

# The Impact of Work Restraint and Interference (WRI) on Employee Health

Preliminary findings from large  
corporation survey

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# Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- 1 in 4 women experiences DV during her lifetime
- DV health-related costs exceed \$5.8 billion per year--nearly \$4.1 billion for direct medical and mental health care services, and \$1.8 billion for the indirect costs of lost productivity or wages.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States, April 2003

# IPV and Employment

- Stable employment allows victims to leave dangerous relationships
- Work performance may be negatively impacted when victims are afraid, overly stressed or physically injured
- Court hearings or medical appointments may result in work absences

Swanberg et al., 2005

# Work restraint and interference (WRI)

- Number of studies document abusers' WRI tactics (Riger, et al, 2001; Swanberg, et al, 2005; Wetterstein, et al, 2004)
- Inferred motives for WRI include desire to decrease victims' financial independence, co-worker support, and work related self-esteem
- Work interference tactics include behaviors focused on preventing victims from being at work when abusers inflicted visible injuries, failed to provide child care, or even hid clothing or car keys
- Work restraint tactics undermine work performance often through stalking behaviors, such as frequent phone calls or texts or showing up on the job site unannounced

# Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between employee WRI and IPV?
2. Does WRI impact employee health?

# Method

- Web-based survey on Qualtrics
- Invitations/reminders were sent to all employees of a large corporation weekly from 9/25 to 10/15/13
- 60 Questions--health, social support, domestic violence attitudes and experiences, and perceptions of workplace supportiveness around IPV
- Surveys responses were anonymous
- IRB approved

# Measures

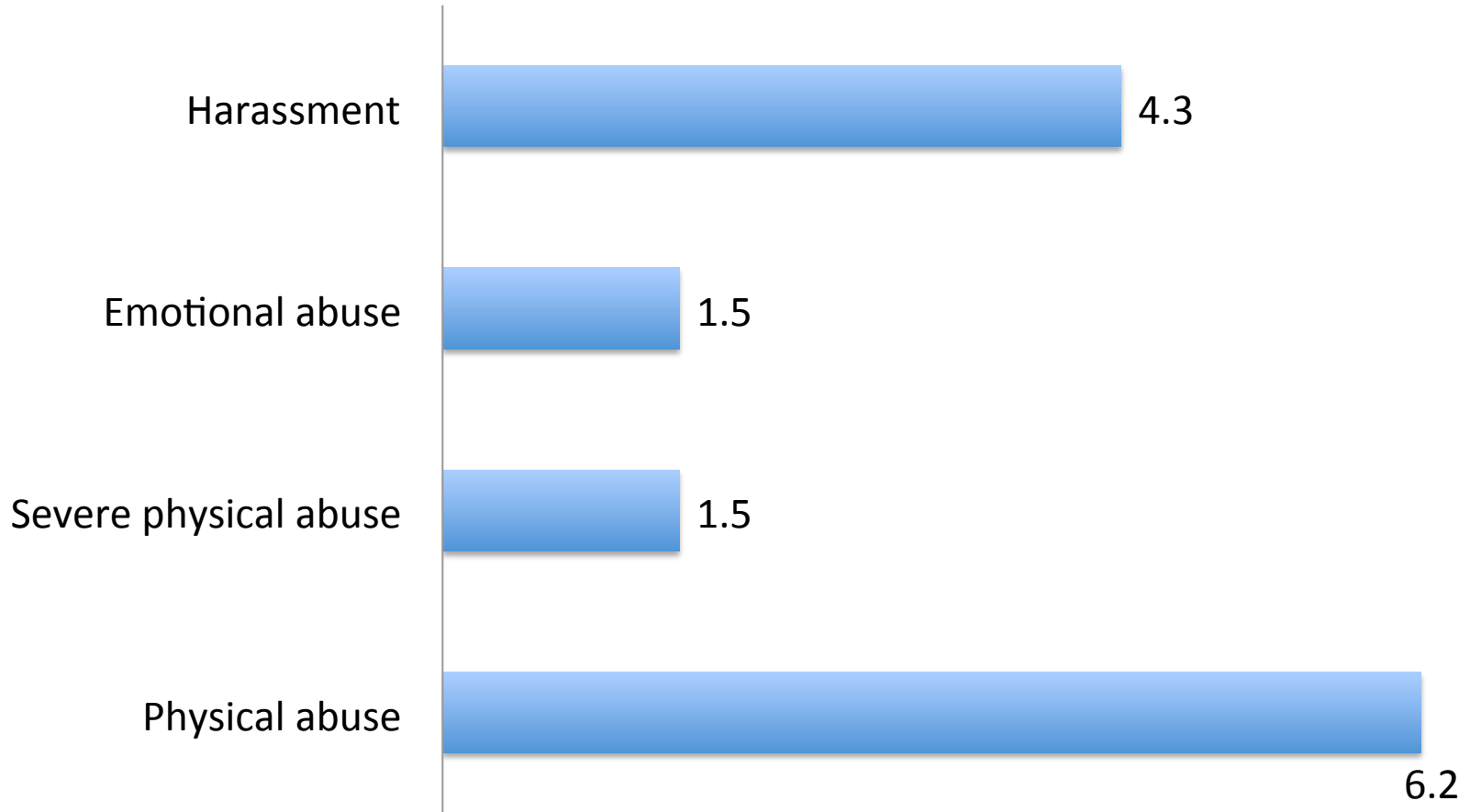
- Health—Health Related quality of life (8 items/ CDC, 2000)
- WRI--The Work Abuse Scale (12 items/ Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000)
- Current IPV—Composite Abuse Scale (30 items/ Hegarty, Bush, & Sheehan, 2013)
  - Subscales—Severe Abuse, Physical, Emotional, Harassment
- IPV during work tenure—1 item
  - *Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior used by one partner to control the other. Domestic violence can include physical, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats. Have you experienced domestic violence while employed working at this organization?*

