

# Who is on sick leave in Finland? Differences between population groups and regions

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# **1. Sickness absence in Finland: an overview**

# The Finnish system of sickness absence

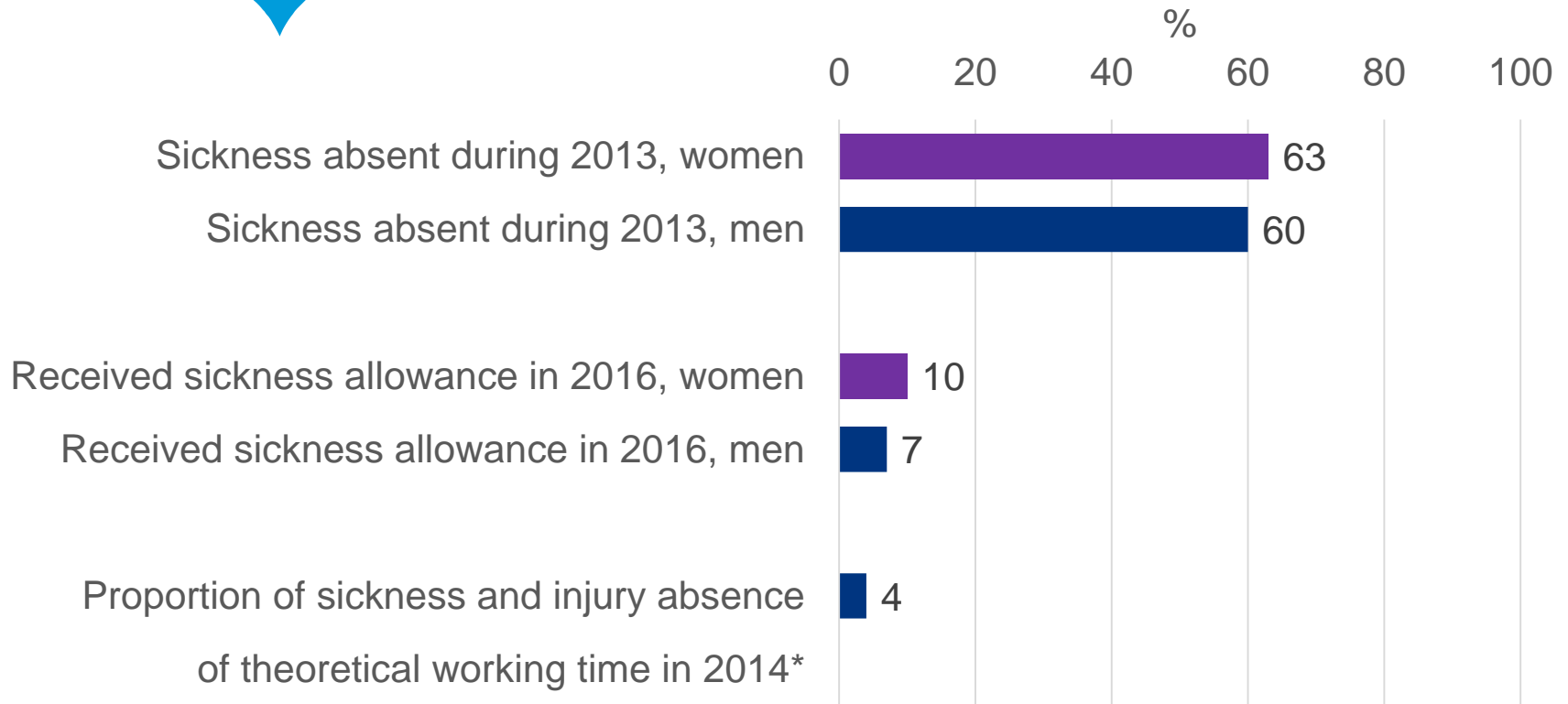
## Sickness absence days

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
<b>Short absence</b>			<b>Shortish absence</b>								<b>Long absence</b>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 1–3 days</li> <li>* self-certified</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 4–11 days</li> <li>* physician's certificate usually required</li> <li>* <b>not entitled to sickness allowance</b></li> <li>* full salary paid at least during the waiting time of sickness allowance</li> </ul>								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 12 days or more</li> <li>* physician's certificate required</li> <li>* <b>entitled to sickness allowance</b></li> <li>* full salary normally paid for absences lasting &lt;1-3 months (depends on the contract)</li> </ul>								

# Focus on long sickness absence spells

- The trends shown in the presentation are on **”long” sickness absence spells**
  - = those compensated by sickness allowance
  - = at least 12 calendar days long absences
- Only absences compensated by sickness allowance (paid by Kela) are tractable in Finnish national registers
- Comprehensive register-based data on shorter absences are not available (data only from surveys or from employer-specific studies)

