

Helping people back to work

What research is telling employers

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Return to Work Matters
THE RESOURCE FOR RETURN TO WORK PROFESSIONALS

Key intent from this talk

The workplace provides the most cost effective opportunity to lessen work disability

Two studies

1. RTW Survey analysis
2. Workplace intervention

Key workplace approaches

Study 1 - RTW Survey

Survey of approx 9300 injured workers across Australia

Conducted for Safe Work Australia

Research analysis of workers' RTW results, and views on their RTW experiences

Psychological claims and physical claims

With Dr Tyler Lane of ISCRR (stats), and research review of psych by Dr Peter Cotton (clinical and org psychologist)

Summary report for employers to be published in next few months

Employers play a key role

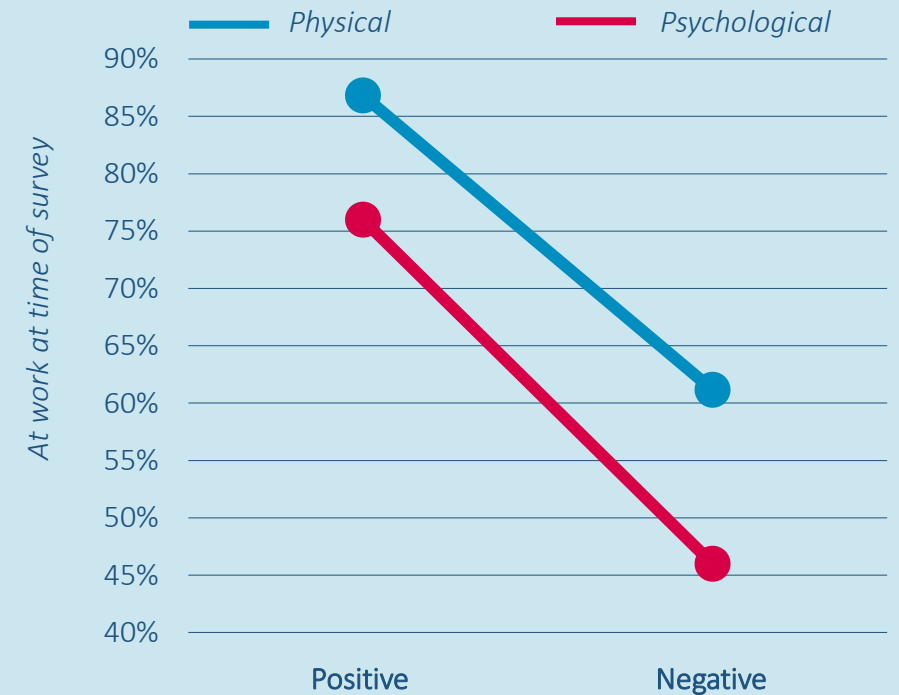
RTW by how employers respond to the injury

Positive response from employer,

RTW is:

- **43% higher in physical claims** (87% versus 61%)
- **65% higher in psychological claims** (76% versus 46%)

RTW by Employer response to injury



Employee experiences

Percentage who reported employer responded positively

Employer response questions	Physical	Psychological
Your employer did what they could to support you	73%	31%
Employer made an effort to find suitable employment for you	71%	36%
Employer provided enough information on rights and responsibilities	68%	32%
Your employer helped you with your recovery	66%	24%
Your employer treated you fairly DURING the claims process	78%	33%
Your employer treated you fairly AFTER the claims process	78%	38%

Making contact pays off

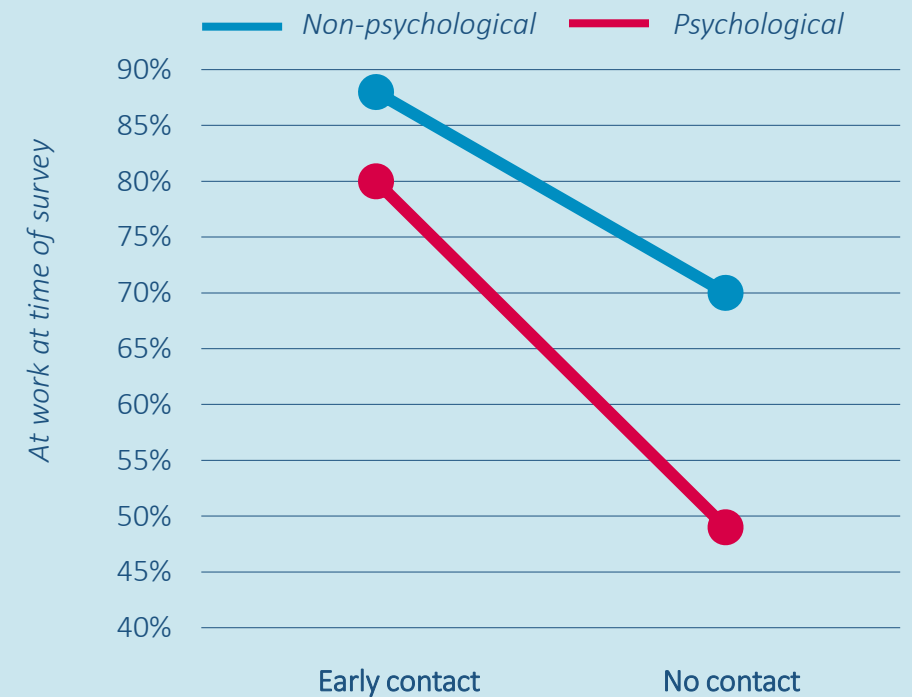
RTW by employee contact from the workplace

Employees who advise their workplace has made **contact** about their injury are more likely to be at work.

