Decent work and people with disabilities

An integral approach to assessing the quality of work

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411,600 Canadians with physical or mental disabilities are currently unemployed, despite being willing and able to participate in the paid labour force

EMPOYMENT RATES

50% People with a hearing- or pain-related disability

25% People with intellectual and developmental disabilities

65% Working-age adults with mild disabilities

26% Working-age adults who report a very severe disability

Basic facts about the socio-economic situation of working-age people with disabilities:

- Their employment rate has persistently been far below that of other people
- They are twice as likely as other people to live in poverty – even more likely if "unattached" or a lone parent
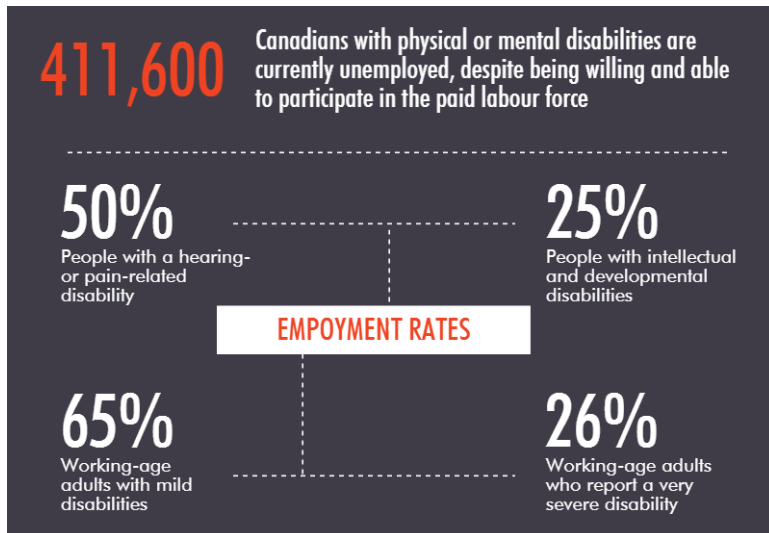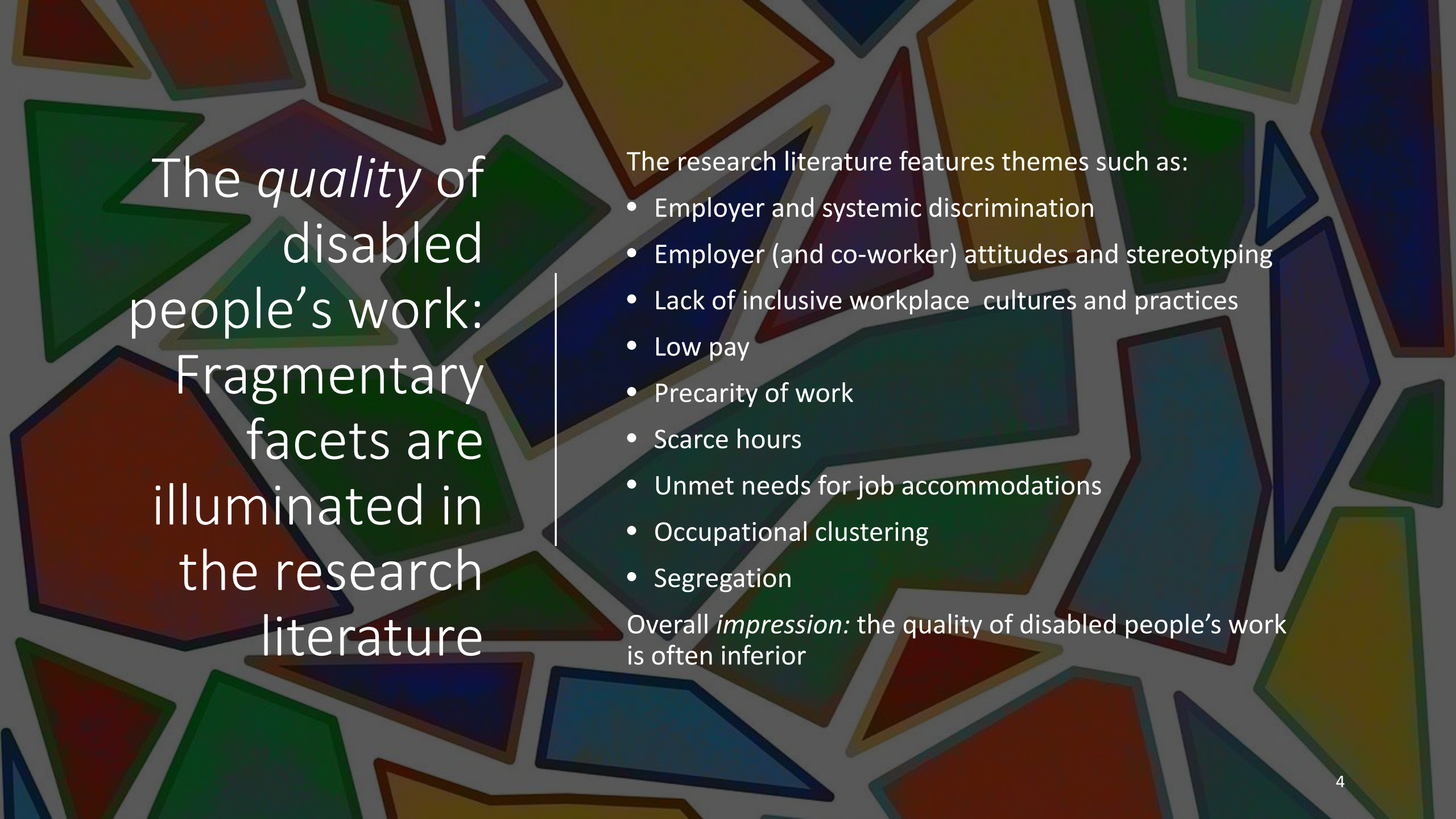
Human Rights

