

Employment and Disability

Gráinne Collins

National Disability Authority

May 2017



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

- 
- ▶ “Disability is the second biggest cause of people leaving the labour force”

Outline

1. What is disability
2. Scale of the effect of disability on employment
3. Examine the under-analysis of disabilities role in employment
4. Discuss why disability is a hidden driver of employment/unemployment

What is disability?



Definition of disability

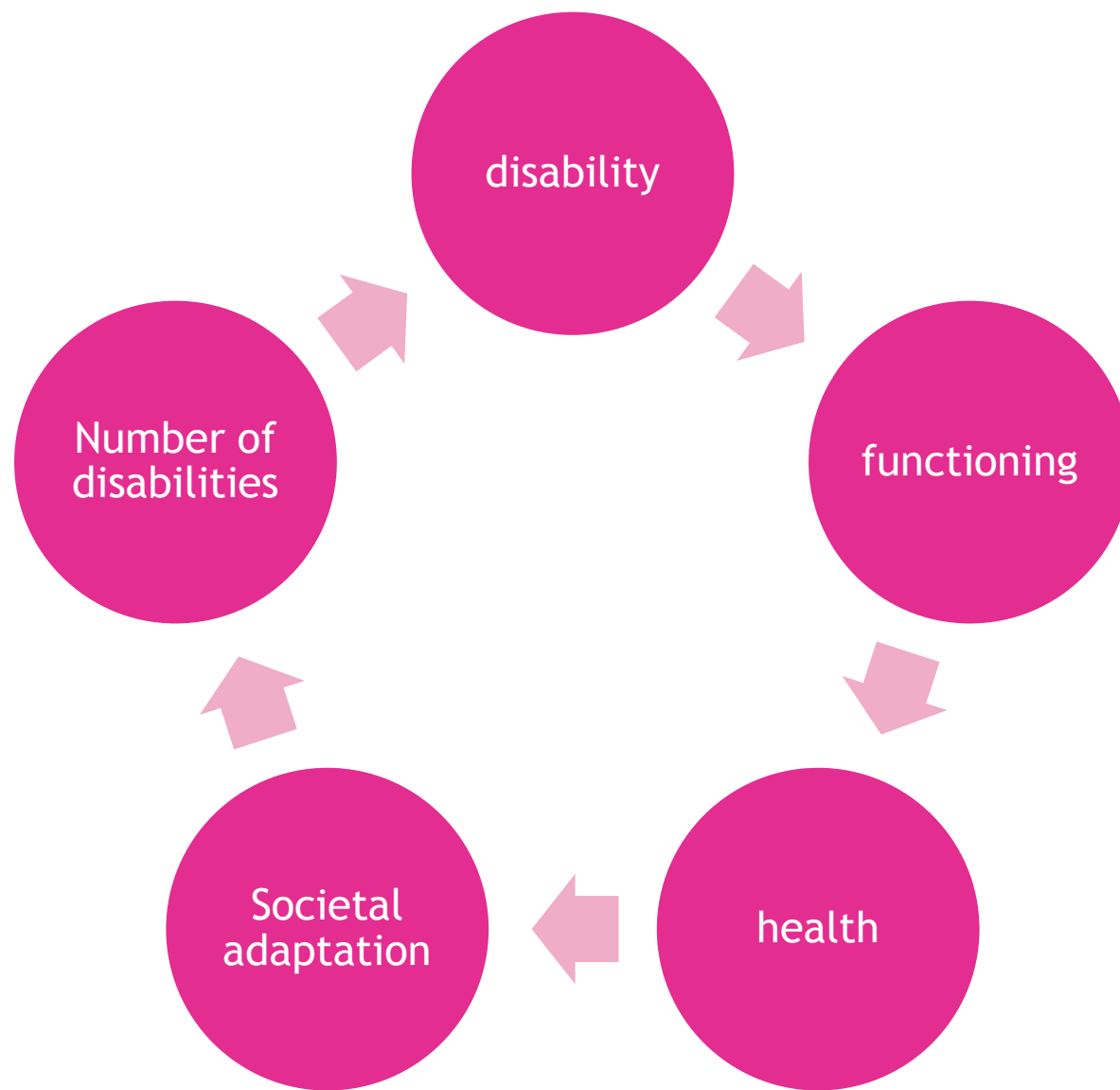
- ▶ Different definitions of disability are used in different contexts
- ▶ There is no definitive list of conditions that constitute a disability.
- ▶ There can also be a wide range of difference between how individuals with a particular condition are affected, ranging from mild to severe difficulties.
- ▶ A person's environment, which includes the supports they have and the physical or social barriers they face, influences the scale of the challenges they face in everyday life (social model of disability)
- ▶ The [Disability Act 2005](#) set out the following definition:
“disability”, in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment

