

Economic Living Standards Of Older People: Inequalities And Health.



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Te Kaunihera Rangahau Hauora o Aotearoa

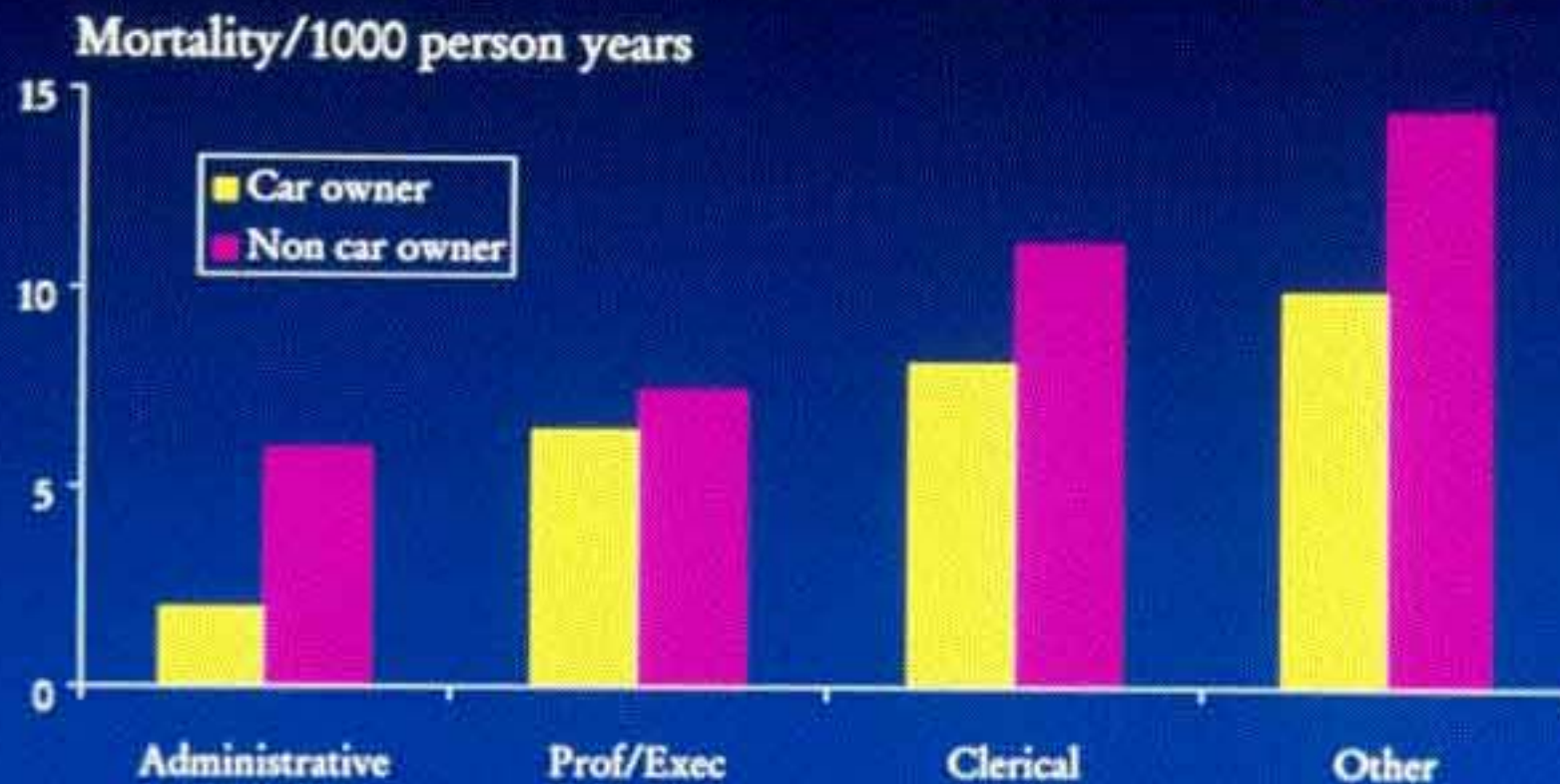
Ageing and Health

- Factors related to changes in physical and mental health
 - Age
 - Individual health behaviours: e.g. health care utilisation, physical activity, smoking and alcohol use.
 - Structural factors: retirement, ethnicity, gender, and SES (income, occupation and education).

