

# DISCLOSURE AND SECRECY ABOUT DEPRESSION IN THE EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT: ACROSS 16 COUNTRIES

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# Overview

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1. Global context of depression and employment
2. Multinational comparisons in relation to
  - Openness and disclosure of depression in the workplace
  - Manager reactions and support
3. Describe the relationship between disclosure of depression / manager responses and workplace productivity

# **CONTEXT OF DEPRESSION AND EMPLOYMENT**

# Depression in the workplace

- By far, the greatest contributor to the overall economic impact of depression is loss in productivity.... but
- Beliefs reported by employers (survey of 500 UK employers)
  - 44% thought employees 'suffering from stress are able to work effectively at all time points
  - 42% thought workplace policies for mental health / stress were designed to avoid litigation
- Global INDIGO survey (35 countries) showed 71% of people with depression conceal their diagnosis in the workplace
- Public stigma and workplace culture may influence both openness and disclosure and productivity

# METHODS

# Data source

- Global IDEA survey (Impact of Depression in the Workplace Audit) survey
- Participants were recruited through an online market research panel
- 16 diverse countries
  - 7 European countries: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, Turkey
  - 9 additional countries: Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, South Africa, USA
- 1,000 respondents / country who were in employment

# Measures

## Employee variables

- Sociodemographics (age, gender, education, marital status, working status)
- Previous diagnosis of depression

## Among employees with a diagnosis of depression

- Openness and disclosure--didn't tell manager because of (i) fear of losing job / economic climate and (ii) felt manager wouldn't understand / know what to do
- Presenteeism
- Absenteeism

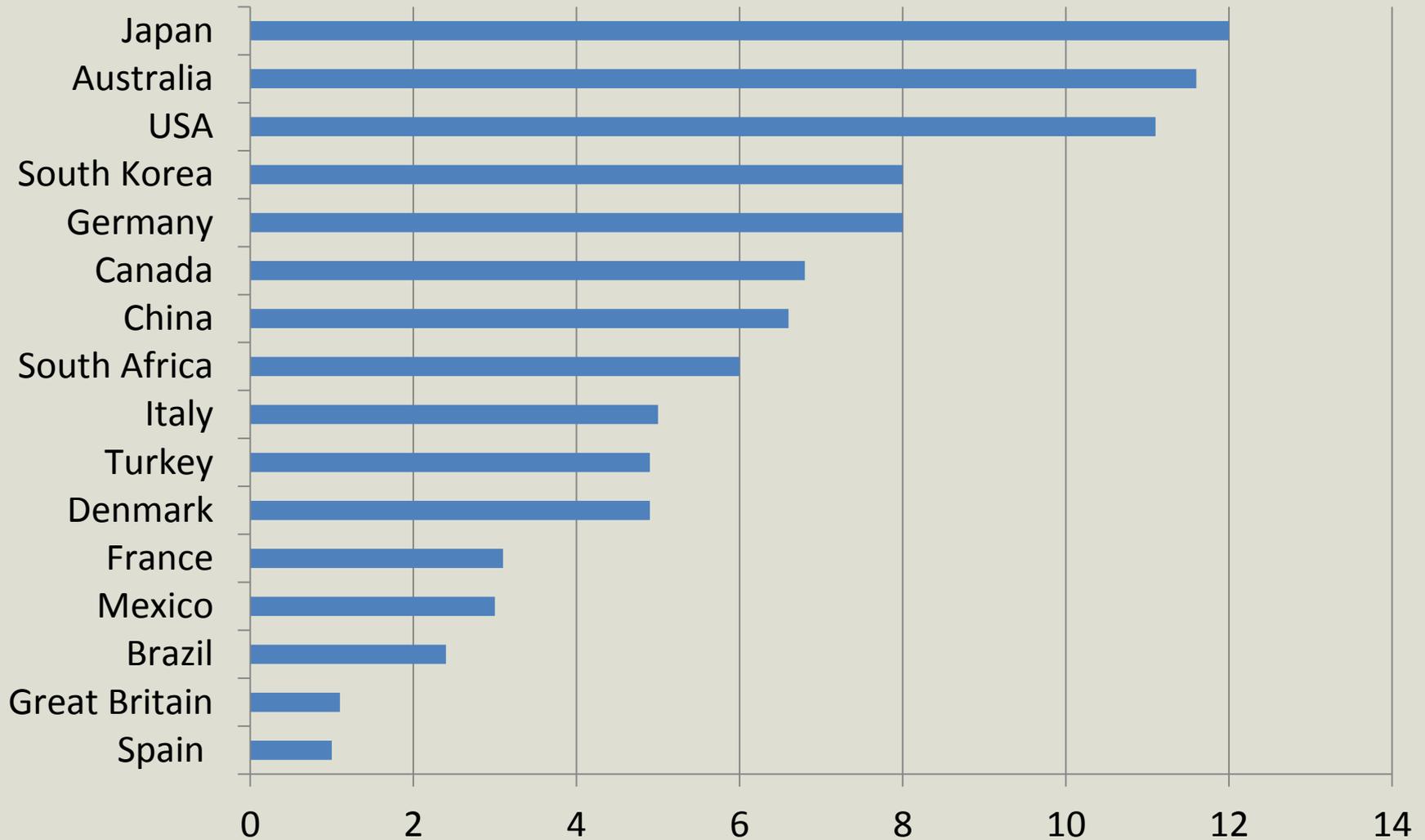
## Manager responses in relation to depression