# Prevalence of sickness absence in Finland

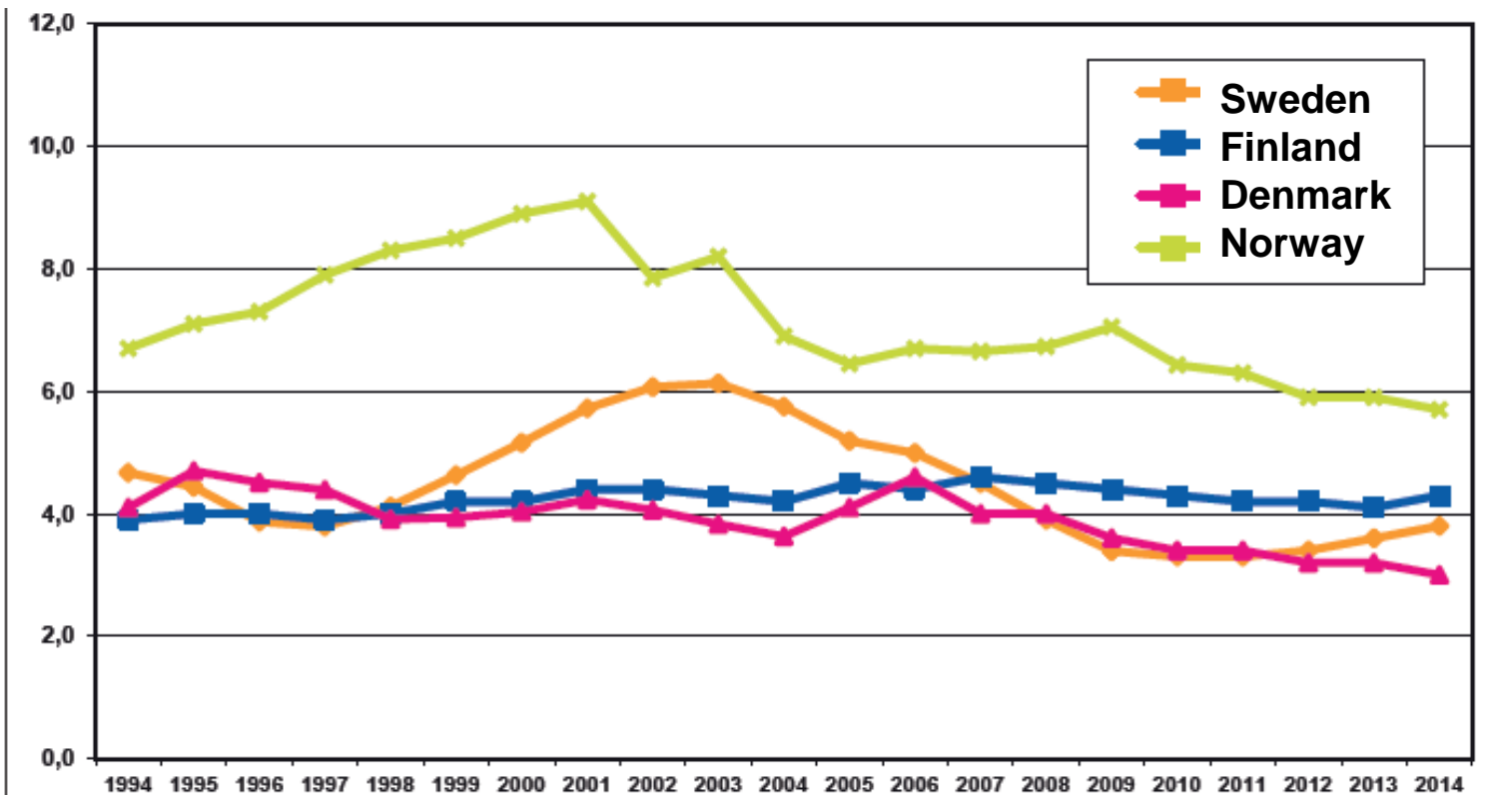


\* Of those working in the fields of industry, construction and services.

Sources: Statistics Finland, Labour force survey; statistics of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland; Confederation of Finnish Industries

# Comparison of Nordic countries

Proportion of sickness and injury absence of theoretical working time (%)



Sources: Nordic confederations of industries

## **2. Sickness allowance for long sickness absence spells**



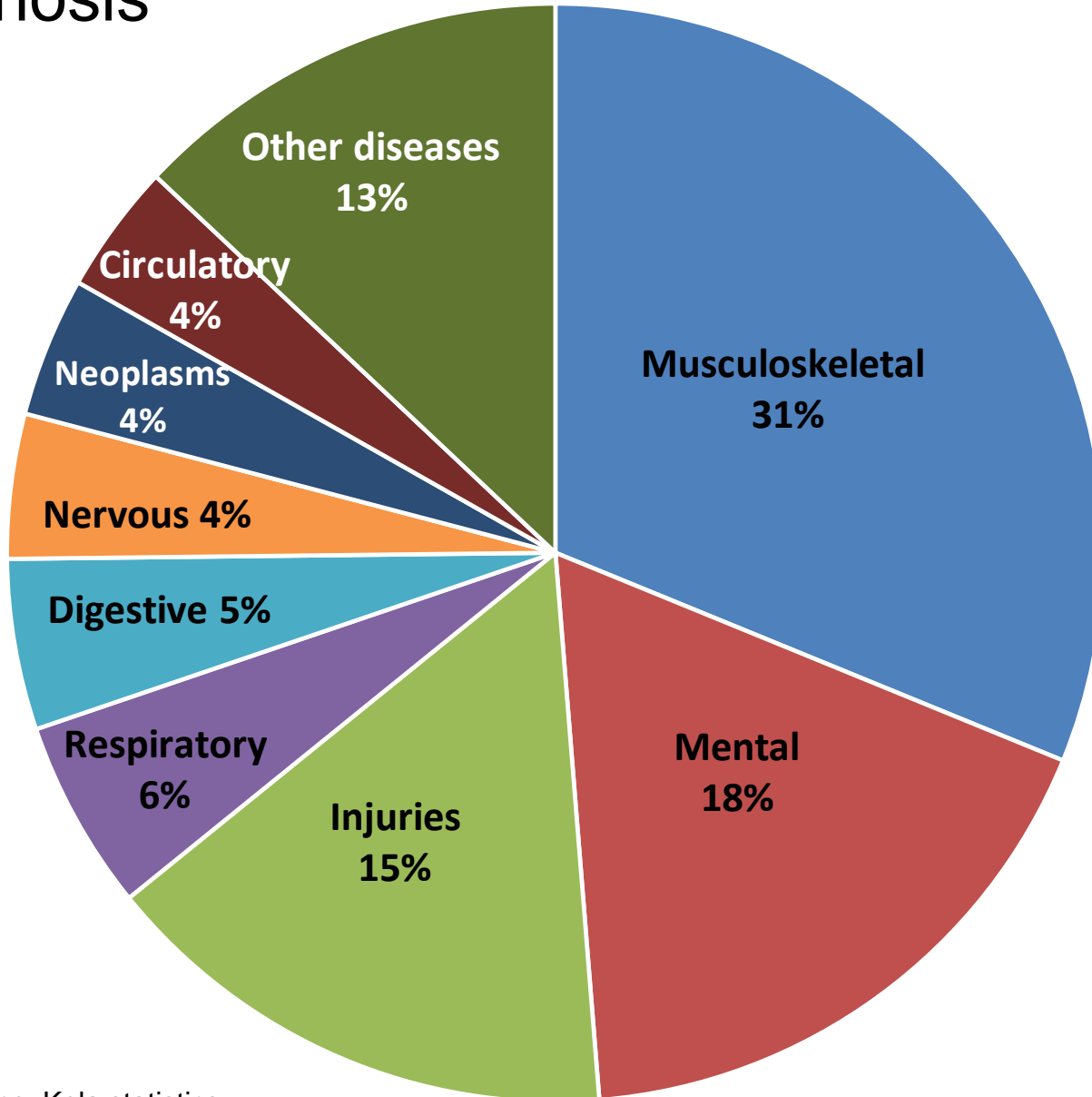
# Sickness allowance: who can receive?

- All non-retired persons aged 16–67 with incapacity to work (to perform their current duties) may be entitled
- A doctor's certificate is required
- Not restricted to those in employment
  - Employed, self-employed
  - Unemployed
  - Students
  - Others outside labour force
- Waiting period
  - Normally 1+9 working days (Mon–Sat, excluding midweek holidays)
  - 55 calendar days for those with no previous income

# Sickness allowance: how much?

- Paid for 6 days a week = “working days”
- Earnings-related
  - Formula per daily allowance:  $(70\% \text{ or previous income} / 300)$  up to yearly income of 30 350 € + 20% of income exceeding 30 350 €
  - Example: for a person with a yearly gross income of 50 000 euros (4000 €/month), gross SA is 84 €/day ~ 2000 €/month
- Minimum level for those with no previous income
  - 23,73 €/working day ~ 570 €/month in 2017
- Average paid allowance per working day in 2016: 56 €/day ~ 1340 €/month
- Payment
  - Paid to the employer if the employer pays salary
  - If no employer / no salary, allowance is paid directly to the sick-listed

