

# Evaluating the Effectiveness of the New Certificates of Capacity in Improving Outcomes of the Management of Musculoskeletal Injuries within the Western Australian Workers' Compensation System

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- Background
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- Discussion
- Conclusion

# Background

- WorkCover WA introduced new Certificates of Capacity
  - It is time
  - Encourage GPs to adopt language to support work capacity
  - Support biopsychosocial injury management
  - Improve communication and flow of information

# Certificates of Capacity



WorkCoverWA

Form 3

## WorkCover WA - FIRST certificate of capacity

### 1. WORKER'S DETAILS

First name  Last name   
Date of birth  Email   
Phone  Mobile   
Address

### 2. EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Worker's job title  Employer's name   
Employer's address

### 3. CONSENT AUTHORITY

I consent to any medical practitioner who treats me (whether named on this certificate or not) to discuss my medical condition with my employer, insurer and other medical or allied health professionals for the purpose of my claim for workers' compensation and return to work options.

Worker's signature  Print name   
Date

### 4. WORKER'S DESCRIPTION OF INJURY

Date of injury   
What happened?   
Worker's symptoms

### 5. MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

Date of this assessment   
Clinical findings   
Diagnosis   
The injury is consistent with worker's description of how injury occurred  yes  no  uncertain  
The injury is:  a new condition  a recurrence of a pre-existing condition



WorkCoverWA

Form 4A

## WorkCover WA - PROGRESS certificate of capacity

### 1. WORKER'S DETAILS

First name  Last name   
Date of birth  Claim no.   
Phone  Email   
Address

### 2. EMPLOYER'S DETAILS

Employer's name  Employer's phone   
Employer's address

### 3. MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

Date of this assessment  Date of injury   
Diagnosis

### 4. PROGRESS REPORT

Activities/interventions	Actual outcome (change in symptoms, function, activity and work participation)	Still required?*
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Other factors appear to be impacting recovery and return to work

Comment

### 5. WORK CAPACITY

Worker's usual duties   
Having considered the health benefits of work, I find this worker to have:  
 full capacity for work from  to   still requires further treatment  
 some capacity for work, from  to  performing:  
 pre-injury duties  modified or alternative duties  workplace modifications  
 pre-injury hours  modified hours of  hrs/day  days/wk  
 no capacity for any work from  to  (outline clinical reason on next page)

# Background

- Fit note UK 2010<sup>1</sup>
- Legislative change in Finland 2012<sup>2</sup>
- New Certificates of Capacity in Victoria 2015<sup>3</sup>

The interventions have common goals:

- Focus on capacity
- Improve communication

1. Gabbay et al – Factors associated with the length off fit-note certified sickness episodes in UK – 2015.
2. Halonen et al – Effectiveness of legislative changes obligating notification of prolonged sickness absence and assessment of remaining work ability on return to work and work participation in Finland- 2016.
3. Brijnath et al - A Process evaluation of the new certificates of capacity for compensation claims - 2013

# Methods

- Aim of the study
  - Preliminary Evaluation of Certificates
- Descriptive study (before-after intervention study).
  - Approvals
  - Retrospective review of WCWA workers' compensation data.
  - Intervention
    - WorkCover WA new Certificates of Capacity
  - Inclusions
    - Before intervention: accepted WC claims for sprains & strains (1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2013 – 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2013) – finalised prior to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014.
    - After intervention: accepted WC claims for sprains & strains ( 1<sup>st</sup> Jul 2014 – 30<sup>th</sup> Jun 2015)- finalised prior to 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2016.
  - Exclusions
    - Incomplete data.
    - Don't meet case definition.