- Offered help to employee
- Avoided talking about it
- No support offered to managers in dealing with depression

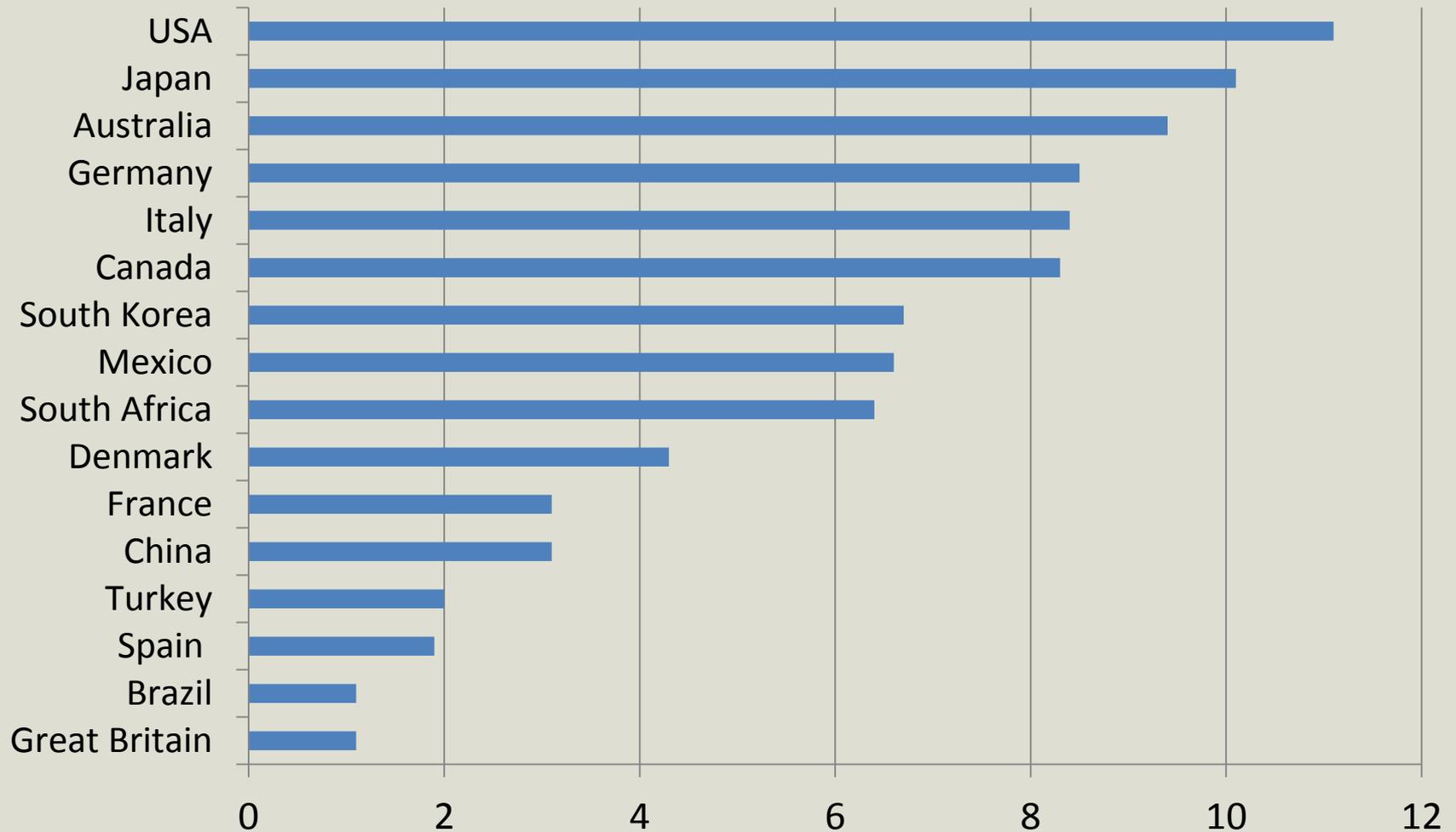