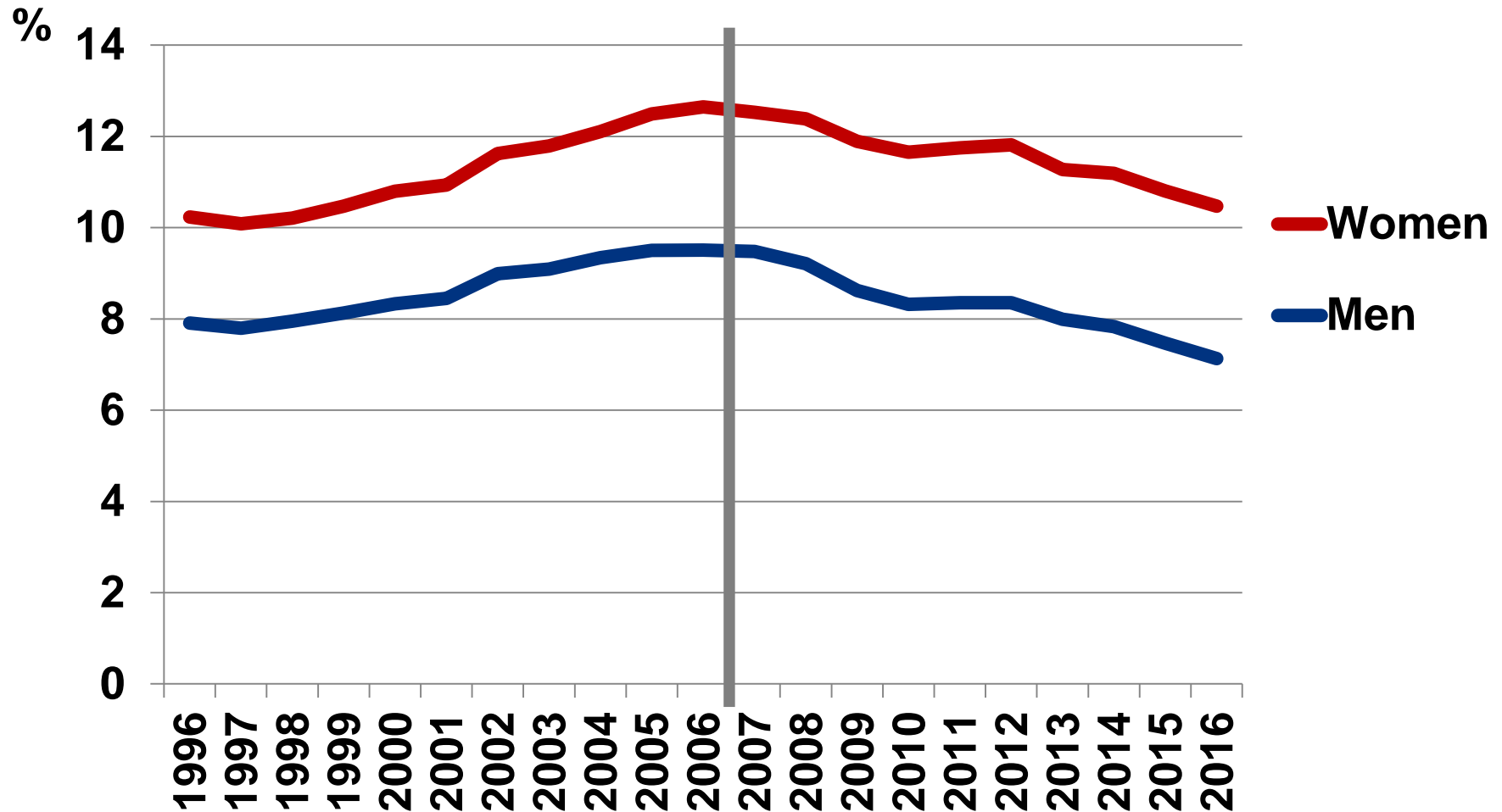
# Distribution of new sickness allowance spells in 2015 by diagnosis



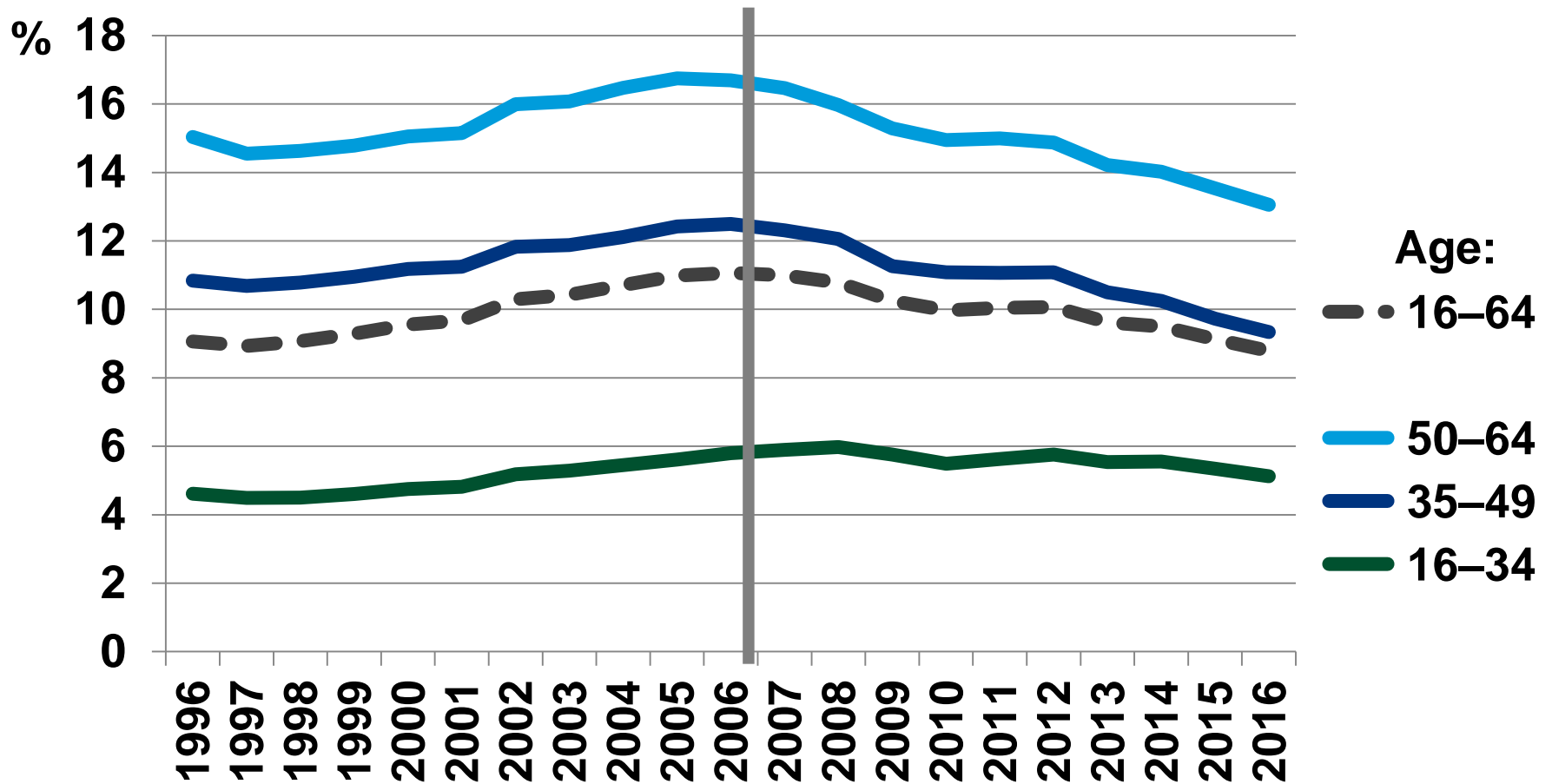
Source: Kela statistics.