The SES and health gradient

- People of higher SES live longer healthier lives
- One of the strongest and most consistent predictors of public health
- A gradient - not just the poor and the rest

All-cause mortality by employment grade and car ownership in the Whitehall study of London civil servants, excluding subjects with prevalent disease at the time of study entry



Inequalities in older age

[Chandola T](#), [Ferrie J](#), [Sacker A](#), [Marmot M](#). (2007). Social inequalities in self reported health (SF-36) in early old age: 18 year follow-up of Whitehall II study participants.

- Inequalities contribute to widening gaps
- Physical health deteriorated more rapidly with age among men and women in lower occupational grades
- Improved mental health rate slower for lower grades

HEALTH, WORK, AND RETIREMENT STUDY

Two waves of data collection.

- Phase 1 involves three studies:
 - Postal survey of representative sample of NZers aged 55 to 70 (oversampling of Māori)
 - Interview with a representative sample of Māori in same age range.
 - Interview with sub-sample from the general population
- Phase two – 2nd wave of survey and interview data

Survey

■ *Participants*

- From NZ Electoral Roll
- General Sample = 5,264 (61%)
- Māori Sample = 7,781 (48%)
- N = 6662 Average Return rate = 53%

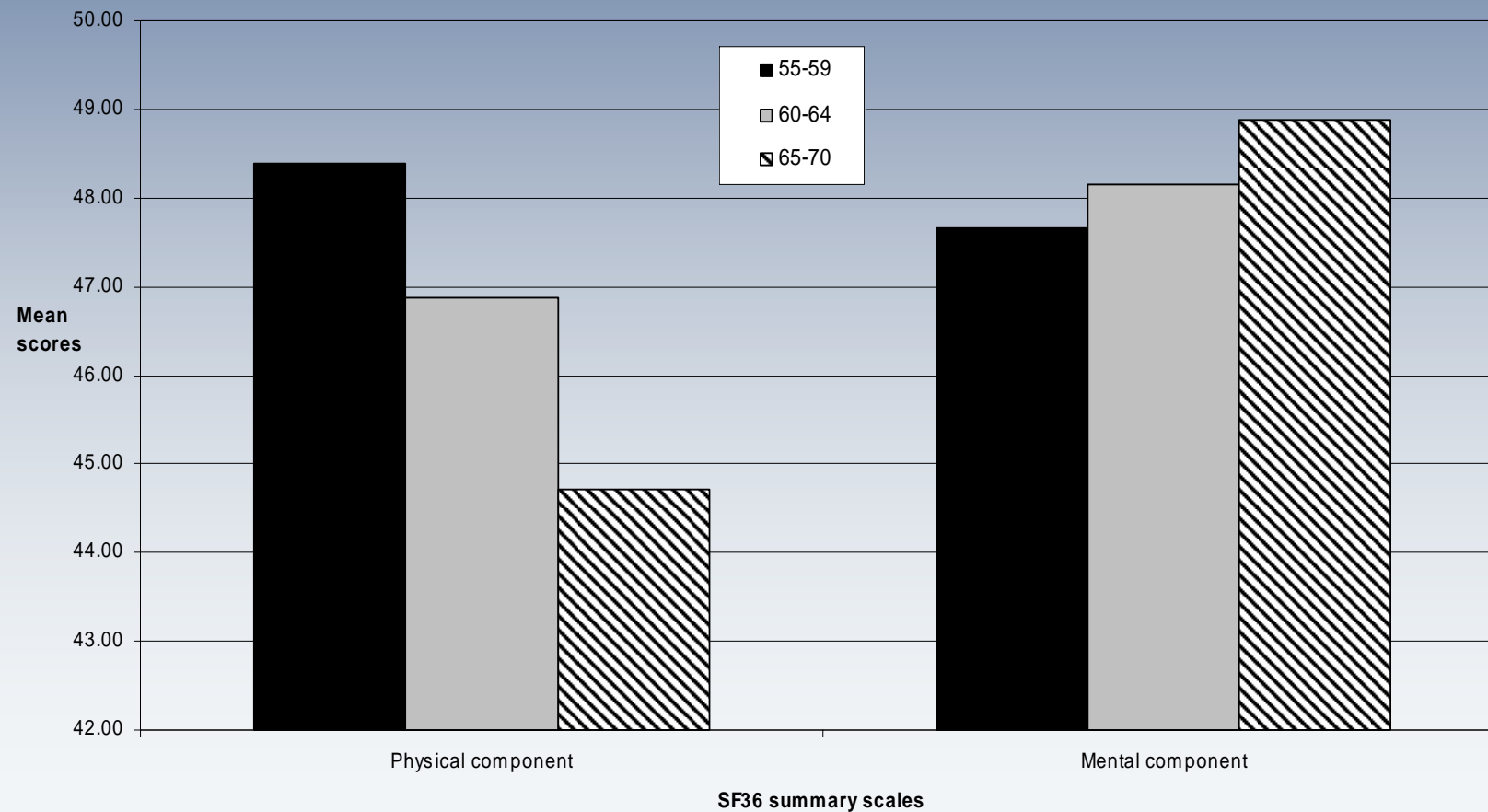
■ *Postal questionnaire*

- Individual and Household demographics
- Physical and Mental health (SF-36)
- SES (wealth, economic living standards, ethnicity, educational qualifications)
- Health related behaviours (smoking, exercise).

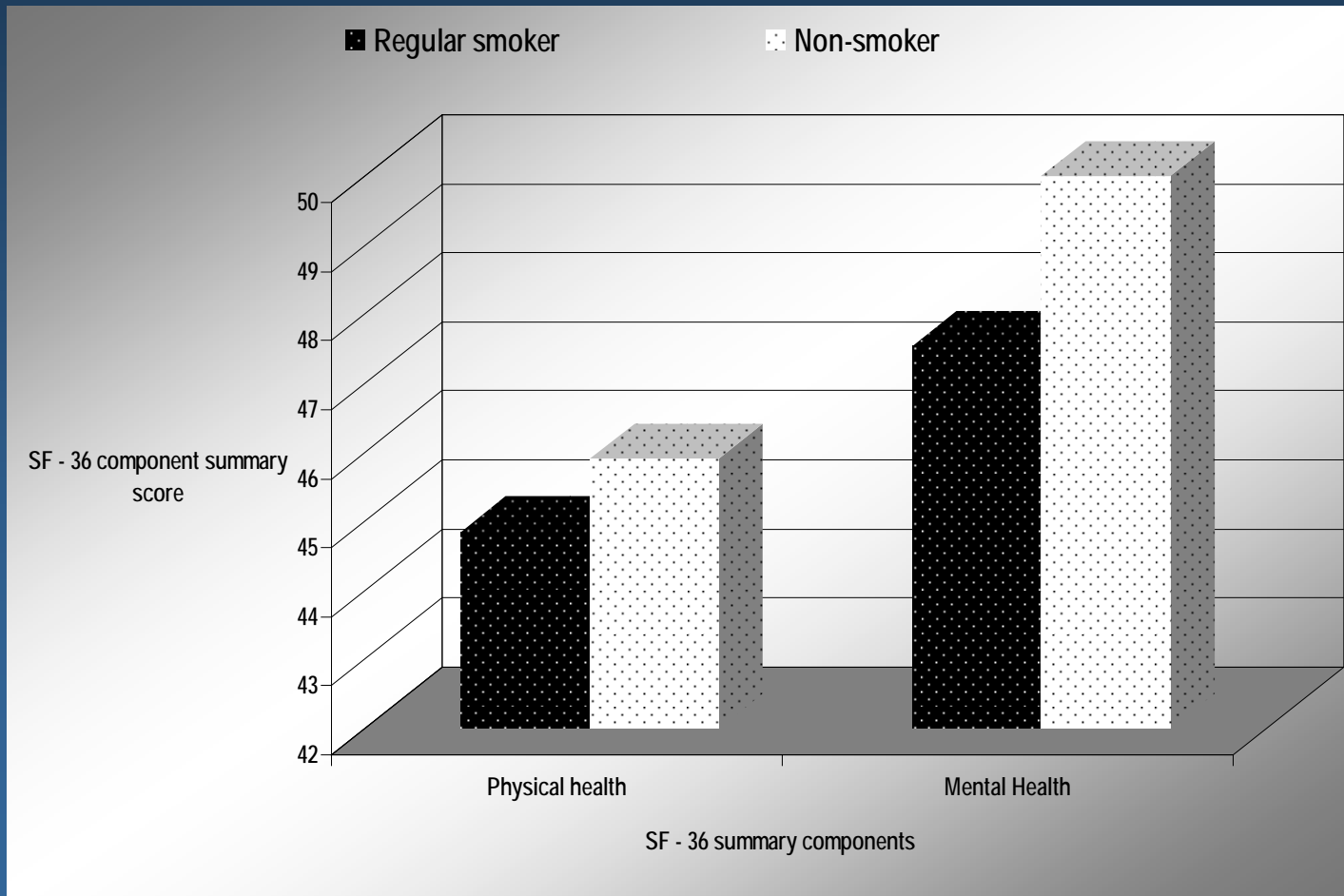
Individual and Behavioural Factors Related to Health

