

# Interventions in human service work

- in order to improve the psycho-social  
working environment

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# The BEST Project

- The BEST project: *"BETter psychosocial work environment (PSWE): a Study of workplace interventions"*
- 13 workplaces were followed for 2-3 years (2004 – 2007)
- Three sectors: Industry, Social Welfare and "Handling of symbols" (service)
- Goal: To reveal barriers and progress when a workplace decides to improve PSWE and reduce stress
- NFA, RUC, DTU, Team Worklife

# The BEST Project: Methods and quantitative data

- The total sample included 3.517 employees (14 workplaces)
- The questionnaire "COPSOQ II" (The Copenhagen Psycho-social Questionnaire: 26 dimensions) was applied at beginning and end of the project phase
- Average response rate: 60%. Females: 52%.

# The dimensions of the Questionnaire

Job demands (5)

Work organisation, content & conditions (5)

Management and relations (6)

Jobsecurity and Satisfaction (2)

Health and stress (6)

Values: Fairness and Trust (2)

# The BEST Project: Qualitative data

**Sample:** Institution story of handling psycho-social working environment (PSWE), Experienced PSWE, conception of social relations and assessment of performed interventions

**Method:** Chronicle workshop, Interviews, participation / observation and documents.

**Design:** Full assessment at project start and end. Feedback to workplace, on going contact.

# The overall changes

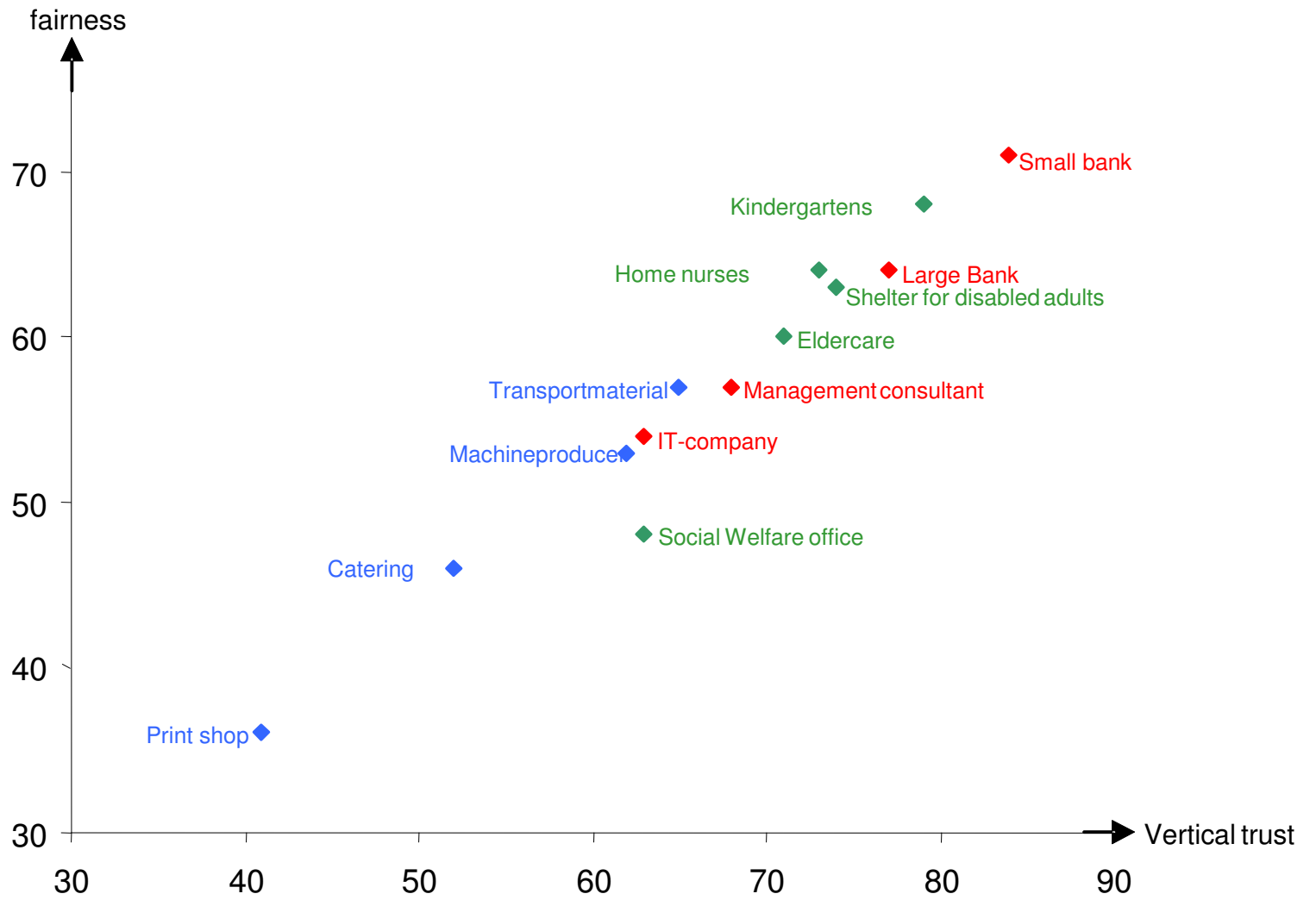
The general development in the 14 workplaces of all 26 dimensions