Early contact (within 3 days from claim lodgement) is associated with further increases in RTW:

- **26% higher physical claim** (88% vs 70%)
- **63% higher psychological claim** (80% vs 49%)

RTW by Early contact from workplace vs No contact



Contact from the workplace

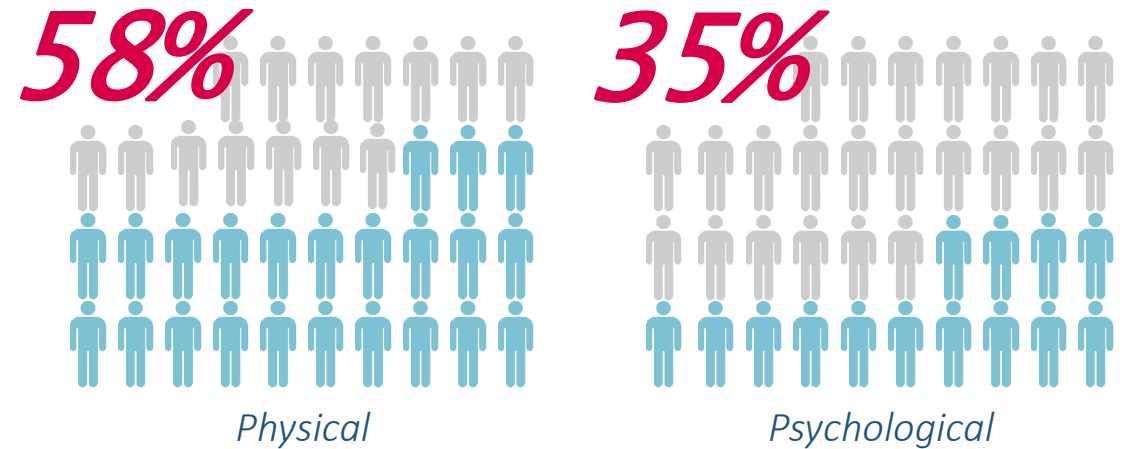
Employee experiences

58% of employees with a **physical injury claim** say their **employer made contact** with them about their injury.

Only **35%** of employees with a **psychological claim** say their **employer made contact** about their injury.

Of those who say they heard from their employer:

- **34% with a physical claim** had contact from their employer **within 7 days** of reporting their injury
- Only **11% of those with a psychological claim** heard from their employer **within 7 days**

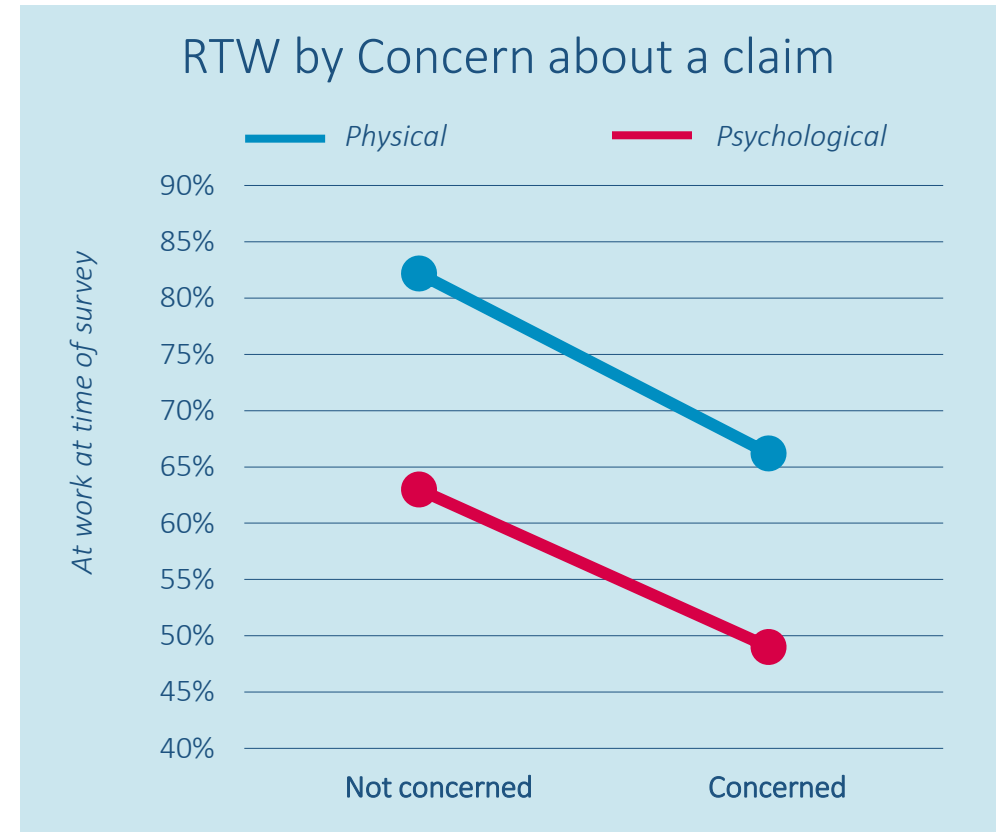


Days from injury to claim	Non psychological	Psychological
Less than 7 days	34%	11%
7 - 13 days	22%	13%
14 - 20 days	12%	9%

Concern about lodging a claim

Low levels of concern about lodging a claim associated with higher RTW result for both groups