# Sample Characteristics

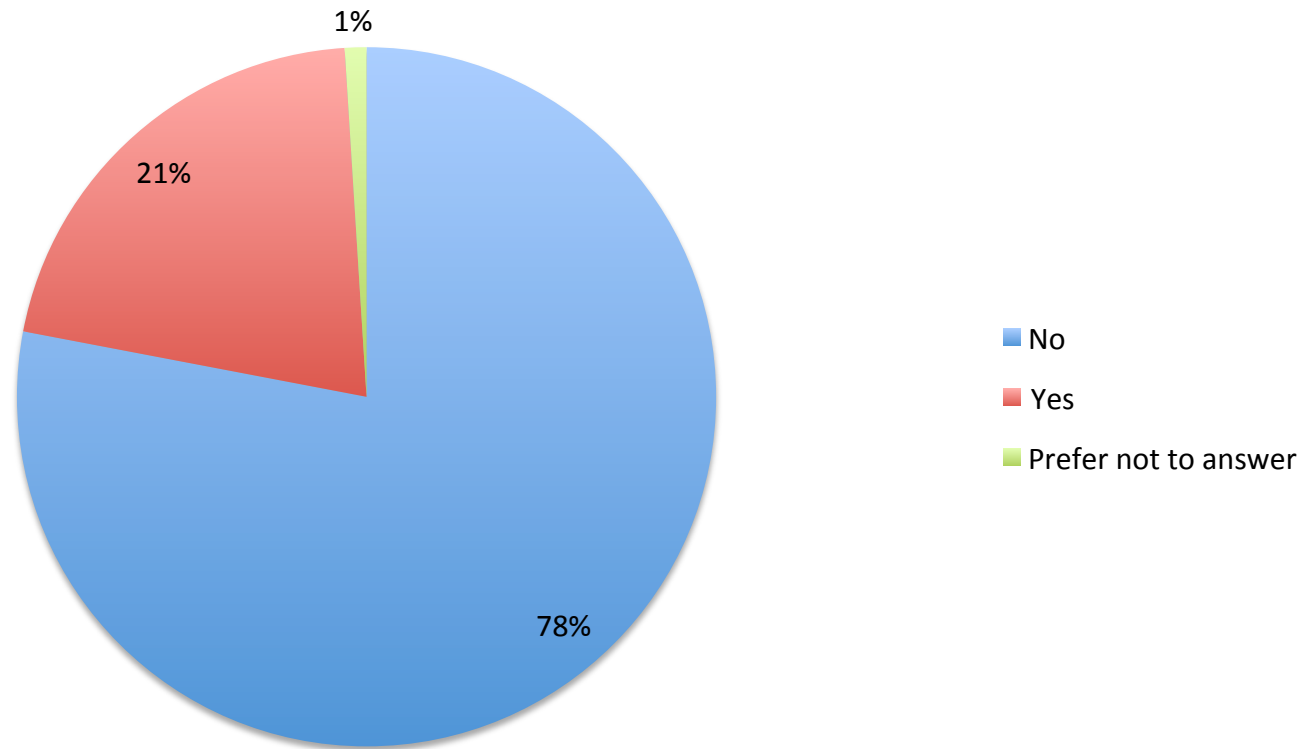
- 535 completed surveys
- 76% Married or unmarried living with partner
- Mean age 45.8 years old
- 85.1% White
- 63.5% College degree or higher
- 57.7% Female



