



TNO innovation
for life

Trends in mental health complaints of Dutch young workers and potential causes

Monitor Data Analysis and Focus Groups

Malte van Veen | PEROSH 2023



› **BURN-OUT ONDER JONGE WERKNEMERS EEN GROEIEND PROBLEEM?**

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WHY & WHO & HOW

Context of research

- Burnout-related complaints were increasing more in young workers compared to the general working population
- Dutch Ministry of Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment called on research to **analyze trends** within this group
- Goal was to identify **potential risk groups** and **underlying reasons** for this observed increase

Secondary Data Analysis

Sample

- Data: Netherlands Working Conditions Survey
- Age: 18 and older and younger than 35
- Occupied: Working more than 16 hours per week

Outcome Measures

1. Burnout-complaints (5 items)
2. Absence from work with psychological complaints (partly) caused by work

Focus Groups

Method

- 4 focus groups
- 27 young workers
- Via MS Teams
- Over-representation of higher-educated

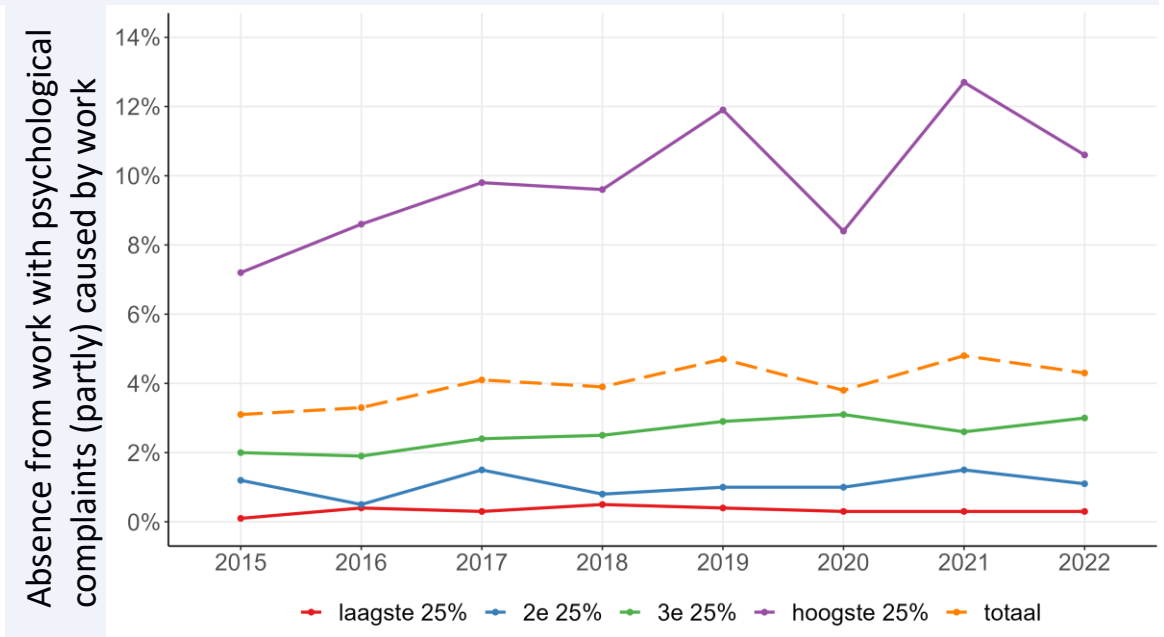
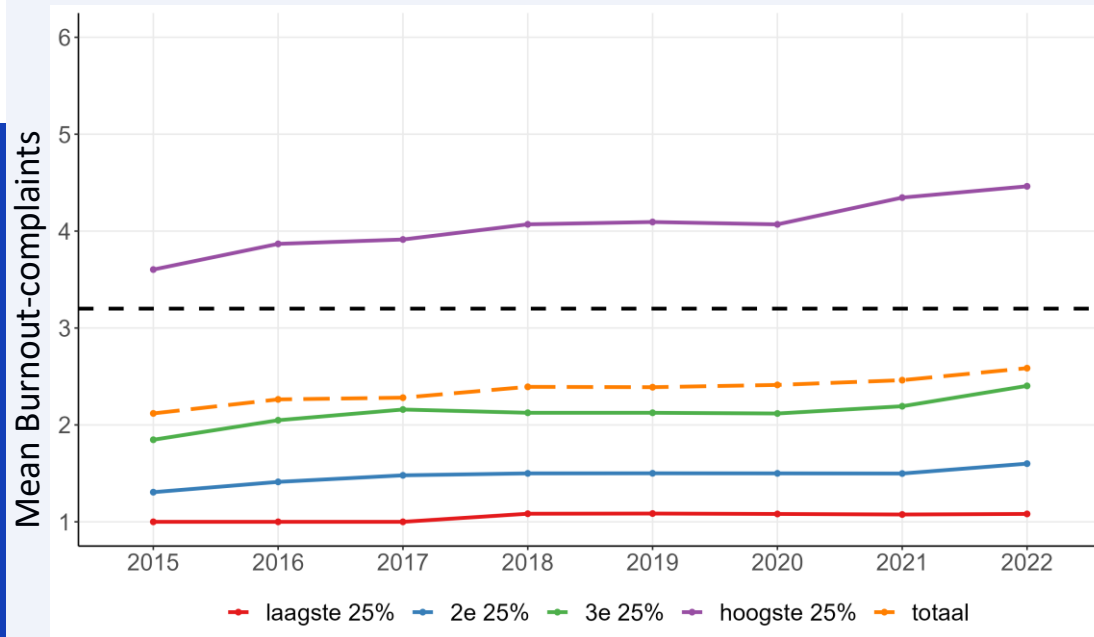
A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of a network of white lines and dots. The lines form a series of interconnected diamond shapes, with some lines extending horizontally from the left edge. The dots are small white circles, some of which are connected by lines, while others are isolated. The overall pattern is abstract and geometric.