Difference greater for psychological claims



Employee view of workplace culture

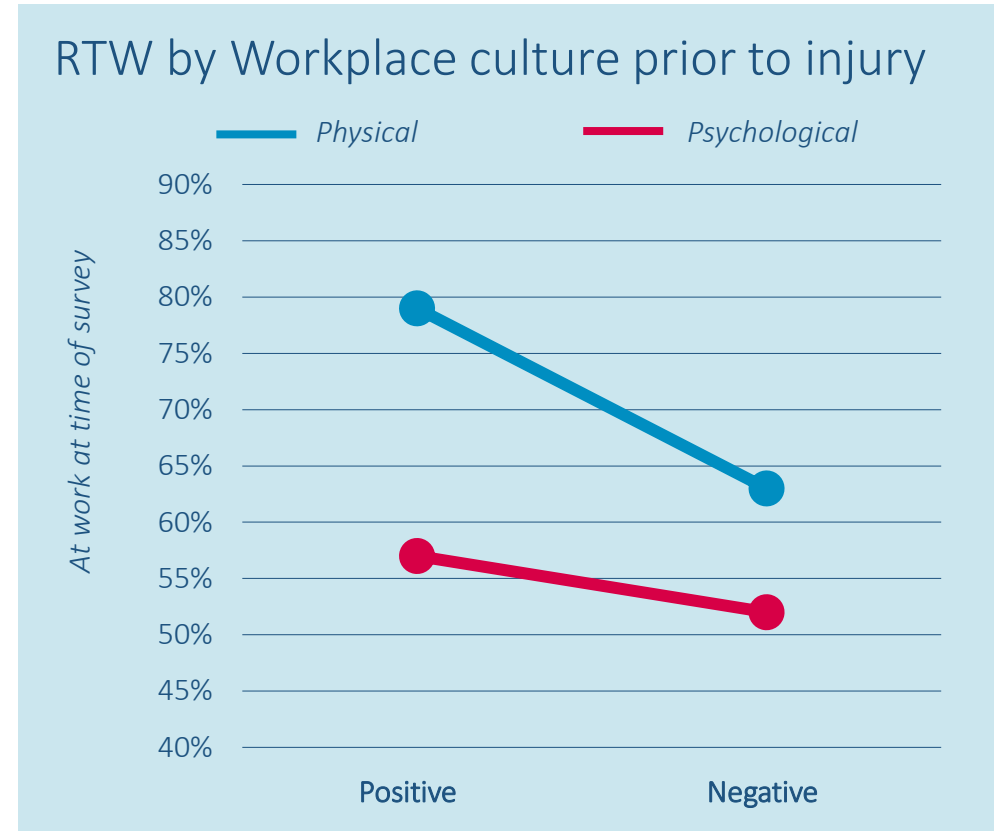
Prior to injury



Workplace culture prior to the injury impact on RTW greater in physical claims

More positive view of work and work environment associated with RTW:

- **25%** higher **physical** claims (79% vs 63%)
- **10%** higher **psychological** claims (57% vs 52%)

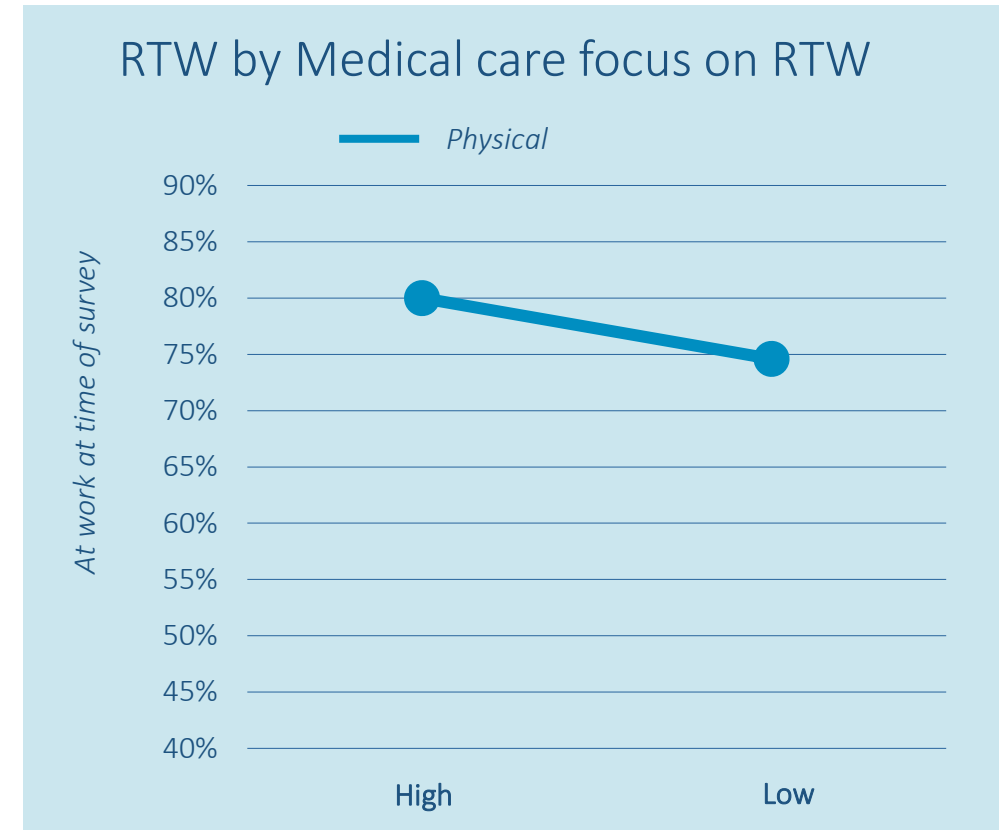


Medical care focus on RTW

Higher medical focus on RTW associated with 7% higher rate of RTW for physical claims

The number of psychological claims was too small to provide reliable results in the analysis