Definition of disability

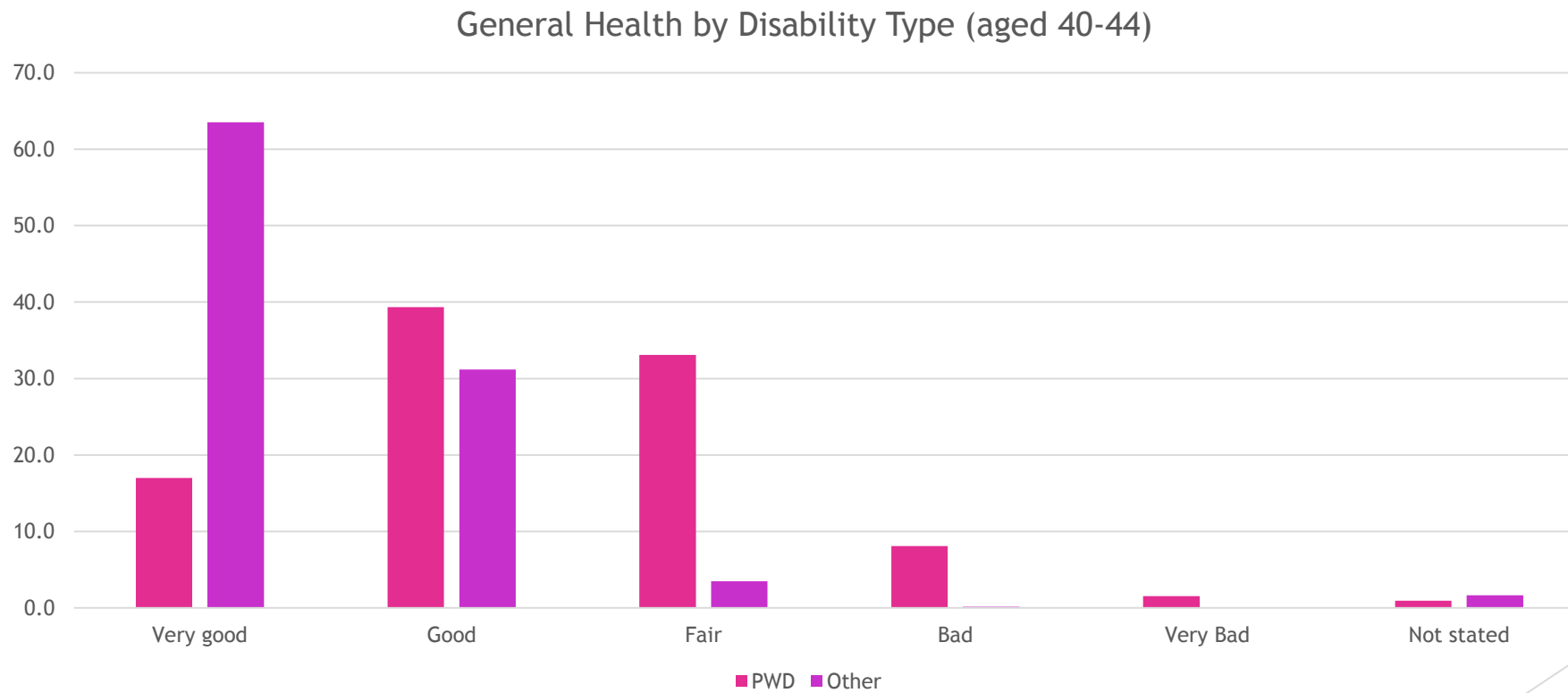
- ▶ The **Equality Acts**, which outlaw discrimination on grounds of disability, use a wider definition, and cover past as well as current disability:
"Disability means:
 - (a) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body;
 - (b) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness;
 - (c) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body;
 - (d) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction; or
 - (e) a condition, disease or illness which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour."

Definition of disability

- ▶ **Census 2011**, and other official surveys, used the following definition of disability:
A person with one or more of the following long-lasting conditions or difficulties:
 - Blindness or a severe vision impairment
 - Deafness or a severe hearing impairment
 - An intellectual disability
 - A difficulty with learning, remembering or concentrating
 - A difficulty with basic physical activities
 - A psychological or emotional condition
 - A difficulty with pain, breathing, or any other chronic illness or condition
- ▶ Usually a follow up question on severity or capacity to do certain things

