

# The Influence of Psychosocial Factors on Work Absenteeism in an Employed Population

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## *Background and Objective*

- Absenteeism adversely affects employer productivity.
- Absence from work may be a response to the supportiveness or stressfulness of an individual's work and social environments.
- Does 1) support or stress in interactions with coworkers and supervisors, and 2) support or stress in interactions with family and friends, influence absenteeism among working age adult enrollees of a group-model MCO?

## *Study Population*

- Random samples of Kaiser Permanente Georgia (KPGA) members, aged 25-59, employed by large public or private corporations in the Atlanta area.
- Three condition cohorts were sampled:
  - Adults with type 2 diabetes (N=652)
  - Adults with elevated lipids without CAD history (N=792)
  - Low risk adults with no identifiable major morbidities (N=780)

## *Data*

- Mixed mode survey (mail or Internet responses) conducted by a professional survey firm from 10/1/05 to 12/31/05.
- 2,224 respondents (response rate of 42%).
- Survey measures:
  - Social and Work Climate (MIDUS survey scales)
  - Patient Activation (PAM-13)
  - Mental and Physical Health (SF-12)
  - Height and Weight (BMI)
  - Self-reported measures of work absence

## *Measures*

- Dependent Variable:
  - One or more absentee days
    - Self-reported absence due to illness
    - 4 weeks prior to survey

## *Measures*

- Independent Variables:
  - Work Climate Summary
    - average of 4 subscales (coworker support, supervisor support, job demands, and decision authority)
  - Social Climate Summary
    - average of 2 subscales (friend/family support and strain)
  - Patient Activation
    - assesses patient engagement and motivation in self-management of care

## *Measures*

- Independent Variables:
  - Scored 0-100
    - Work Climate and Social Climate Summary Scales
      - 0 = Most stressful, least supportive
      - 100 = Most supportive, least stressful
    - Patient Activation
      - Higher score represents greater activation
  - Good psychometric properties (Cronbach's alphas  $\geq 0.85$ )

## *Methods*

- Ordinary logistic regression:
  - Dependent Variable:
    - One or more absentee days vs. none
  - Independent Variables:
    - Model 1: Work climate summary scale and patient activation
    - Model 2: Social climate summary scale and patient activation

## *Methods*

### – Covariates:

- Age
- gender
- condition cohort
- depression (MCS-12)
- physical function (PCS-12)
- race
- education
- marital status