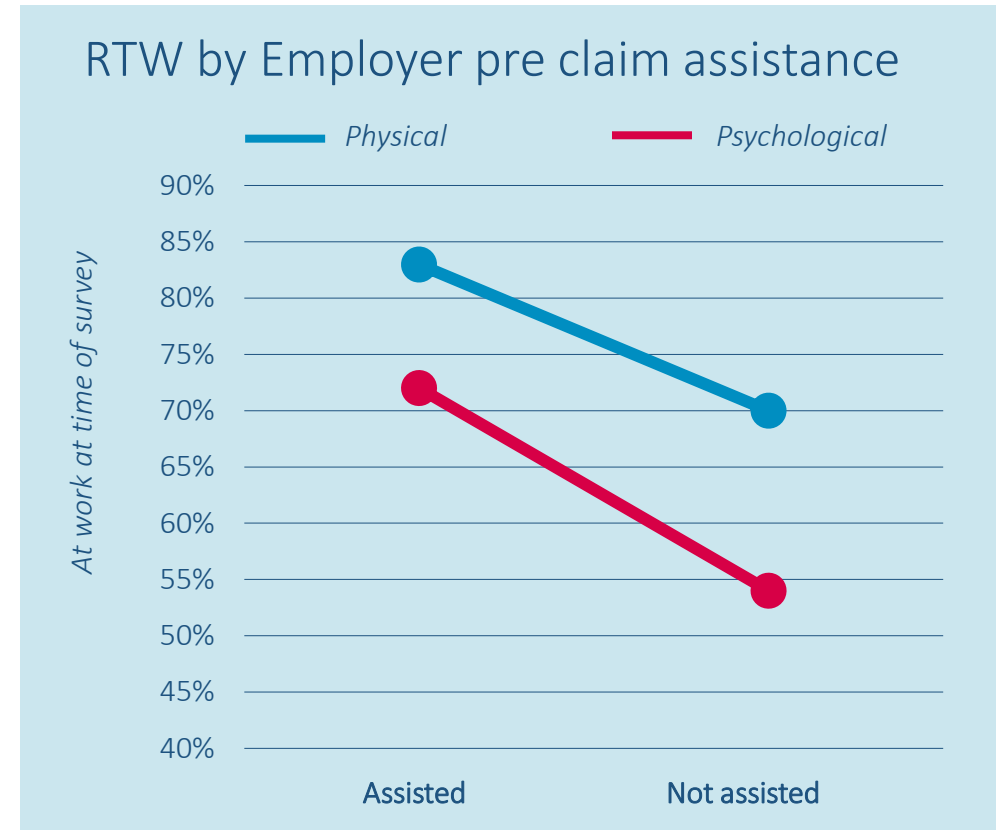
Percent who agreed with medical focus on RTW questions	Non psychological	Psychological
Medical treatment assisted you in RTW?	90%	87%
Clearly communicate options for staying/returning to work?	85%	89%
Work with others to assist your recovery	78%	85%
Explain the role that work could play in your recovery?	72%	80%
Medical certificates clearly stating capacity for work?*	96%	98%



Early assistance is worthwhile

Pre claim assistance from employer associated with higher RTW for both groups:

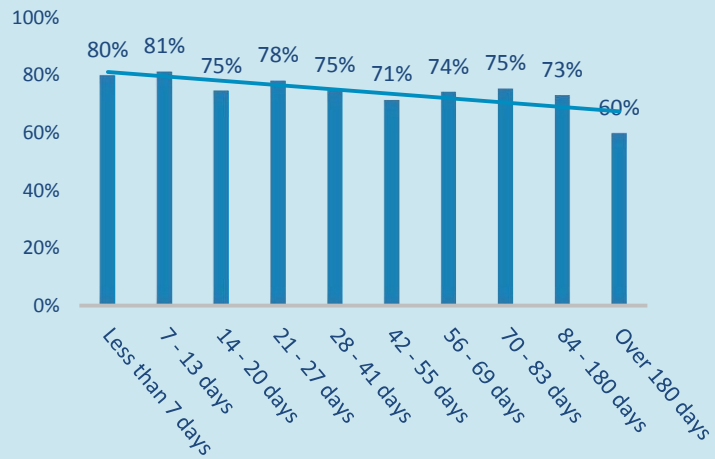
- **19%** higher **physical** claims (83% vs 70%)
- **33%** higher **psychological** claims (72% vs 54%)