### **3. Trends in receipt of sickness allowance by sex, age and diagnostic cause**

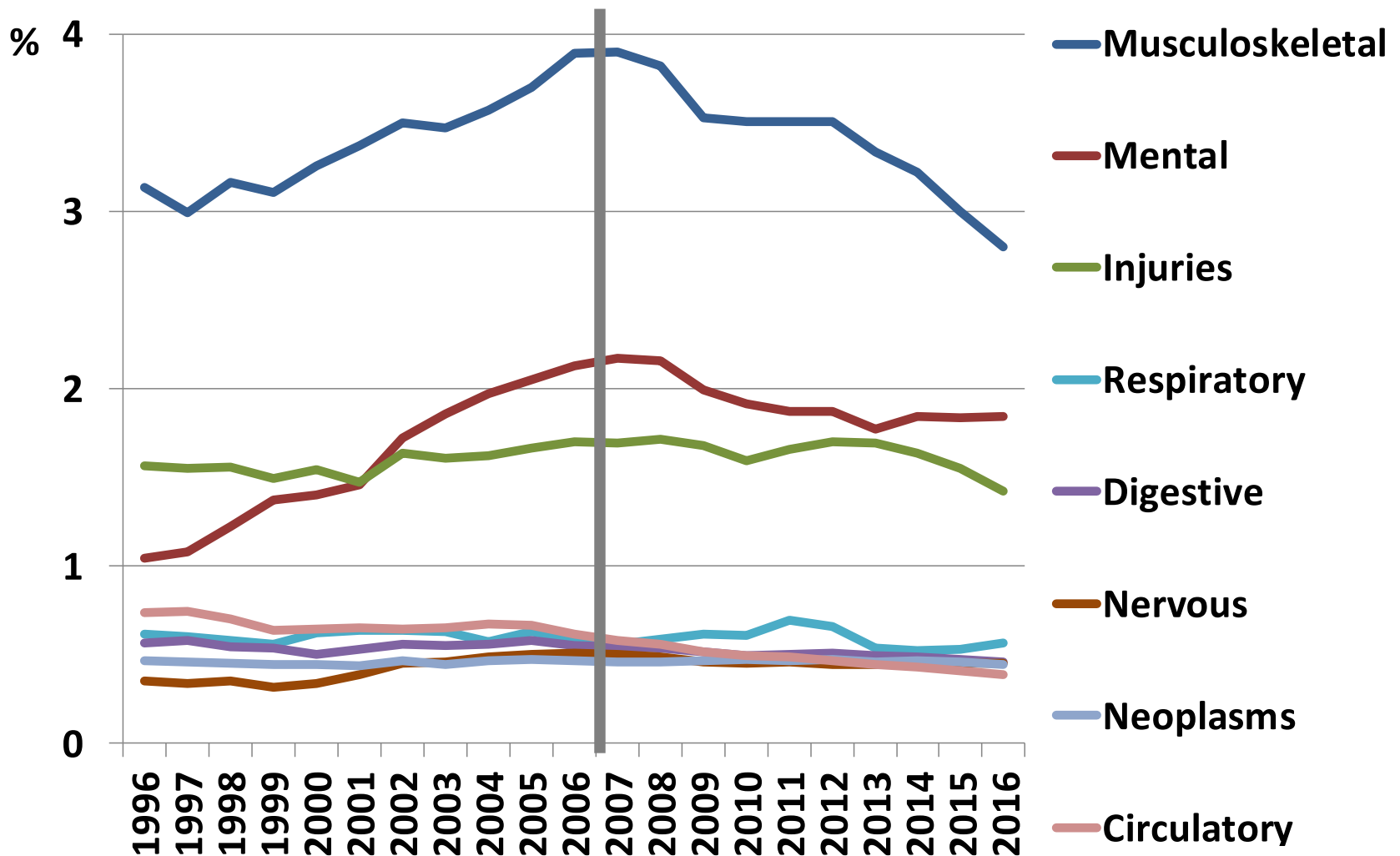
# Proportion of recipients of sickness allowance, non-retired population 1996–2016



# Proportion of recipients of sickness allowance, non-retired population 1996–2016



# Proportion of recipients of sickness allowance, non-retired population 1996–2016



## **4. Differences between socio-economic groups**



# Incidence and length of sickness allowance by occupational class

- What is the proportion of new sickness allowance recipients in different occupational classes?
- How long are the sickness allowance spells in different occupational classes?
  - Cumulative number of days, measured from the start of the waiting period (=onset of disease) to the ending day of sickness allowance