	Worse	No change	Improved
Industry	29		75
Human service	76	1	53
Symbol	54	1	49
Total	159	2	177
Insecurity at work	1		12
Without insecurity	158	2	165

# On company level

- All participating workplaces developed a strategy to improve PSWE.
- The good stayed good and the poor stayed poor
- Difficult to document any effect of the interventions
- But some dimensions proved crucial to the conception of having a good PSWE
- “Vertical trust” and “fairness” (justice) from management proved most important

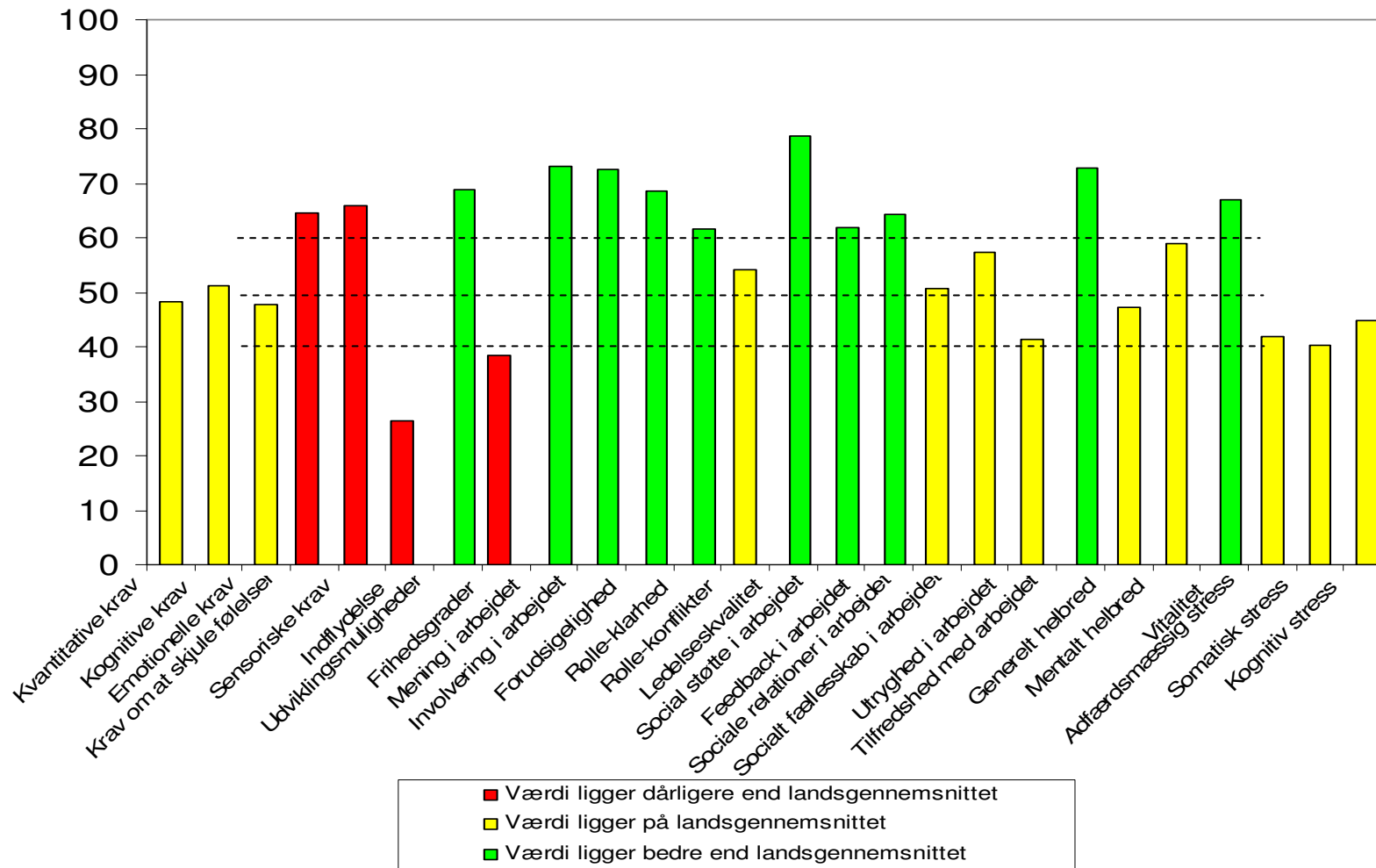
# Trust and fairness



# Within the Social Welfare workplaces we found large differences among departments

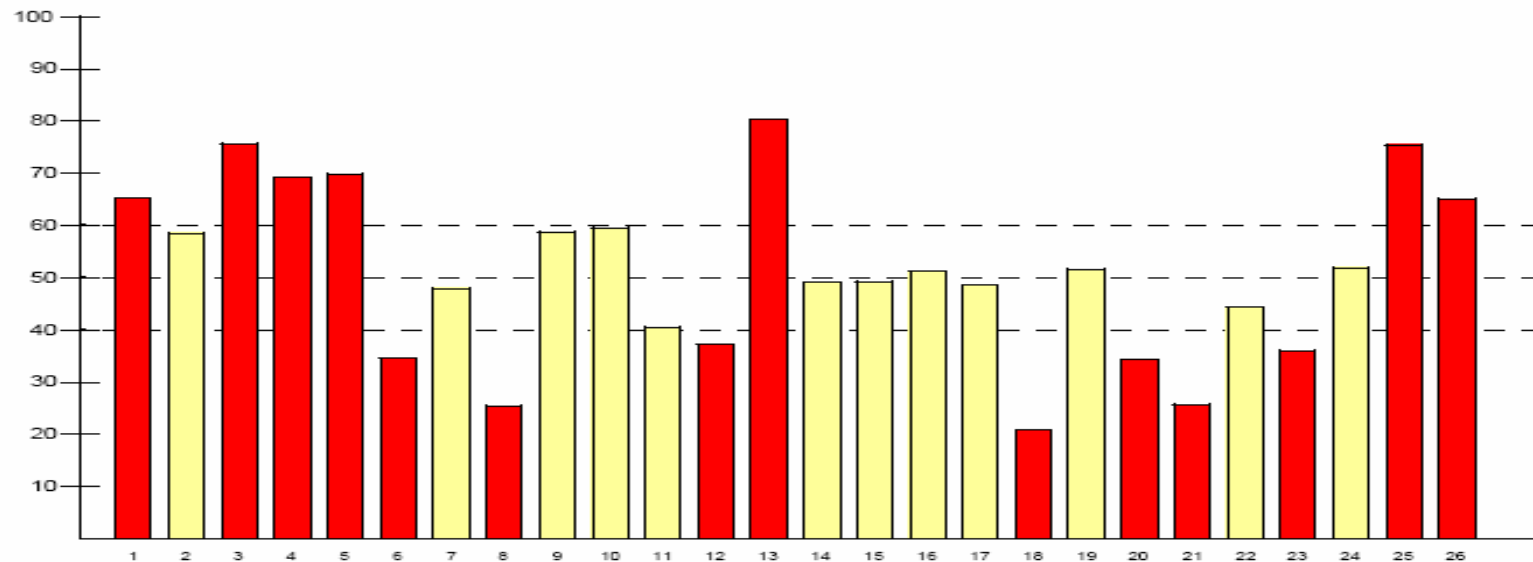
- One case: Institution for disabled adults divided in 12 departments (houses)
- Same work, same educations, same management, same wages, same time structure, same clients
- But large differences in PSWE ?