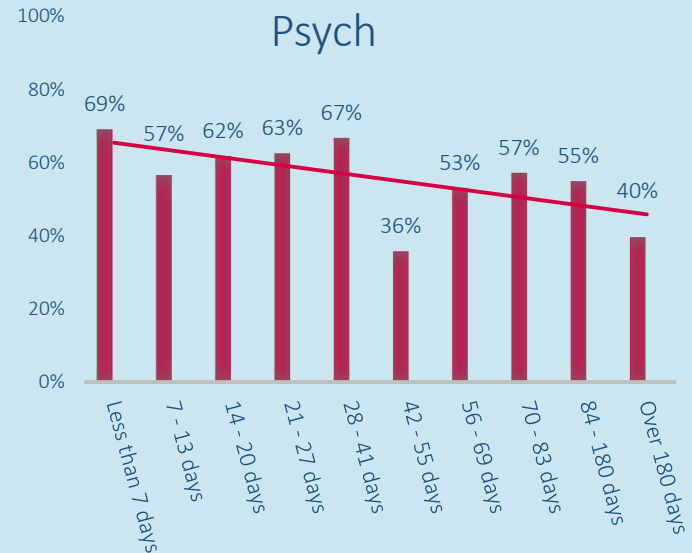
Early injury reporting

Claims that are lodged early are associated with higher RTW

RTW by Days from Injury to Claim Physical



RTW by Days from Injury to Claim Psych

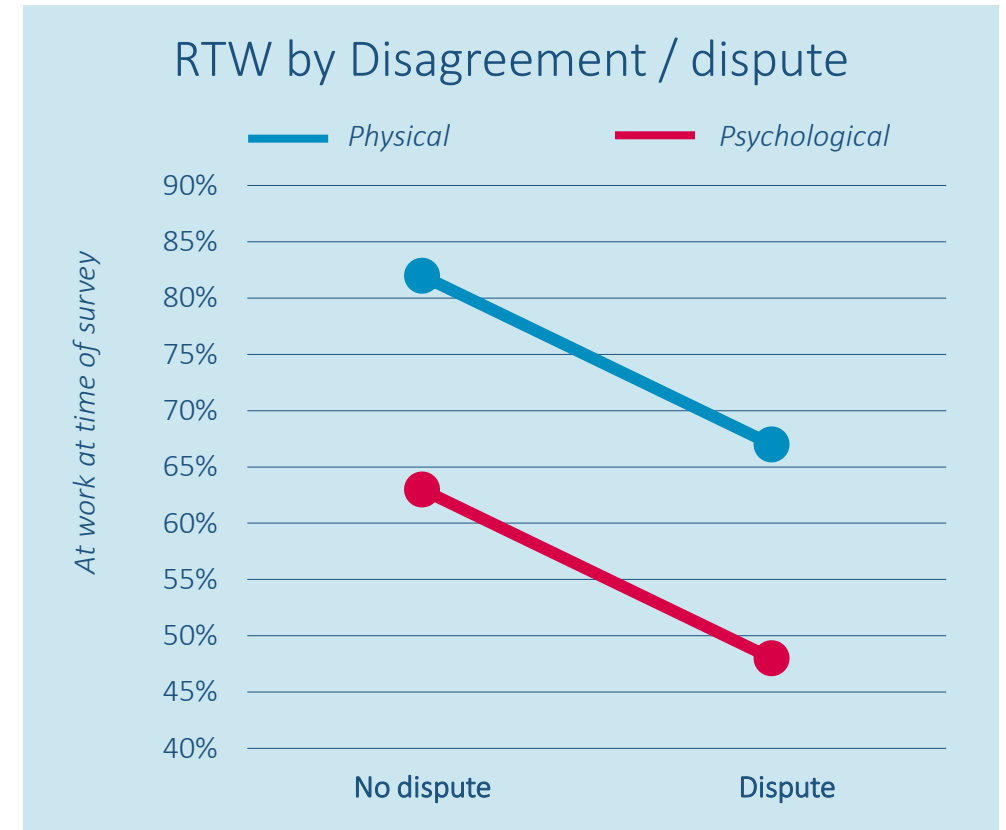


Disputes

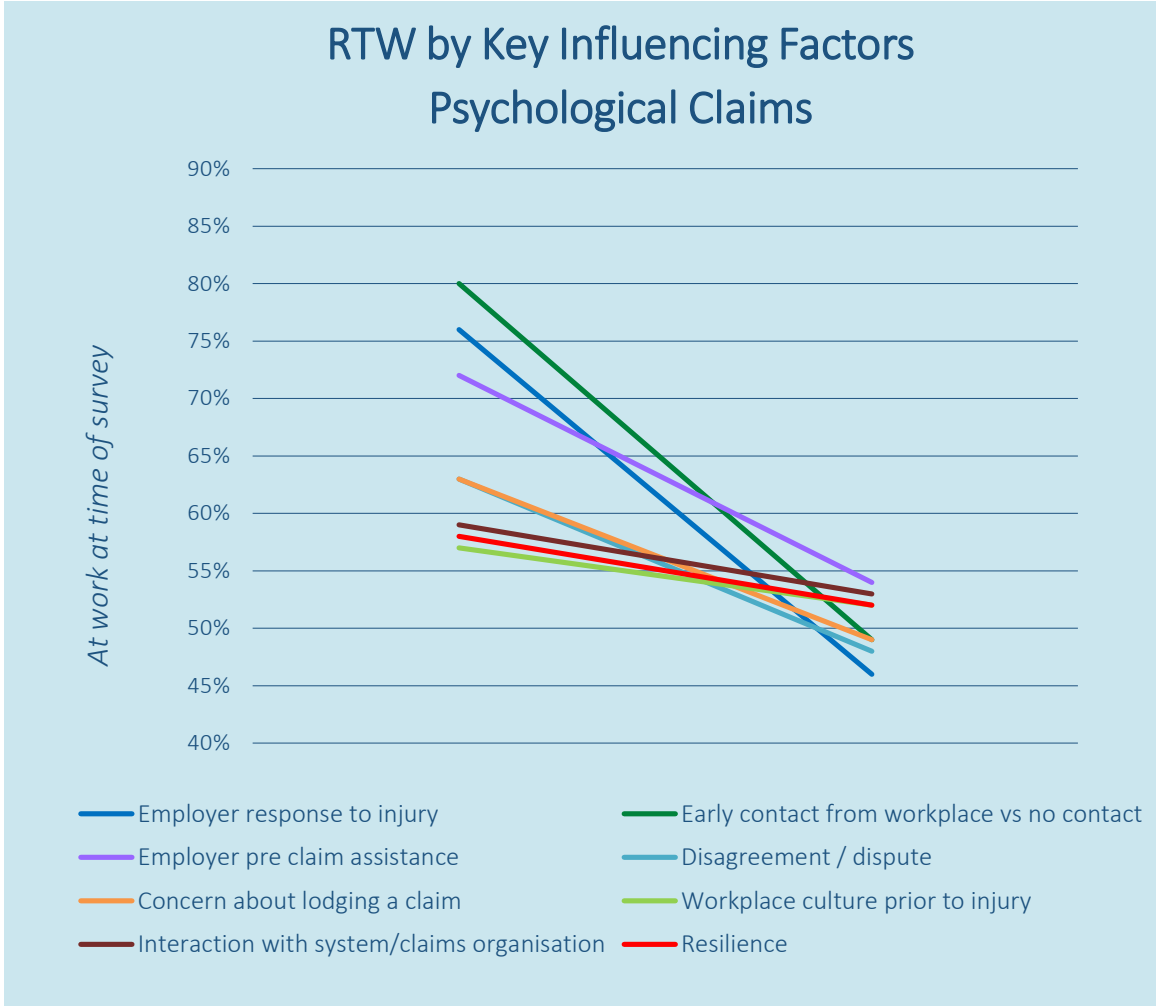
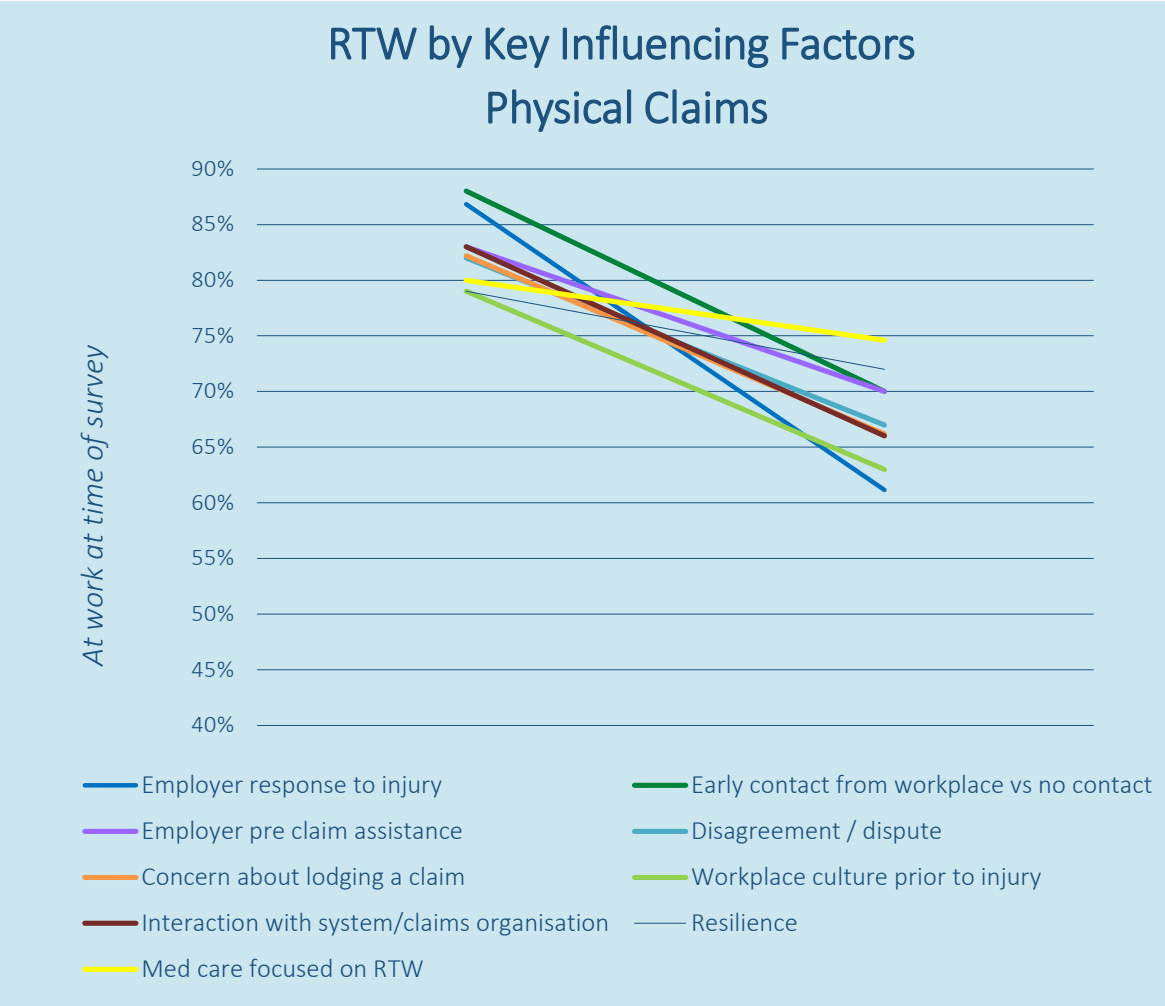
When a dispute was present, RTW less likely in both psychological and physical claims.

