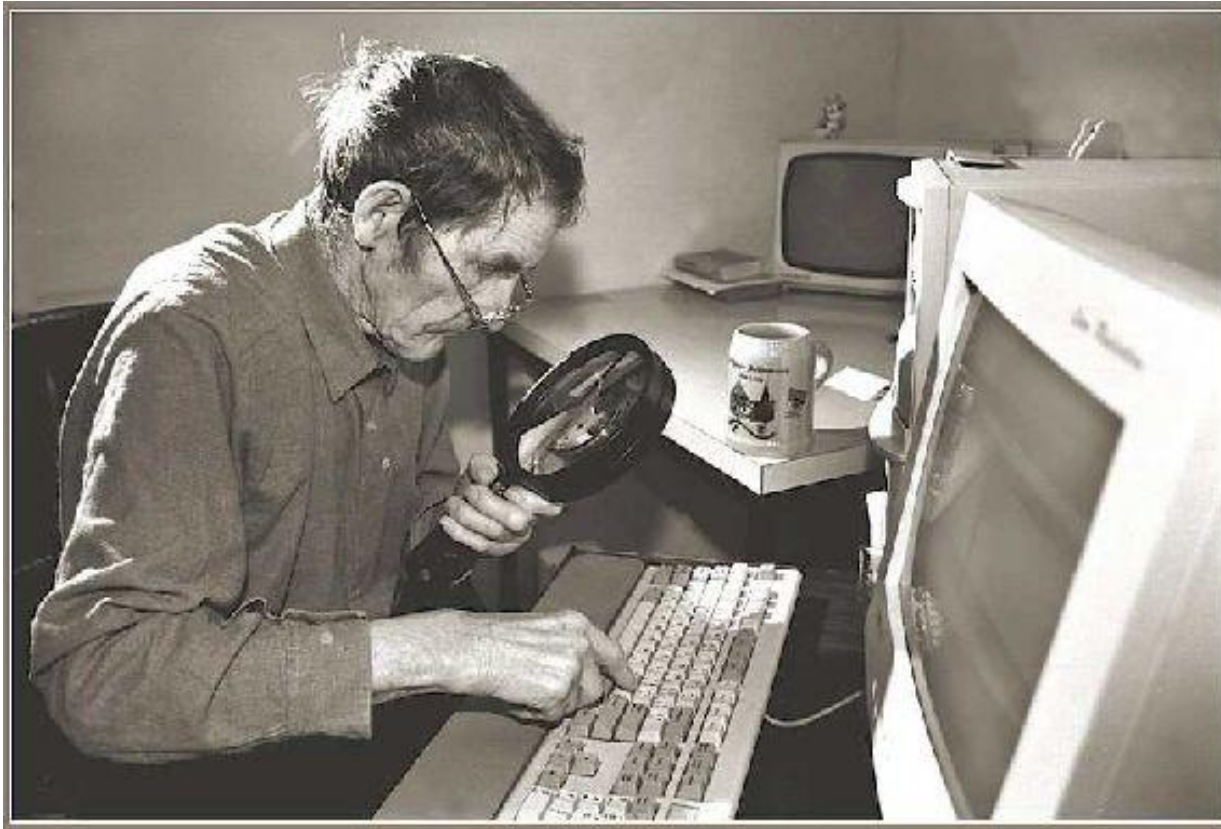


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- ◆ Interventions will benefit from not only focusing on *what* and *for whom*, but also *how*, *why* and *context*
- ◆ Urgent need for increasing labour productivity through social innovation induced by all parties involved

Smart, inclusive and sustainable work...

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION...!

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