# Results

# **Openness and disclosure among employees with depression**

# % who didn't tell employer about depression because fear of losing job

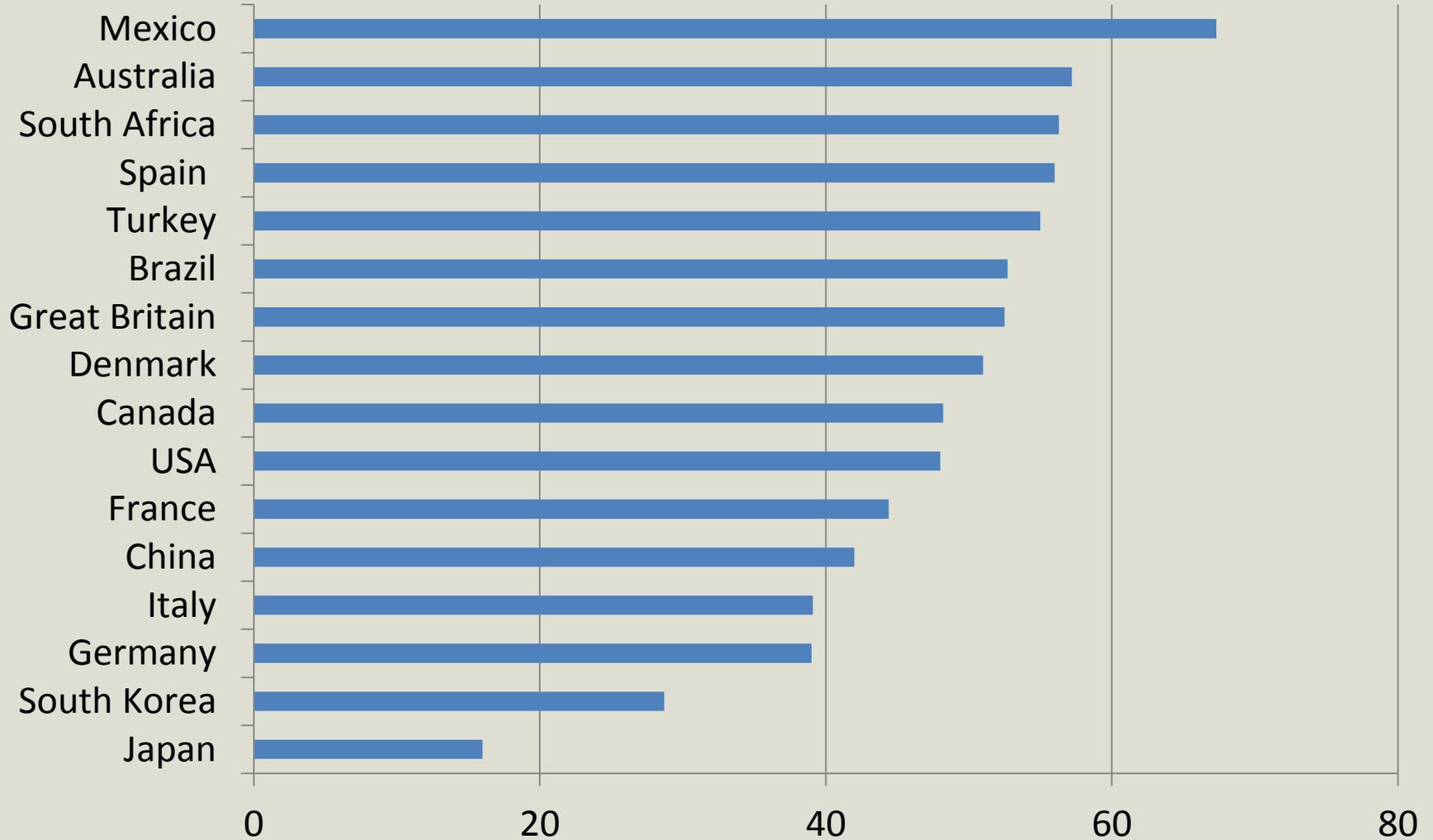


# % who didn't tell employer about depression because they wouldn't understand/wouldn't know what to do