No dispute (versus a dispute) RTW:

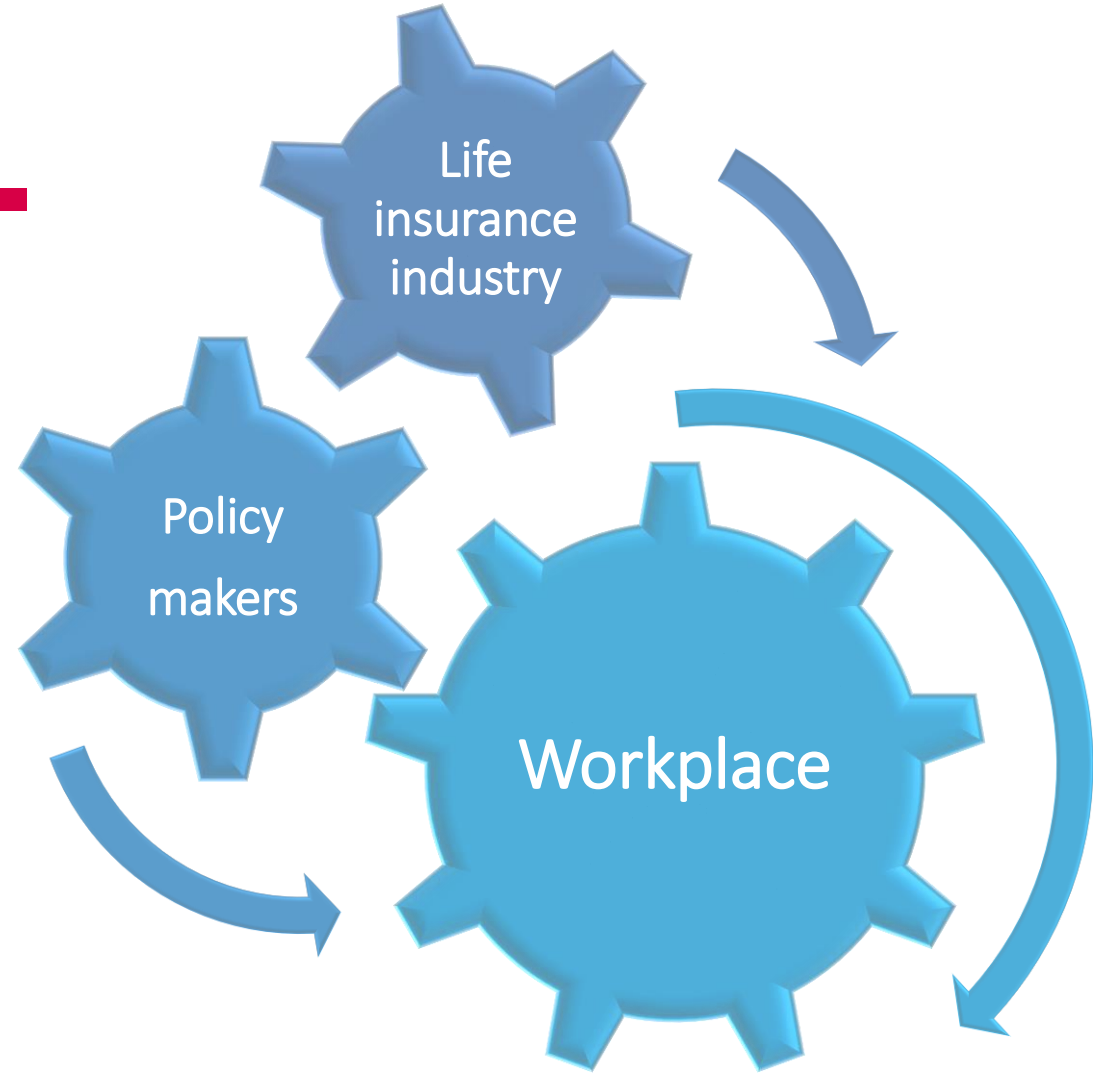
- **22%** higher **physical** claims
- **31%** higher in **psychological** claims