# % Past Year IPV (n=535)



# Experienced DV during time of employment



21% of Employees reported experiencing DV during their employment (n=523)

Research Question #1

**WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
EMPLOYEE WRI AND IPV?**

# Bivariate Correlations between Past Year WRI and IPV (n=535)

	WRI	Severe Abuse	Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Harassment
Severe Abuse	.72**				
Physical Abuse	.46**	.66**			
Emotional Abuse	.44**	.65**	.79**		
Harassment	.39**	.56**	.67**	.76**	
Total Abuse	.79**	.75**	.88**	.96**	.85**

\*\*Significant at .01 level

Research Question #2

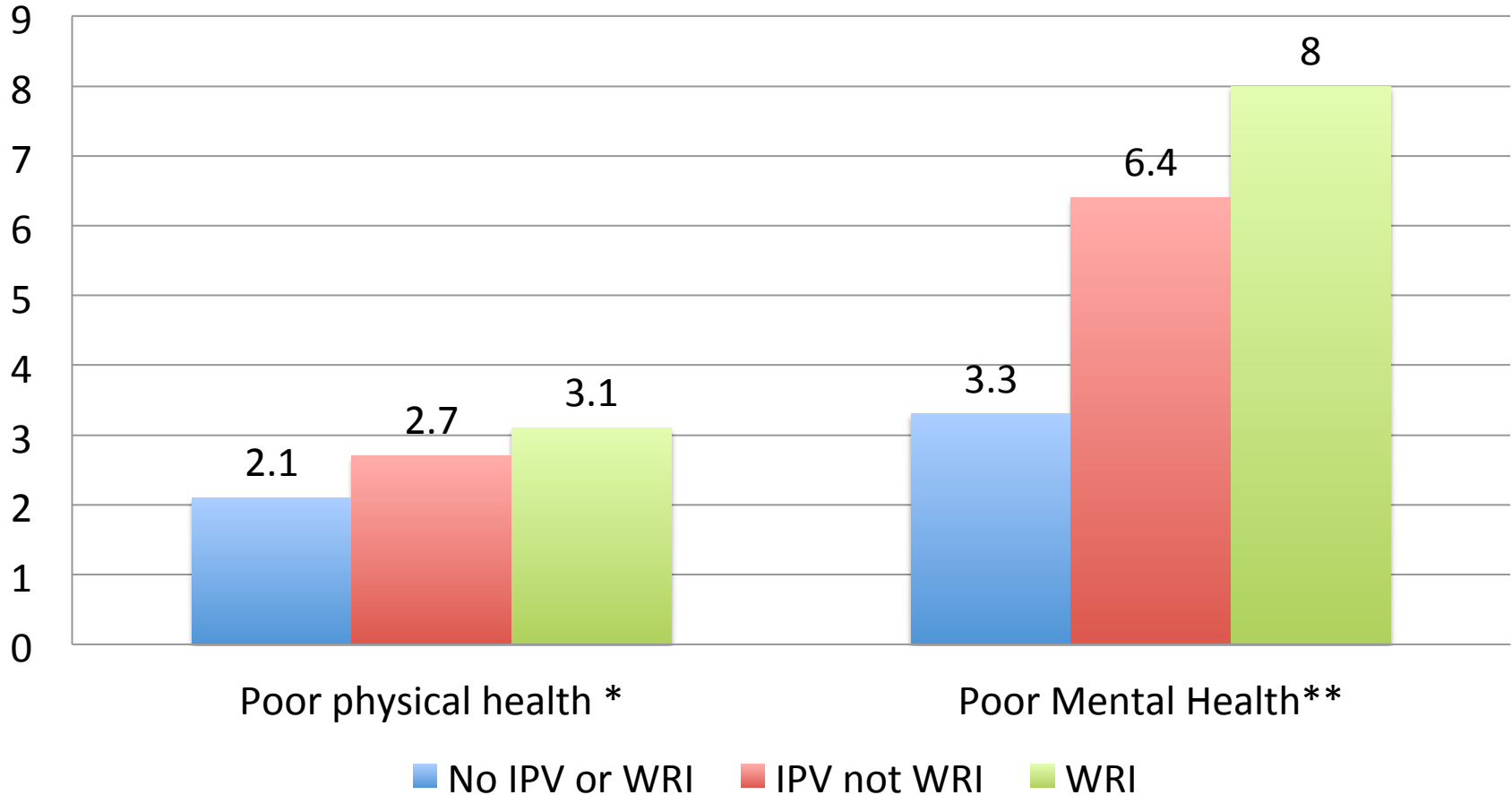
**DOES WRI IMPACT EMPLOYEE HEALTH?**

# Analysis

- 3-way ANOVA using HRQL items as dependent variables
  - Group 1: Control--No IPV or WRI (n=361)
  - Group 2: IPV not WRI (n=55)
  - Group 3: Any WRI (n=92)