- Age
- Smoking
- Physical Activity

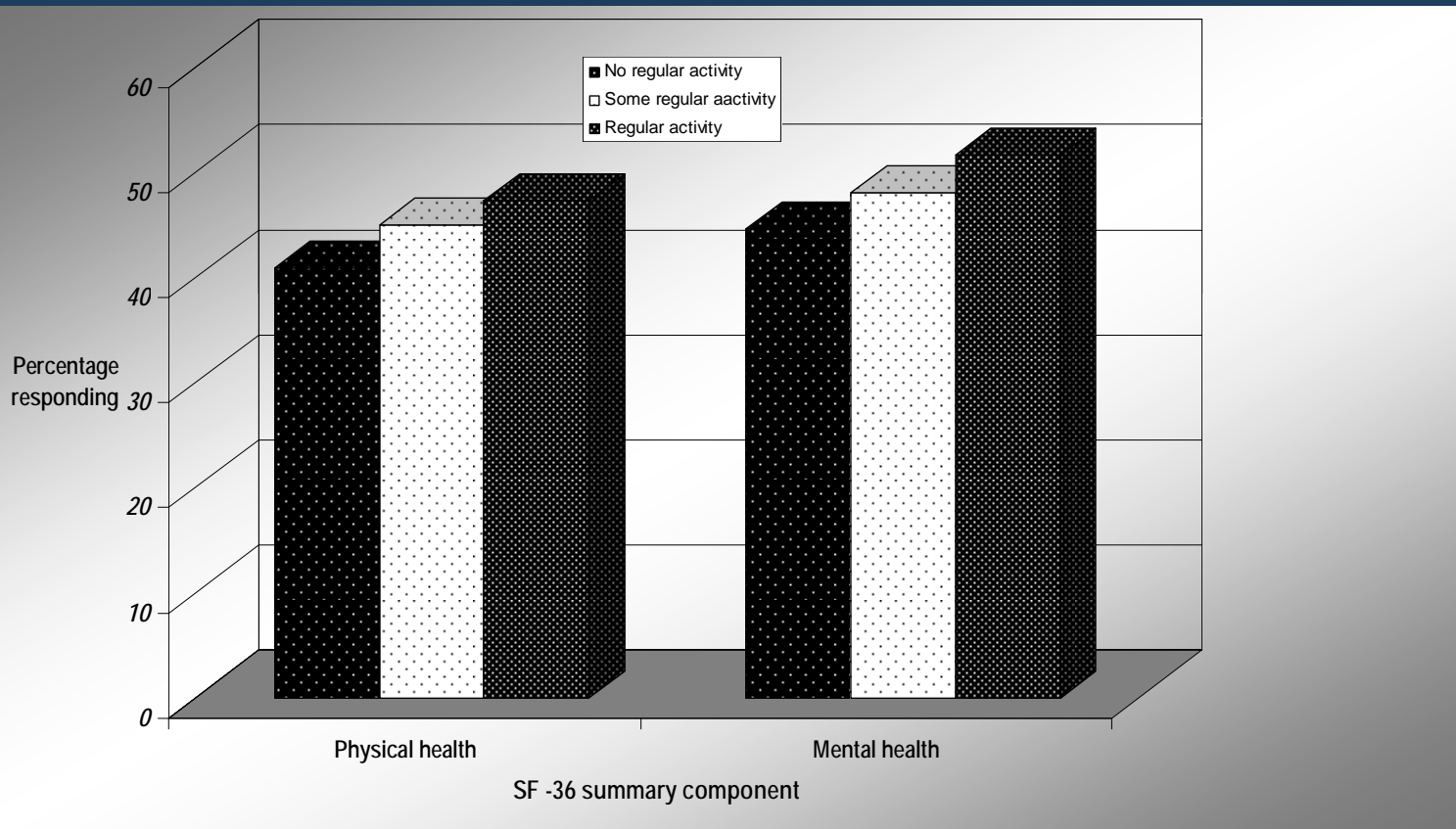
SF36 summary scores by Age