# Methods

- 33,189 cases were collected.
- 10,997 cases were ineligible (33%)
  - 6059 case before intervention (58%)
  - 4554 case after intervention (42%)

# Methods

	Eligible Cases	Percentage
<b>Before Intervention (2013)</b>	11,287	51.51%
<b>After Intervention (2014-15)</b>	10,625	48.49%
<b>Total</b>	21,912	100%



# Methods

- The two groups were compared:
  - Gender, age and occupation (chi-squared tests)
  - Return to work status.
    - Proportion of accepted claims where injured worker returned to work in full capacity, restricted capacity or was unfit for work (chi-squared tests)
  - Median, mean and range of distribution of claims cost (t-test)
  - Median, mean and range of distribution of claims duration (t-test)
- Conventional criterion of statistical significance ( $P < 0.05$ ) was used.
- Data analysed using STATA V.14

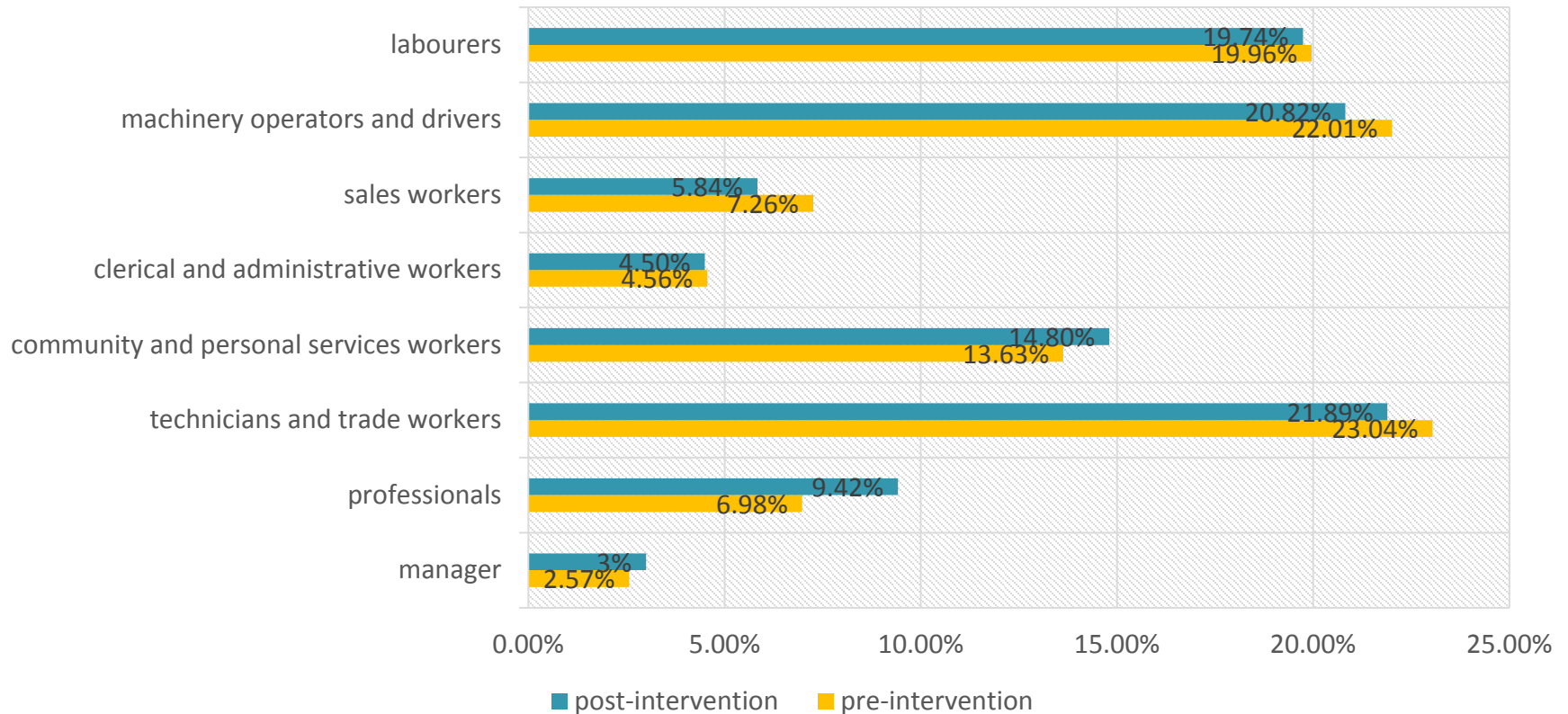
# Results – Gender and Age Distribution

Gender & Age distribution



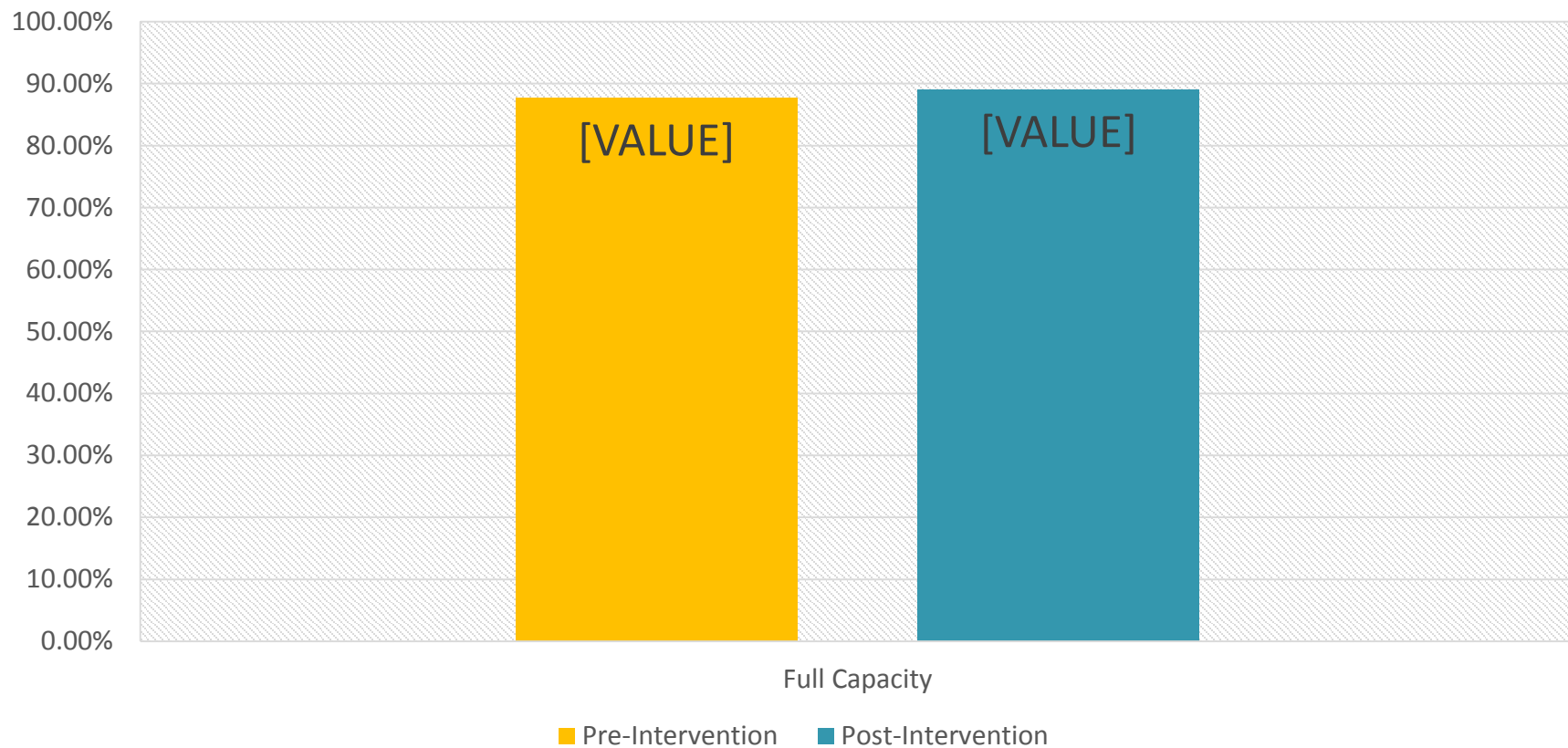
# Results – Nature of Occupation Distribution