Dunnett's post-hoc test for unequal groups performed

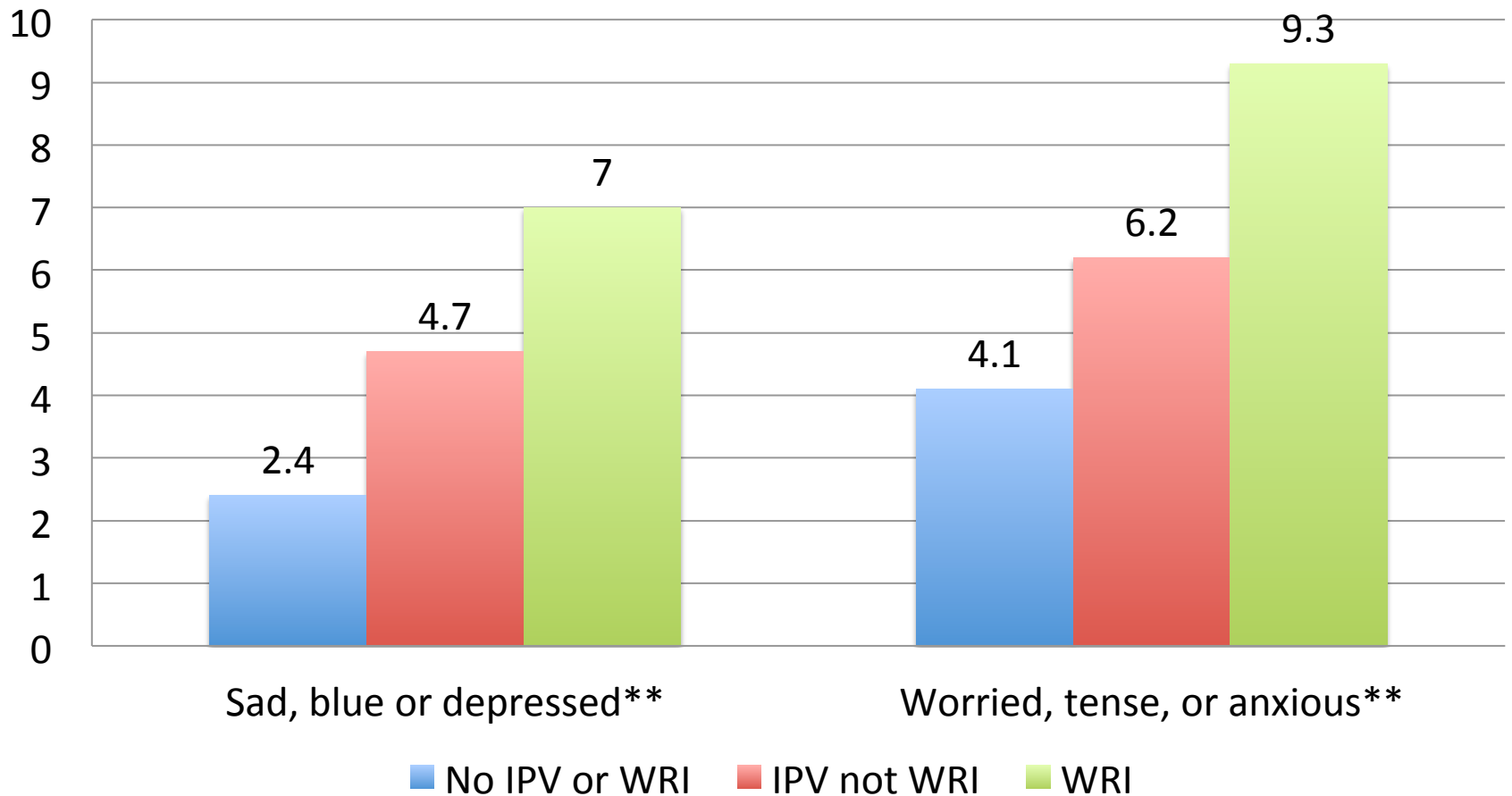
# Days per Month of Poor Health



\*No significant differences between groups (F= 1.7, p< .17)

\*\* Significant differences between groups (F=20.5, p< .00)