International human rights treaties, including the UNCRPD

- Like other citizens, people with disabilities have the right to pursue their own vision of a good life
  - Participate in relationships with trusted others
  - Reasonable safety and security
  - Socially included, valued and respected as equals
  - Free and self-determining
  - Same right to employment as all others
- The antitheses of these values stem in part from derogatory understandings and treatment of disabled people and are prohibited:
  - Exclusion, exploitation, cruelty, degradation, violence, poverty and abuse

The *quality* of disabled people's work: Fragmentary facets are illuminated in the research literature

The research literature features themes such as:

- Employer and systemic discrimination
- Employer (and co-worker) attitudes and stereotyping
- Lack of inclusive workplace cultures and practices
- Low pay
- Precarity of work
- Scarce hours
- Unmet needs for job accommodations
- Occupational clustering
- Segregation

Overall *impression:* the quality of disabled people's work is often inferior

Quality of work: Need for a more unified view

With attention to:

- Opportunities for employment
- Adequacy of earnings
- Supports for productivity
- Hours of work
- Security of work
- Duration of work
- Equality of opportunity
- Equality of treatment
- Freedom from discrimination
- Freedom from constraint, oppression and exploitation
- Safe and accessible workplaces
- Transitions between work and social security, as needed
- Workers' voice and recognition

Quality
of work

Decent work: The ILO's approach

"Substantive elements" of decent work
(the ILO has several indicators for each):

- The economic and social context for decent work

- Employment opportunities

- Adequate earnings and productive work

- Decent working time

- Combining work, family and personal life

- Work that should be abolished

- Stability and security of work

- Equal opportunity and treatment in employment

- Safe work environment

- Social security (in the event of unemployment) and

- Social dialogue, workers' and employers' representation

Decent Work

Postdoc draws from research literature, and the CSD (2012) and NHS (2011)

- Canadian Survey of Disability (CSD)
  - Largest and most comprehensive data set on disability in Canada
  - Contains many variables with information consistent with the ILO indicators, or which can be derived to mirror them reasonably closely
- National Household Survey (NHS)
  - NHS data are linked to the CSD data
  - Captured general socio-demographic (Census) data for the people included in the CSD, e.g., their age, gender, visible minority and Indigenous person status, earnings, occupations, industries…
    - As well as for people classified as non-disabled whose data is also in the CSD raw data file

My approach: Derived 8 sub-indices for the substantive elements of decent work:

These were equally-weighted (each maximum score = 1) for the following:

- Employment opportunities
- Adequate earnings and productive work
- Decent working time
- Stability and security of work
- Equal opportunity and treatment in employment
- Safe work environment
- Social security (in the event of unemployment) and
- Social dialogue, workers' and employers' representation

Decent Work

Substantive elements of decent work: 32 indicators for employed, working-age people with disabilities

- All of my indicators of decent work (32 in total) were composites, based on two or more CSD source variables. Numerous variables were used to construct the composites:
  - Employment opportunities (4 composite variables)
  - Adequate earnings and productive work (6 composites)
  - Decent working time (5 composites)
  - Stability and security of work (2 composites)
  - Equal opportunity and treatment in employment (10 composites)
  - Safe work environment (3 composites)
  - Social security (i.e., employer support for it and for people who have received it) (1 composite)
  - Social dialogue, workers' (and employers') representation (1 composite)
- No useful CSD information for the postdoc research on:
  - The economic and social context for decent work – (Macro-level indicators of the economy)
  - Work that should be abolished – (Mainly forced and child labour)
  - Combining work, family and personal life

My approach: Deriving a decent work master index

- Consists of the sum of the sub-index scores, divided by the actual total score
- Maximum value = 1

Master index: Substantive elements

My approach:
Transformed the master index into an ordinal (three-point) decent work scale

- Divides the cases in the master index into three, approximately-equal groups of population counts

- Each group represents a low, medium or high degree of congruence with decent work as measured by the master index

Decent Work Scale:
Transformed master index
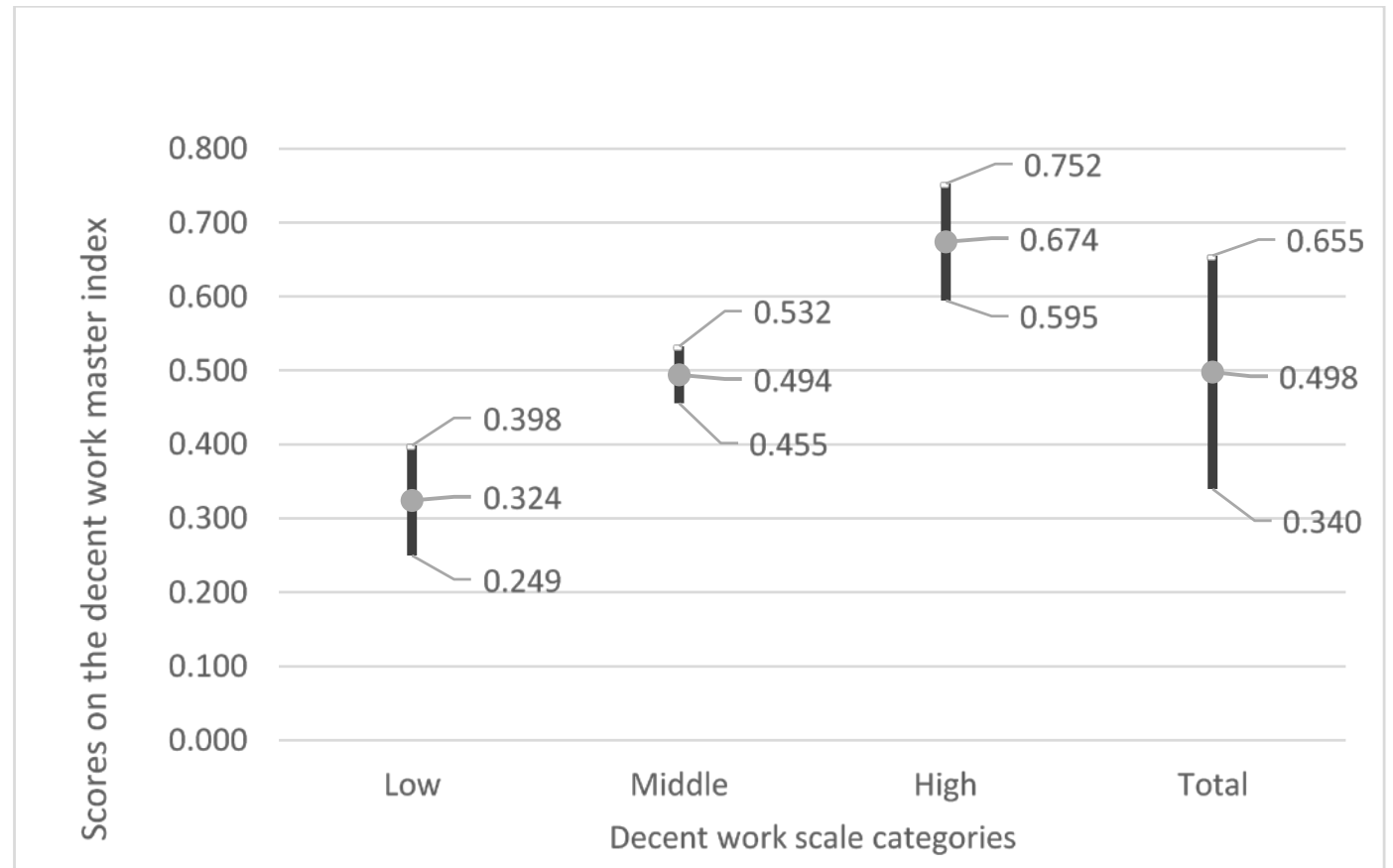
High