Smoking Tobacco



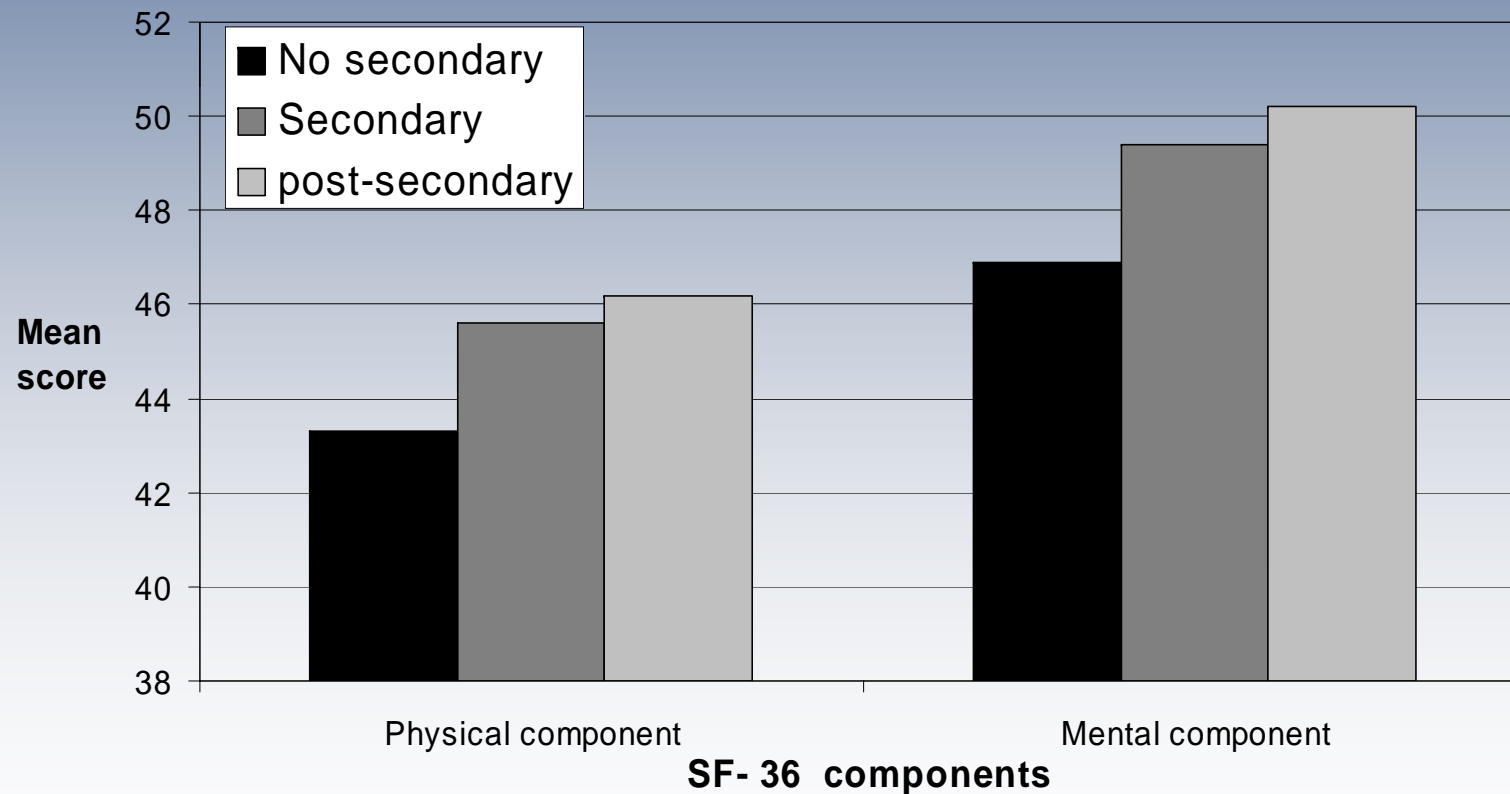
Physical Activity



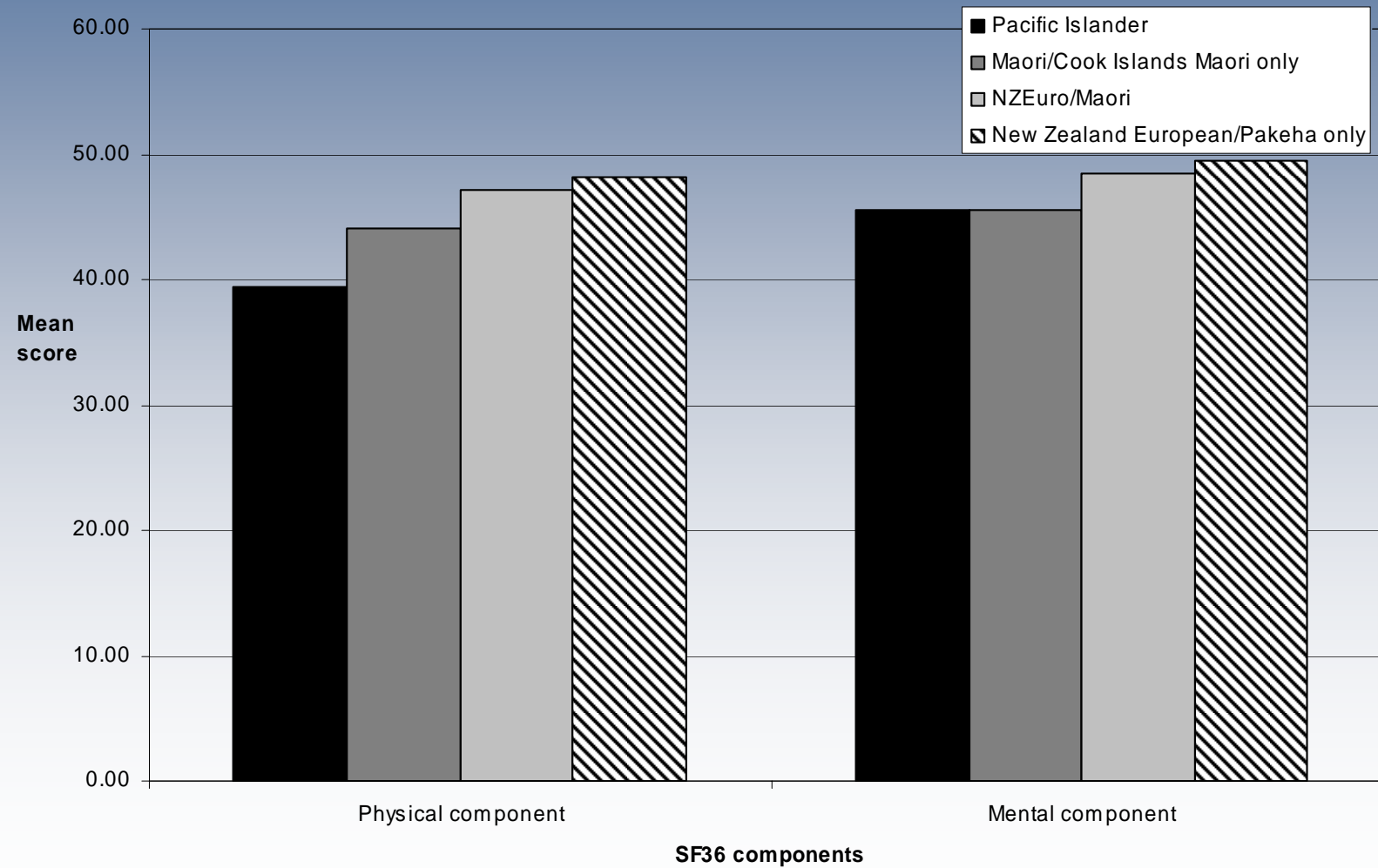