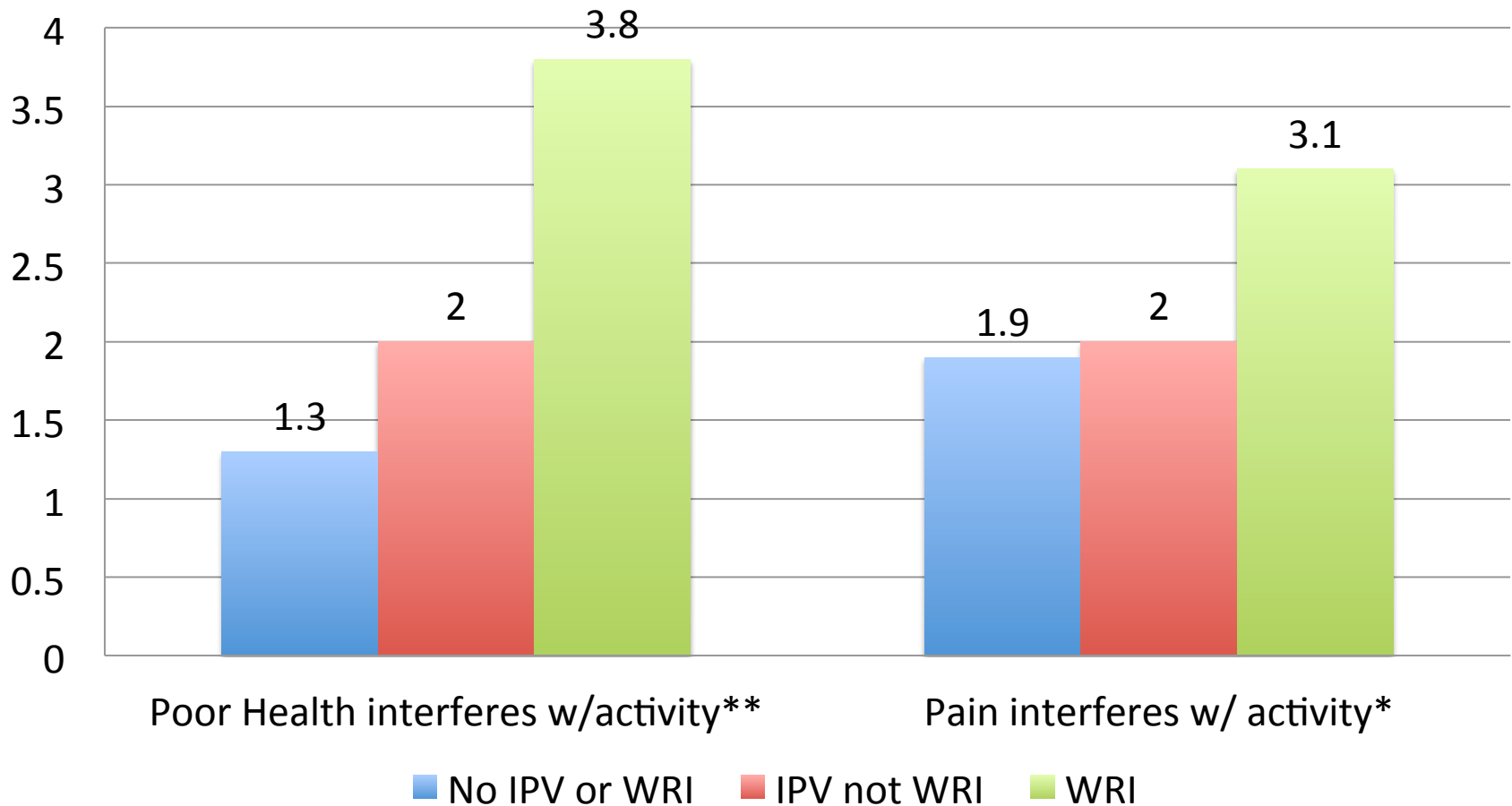
# Days per Month of Mental Health Symptoms



\*\* Significant differences between groups (F=21.7, p< .00; F=21.0., p< .00)