# "The "green" house



# "The red house"

Profil for afdeling "G. Blumevej"



Nr:	Dimension	Værdi:	N:
1	Kvantitative krav	65,3	21
2	Kognitive krav	58,5	21
3	Emotionelle krav	75,7	21
4	Krav om at skjule følelser	69,3	21
5	Sensoriske krav	69,9	21
6	Indflydelse	34,6	21
7	Udviklingsmuligheder	47,9	21
8	Frihedsgrader	25,4	21
9	Mening i arbejdet	58,8	21
10	Involvering i arbejdet	59,5	21
11	Forudsigelighed	40,5	21
12	Rolle-klarhed	37,2	21
13	Rolle-konflikter	80,2	21
14	Ledelseskvalitet	49,1	21
15	Social støtte i arbejdet	49,2	21
16	Feedback i arbejdet	51,2	21
17	Sociale relationer i arbejdet	48,6	21
18	Socialt fællesskab i arbejdet	20,8	21
19	Utryghed i arbejdet	51,5	21
20	Tilfredshed med arbejdet	34,3	21
21	Generelt helbred	25,7	21
22	Mentalt helbred	44,4	21
23	Vitalitet	36,0	21
24	Adfærdsmæssig stress	51,9	21
25	Somatisk stress	75,5	21
26	Kognitiv stress	65,1	21

Beskrivelse af farver:

- Værdi ligger dårligere end landsgennemsnittet
- Værdi ligger på landsgennemsnittet
- Værdi ligger bedre end landsgennemsnittet



# Two "houses" in institution for disabled

The green House with high score on PSWE	The Red House with low score on PSWE
Low sick leave and turn over	High sick leave and turn over
Ability to focus on the job task	A constant high stress level caused external demands
Ability to use teams to deal with social relations	No forum to handle conflicts
Ability to perform meetings goal oriented, short and with a clear agenda	Meetings that are disturbed by small-talk, unclear leadership and agenda.
Clear role distribution	Individual prioritising of tasks and planning.
High score on trust, fairness, quality of work, health and satisfaction of work	Low score on trust, fairness, quality of work, health and satisfaction of work

# Conclusions

- There is no general “recipe” of how to improve PSWE
- Successful interventions take the point of departure of the condition of the actual workplace
  - If the sick leave is high – don’t expect attention to development projects
  - If the perception of trust is low don’t expect support to changes
  - If you are not able to perform a meeting don’t expect decisions to be executed
- Trust and fairness are crucial factors in the perception of a good PSWE
- Trust and fairness relates to the concrete workplace not to company strategies.