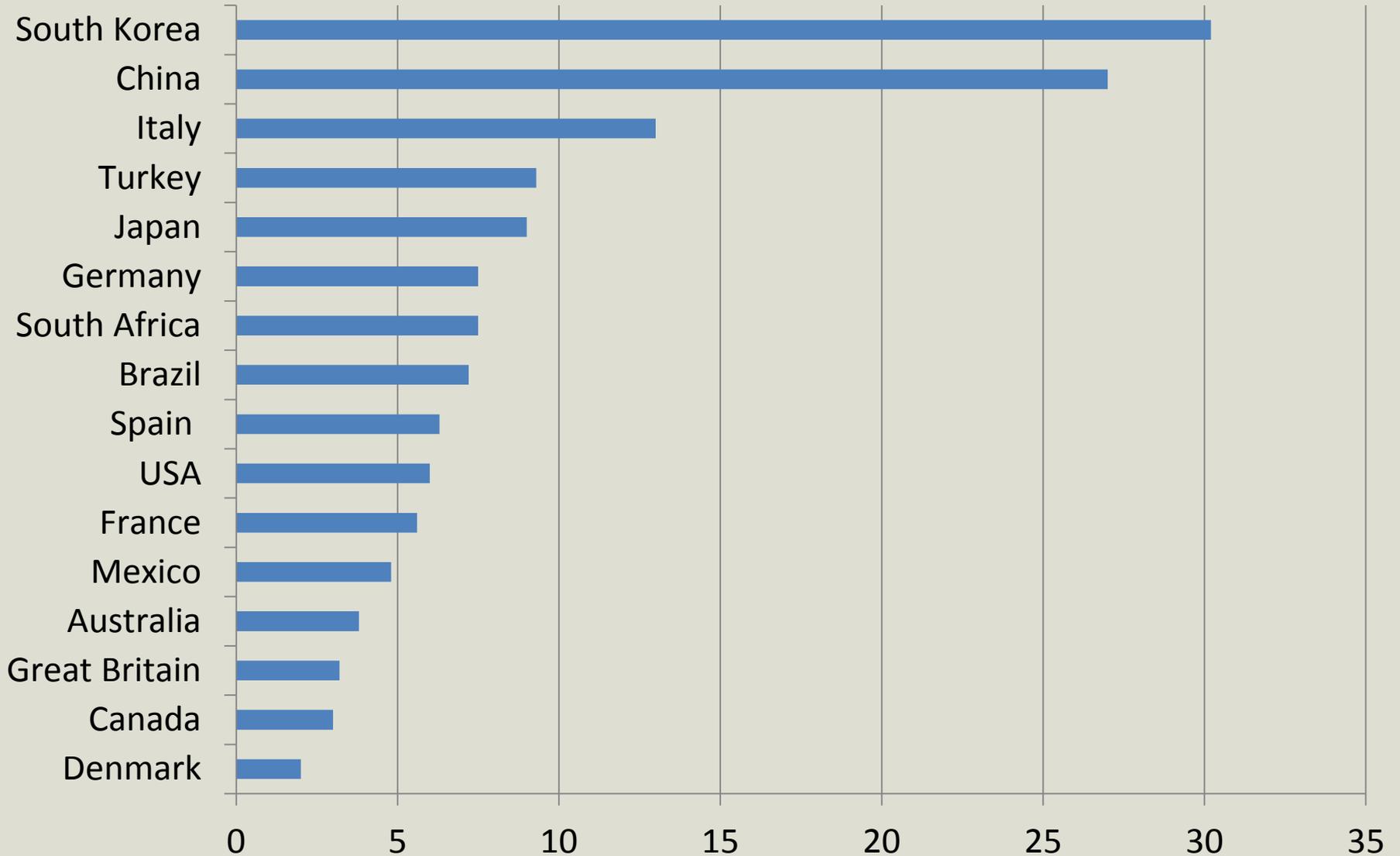


# Support from managers

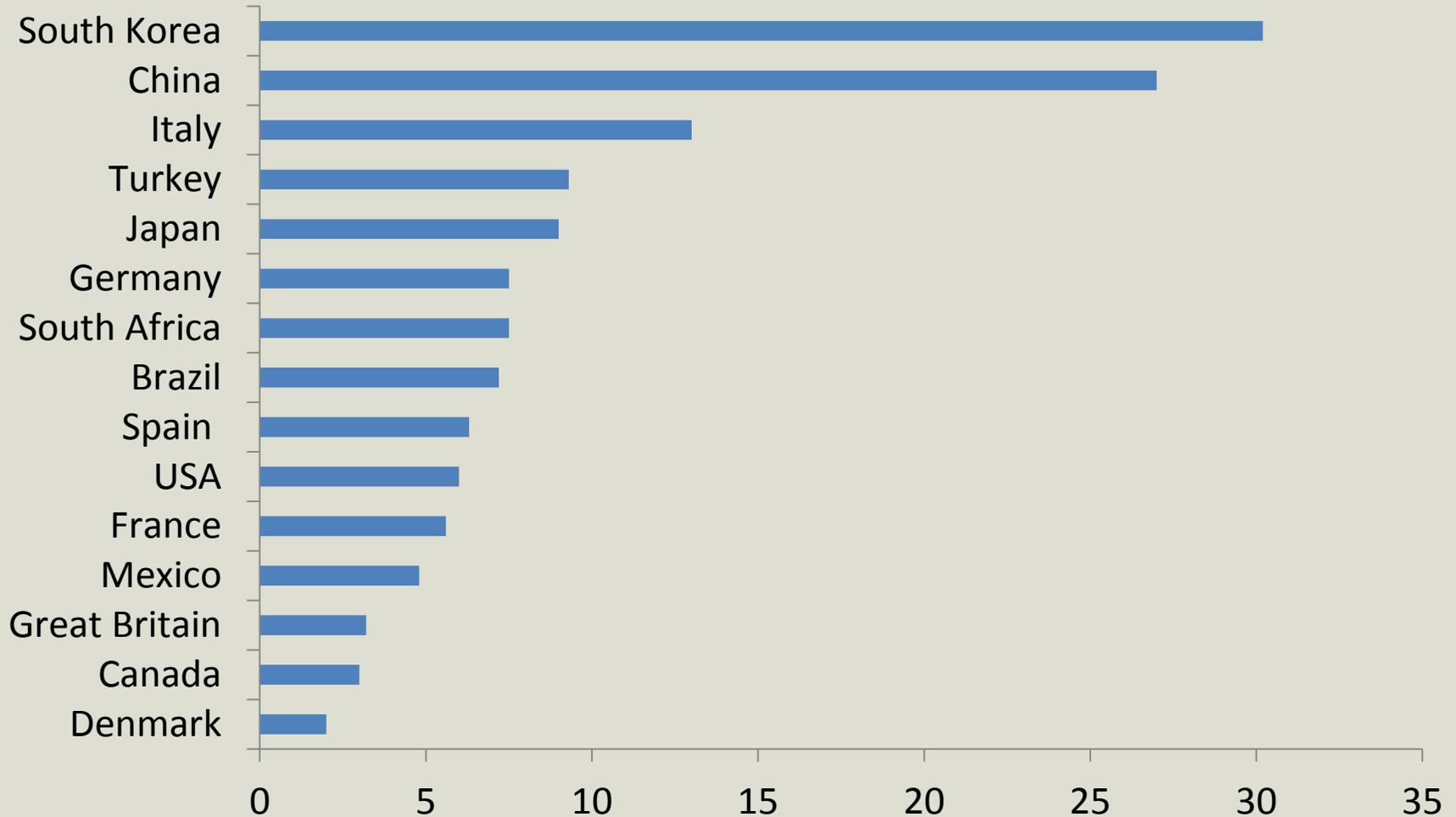
# % Offered help to employee with depression