Putting it all together



Opportunities



Study 2 - RTW Intervention

Evaluation of approx 9300 injured workers across Australia

Workplace based intervention

Early proactive supportive approach

Avoidance of disputes

Supervisor involvement

Skilled 'RTW Coordinator' (case management)

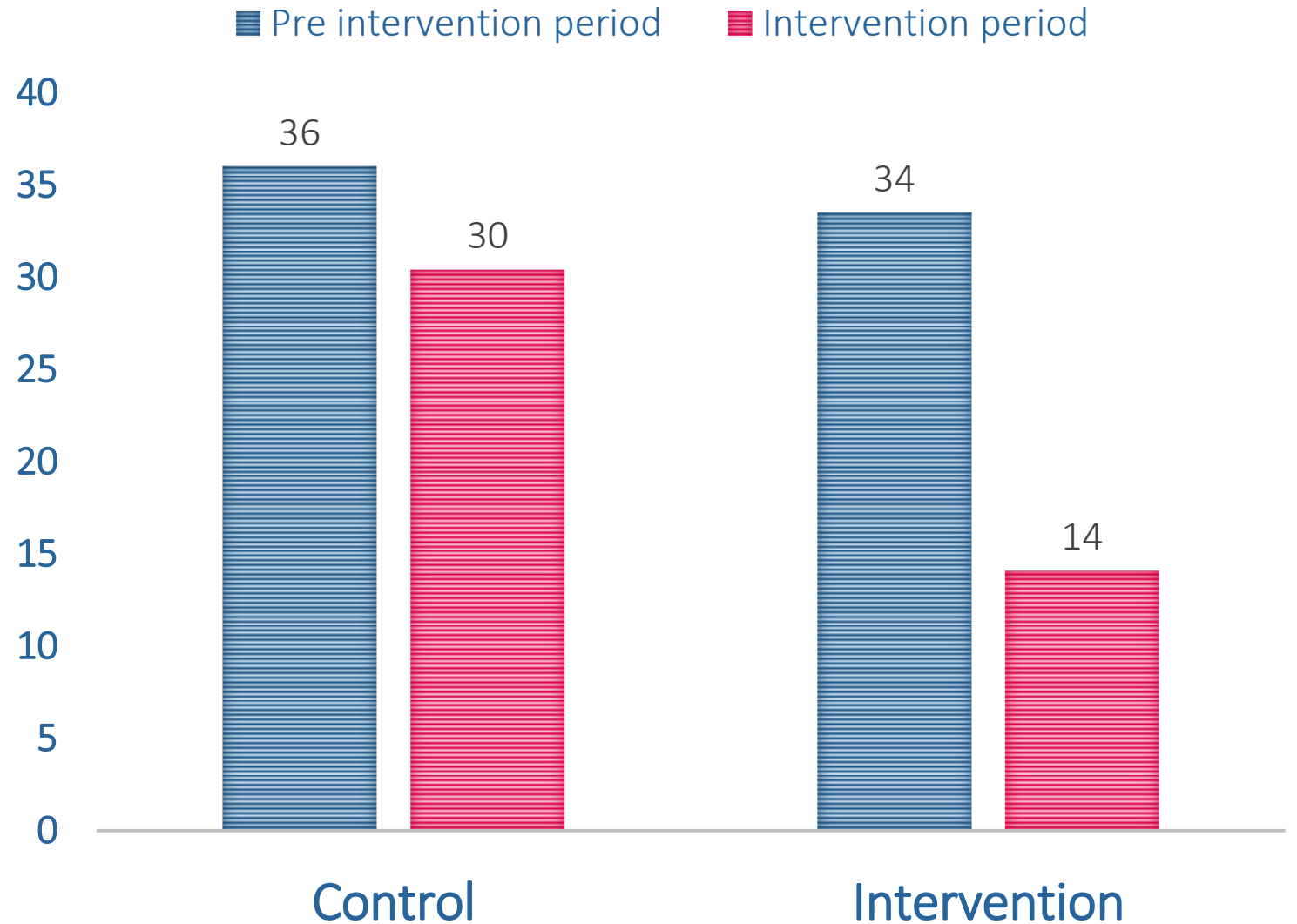
Streamlined medical care (avoiding delays and aiding the treater)

IAIABC Journal Spring, 2013 Vol. 50, No. 1. Improving Return to Work Results: It Pays To Care

Iles RA, Wyatt M & Pransky G (2012). Multi-faceted case management: Reducing compensation costs of musculoskeletal work injuries in Australia. Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, 22(4), 478–88.