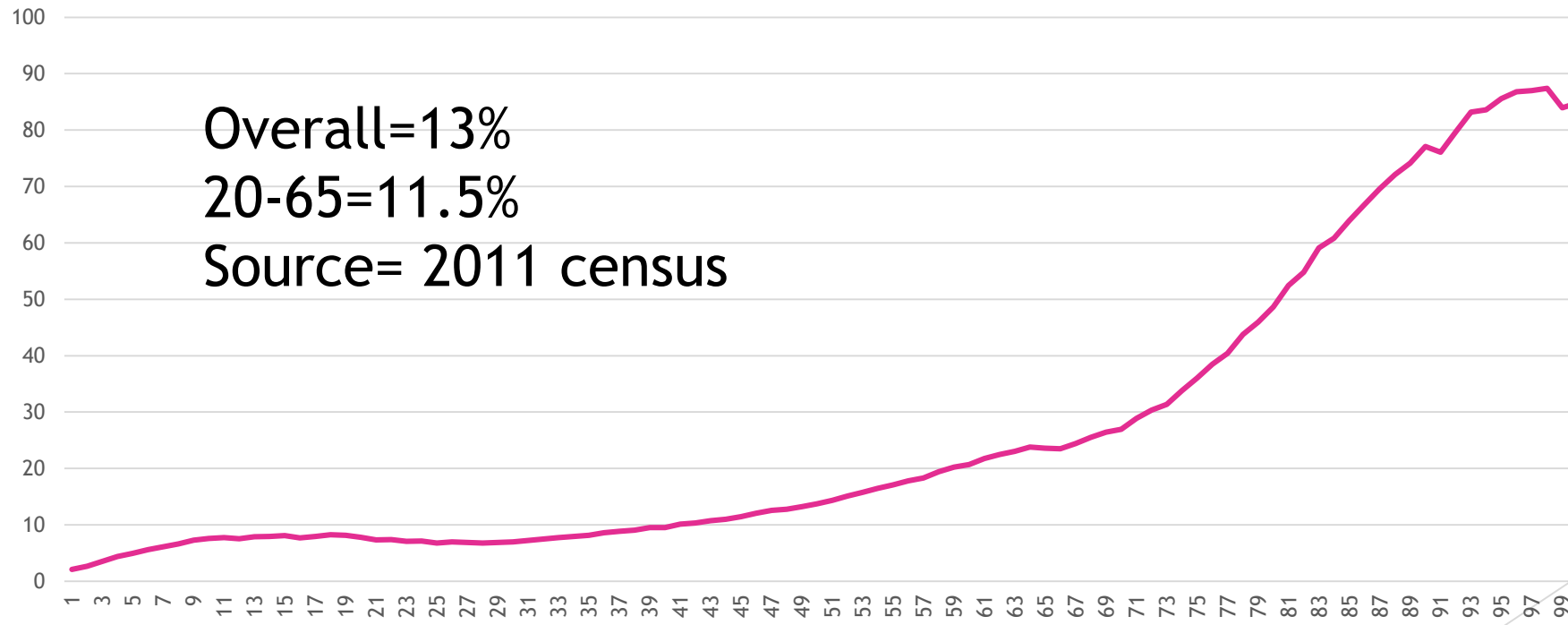


Health vs Disability

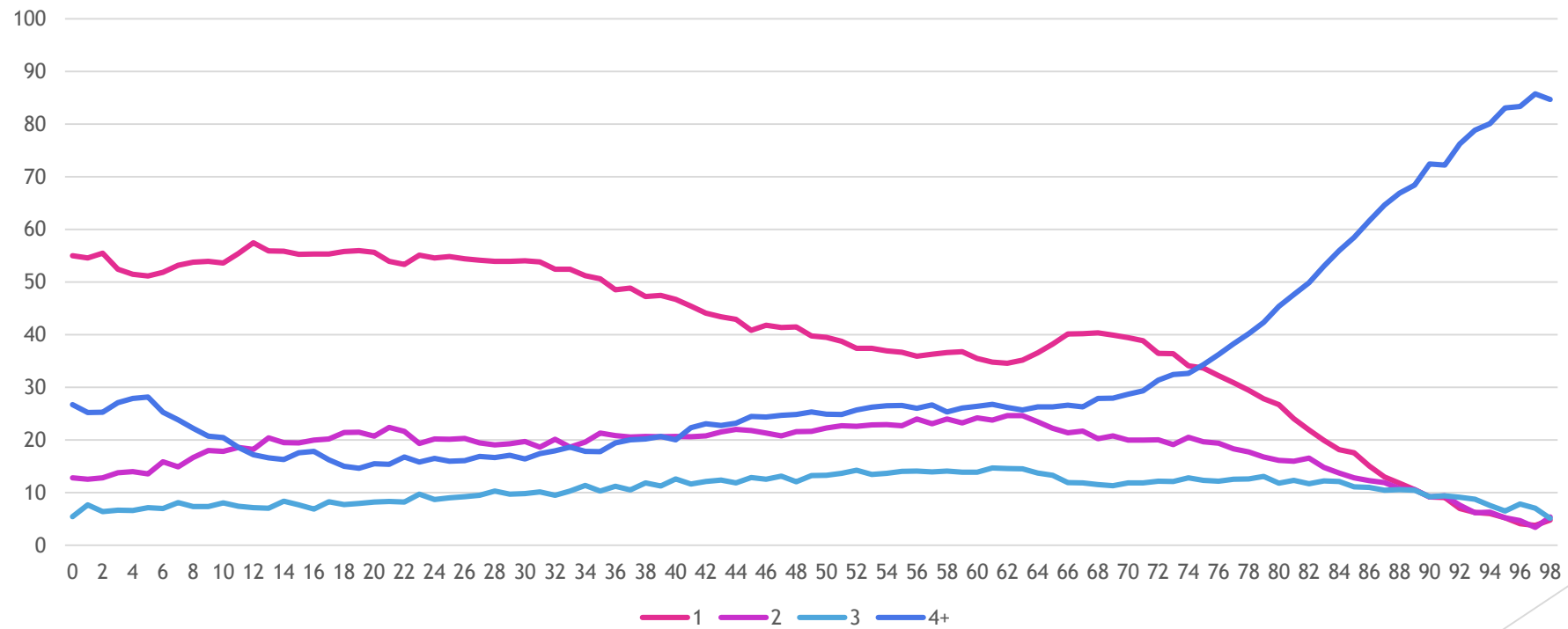


Scale of disability