## NATURE OF OCCUPATION



# Results – Return To Work

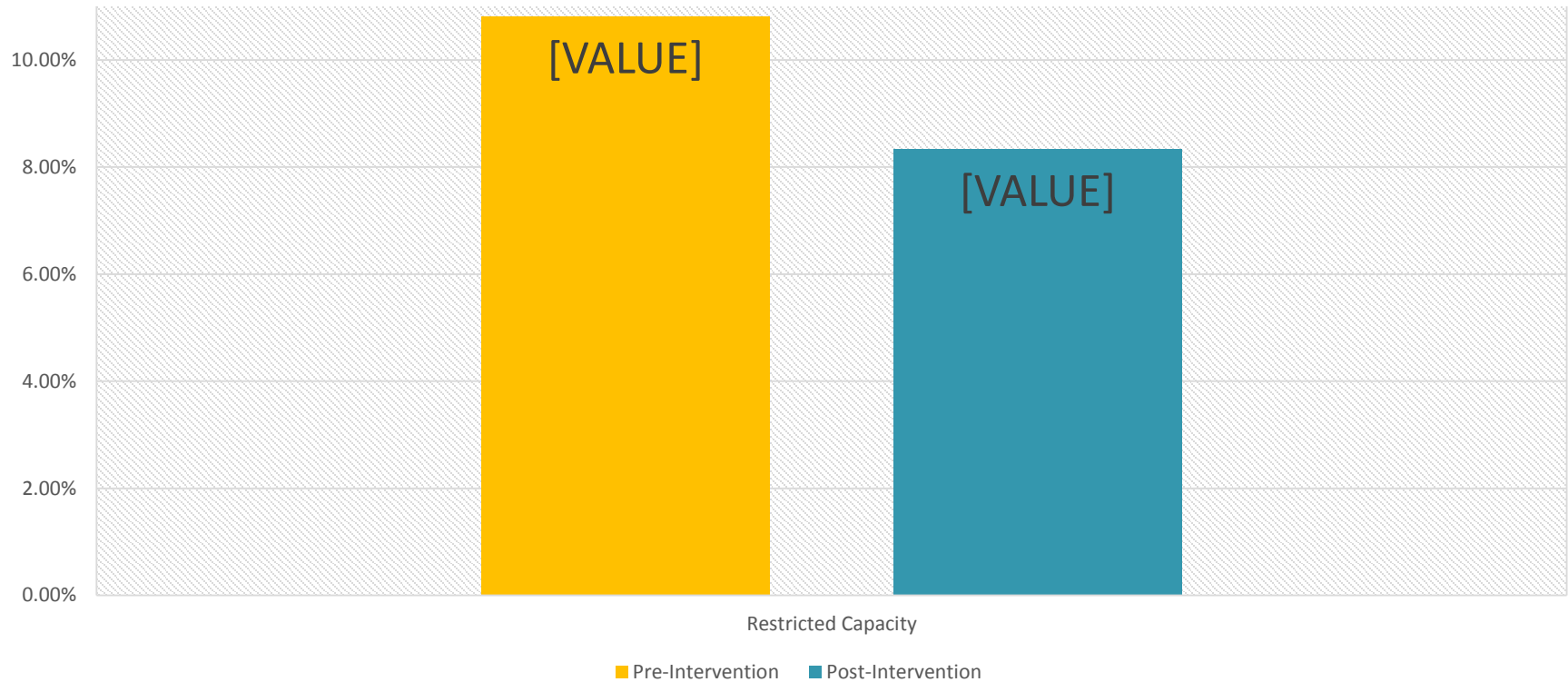
## Full Capacity For Work



Pearson  $\chi^2$  (2) = 69.598,  $P < 0.00005$

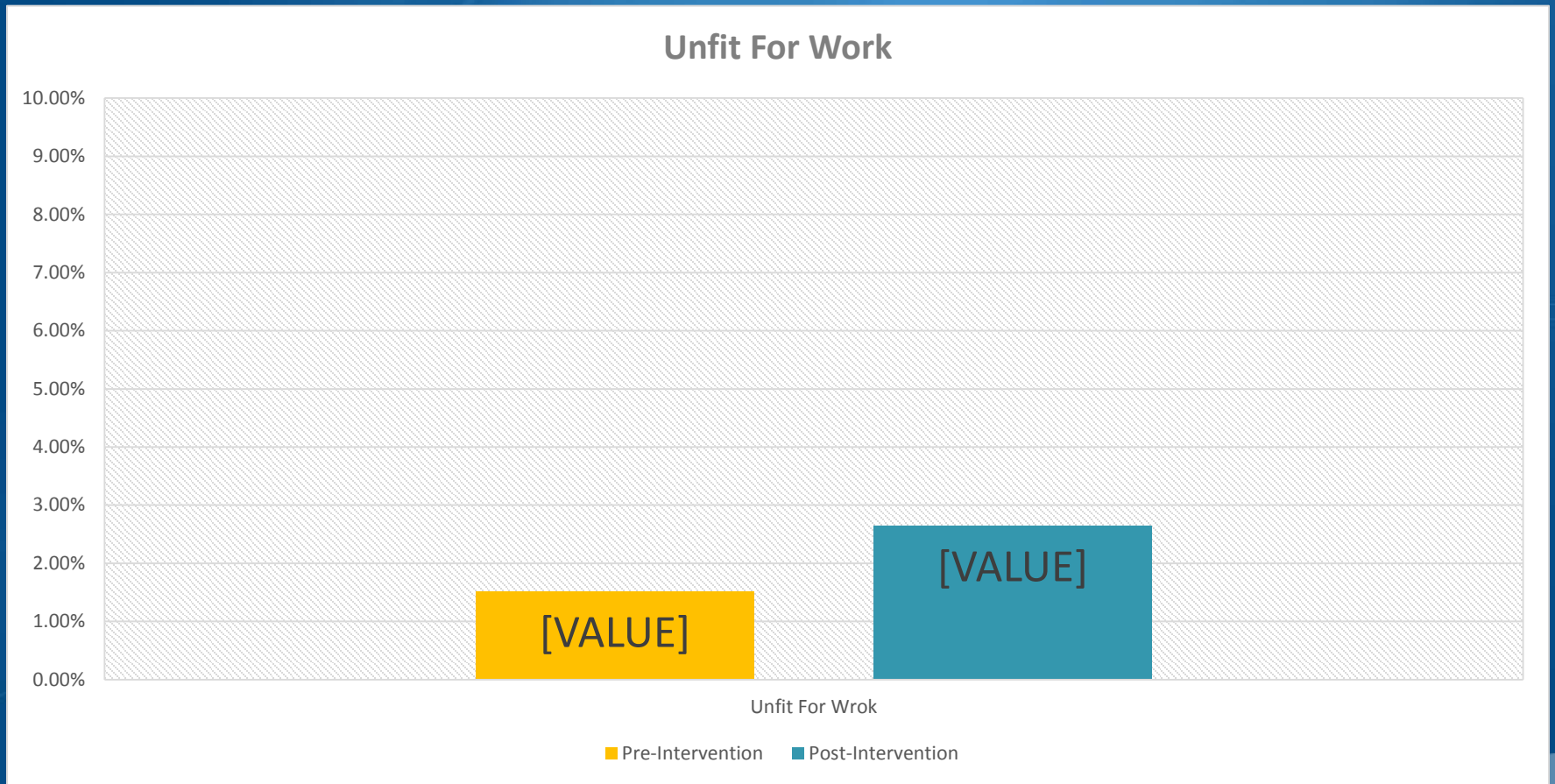
# Results – Return to Work

Restricted Capacity For Work



Pearson  $\chi^2$  (2) = 69.598,  $P < 0.00005$

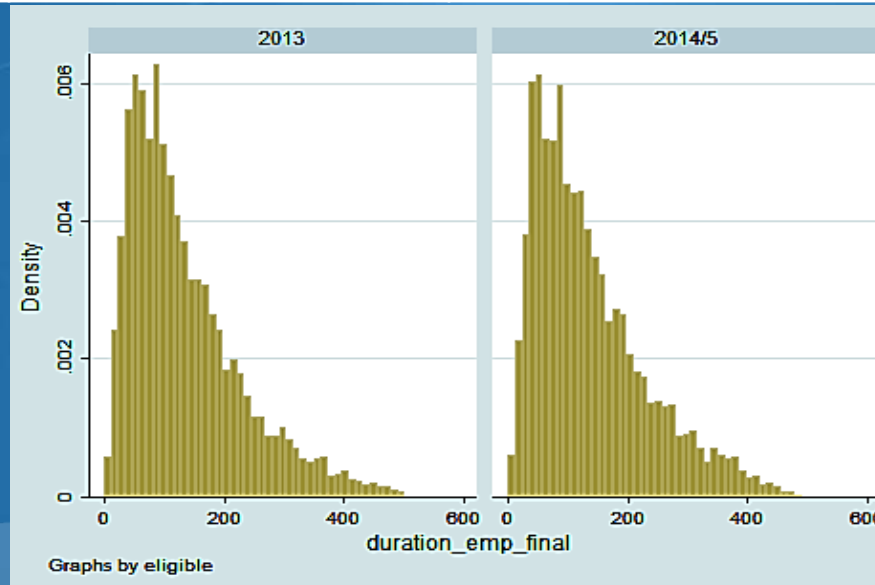
# Results –Return to Work



Pearson  $\chi^2$  (2) = 69.598,  $P < 0.00005$

# Results - Claims Duration: No Significant Change

	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	Difference
No. Observations	11,278	10,625	
Median (days)	110	114	-4
Mean (days)	135.4	137.1	-1.7
Standard deviation	93.4	93.2	
95% CI (mean)	133.7-137.1	135.3-138.9	-4.2 - 9.8



