

IS SOCIAL SUPPORT EQUALLY BENEFICIAL FOR WORKING CLIMATE AND HEALTH
OF WOMEN AND MEN AT DIFFERENT PROFESSIONAL GRADES ?Annalisa CASINI¹, Isabelle GODIN¹, Els CLAYS², France KITTEL¹

- 1 School of Public Health, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium
2 Department of Public health, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

AIM

To examine the association between social support at work (SSW), health factors and working climate as a function of gender and professional grade.

METHOD

- Participants: • Belstress III database (data collection 2004)
• N = 2983 workers employed in 7 (semi-)public companies.
- Variables: • Social Support at Work: JDC-S subscale (Karasek, 1985)
• Professional grade: ISCO-88
• Health factors
– Physical health: Current Health Index - CHI (Dirken, 1969)
– Perceived stress: single question
– Anxiety: Symptom Check-list 90' (Derogatis *et al.*, 1973)
• Working climate
– Bullying (Quine, 1999)
– Mobbing (EUROFOUND, 1997).
- Analysis: • Chi² and logistic regressions (data controlled for age, educational level and marital status).

TAB 1 – Descriptive statistics

	Man			χ^2 (p)	Woman			χ^2 (p)	N (%)
	Hi grade N (%)	intermed. (%)	Low grade N (%)		Hi grade N (%)	intermed. (%)	Low grade N (%)		
Social support at work				<.01				<.05	
low	331 (75.9)	369 (68.6)	219 (65.8)		212 (76.5)	676 (67.5)	158 (67.8)		2053 (69.7)
high	105 (24.1)	169 (31.4)	114 (34.2)		65 (23.5)	326 (32.5)	75 (32.2)		892 (30.3)
Current Health Index				n.s.				<.001	
good health	345 (78.8)	400 (74.6)	23 (76.2)		181 (65.8)	555 (55.1)	137 (58.3)		1951 (66.1)
poor health	93 (21.2)	136 (25.4)	79 (23.8)		94 (34.2)	453 (44.9)	98 (41.7)		1002 (33.9)
Stress				<.05				<.001	
low	240 (55.3)	336 (62.3)	211 (26.8)		125 (44.8)	518 (51.3)	144 (61.0)		1640 (55.7)
high	194 (44.7)	203 (37.7)	120 (23.2)		154 (55.2)	492 (48.7)	92 (39.0)		1307 (44.3)
Anxiety				n.s.				<.05	
low	348 (79.8)	409 (76.5)	245 (74.0)		207 (75.0)	677 (67.4)	157 (66.8)		2135 (72.5)
high	88 (20.2)	126 (23.5)	86 (26.0)		69 (25.0)	328 (32.6)	78 (33.2)		811 (27.5)
Bullying				<.001				<.001	
low	344 (80.0)	375 (70.6)	202 (62.5)		224 (82.3)	745 (75.5)	147 (64.2)		2124 (73.4)
high	86 (20.0)	156 (29.4)	121 (37.5)		48 (17.7)	242 (24.5)	82 (35.8)		771 (26.6)
Mobbing				n.s.				n.s.	
low	355 (86.2)	429 (84.6)	259 (84.1)		199 (78.0)	751 (79.9)	178 (79.5)		2267 (82.1)
high	57 (13.8)	78 (15.4)	49 (15.9)		56 (22.0)	189 (20.1)	46 (20.5)		495 (17.9)