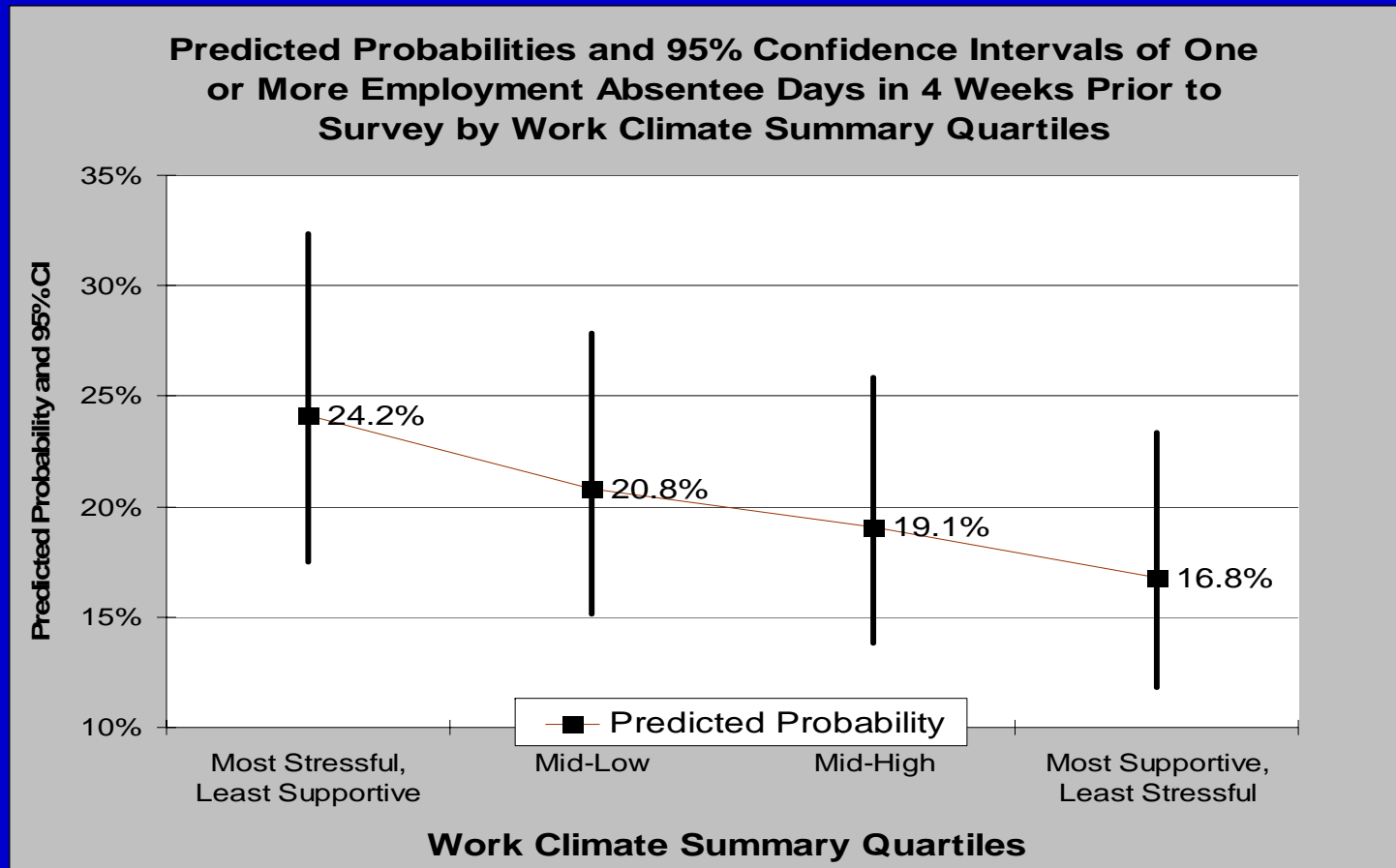
## *Results*

- 26.2% had one or more absentee days
- Absenteeism was associated with:
  - More stressful, less supportive interactions with coworkers and supervisors, less decision authority, and greater work demands (t-test,  $P < .01$ )
  - More stressful, less supportive interactions with family and friends (t-test,  $P < 0.01$ )
  - Lower patient activation (t-test,  $P < 0.01$ )