Structural Factors Related to Health

- Education
- Ethnicity
- Household Income
- Economic Living Standards

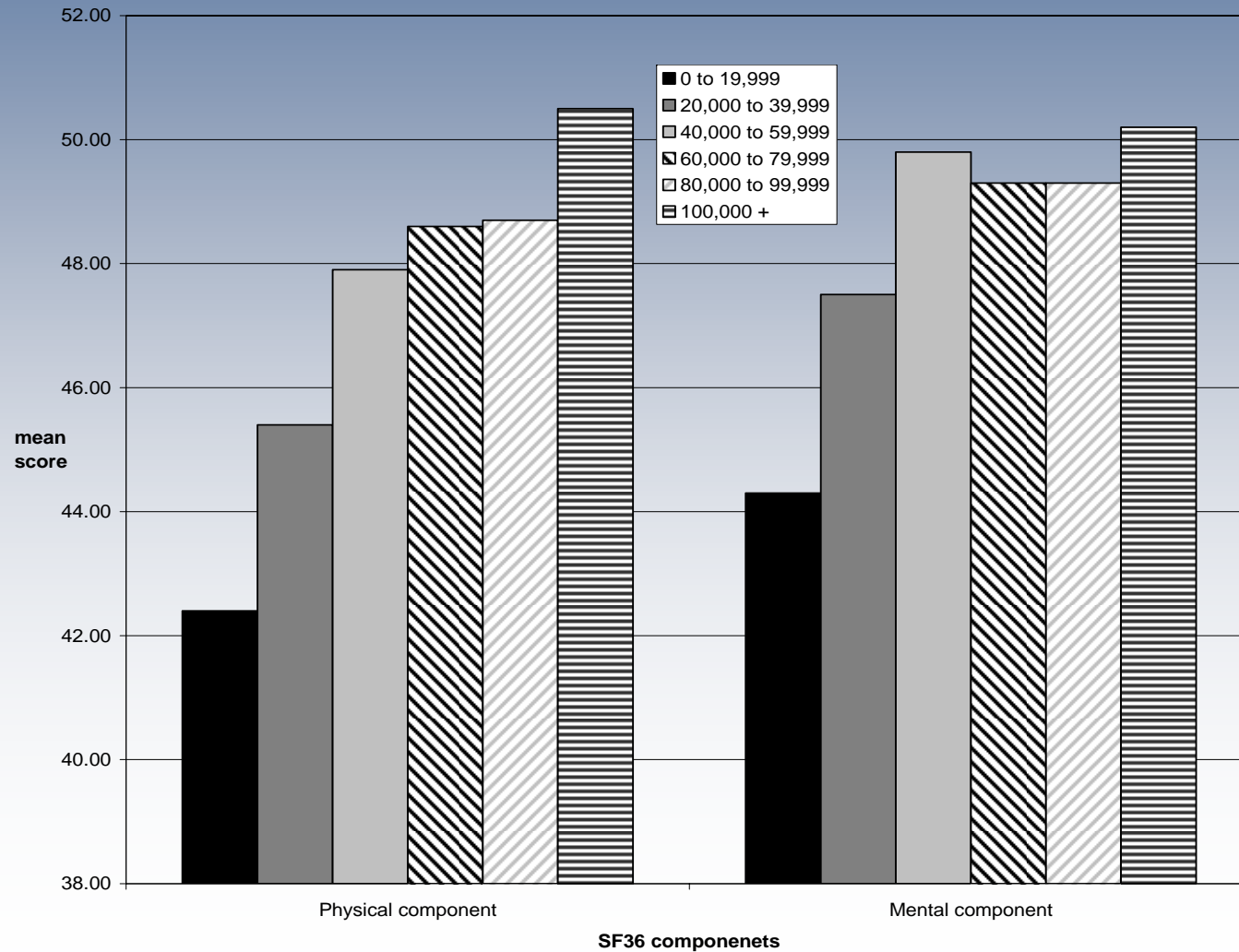
SF 36 summary scores by levels of educational qualifications