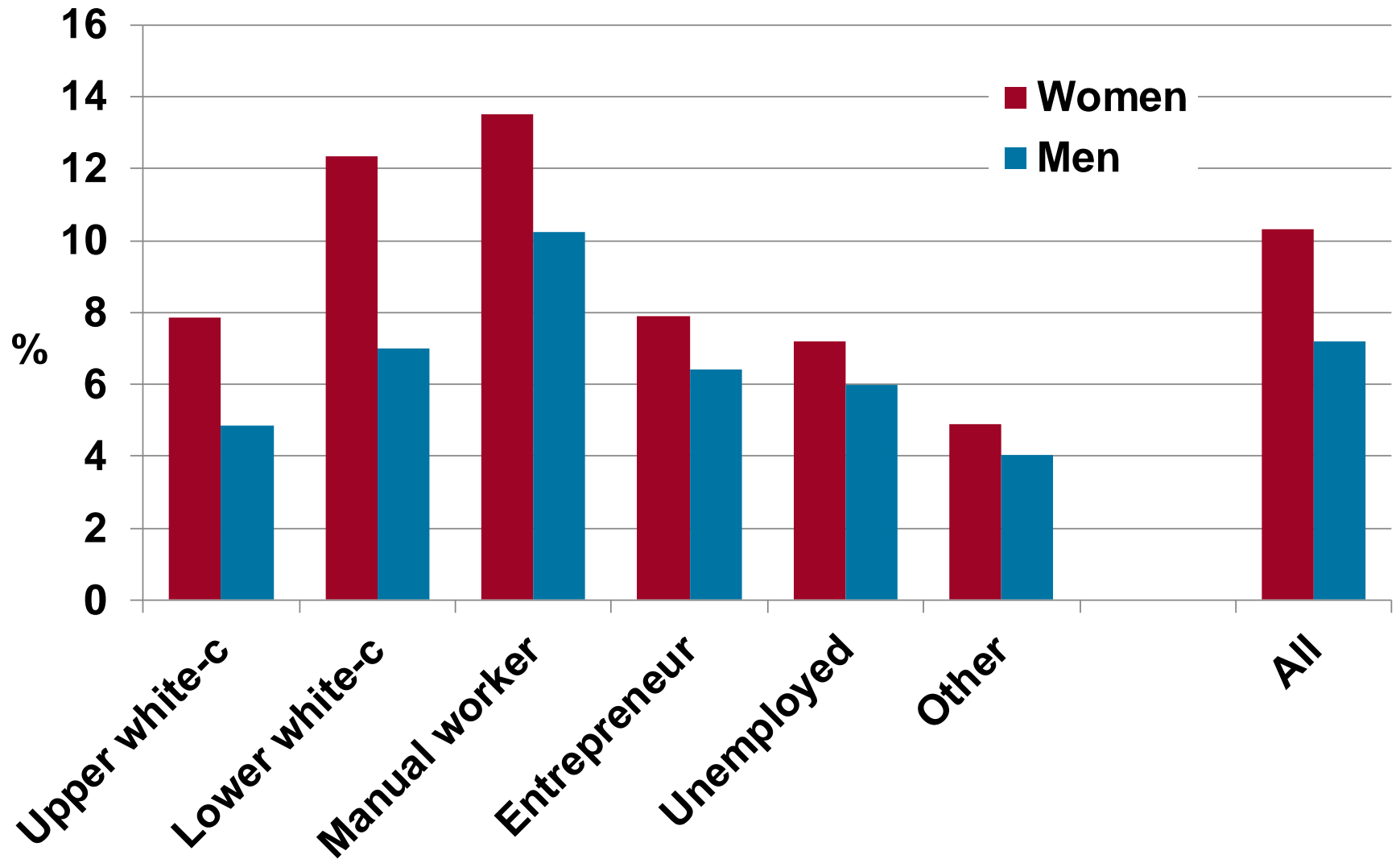
# A study combining registers of Kela and Statistics Finland

- A 70% random sample of the non-retired Finnish population aged 25–62 at the end of 2012 (1.6 million persons)
- Inclusion of also those without employment
- Measurement of new SA spells initiating in 2013

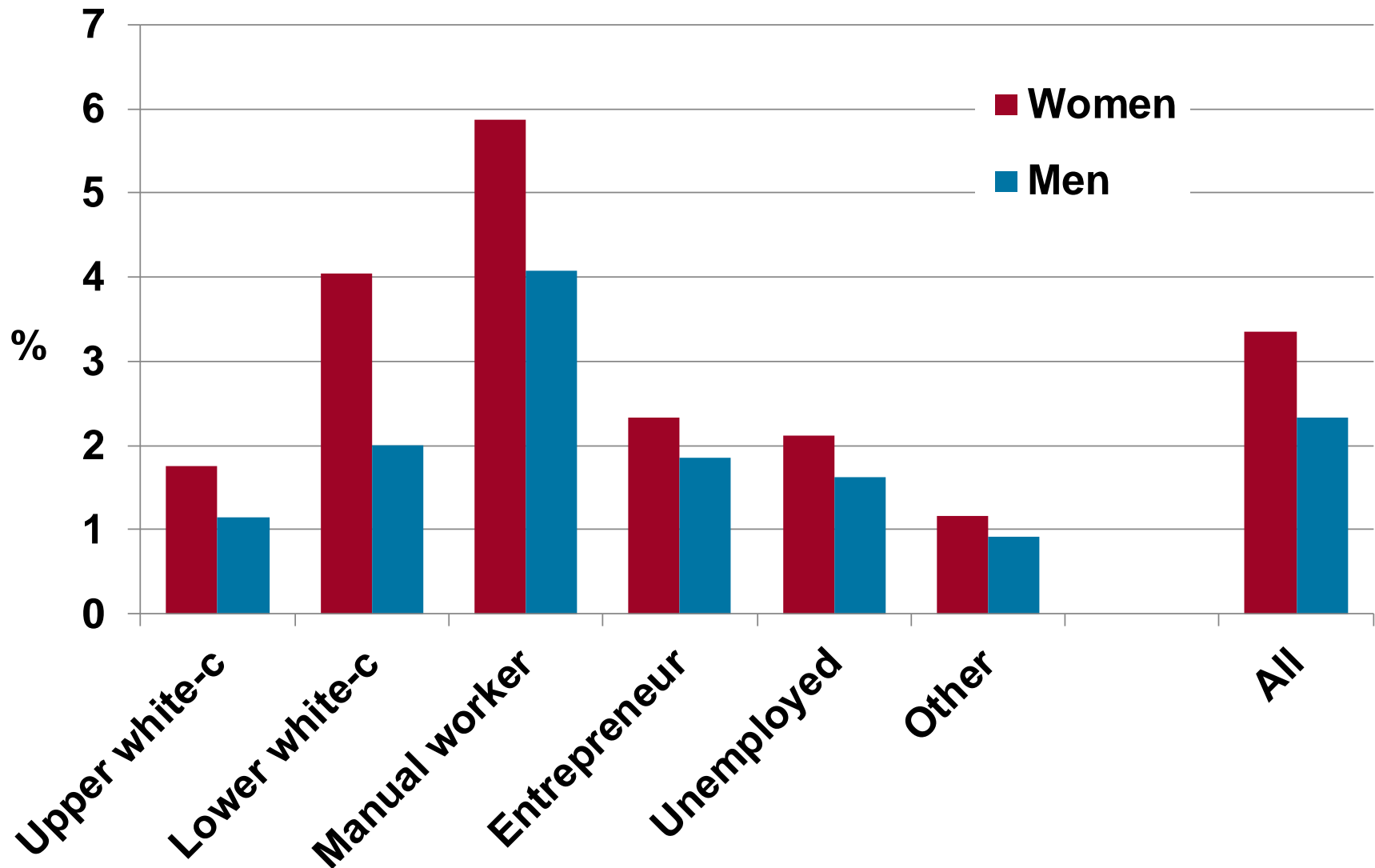
- Occupational class distribution:

	Women	Men
Upper white-collar	20 %	19 %
Lower white-collar	43 %	19 %
Manual workers	14 %	31 %
Self-employed and entrepreneurs	7 %	13 %
Unemployed	9 %	12 %
Other	7 %	7 %
All	100 %	100 %
N	792 575	822 760