*Thank you for your attention  
!*

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*For those who read Danish:*

*Sørensen, Mac, Limborg & Pedersen:*

***Arbejdets Kerne, Frydelund 2008***

teamarbejdsliv

# Scale on trust at work

- *Does the management trust the employees to do their work well?*
- *Can you trust the information that comes from the management?*
- *Does the management withhold important information from the employees?*  
(Reversed scoring)
- *Are the employees able to express their views and feelings?*
- *(Cronbach's alpha = 0.80. Average score for Danish employees 67.0 points)*

# Scale on fairness at work

- *Are conflicts resolved in a fair way?*
- *Are employees appreciated when they have done a good job?*
- *Are all suggestions from employees treated seriously by the management?*
- *Is the work distributed fairly?*
- *(Cronbach's alpha = 0.83. Average score for Danish employees 59.2 points)*

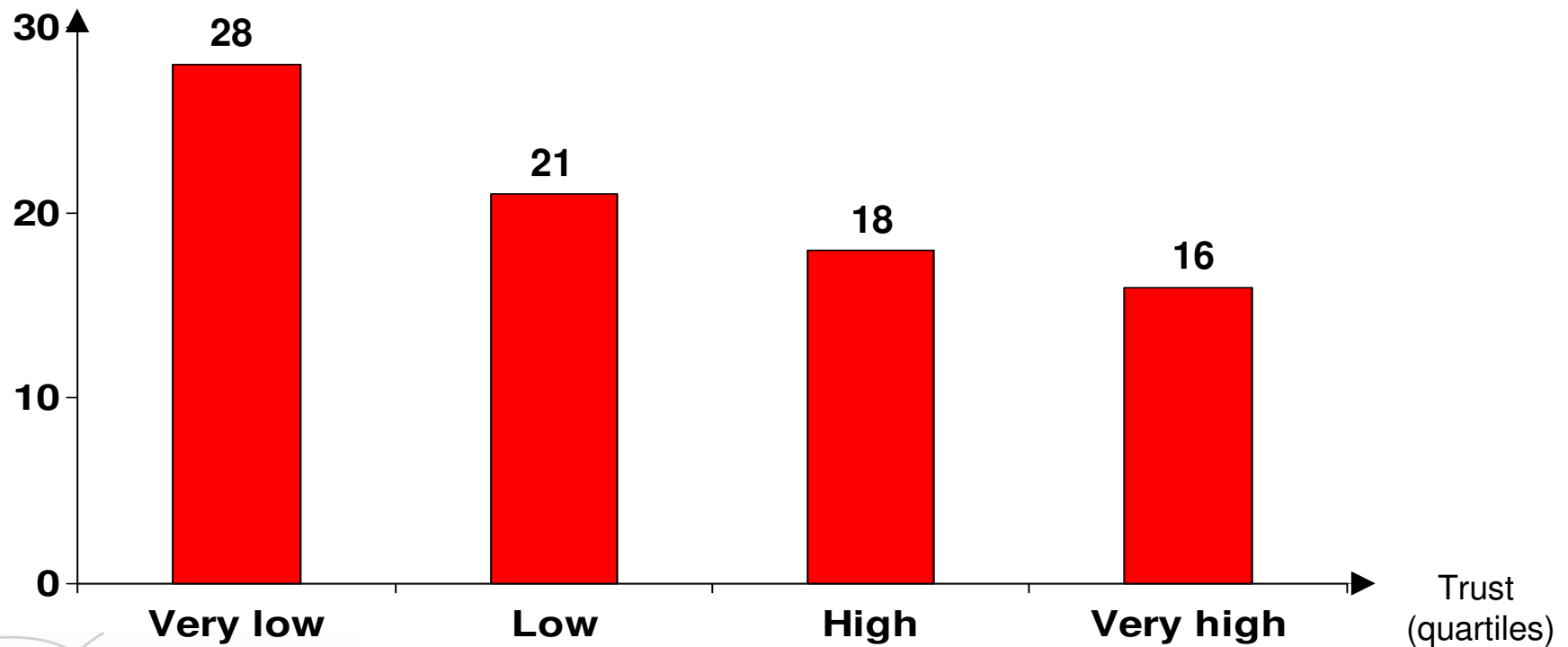
# Trust at the workplace



	DIALOGUE	WORK
Bottom-up ↑	The employees trust the management	The employees trust that the management does a good job
Horizontal	The employees trust each other	The employees trust that their colleagues do a good job
Top-down ↓	The management trusts the employees	The management trusts that the employees do a good job