% disabled by year of age

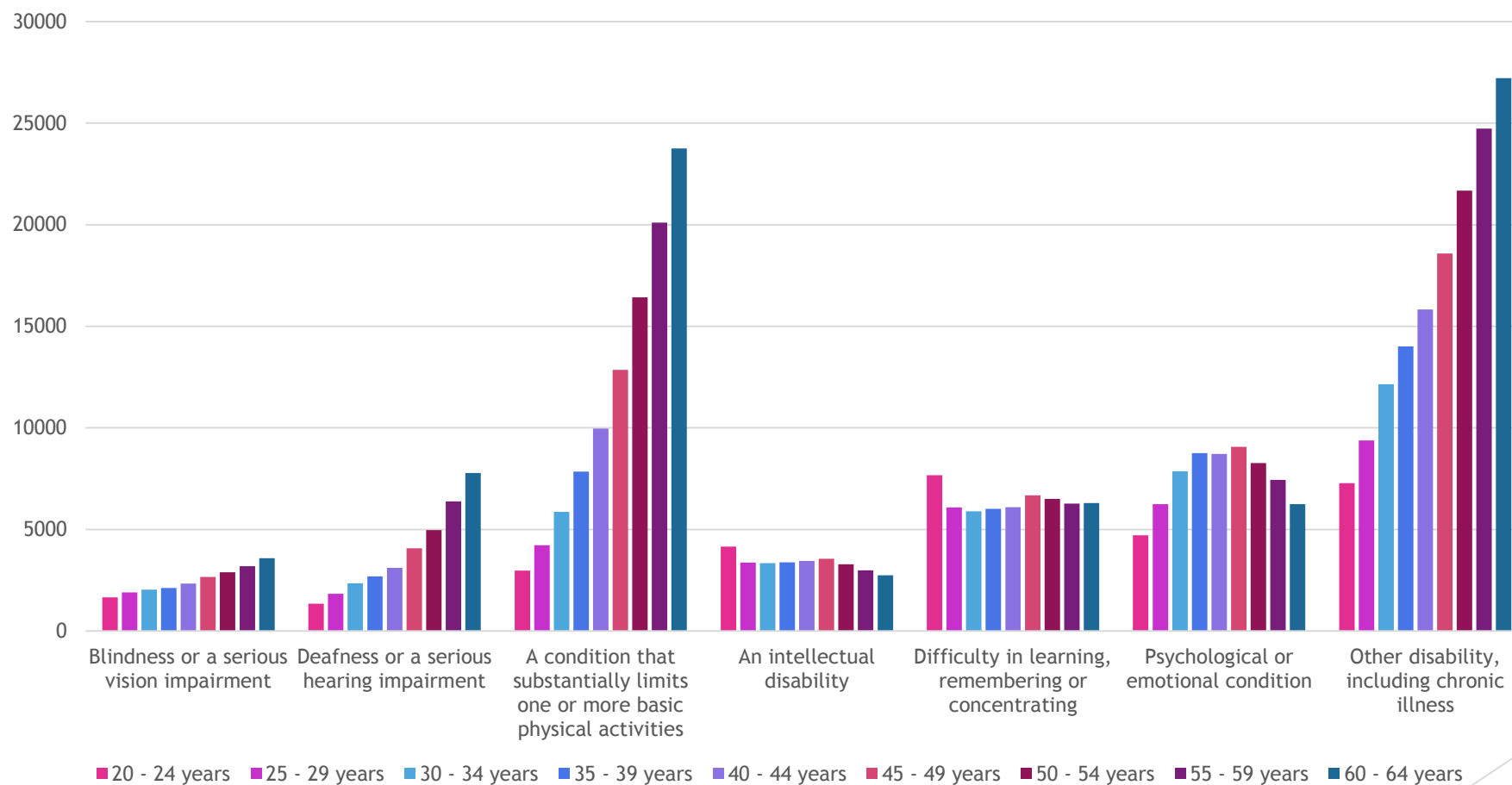


Number of disability by age - pwd only

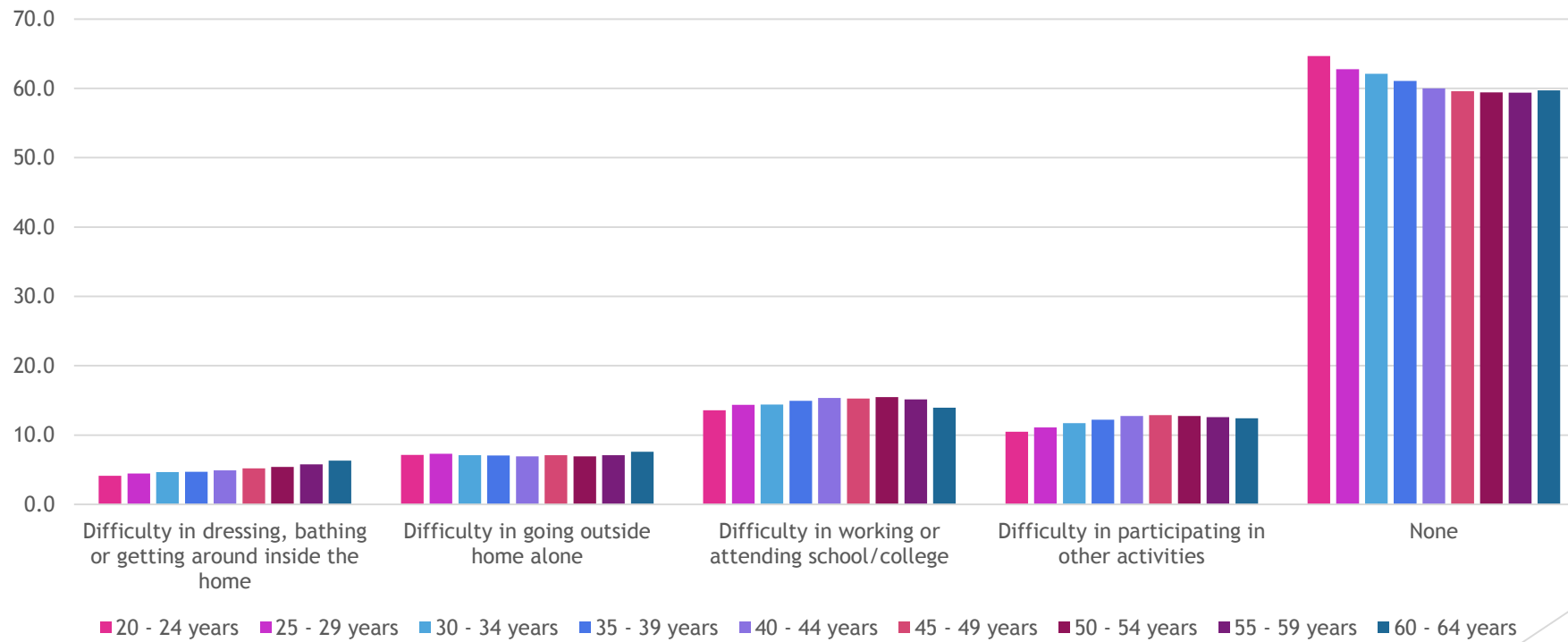