Middle

Low
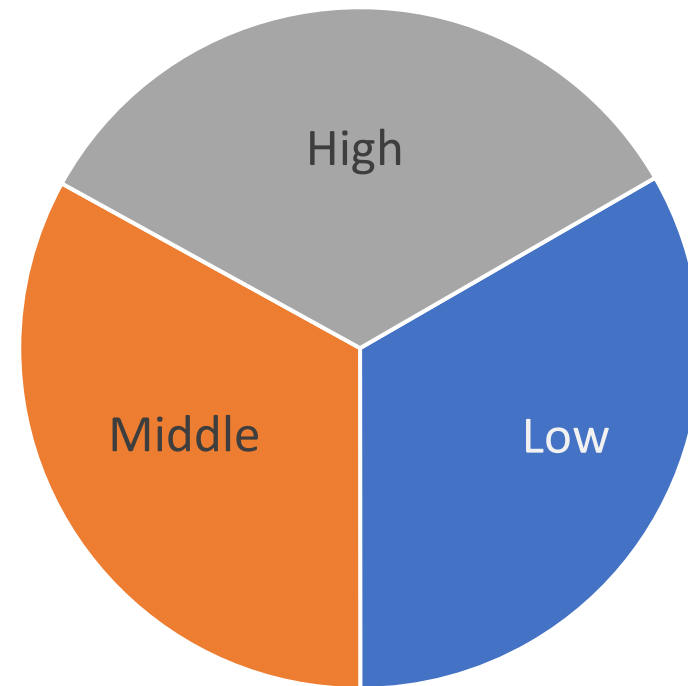
Decent work master index and scale: Basic information (employed, working-age people with disabilities)

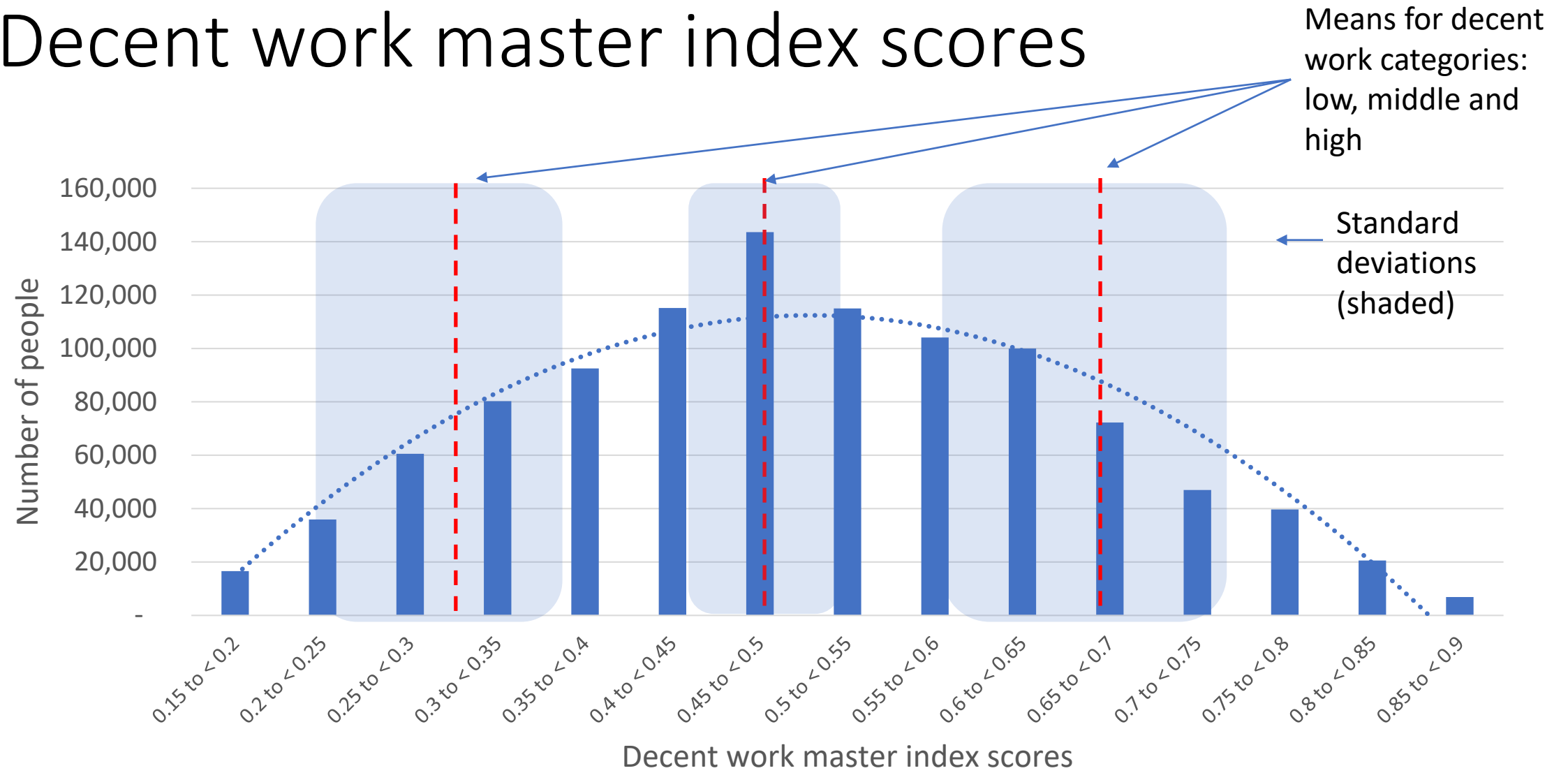| Decent work scale categories	Master index means	Number of people
Low	0.324	352,170
Middle	0.494	349,130
High	0.674	355,510
Total	0.498	1,056,800