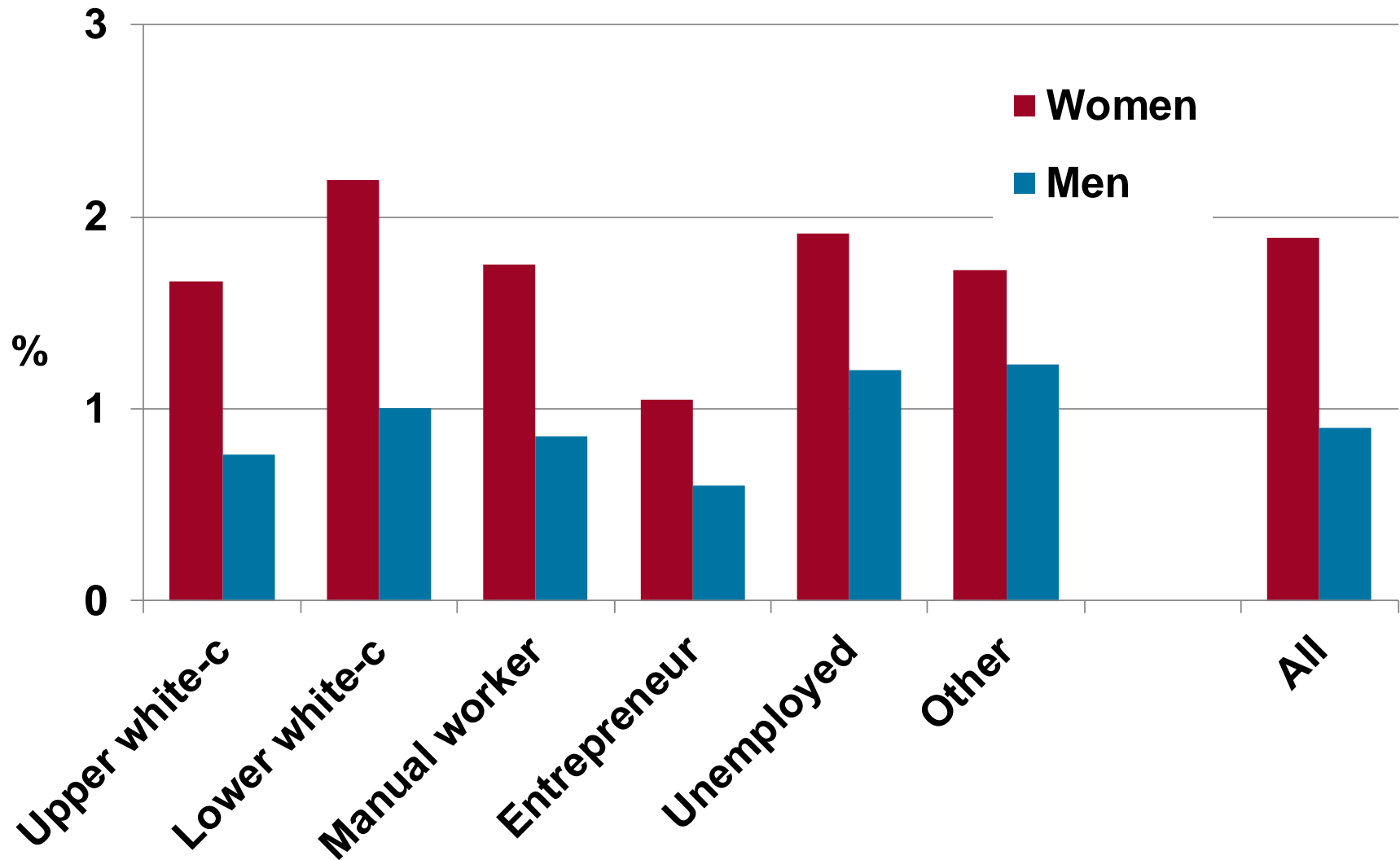
# Persons with new SA spells during 2013 (% of population)



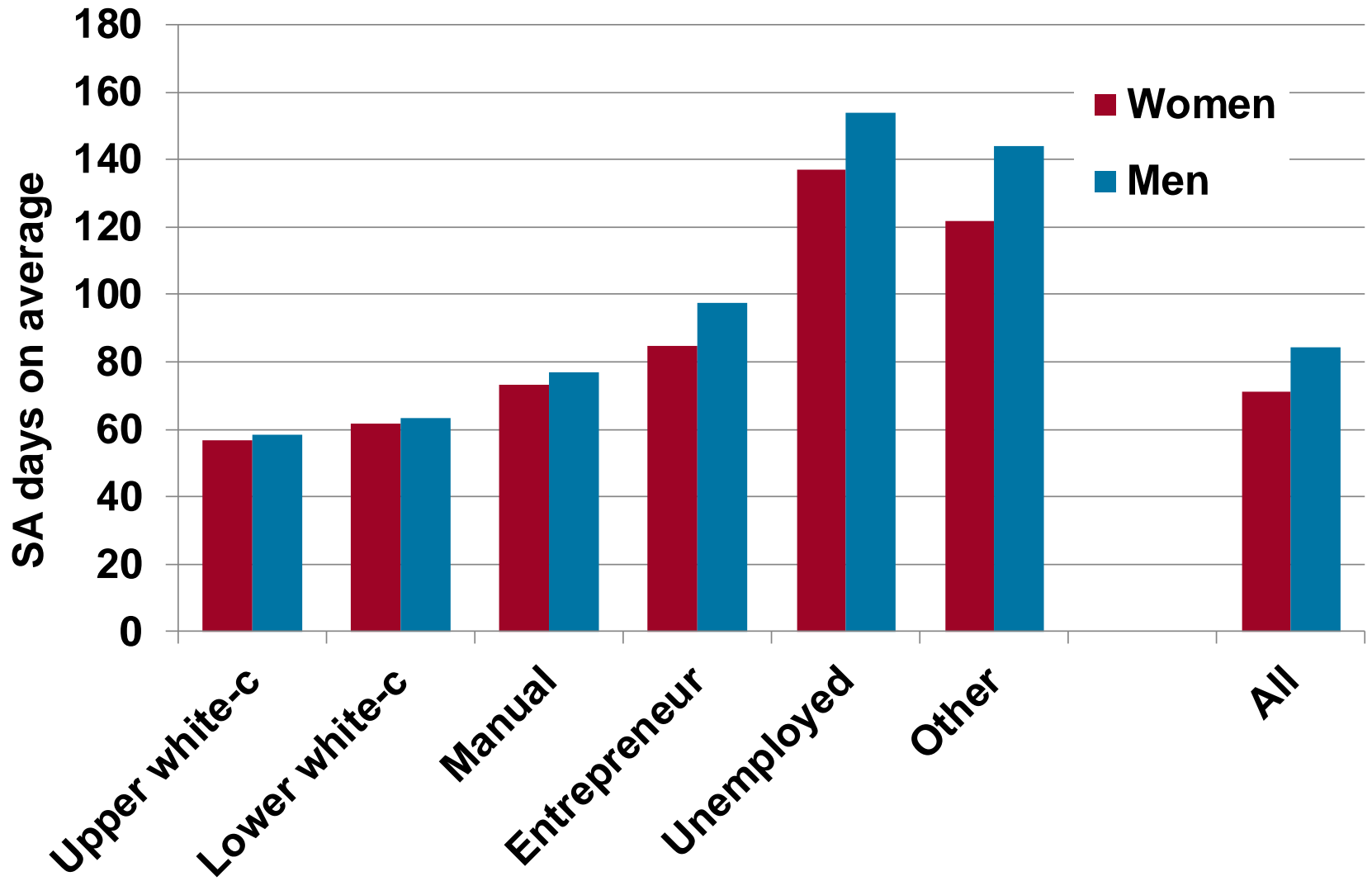
# Persons with new SA spells due to musculoskeletal diseases during 2013 (% of population)