Secondary Data Analyses

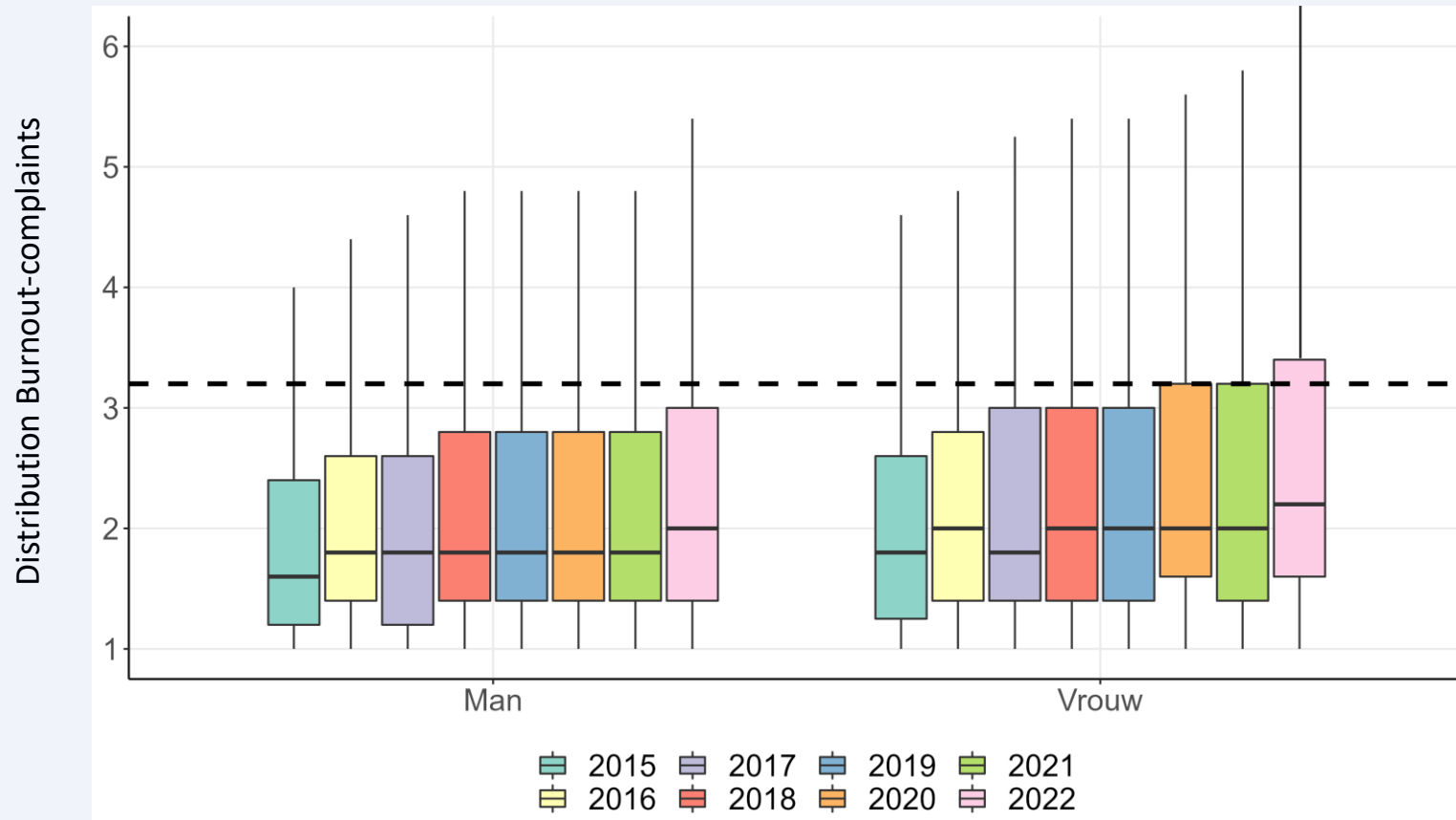
Netherlands Working Condition Survey

Quartiles: Highest scoring higher – lowest stable

What is behind the overall trend?



Women scoring higher and less frequent low





Focus Groups

Which reasons do young workers report for an increase in mental health complaints?

Results from focus group 1

Context: We perceived the atmosphere to be **open** and **safe**, we paid attention on equal contributions; Young workers **ranked** reasons for stress:

1) Performance pressure

- A lot of work in little time
- Fear of failure
- Feeling of having to be available at all times
- Difficulties saying “no”

2) Uncertainties on different life domains

- Concerning career (insufficient appreciation & unclear expectations)
- Constant exposure to bad news (Climate, War, Covid)
- Finances and housing (inflation, study debts, housing prices)

3) Social pressure

- Some mention seeing others succeed on social media
- Impression that one always have to appear happy and polite



Results from focus groups 2

The role of **campaigns** and attention to mental health problems in the media, two quotes:



What we don't know yet

- Do vocationally educated young workers have similar experiences?
- How do work-related factors and non-work related factors interact in contributing to mental health issues?
- What is the origin of the perceived pressure to perform?
- What are your ideas for these questions?
- Which questions do we miss?



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