Means and standard deviations

Chart 1.
Decent work scale, showing typical score ranges (on the decent work master index) for each category, within one standard deviation of the mean scores
Source: Canadian Survey on Disability, 2012

Decent work master index scores

Means for decent work categories: low, middle and high

Standard deviations (shaded)

Number of people

Decent work master index scores

0.15 to < 0.2, 0.2 to < 0.25, 0.25 to < 0.3, 0.3 to < 0.35, 0.35 to < 0.4, 0.4 to < 0.45, 0.45 to < 0.5, 0.5 to < 0.55, 0.55 to < 0.6, 0.6 to < 0.65, 0.65 to < 0.7, 0.7 to < 0.75, 0.75 to < 0.8, 0.8 to < 0.85, 0.85 to < 0.9
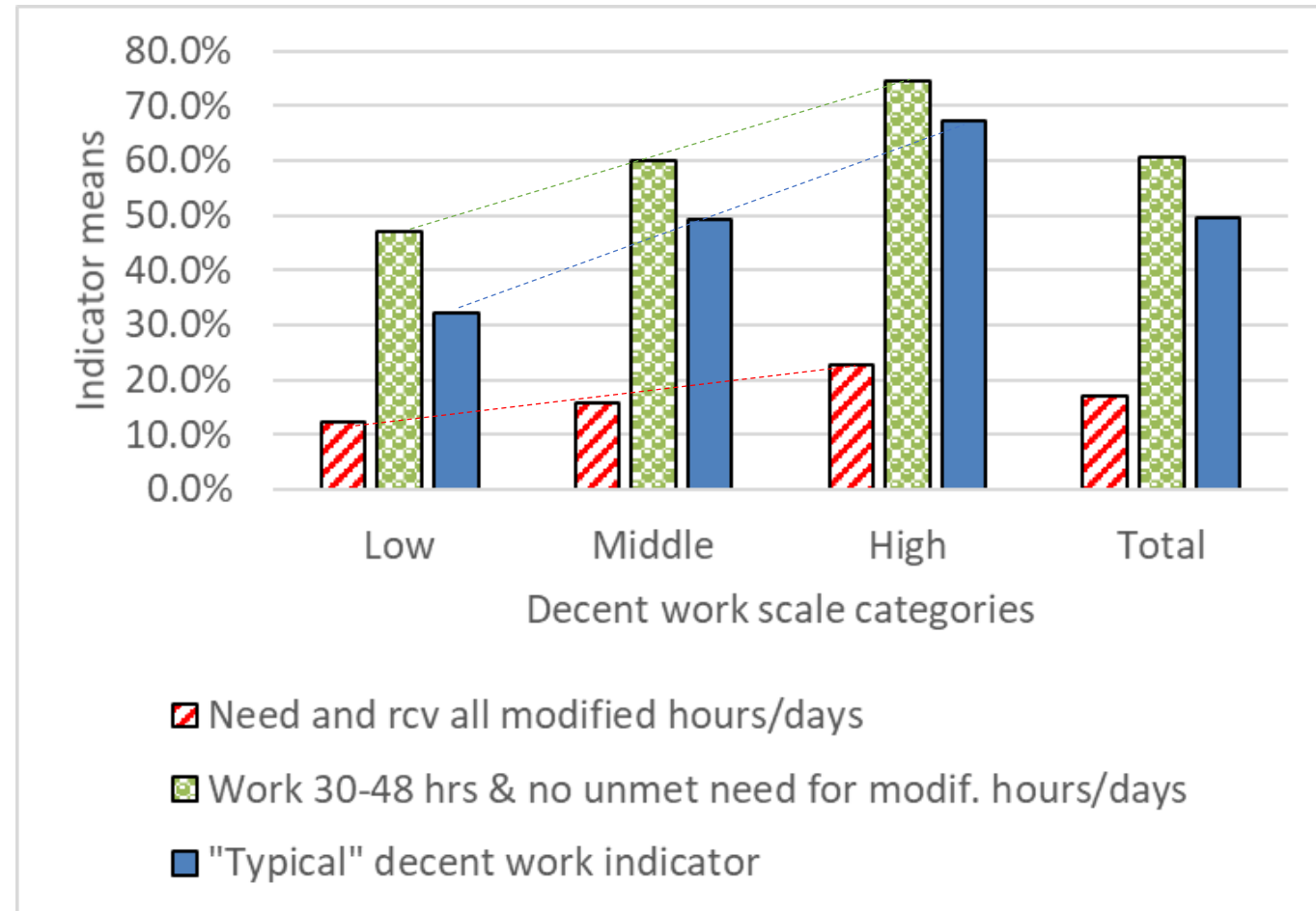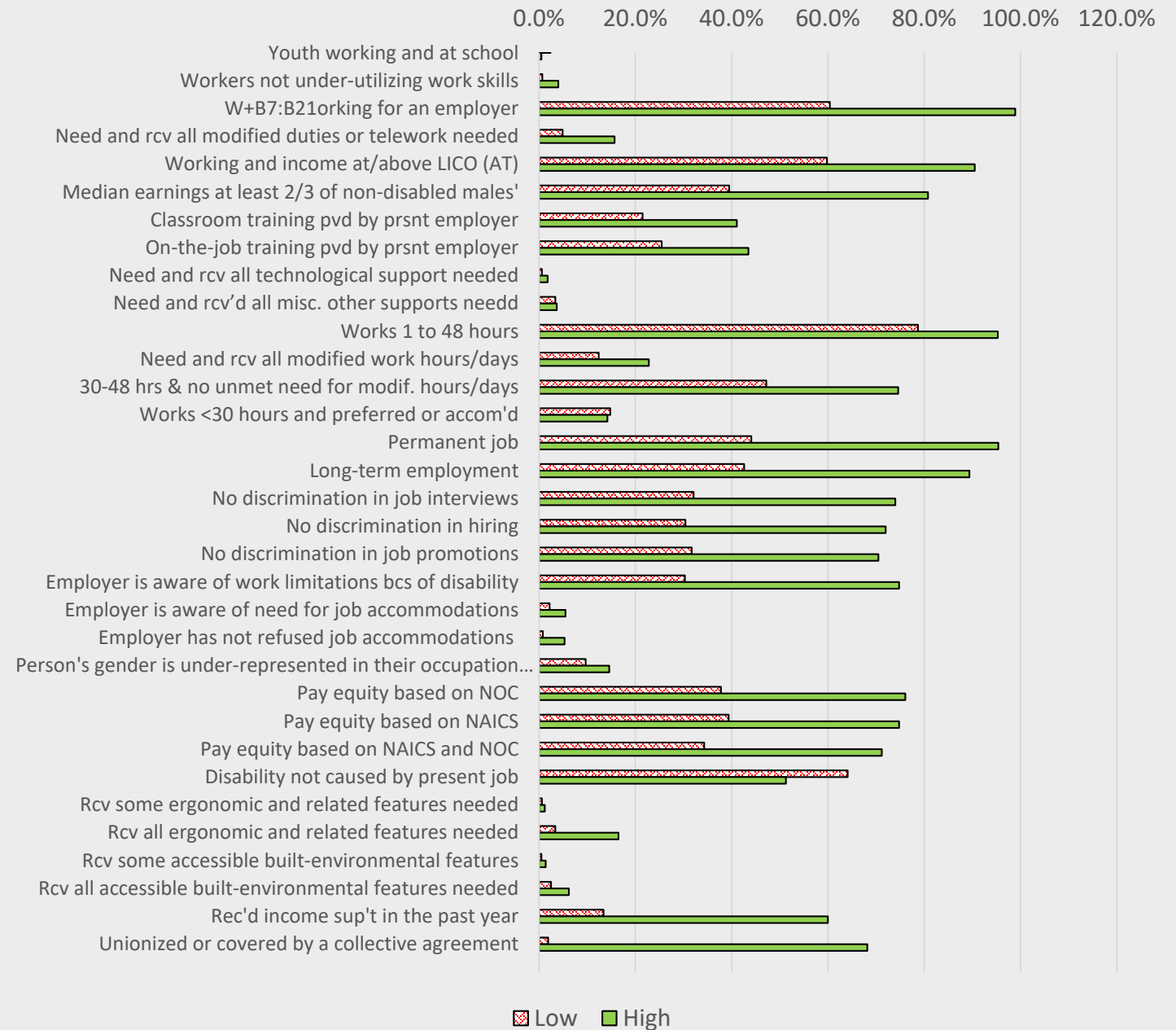
The general pattern for the individual indicators of decent work