# % Avoided talking about it with employee

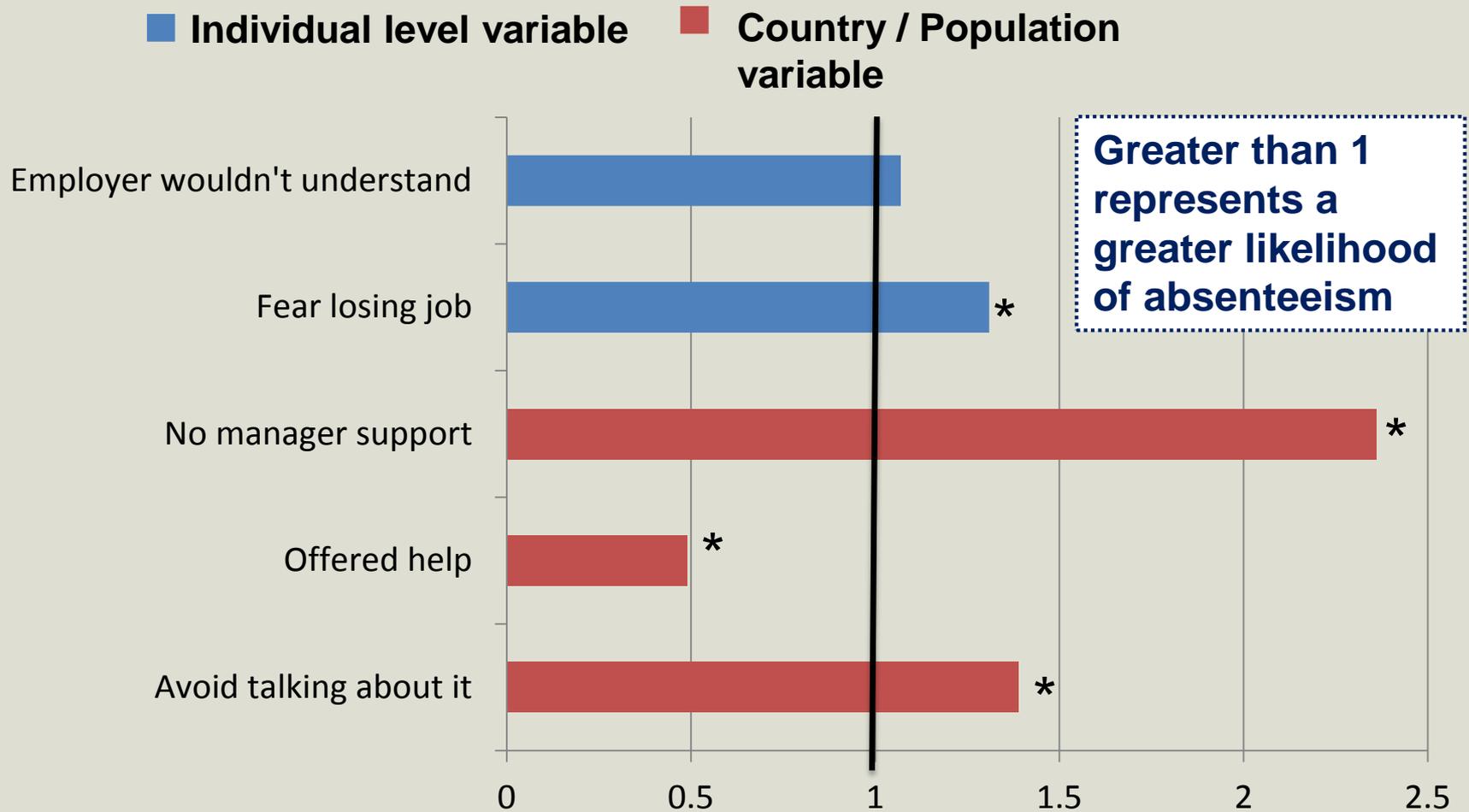


# % Report no support for dealing with employees with depression

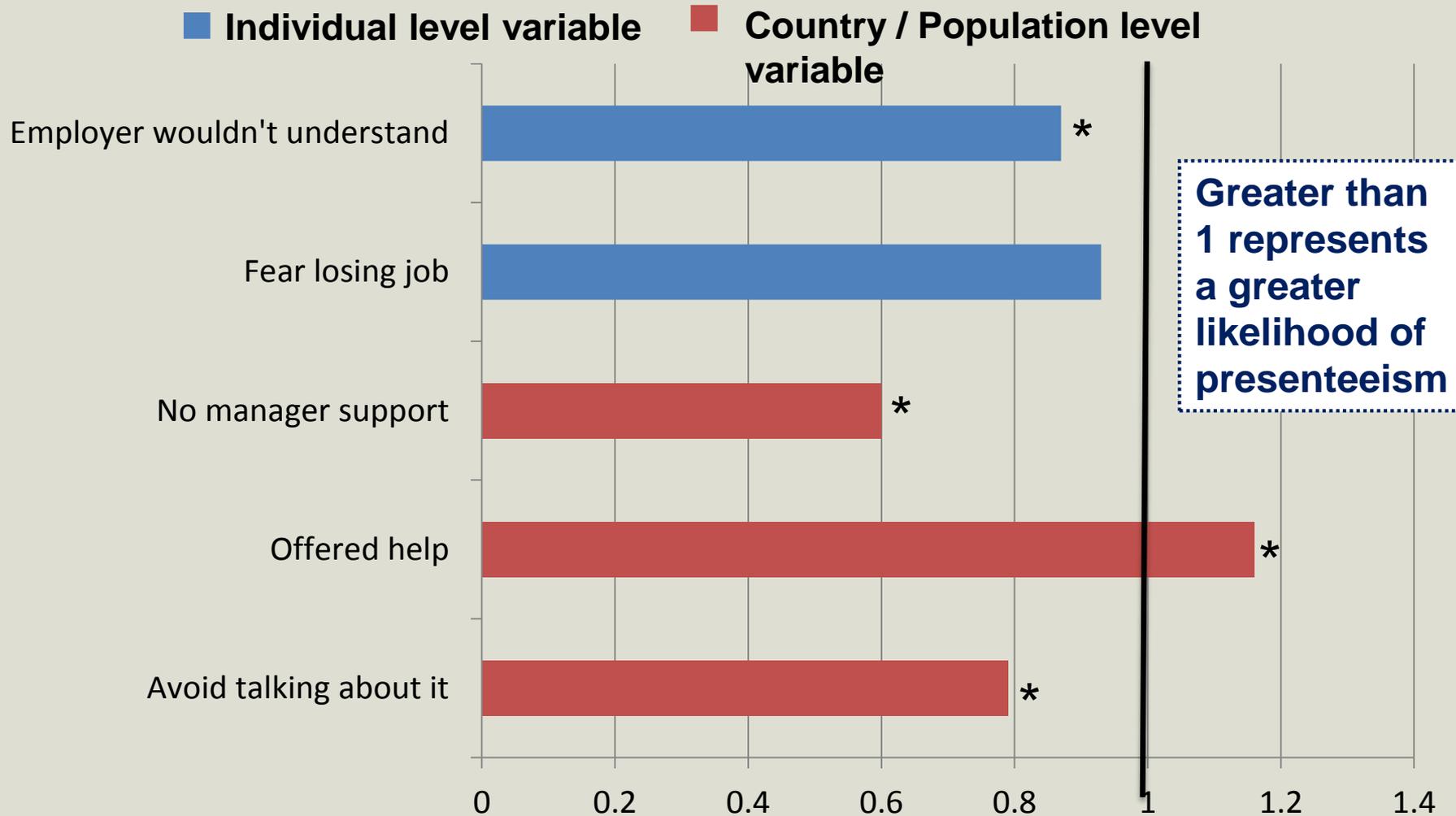


# **HOW DO THESE FACTORS RELATE TO PRODUCTIVITY**

# Factors associated with absenteeism



# Factors associated with presenteeism (subset of 8 countries) among employees with depression



Controlled for: gender, age, education, prevalence depression, GDP

# **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

# Importance of Social and Cultural Factors for Attitudes, Disclosure and Time off Work for Depression: Findings from a Seven Country European Study on Depression in the Workplace

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*Our findings suggest that structural factors such as benefit systems and **flexible working hours** are important for workplace perceptions and employee outcomes; however, it seems that manager responses which focus on **offering help** to the employee with depression have the strongest association with positive perceptions in the workplace and also, openness and disclosure of employees with depression....*

*Avoidance, may result from prejudice and negative beliefs, and only adds to ignorance*