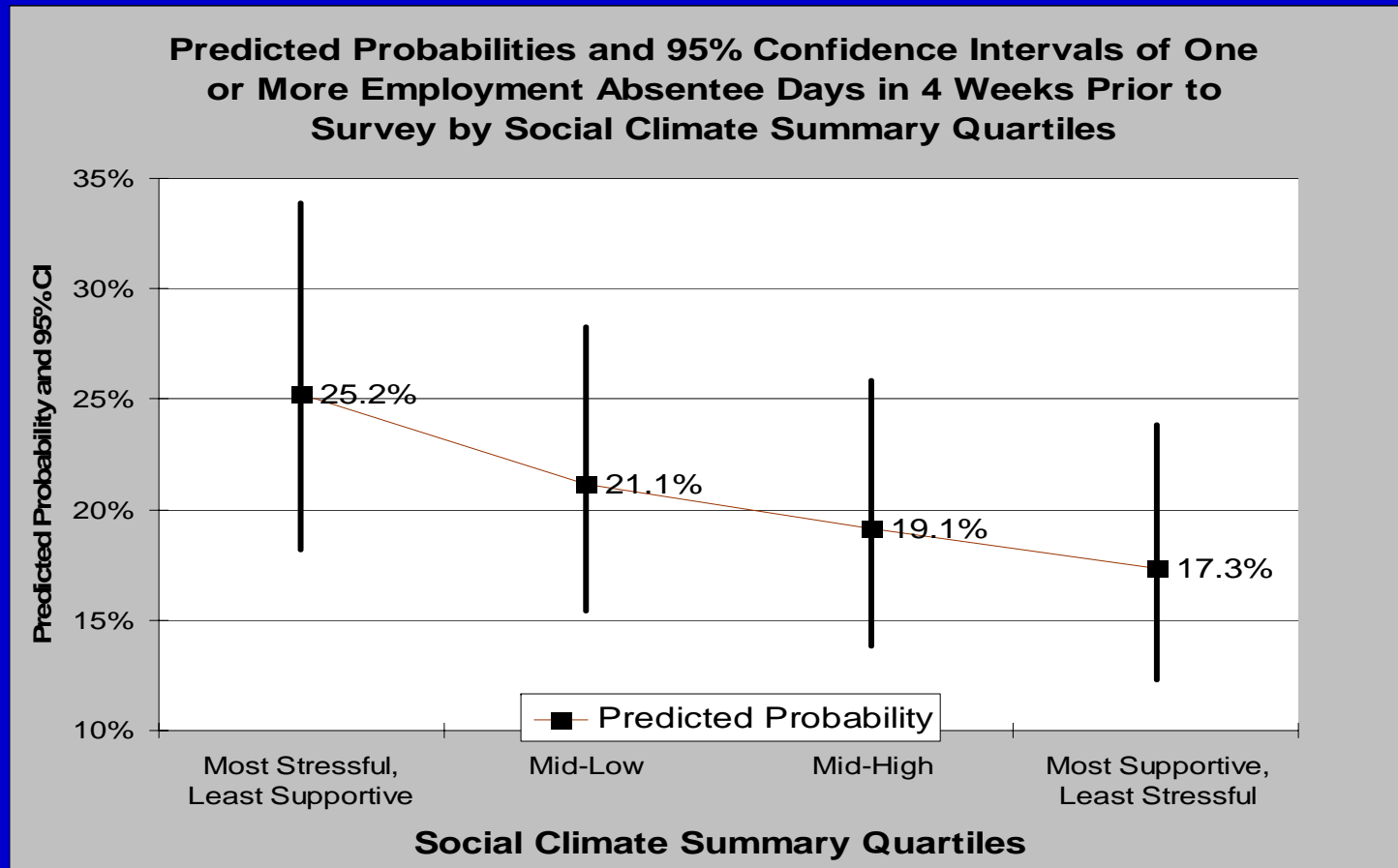
## *Results*

- Adjusted for covariates, likelihood of absenteeism was significantly **lower** among adults:
  - reporting more supportive, less stressful work environments
    - Adjusted OR = 0.989 per point increase (more favorable) in overall work climate ( $p < 0.01$ )
  - reporting more supportive, less stressful social environments
    - Adjusted OR = 0.990 per point increase (more favorable) in overall social climate ( $p < 0.01$ )
  - reporting higher activation
    - Adjusted OR = 0.993 per point increase in activation ( $p < 0.05$ )

# Results



# Results



## *Results*

- Likelihood of absenteeism was significantly **higher** for adults who were :
  - Depressed\*
    - OR = 2.340 (p<0.01)
  - Poor physical health\*
    - OR = 2.792 (p<0.01)
  - Female\*
    - OR = 1.520 (p<0.01)

\* Logistic regression model with overall work climate as the principle independent variable

## *Conclusion*

- More supportive, less stressful work climates are associated with decreased absenteeism.
- More supportive, less stressful social climates are associated with decreased absenteeism.
- Greater patient activation is associated with decreased absenteeism.
- Depression and worse physical health are associated with increased absenteeism.
- Females have higher rates of absenteeism than males.

## *Implications for Policy and Practice*

- Worksite strategies to improve teamwork and collegiality among employees may contribute to decreased absenteeism.