Individual indicators yielded a variety of means that followed a similar pattern
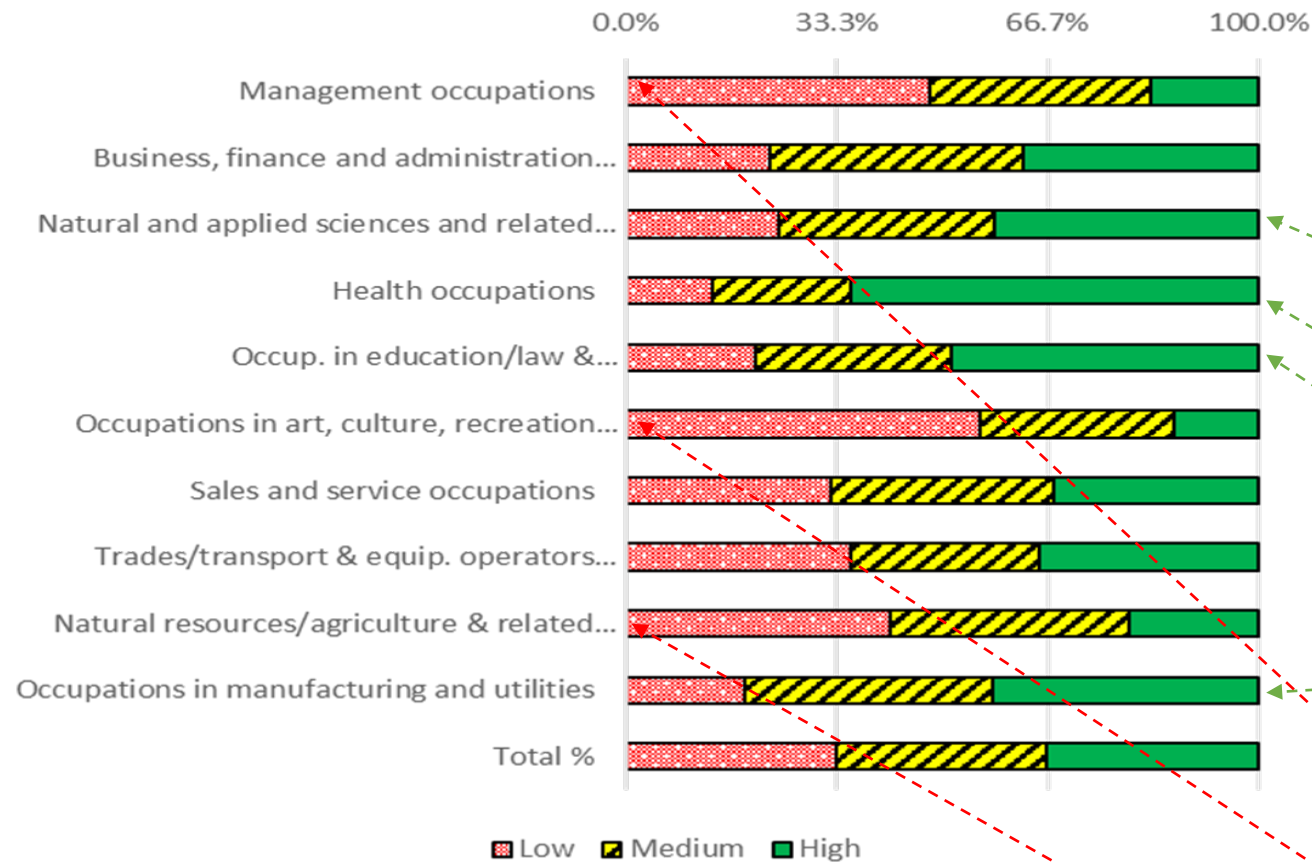
Three examples of three indicators' "yes" percentages in each category of the decent work scale

Percentage "yes" for indicators in low- and high-quality jobs

Chart showing percentage "yes" for indicators in low- and high-quality jobs (Low and High), with a horizontal axis from 0.0% to 120.0%.

Indicators (top to bottom):
- Youth working and at school
- Workers not under-utilizing work skills
- W+B7:B21orking for an employer
- Need and rcv all modified duties or telework needed
- Working and income at/above LICO (AT)
- Median earnings at least 2/3 of non-disabled males'
- Classroom training pvd by prsnt employer
- On-the-job training pvd by prsnt employer
- Need and rcv all technological support needed
- Need and rcv'd all misc. other supports needd
- Works 1 to 48 hours
- Need and rcv all modified work hours/days
- 30-48 hrs & no unmet need for modif. hours/days
- Works <30 hours and preferred or accom'd
- Permanent job
- Long-term employment
- No discrimination in job interviews
- No discrimination in hiring
- No discrimination in job promotions
- Employer is aware of work limitations bcs of disability
- Employer is aware of need for job accommodations
- Employer has not refused job accommodations
- Person's gender is under-represented in their occupation…
- Pay equity based on NOC
- Pay equity based on NAICS
- Pay equity based on NAICS and NOC
- Disability not caused by present job
- Rcv some ergonomic and related features needed
- Rcv all ergonomic and related features needed
- Rcv some accessible built-environmental features
- Rcv all accessible built-environmental features needed
- Rec'd income sup't in the past year
- Unionized or covered by a collective agreement

Legend: Low, High

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Which occupations are most likely to provide decent work?

Details

- Occupations with at least 1.2 times the average percentage of high-quality jobs:
  - Natural and applied sciences and related
  - Health
  - Education, law, social/ community services
  - Manufacturing and utilities

- Occupations with at least 1.2 times the average percentage of low-quality jobs:
  - Management
  - Art, culture, recreation and sport
  - Natural resources/agriculture & related production

Occupational groups with substantially more high-quality jobs than expected

Contributing factors:

- High social dialogue and workers' representation in health, education, law, social/community services and government services, and in manufacturing and utilities

- Strong earnings and supports for productivity, and equal opportunities and treatment in employment, in natural and applied sciences and in health services

- Also, safe and accessible work environments in natural and applied sciences

Occupational groups with substantially more low-quality jobs than expected

Contributing factors:

- Low levels of social dialogue and workers' representation in management; art, culture, recreation and sport; and natural resources and agriculture

- Lack of support for movement from or between social security and jobs in management and in art, culture, recreation and sports

- Unequal opportunities and treatment in arts, culture, recreation and sports

- Low job security in natural resources and agriculture (and related jobs)