# Persons with new SA spells due to mental and behavioural disorders during 2013 (% of population)

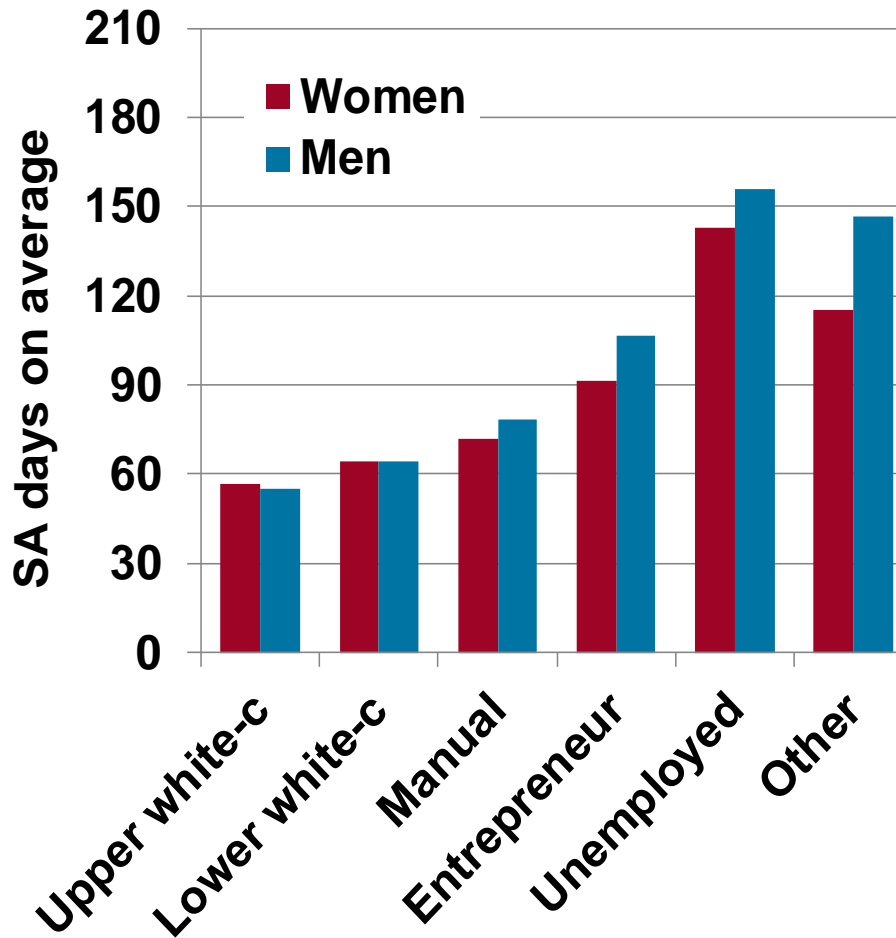


# Cumulative length of SA spells starting in 2013, calendar days

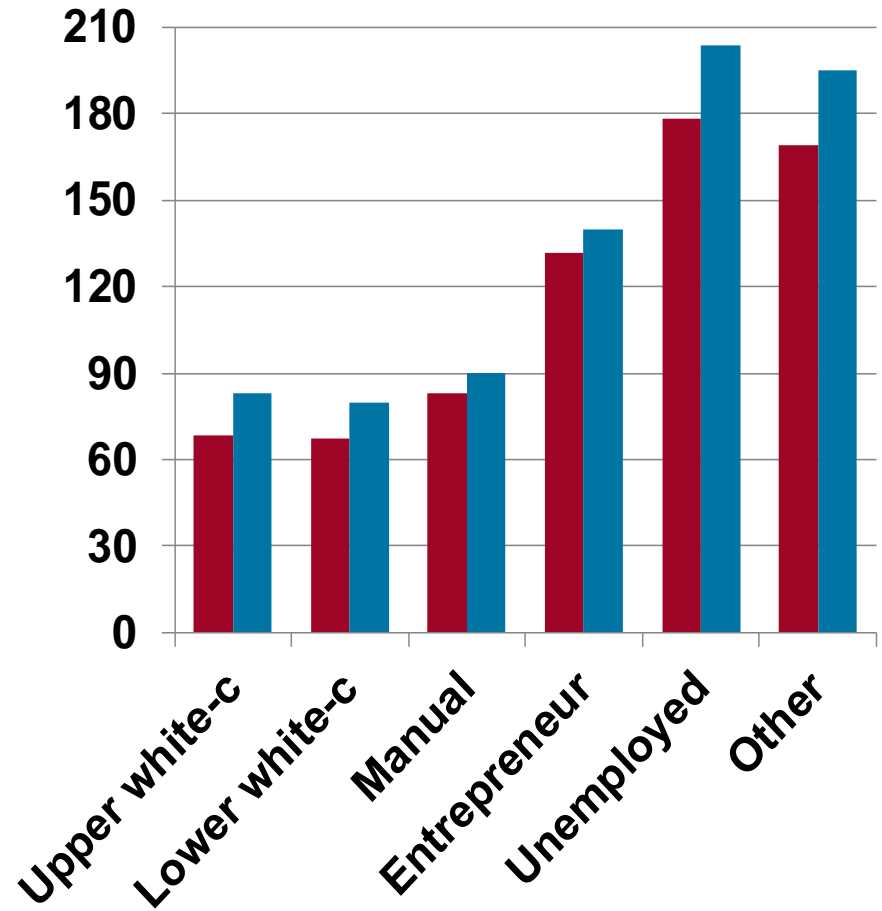


# Cumulative length of SA spells starting in 2013, calendar days

## Musculoskeletal diseases



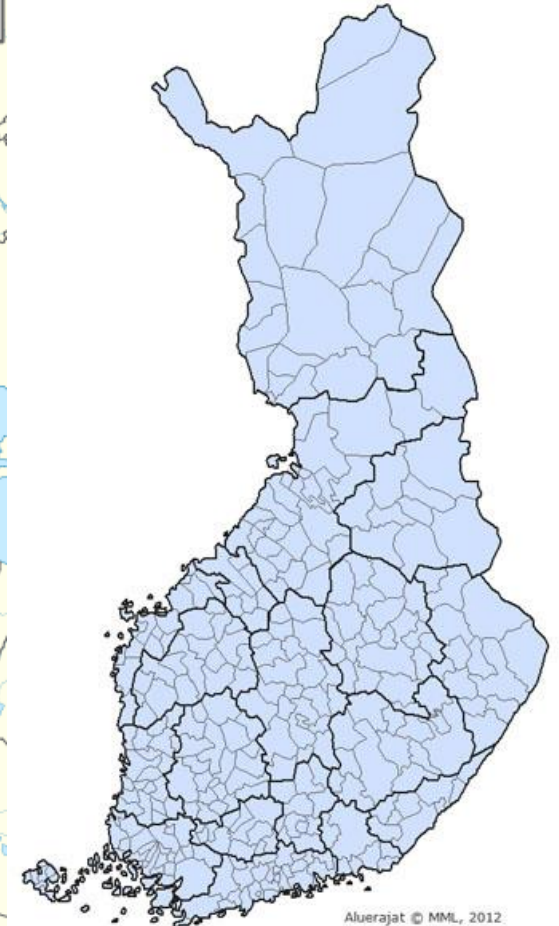
## Mental disorders



## **5. Differences between regions**



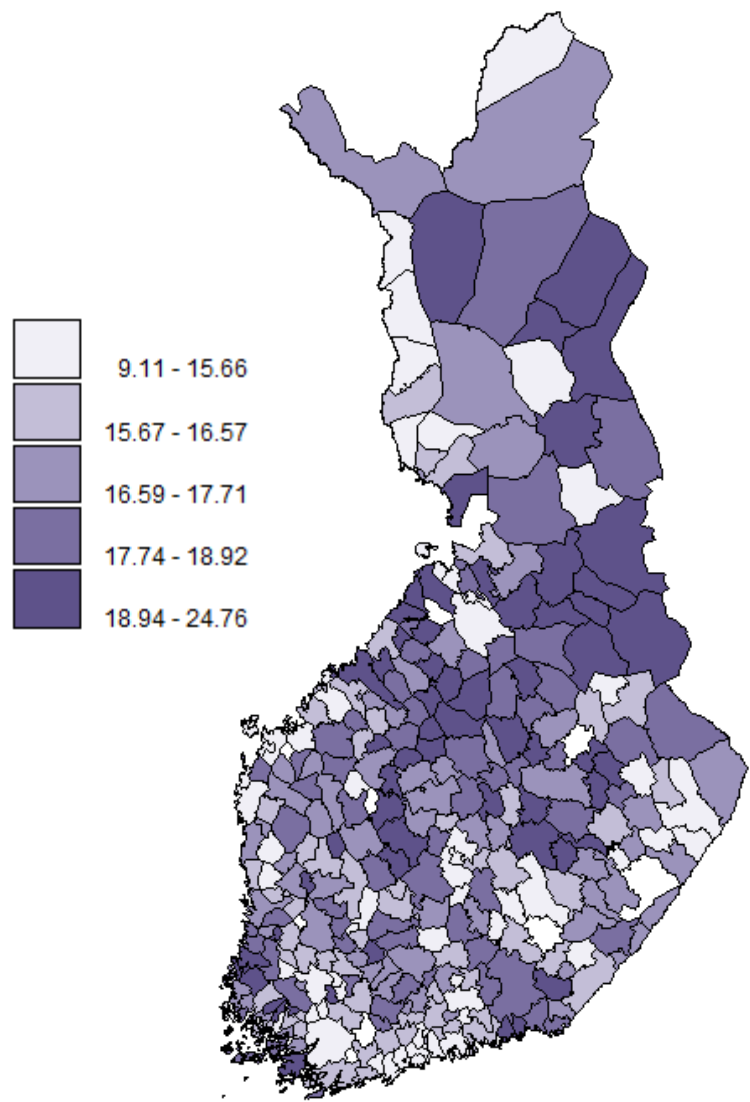
# Finland and its municipalities



# Differences between Finnish municipalities

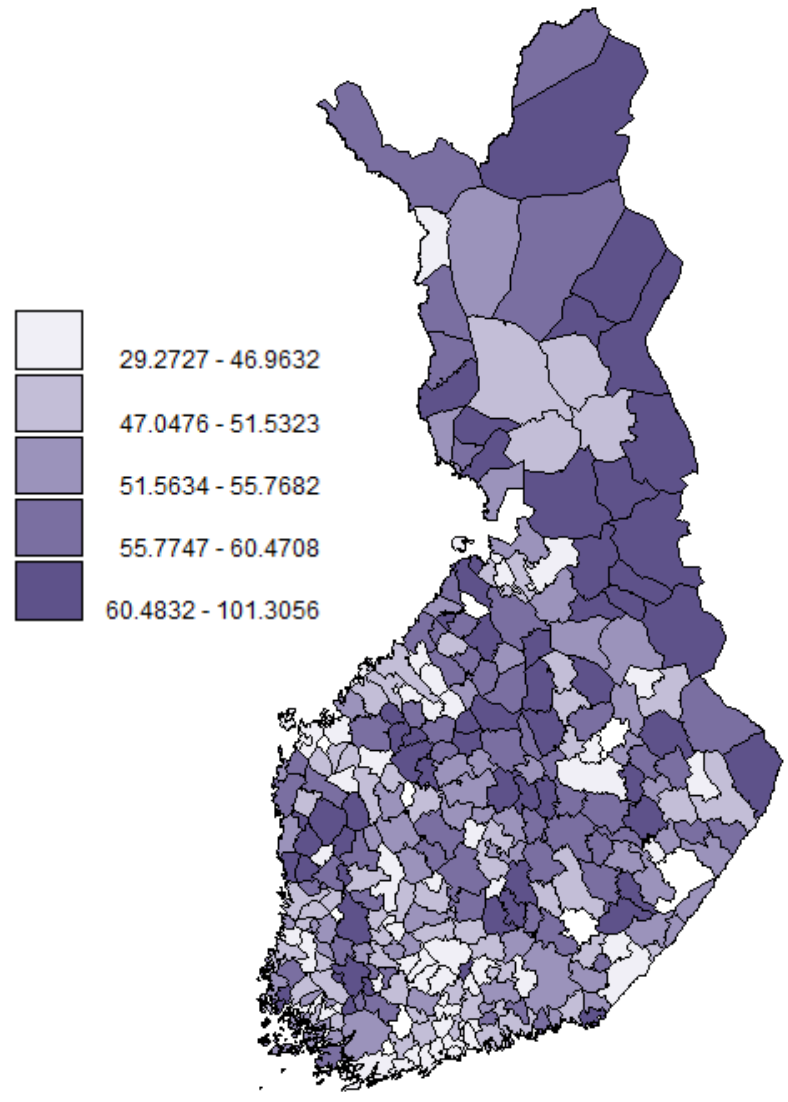
- Data:
  - A 50% random sample of non-retired population aged 25–62 at the end of 2009, who did not receive sickness allowance during 2009 (N = 1 068 736)
  - 332 municipalities + municipality-level factors
- Measures:
  - receipt of sickness allowance during 2010-2011
  - the cumulative number of SA days during 2010–2011

# % persons who had received SA during 2010–11



Average: 16%

# Mean number of days among those who had received SA during 2010–11



Average: 50 days

# Municipality-level factors that are related

- Higher probability of long sickness absence in municipalities with
  - high unemployment rate
  - high % of the manufacturing and construction sector
  - high general morbidity
  - small population
  - rural areas

# Summary and conclusion

- A decreasing trend of long sickness absence in Finland since 2007, mainly due to decrease in sickness absence due to musculoskeletal diseases
- Receipt of sickness allowance strongly related to age, sex, occupational class and region
- To decrease incidence of sickness absence:
  - Focus on manual workers and lower non-manuals (especially women)
- To shorten the spells:
  - Focus on the unemployed, other non-employed, and entrepreneurs / self-employed

# Thank you!

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