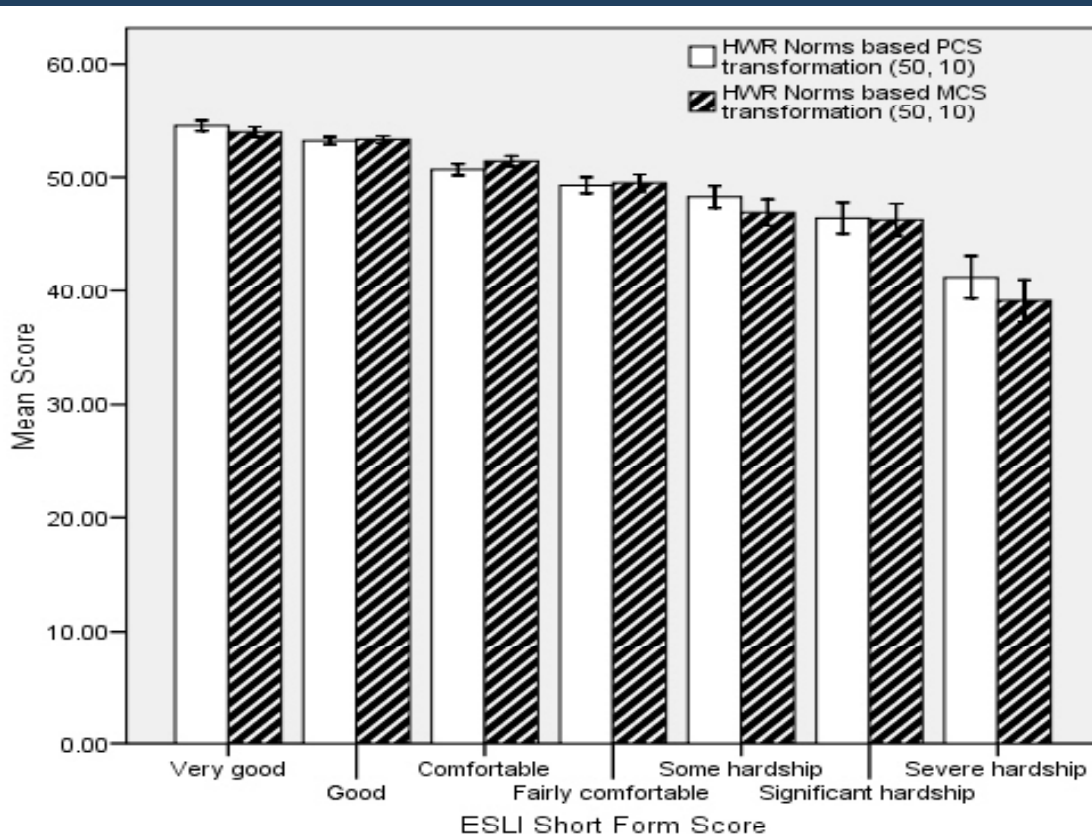
SF 36 summary scores by ethnicity



SF-36 scores by household income



Economic Living Standards



Note: Error Bars: 95% CI

Physical Health as Criterion

■ Age	-.069***
■ Gender	.033*
■ Retirement Status	-.153***
■ Physical Activity	.105***
■ Smoking	.028*
■ Wealth	.052***
■ Living Standards	.259***
■ Education	.063***
■ Ethnicity	.037**

Adj. $R^2 = .160$ ***

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Mental Health as Criterion

■ Age	.125***
■ Gender	.034*
■ Retirement Status	-.047**
■ Physical Activity	.042**
■ Smoking	-.012
■ Wealth	.006
■ Living Standards	.341***
■ Education	.023
■ Ethnicity	.020

Adj. $R^2 = .160$ ***

* $p = <.05$, ** $p = <.05$, *** $p = <.001$

Conclusion

- Evidence suggests that inequalities will be an important public health issue for the ageing population as 'baby boomers' move from work to retirement.
- Health promotion for older people must take account of the broader social and structural factors.
- These relationships must be explored since they have important implications for public health policy and practice.



<http://hwr.massey.ac.nz>