Which industries are most likely to provide decent work?
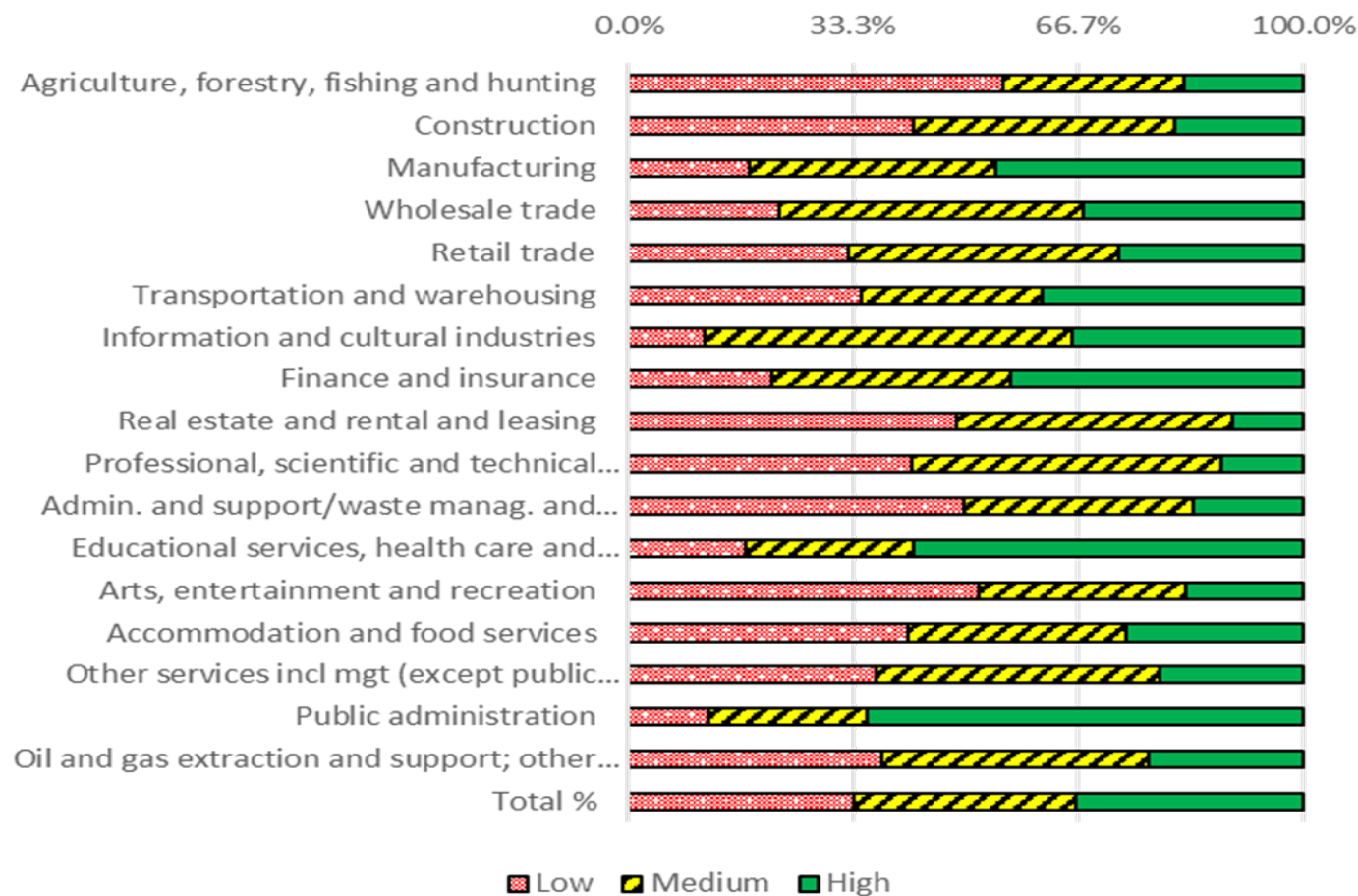
Details

- Industry sectors with at least 1.2 times the average percentage of high-quality jobs:

  - Manufacturing

  - Educational services, health care and social assistance

  - Finance and insurance

  - Public administration

- Sectors with at least 1.2 times the average percentage of low-quality jobs:

  - Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting

  - Construction

  - Real estate and rental and leasing

  - Professional, scientific and technical

  - Admin. and support/ waste mgt and remediation services

  - Arts, entertainment and recreation

  - Accommodation and food services

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Industry groups with substantially more high-quality jobs than expected

Contributing factors

- High social dialogue and workers' representation in educational services, health care and social assistance, and in public administration

- Higher-than-typical earnings and supports for productivity, and measures to further equal opportunities and treatment in employment, in finance and insurance and in public administration.

- Good earnings and supports for productivity also contributed to high-quality jobs in the health care and social assistance sector

- Job security was a further contributor in public administration

- The strong showing in high-quality jobs in manufacturing seemed to depend less on any one or two factors but on the fairly even and slightly higher than typical availability of most substantive elements of decent work in that sector

Industry groups with substantially more low-quality jobs than expected

Contributing factors:

- Lack of unionization /collective-agreement coverage was a common feature

- The lack of safe and accessible work environments In agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and in construction

- The lack of support for transition between social security and work in construction

- Unusually low earnings and supports for productivity, and poor job security, in the cluster of jobs in administration and support, waste management and remediation services

- Aside from lack of union protections, no single major deficiency stood out as the driver of low-quality jobs in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, or in the accommodation and food services sector
  - Instead the explanation seemed to be slightly lower scores than typical across many of the substantive elements of decent work

Who is most likely to have high-quality work?

- General leaning towards the people with the following characteristics:
  - 30 years and older;
  - Lone parents;
  - Separated or divorced;
  - Living in households with total incomes above the after-tax poverty line (LICO);
  - With educational credentials, specifically in trades/ apprenticeship, or from college, CEGEP or university

- More likely than in low-or medium-quality work to have very severe level of disability;
- More likely to be limited at work because of disability and with their present employer when they first experienced those limitations, i.e., people who were retained in jobs rather than who acquired jobs after the onset of work limitations;
- More likely to have disability caused by work-related rather than other factors;
- More likely living in New Brunswick

Occupational groups with substantially more people than expected with selected disabilities in Low, Medium and High-quality jobs

Occupations	Intellectual	Psychological / emotional	Hearing	Learning – No intellectual / developmental	Seeing	Physical (mobility, dexterity, flexibility)	Pain only
Management	–	L	L	L	L	M	L
Business, finance and administration	M	H	H	H	M	H	M
Natural and applied sciences and related	–	M	M, H	H	H	H	H
Health	–	H	M, H	M	H	H	H
Education; law & social; community & gov. services	–	H	H	H	M	H	H
Art, culture, recreation and sport	–		L	L	L	L	L
Sales and service	H			L			
Trades; transport & equip. operators & related		L	H		L		M
Natural resources; agriculture & related production	–	L		L	–		–
Manufacturing and utilities	–		M	H	M	M	M

Blank cells had counts within the expected range. Cells with a dash (–) had counts too low for release.