Type of disability

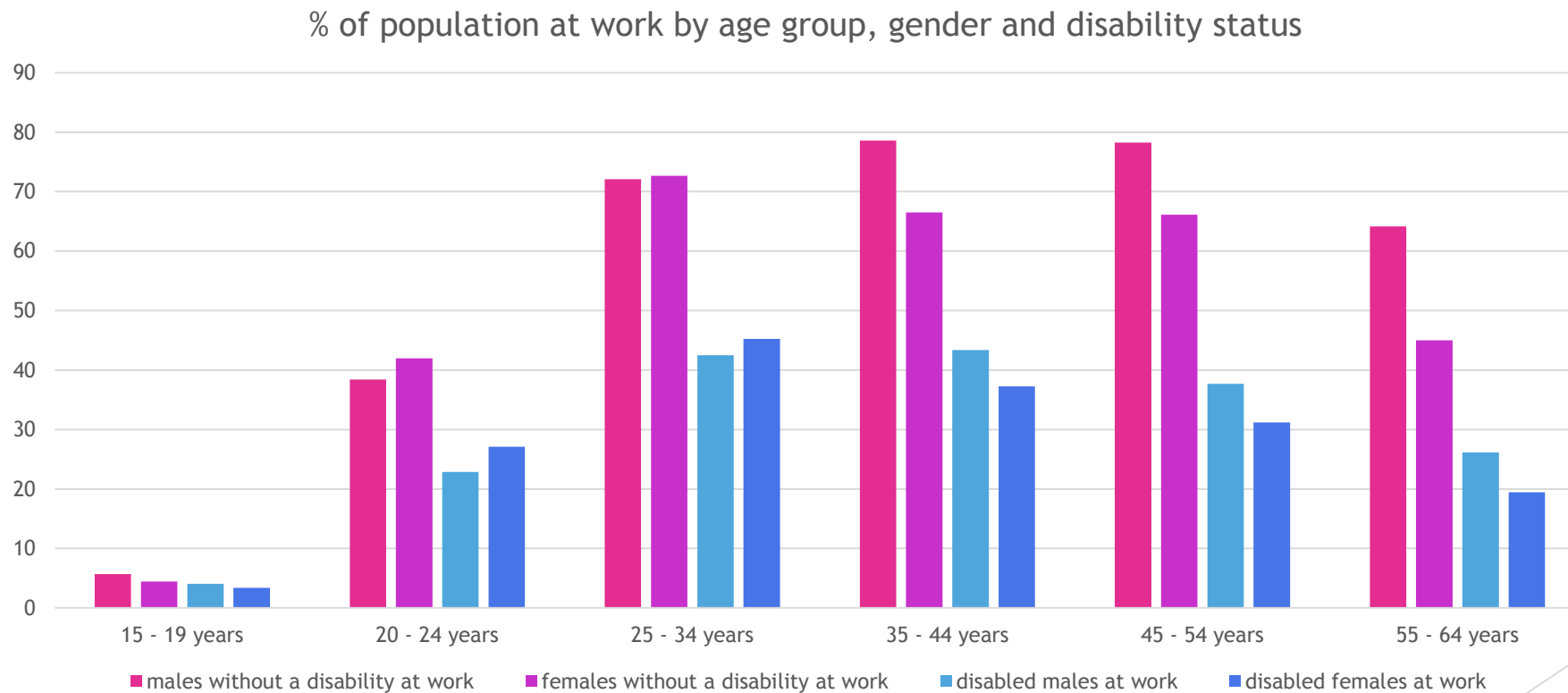
Type of disability by age group (20-64 only)