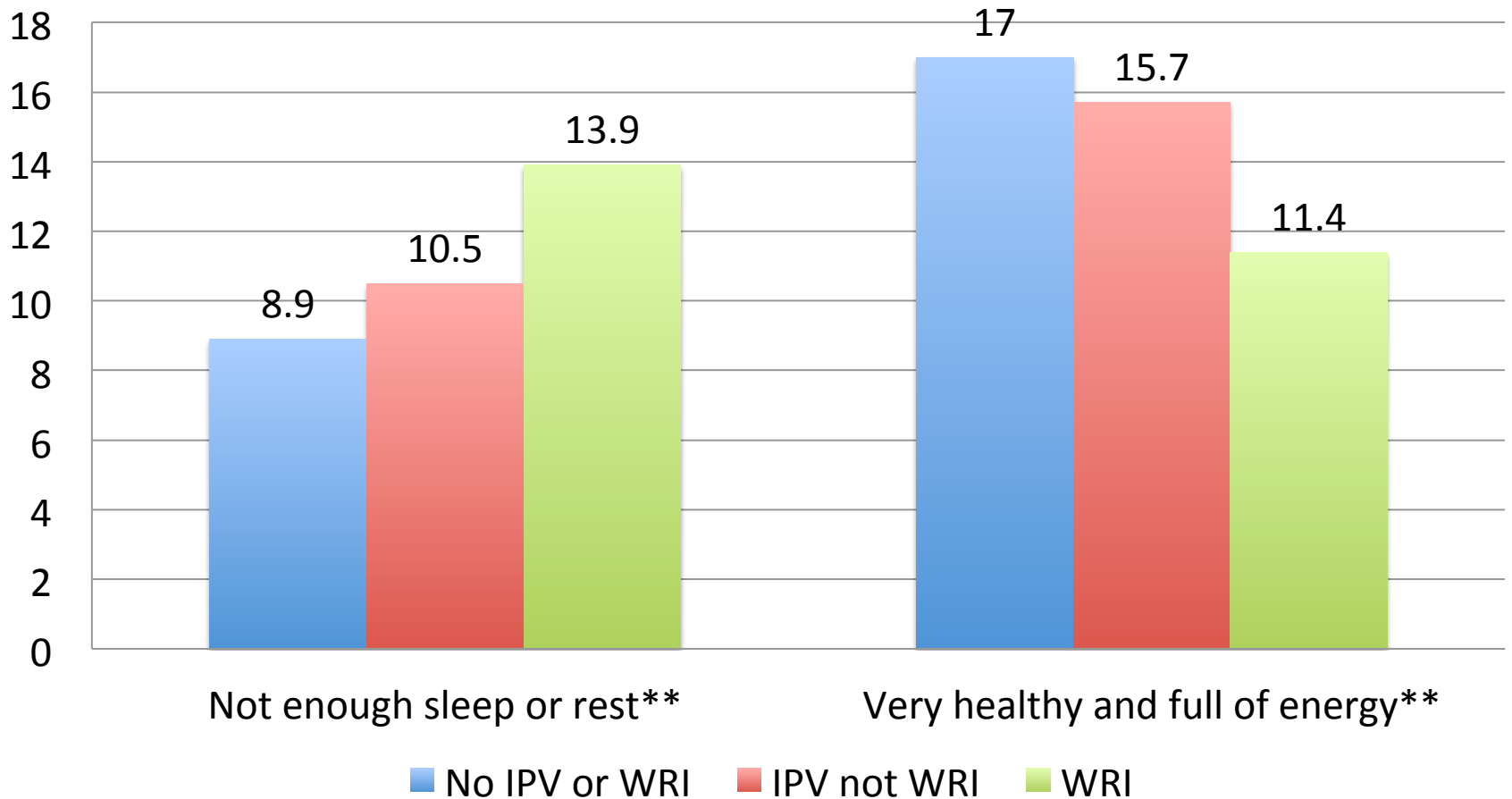
# Days per Month of Reduced Activity



\*No significant differences between groups ( $F=1.9$ ,  $p < .14$ )

\*\* Significant differences between groups ( $F=15.2$ ,  $p < .00$ )

# Days per Month of Vitality



\*\* Significant differences between groups (F=12.2, p< .00; F=11.7, p< .00)

# Post –Hoc Analyses

	Dunnett's Test ( $p < .05$ )
Poor Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant differences between control and IPV only and control and WRI groups</li></ul>
Physical and Mental Health Activity Interference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant differences between control and WRI groups</li></ul>
Depressive Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant differences between control and WRI groups</li></ul>
Anxious Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant differences between control and WRI groups</li></ul>
Enough Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant differences between control and WRI groups</li></ul>
Very Healthy and Full of Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant differences between control and WRI groups and between IPV only and WRI groups</li></ul>

# Limitations

- Small, non random sample
- Single item for IPV during work tenure

# Summary

- IPV rates similar to national statistics with approximately 1 in 5 employees reporting IPV during employment period
- WRI appears to have a strong relationship to other IPV measures
- Employees reporting WRI had most negative health outcomes in all categories while those reporting neither IPV nor WRI had the most positive health outcomes

# Summary

- Significant group differences were found in days per month of poor mental health, activity impairment due to poor mental or physical health, depressive feelings, anxious feelings, adequate rest or sleep, and feeling healthy.
- No significant group differences were found in days of poor physical health or pain interference with activity.

# Implications

- WRI may be a useful proxy for IPV especially in the workplace
- WRI has an impact on health even when employee does not identify WRI as IPV
- Workplace and health interventions should consider screening practices that include WRI

# Future Research

- Representative sample
- Longitudinal research to establish the short and long-term impact of WRI upon health
- Additional research needed to understand the impact of WRI on productivity—cost analysis



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