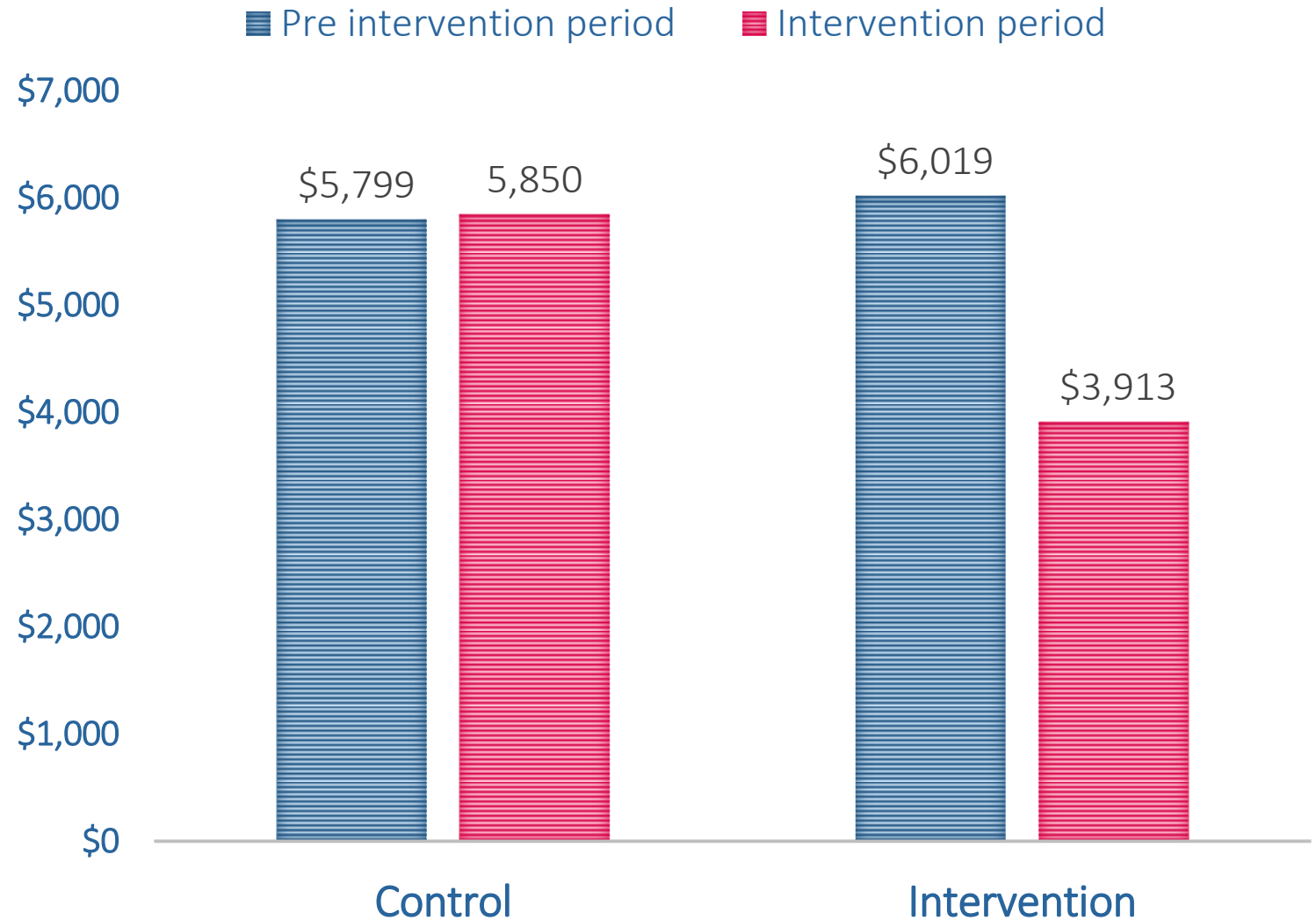
Workplace intervention

Days lost from work



Workplace intervention

Average claims costs



Key workplace approaches

What can workplaces do

Key factors

Your employer did what they could to support you

Employer made an effort to find suitable employment for you

Your employer helped you with your recovery

Employer provided enough information on rights and responsibilities

Your employer treated you fairly DURING and AFTER the claims process

Contact, especially early contact

Skilled RTWCs / Case managers

- Set up systems
- Manage cases
- Support supervisors
- Influence the workplace

- Early contact
- Avoid disputes



How to train RTW Coordinators

- Formal training
- Case discussion
- Mentoring
- Understanding cost and savings
- Initial training
- PIEF
- RTWMatters



Senior manager engaged = *organisation engaged*

How to engage

How they can lead



Understand the costs and benefits of managing employee health

- Premium costs
- Indirect costs
- Claims costs dashboard
- Impact on premium calculator
- Cost calculator

- Leading by example – eg calling the worker
- Ask managers about key issues
- Practicing active safety leadership.

Be Bold

(Up management)

Influencing the (line) manager – why?

Study one – IWH systematic review

- Educating supervisors and managers
- Is one of the seven workplace based interventions that makes a difference

Study two – Liberty Mutual

- 47% reduction in new claims and an 18% reduction in active lost-time claims
- Versus 27% and 7%, respectively, in the control group

Shaw, W. S., M. M. Robertson, et al. (2006). "A controlled case study of supervisor training to optimize response to injury in the food processing industry." Work 26(2): 107-14.

Supervisors and return to work

A supervisor's role is to develop employees and monitor their performance.

In pivotal position to observe

- changes in behaviour
- physical, mental and personal problems
- for employees returning to work

Early

- recognition of problems,
- intervention and support

How to train supervisors

- Case discussion
- Formal training
- Use of questionnaire
- Use of survey
- Talk money
- Involve their boss



Summary

The workplace provides the most cost effective opportunity to lessen work disability

1. RTW Survey analysis shows the greatest influencing factor is the workplace
2. Workplace intervention – 58% reduction in days lost, 38% reduction in claims costs