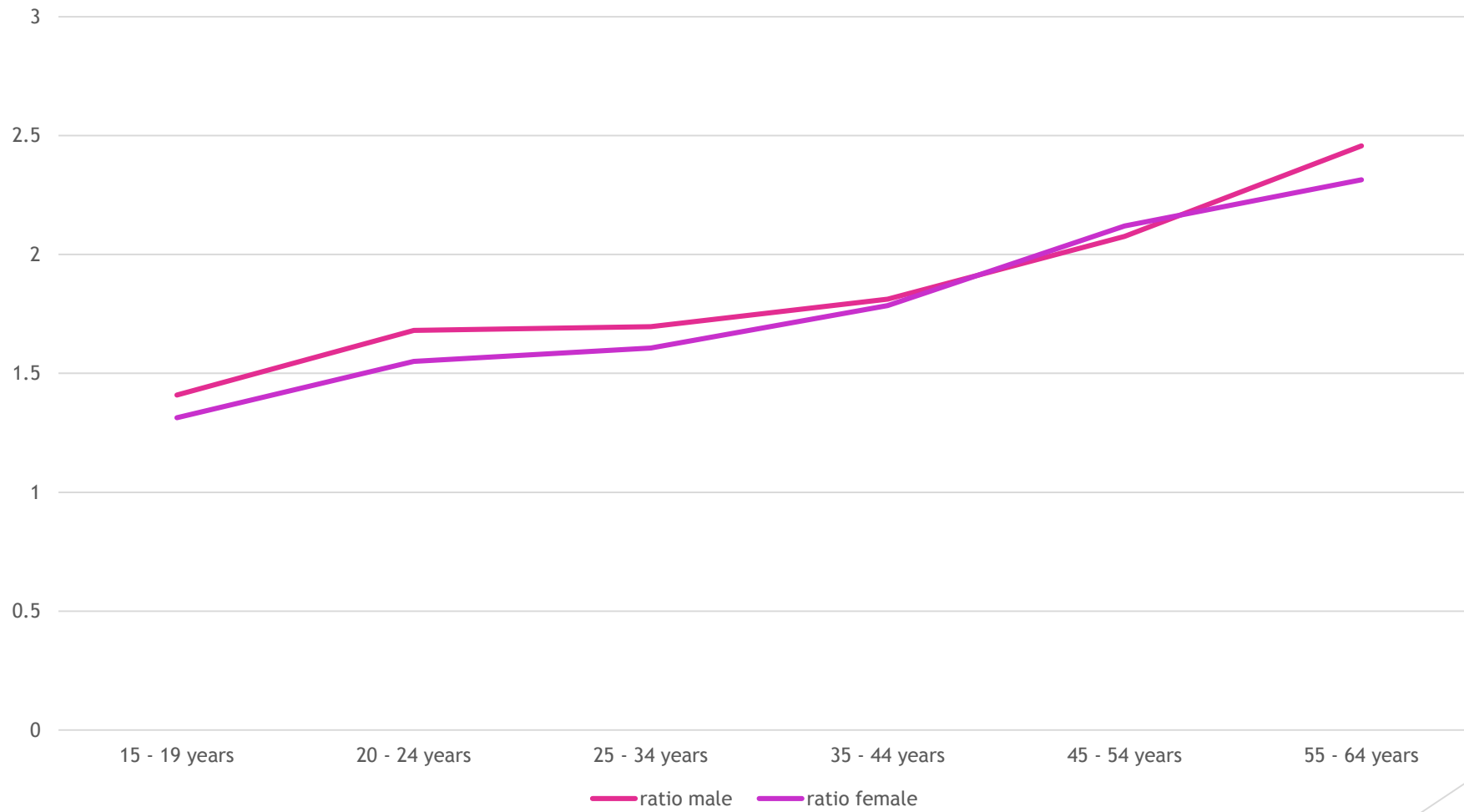
Difficulties among people with disabilities