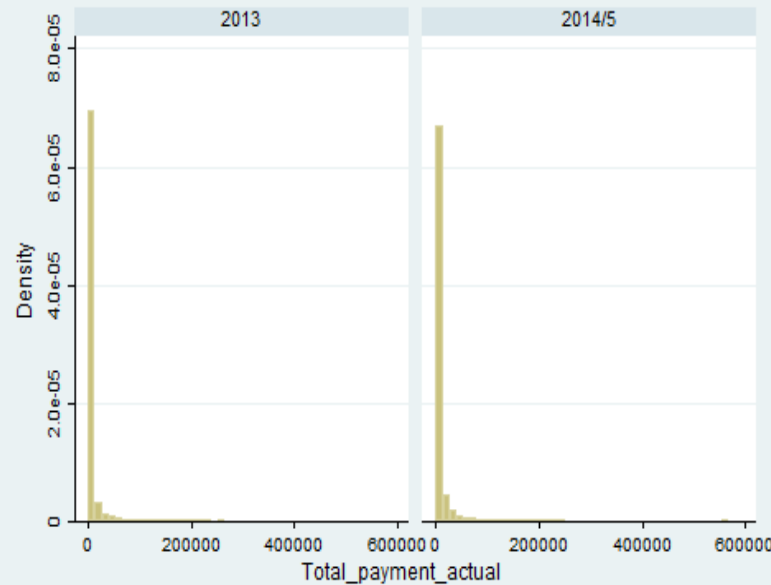
# Results – Claim Duration

Claims duration	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	P> t	95%CI
Post-intervention	1.68	1.26	1.33	0.183	-2.49-2.39



# Results- Claims Cost: No Significant Change

	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	Difference
No. Observations	11,278	10,625	
Median (\$)	1233.03	1532.14	-299.11
Mean (\$)	5303.57	6711.76	-1408.195
Standard deviation	15536.46	18049.09	
95% CI (mean)	5016.9-5590.2	6368.5-7054.9	-1853.4 - 963



Graphs by eligible

# Discussion

- RTW status
  - A small increase in RTW in full capacity.
  - A small increase in the proportion of workers declared unfit.
  - A decrease in RTW in restricted capacity.
- Claims duration: no impact so far
- Claims cost: no impact so far

# Discussion

- Strengths

- Data collection
- No significant differences in gender/age and occupation.

- Limitations

- Psychosocial factors not accounted for.
- Not enough time elapsed to adapt the new certificates

# Conclusion

- New certificates of capacity may be beneficial.
  - Small significant increase in return to work in full capacity.
- Failed to impact on other objectives
  - Small significant increase in proportion declared unfit.
  - No impact on claims duration and cost.
- Follow up is required.

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Thank you for your time

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