RESULTS

FIG 1 – SSW as a function of Sex and Professional grade

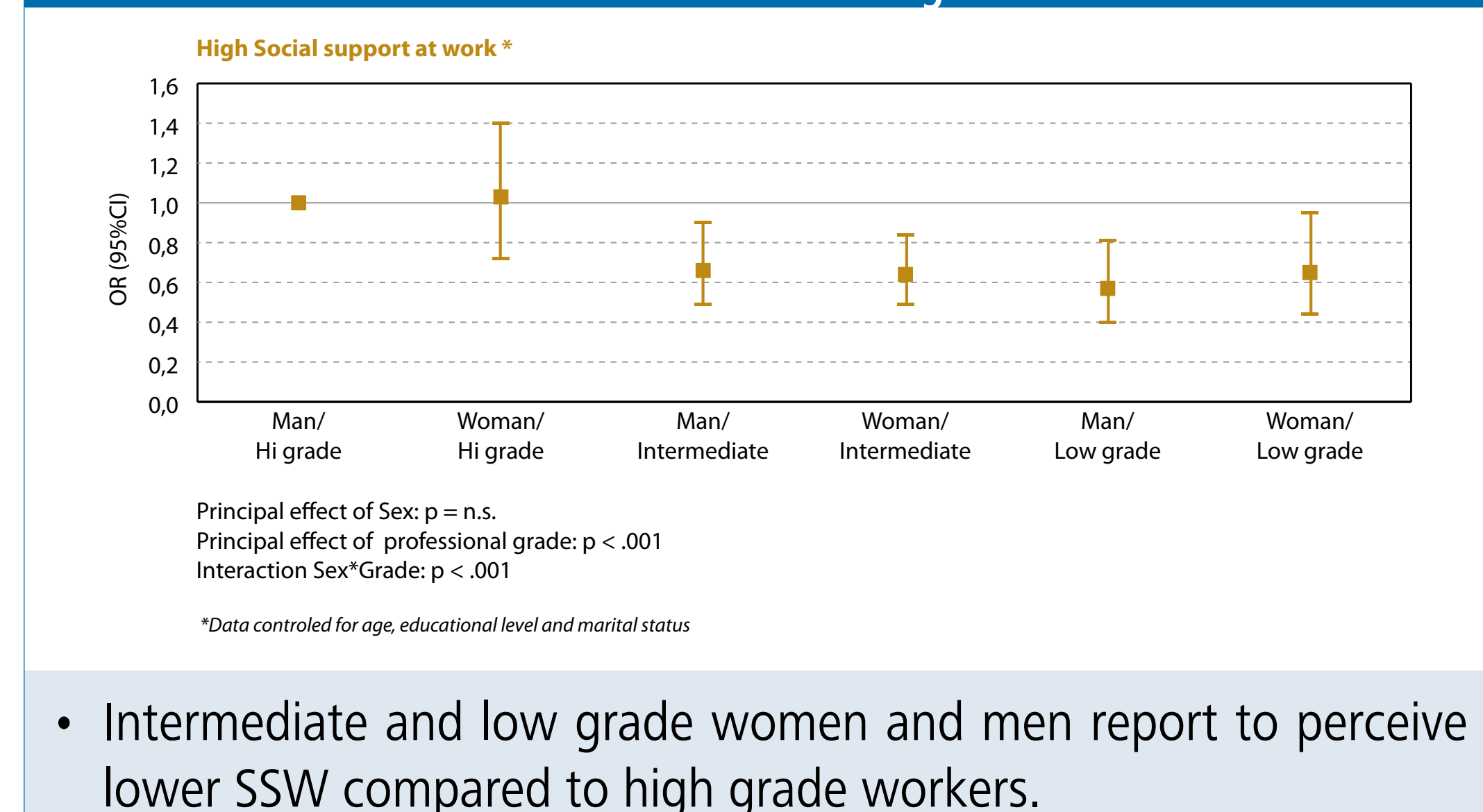
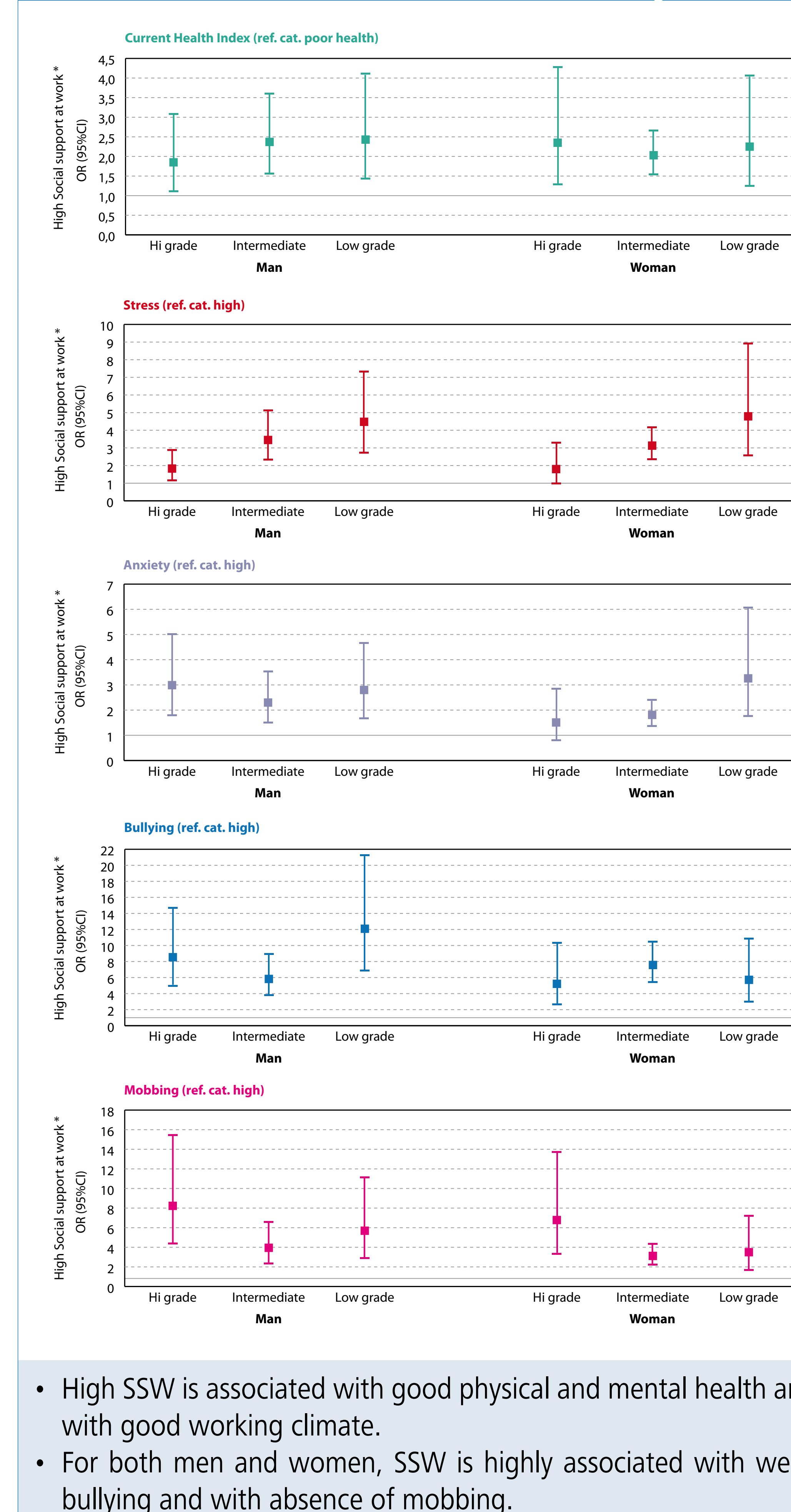


FIG 2 – Association between SSW and health factors and working climate



DISCUSSION

- SSW is beneficial for women's and men's health and working climate but not at the same degree for the different professional grades.
- SSW seems to be particularly beneficial in preventing bullying and mobbing.
- These results are in line with the SSW buffering hypothesis (Cohen *et al.* 1985, van der Doef & Maes, 1998).