Scale of the effect of disability on employment



Abled-bodied to disabled employment rates by age



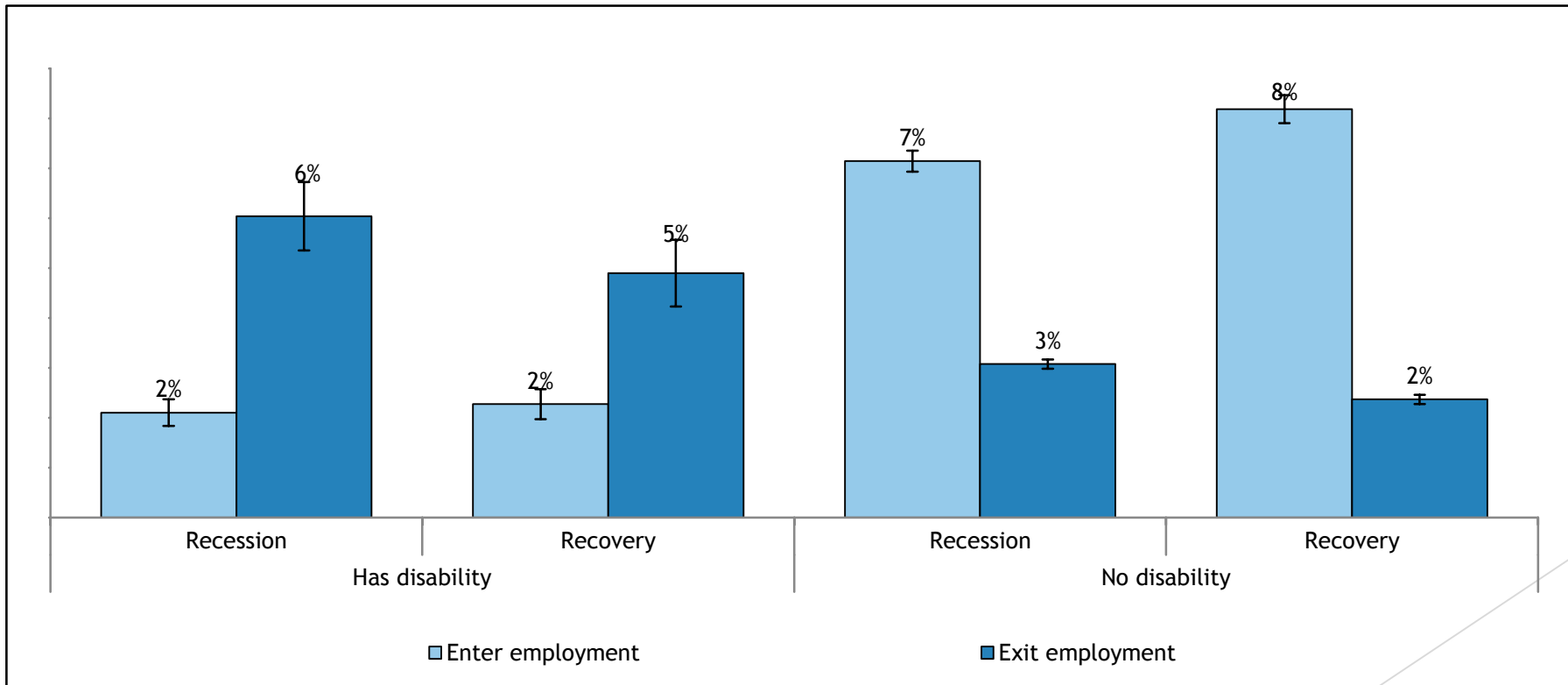
All persons aged 15 years and over (%) by Year, Self perceived health status and ILO Economic Status

	All ILO economic status	In employment	Unemployed	Not economically active
2015				
Very Good	41	50	32	30
Good	42	42	52	40
Fair	14	7	15	23
Bad/Very Bad	3	1	2	7

Transitions

- ▶ ESRI looked at movements in and out of employment by disability (Watson et al, 2017)
- ▶ Over 2013 to 2015 and looking at those NOT in employment in the first quarter, by next quarter
 - ▶ 2% of people with a disability entered employment
 - ▶ 8% of people without a disability entered employment
- ▶ In employment in first quarter and not in second quarter
 - ▶ 5% of people with a disability exited employment
 - ▶ 2% of people without a disability exited employment
- ▶ Big recessionary effects for people without a disability - no difference for people with a disability

Work transitions among people with and without a disability, age 20-59, as a percentage of those who could have made the transition (Watson et al 2017)