# Impact of economic crises on mental health

27 July 2013 Last updated at 00:32

1.1K Share   

## Mentally ill people 'hit hard by recession'

The economic recession across Europe has had a profound impact on people with mental health problems, research from King's College London suggests.

*Between 2006 and 2010, the rate of unemployment for those with mental health problems rose twice as much as for other people - from 12.7% to 18.2%.*

*Men and those with low levels of education were particularly affected, the study said.*

*The authors warn that social exclusion could increase among the mentally ill.*

*Scientists collected data from 20,000 people across 27 EU countries using the Eurobarometer survey, which looked at mental health, attitudes to those with mental health problems and current employment rate.*

*For those without mental health problems, the unemployment rate increased from 7.1% in 2006 to 9.8% in 2010 - half the increase compared with the previous group.*

*In addition, the study identified that men with mental health problems were particularly vulnerable. The unemployment rate for this group increased from 13.7% in 2006 to 21.7% in 2010.*

### Stigma

*The researchers, from the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London, found that negative attitudes to people with mental health problems were a factor in the rise in unemployment.*

*The study said: "Living in a country where a higher proportion of*



People with mental health problems are more likely to end up unemployed in a recession

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[When does your mental health become a problem?](#)



**It's harder for people to get a job if there's already a gap on their CV."**

Dr Sara Evans-Locko  
Institute of Psychiatry

# Summary & Conclusions

- Depression is a significant issue among workplaces worldwide.
- There is substantial variation across countries in terms of openness around depression and also comfort and knowledge of managers on how to deal with depression in the workplace.
- Manager responses and workplace culture have significant consequences for productivity
- More openness and an environment where managers can feel comfortable to offer help and support the employee rather than avoid them is associated with less absenteeism and more presenteeism.
- Further support for managers to directly help employees and support to help employees feel open and comfortable to discuss mental health issues are needed

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**

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