# The association between level of trust and average depression score

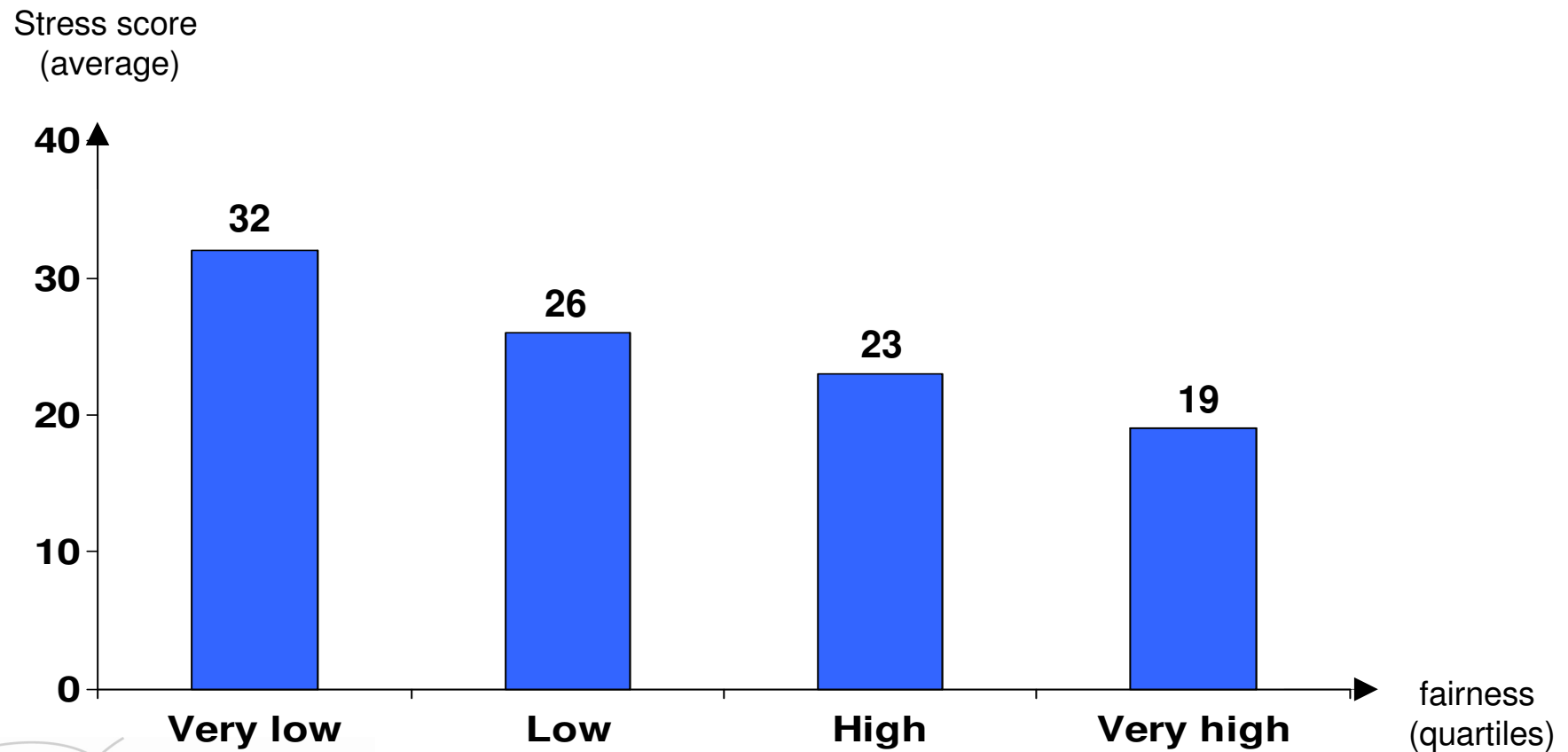
Depression score  
(average)



Range for both scales: 0-100

team *anjali*

# The association between level of fairness and average stress score



Range for both scales: 0-100

team **anajshiv**