Transitions

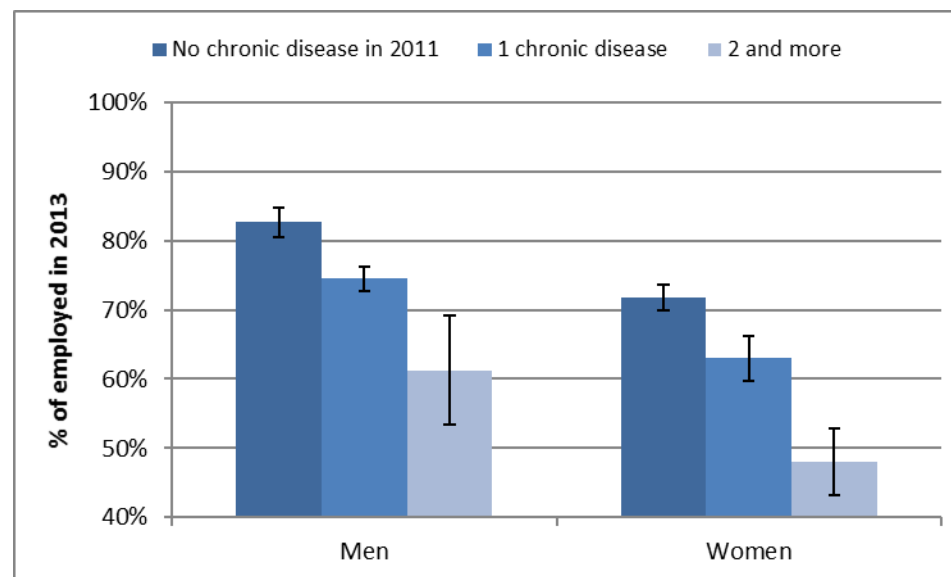
- ▶ Jones Rice and Roberts (2009) “Sick of work or too sick to work? Evidence on self-reported health shocks and early retirement from the BHPS”
- ▶ -They found evidence that health shocks are a determinant of retirement age (holds for both men and women)
- ▶ While the size of the health effect varies according to how they measured health, the relative effect is large compared to the other variables, and in particular when compared to the effects of private pensions.
- ▶ But high hazard ratio and relatively low incidence of new health limitations means a modest number of excess early retirements.
- ▶ They do not find that the health status of a partner affects the hazard of early retirement for both men and women.

Transitions

- ▶ García-Gómez (2011) looking at 9 European countries using the European Community Household Panel.
 - ▶ results suggest that there is a significant causal effect from health on the probability of employment:
 - ▶ individuals who incur a health shock are significantly more likely to leave employment and transit into disability. The estimates differ across countries, with the largest employment effects being found in The Netherlands, Denmark, Spain and Ireland, and the smallest in France and Italy. Differences in social security arrangements help to explain these cross-country differences.

Cumulative disadvantages

- ▶ More disabilities/diseases more problems:
 - ▶ The odds of entering employment are reduced by about 30 per cent for each additional difficulty the person experiences, such as difficulty with self care, getting about or participation in education, work or other activities.
- ▶ However, simply having a disability - even if the person did not report any difficulty - reduced the odds of moving into work by 30 per cent. The chances of entering employment are particularly low for those with intellectual disability: even controlling for level of difficulty, the odds are only about one third those of someone without a disability.



Source: OECD (2016)

Work Relations Commission 2016: Grounds under the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011

Total	1,113 grounds from 691 complaints
Gender	353
Disability	204
Race	189
Age	161
Family Status	114
Civil Status	52
Sexual Orientation	24
Religion	9
Membership of the Traveller Community	7

Court examples

- ▶ “Council ordered to pay €40,000 to disabled former employee: Woman banned from eating with colleagues and forcibly retired on medical grounds” Irish Times Jan 4, 2017
- ▶ Marie Daly -v- Nano Nagle School and Arravasc Limited v Gerard Cahill [2016]
- ▶ €65,000 Awarded to an Employee with Vertigo (2009)
- ▶ Tom Moloney Limited trading as Squire Maguires v Mr Thomas Keogh [2016] (“100% sane”)

Other examples

- ▶ Woman with MS who uses crutches - told to stay behind during fire drills as they'd never make the two minute target with her involved
- ▶ Wheelchair user with PA in local authority, no evacuation lifts - PA refused to stay behind with wheelchair user during an evacuation 'not paid enough to put my life at risk'
- ▶ Gov case worker who is hard of hearing who cannot use the telephone. While she could do the majority of her work via text and e-mail there were occasions when she needed to make a phone call. Colleagues refused to help her and the attitude was very much 'I am paid to do my job and I am not going to help anyone else'.
- ▶ Deaf cleaner in commercial state agency - lost hearing aid and can't afford €3k to €4k for replacement unless becomes unemployed and gets medical card
- ▶ Person with disability not performing adequately - performance issues not linked with disability, but management concerned about exposure to equality claims therefore not really tackling issue of underperformance
- ▶ Woman handed a form in the Rotunda to claim carers benefits

Under-analysis of disabilities role in employment

► Employment AND...

	Google scholar citations	Sage Journals	SSRN
Gender OR Sex	2,710,000	182,068	1,805
Ethnicity OR Race	2,370,000	146,699	679
Disability	1,510,000	71,488	632
Sexuality	463,000	60,412	46
Homosexuality	86,900	10,322	18
Tattoos	20,200	1,989	4
Health	2,770,000	290,349	2232

Why has disability been so underexplored?

- ▶ Disability has direct effect (your own disability) and indirect effects (disability of a relative forcing you out of workforce)
- ▶ Took women to enter the academic labour force before gender became an issue - so because so few pwd make it in to academia there is an underexamination,
- ▶ Narrative of charity
- ▶ Term disability covers a multitude so often the image of disability isn't actually what is happening in the workforce
- ▶ Sometimes caught in other 'catch-all' terms - like 'caring responsibilities' or 'health'
- ▶ Low expectations start early and become self-fulfilling
- ▶ ??Health less political??

So... Is

- ▶ “Disability is the second biggest cause of people leaving the labour force”?
- ▶YES!