Industry groups with substantially more people than expected with selected disabilities in Low, Medium and High-quality jobs

Industries	Intellectual	Psychological / emotional	Hearing	Learning – No intellectual	Seeing	Physical (mobility, dexterity, flexibility)	Pain only
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	–	L	L	L		L	L
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas	–	–		–	–		–
Utilities	–	–		–	–		
Construction	–	L	L	M	L	L	L
Manufacturing	–	M		H	M	H	M
Wholesale trade	–	H	M	–	–	M	M
Retail trade	H	M	L, M		M	M	
Transportation and warehousing	–		L, H	–	L		H
Information and cultural industries	–	M	H	–	M	M, H	–
Finance and insurance	–	H	M		–	H	
Real estate and rental and leasing	–	–	–	–	–	M	L
Professional, scientific and technical	–	M	M	–	M	M	L
Management of companies ...	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Admin. and support; waste mgt...	M	L	L	L	M	L	
Educational services	–	H	H	H	H	H	M
Health care and social assistance	M	H	H	H	H	H	H
Arts, entertainment and recreation	–	L	–	M	L	L	L
Accommodation and food services	M	H	L	L	L	L	H
Other services (except public admin)	–		M	L		M	L
Public administration	–	H	H	H	H	H	H

Blank cells had counts within the expected range. Cells with a dash (–) had counts too low for release.

Take away messages on occupations and industries

- While there may be some over-arching patterns in terms of whether people are likely to work at low-, medium- or high-quality jobs in various industries and occupations, much depends on the nature of people's disability

- Related factors are relevant as well, such as:
  - A person's occupational history and experiences
  - Their age and gender
  - The level and nature of their education
  - Indigenous person or a visible minority status
  - The cause of disability, when disability occurred in the lifespan, and whether the person was employed at disability onset
  - The job supports the person needs vs the supports available in the context of the job demands in a given occupation and industry

The research's implications and potential

For employment-service agencies

Agencies could use a decent work lens to "package" administrative data to:

- Track the quality of work they are helping their clients to obtain
  - Agencies already collect much of the information they would need
  - A few additional questions could be asked, based on simple questions widely used by researchers
  - Comparative baseline information on employment and earnings by gender, disability status, occupation and industry can be obtained from the CSD (and other major population surveys)
- Track clients' migrations up and down the decent work scale
- Identify key difficulties clients and employers are experiencing with various facets of decent work
- Track clients' movement across jobs and industries that reflect approximately the same degree of congruence with decent work
  - E.g., from good-quality work in manufacturing to good-quality work in retail
- Show the agency's focuses and results with clients and employers over time
- Develop and illustrate proposals for funding
- Report on results to public and private funders

The research's implications and potential

For governments

Governments could use a decent work lens to:

- Track the quality of outcomes achieved for public investments in employment services for people with disabilities

- Track agencies' progress in meeting their own and governments' goals for the employment of people with disabilities

- Consider "merit funding" (e.g., top-ups) for organizations that consistently meet or exceed their goal of ensuring that a given percentage of clients are working in good-quality jobs in a given occupational group, industry group and reporting period

- Recognize agencies that show how they are helping clients move from low-quality work into higher-quality work

- Support periodic spot-checks by independent evaluators (based on samples of agencies)
  - To ensure the validity of the information the agencies are generating
  - To disincentivize agencies from "gaming" the knowledge process

- Track long-term patterns in the employment that governments are helping people with disabilities to obtain

The research's implications and potential

## For governments and agencies

Could use a decent work lens to:

- Develop a better knowledge system on the employment of people with disabilities
- Track trends over time
    - E.g., Consistent patterns of low-quality and high-quality jobs in various occupations and industries
- Inform the goal-setting
- Show employers the occupations and industries where people with disabilities are presently participating in high-quality work.
    - Use this information as a stimulus for employers to consider hiring more individuals with disabilities

Some limitations and further directions for follow-up research

- In which occupations and industries are jobless people with work-limiting disability obtaining new, high-quality (and low-quality) jobs? Are there variations by type of disability, gender, age, province / territory, etc. Implications for policy and programming?

- Explore patterns:

  - Why are there different patterns, by type of disability, in the quality of work across occupational and industry groups?

  - Why do some occupational groups tend to consistently yield low-quality work, regardless of type of disability, e.g., management jobs?

  - Why do some occupational groups tend to consistently yield high-quality work, e.g., in health services; in education; law and social services; community and gov't services?

  - Why do many people with some disabilities have high-quality jobs in a given industry sector, many people with other disabilities have medium-quality jobs in the same sector, while a great many others have low-quality jobs in the same sector, e.g., accommodation and food services?

  - What are the implications of these patterns (and "occupational discrimination") in policy development and planning for more and better jobs for people with disabilities?

- Derive reasonably comparable measures of decent work for use with people with and without disabilities across other major – and frequently occurring – population surveys (e.g., GSS, CCHS)
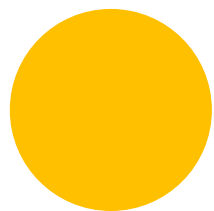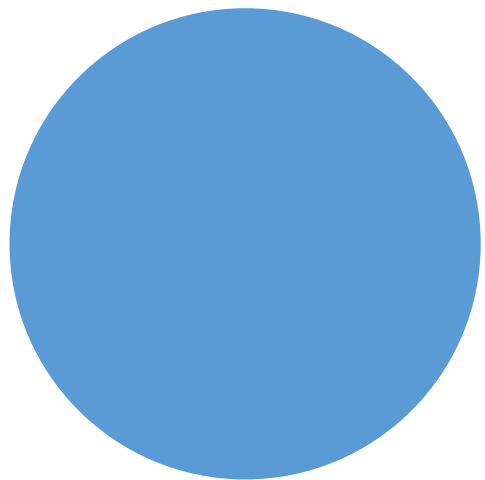
Appendix

Indicators for the decent work master index and three-point scale