

Profile: work-related mental disorders — Queensland

*Based on workers' compensation
mental disorder claims
with \geq five (5) workdays compensated*

Note: Data extracted November 2018

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Key facts

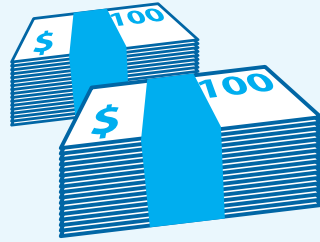
Queensland work-related mental disorders:

3.4% of all accepted, serious workers' compensation claims are for mental disorders



\$24,800

Typical compensation payment per claim.



\$43 million

Total claims payments each year.



871 Queenslanders

are compensated each year.



85 workdays

Typical time off work.



45% of mental disorder claims

are caused by exposure to violence, bullying or workplace bullying.



95% of mental disorder claims

are attributed to mental stress.



Around one third of accepted mental disorder claims

were associated with work pressure.



3.17 mental disorder claims

accepted for every 1,000 Queensland health & welfare support workers.



26% of accepted mental disorder claims

are within Health Care and Social Assistance.

1. Executive summary

Over the period spanning 2013–14 to 2017–18, an average of 871 Queensland workers were compensated for work-related mental disorders each year. This figure represented approximately 3.4 per cent of all accepted serious claims over the period. The mental disorder claim rate sat well below the claim rate for all serious claims.

Over three quarters of the accepted mental disorder claims were associated with work pressure, exposure to work-related violence, or workplace bullying. Furthermore, over 50 per cent of the accepted mental disorder claims were for an anxiety or stress condition.

In relation to occupation, miscellaneous labourers, health and welfare support workers and defence force members, fire fighters and police were more likely than workers in other occupations to be compensated for a mental disorder. Moreover, defence force members, fire fighters, police and prison and security officers who received compensation for a mental disorder took, on average, longer to return to work compared to workers from other occupations who received compensation for a mental disorder.

The four industries with the highest accepted mental disorder claim rates for Queensland accounted for almost two thirds (63 per cent) of the mental disorder claims over the period. With regards to industry subdivision, workers in the public order, safety and regulatory services were around 5.7 times more likely to be compensated for a mental disorder than workers in any other industry subdivision. With the exception of transport, postal and warehousing, work pressure was the recorded cause for approximately a third or more of the accepted mental disorder claims.

Workers across all age groups required a significantly greater amount of time away from work for a mental disorder claim when compared to all other serious claims. Over the period, older workers were more likely to be compensated for a mental disorder claim than younger workers.

2. Introduction

This document provides a statistical profile of Queensland’s work-related mental disorders that are compensated by the Queensland workers’ compensation scheme. It provides statistics on how many Queensland workers are awarded a mental disorder claim each year and also explores mechanism, occupation, industry, and age associated with such claims. It is based on data of serious workers’ compensation claims for the most recent five-year period (2013–14 to 2017–18). A serious claim is defined as an accepted workers’ compensation claim which involves five or more workdays away from work and excludes fatalities. Also, all claims related to travelling to and from work or while on a break away from the workplace have been excluded.

2.1 Scope

This profile was developed using accepted workers’ compensation claims¹ data where:

- the Type of Occurrence Classification System (TOOCS)² Nature of Injury/Disease major group is ‘mental disease’
- the claims are non-fatal and five or more workdays are compensated (i.e. serious claims)
- the claims are work-related and accepted (and in some cases accepted and finalised³)
- the claim intimation date is between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2018 (the period). Note, the data used for workdays lost (WDL) and statutory costs are based on accepted claims that were finalised between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2018.

2.2 Why focus on mental disorder claims?

On average, 871 Queensland workers are compensated for work-related mental disorders each year. Mental disorder claims represented just 3.4 per cent of all serious claims over the period and the mental disorder claim rate sits well below the claim rate for all serious claims. This is highlighted in Table 1 below. However, mental disorder claims typically involve relatively higher statutory claim costs and workdays lost. As Table 1 shows, the median workdays lost (85) and the median claim payment⁴ (\$24,800) for mental disorder claims were 3.4 and 3.1 times higher than the median workdays lost and median claim payment for all claims, 25 and \$8,010 respectively. Therefore, although mental disorder claims represent a relatively small proportion of all serious claims, they are usually more serious for the claimant.

Table 1. Mental disorder claims and all serious claims 2013–14 to 2017–18

Serious claim type	No. serious claims (annual average)	Proportion of claims	Incidence rate (no. claims per 1,000 workers) ⁵	Median claim payment (over the period)*	Median workdays lost (over the period)*
Mental disorder claims	871	3.4%	0.5	\$24,800.00	85
All serious claims	25,818	100.0%	13.5	\$8,010.00	25

* Based on accepted and finalised serious claims

1 Source: Queensland Employee Injury Database (QEIDB).

2 Source: Type of Occurrence Classification System (TOOCS) – Third edition (revision one), May 2008.

3 Accepted and finalised claims are used to calculate average work days lost and average statutory cost per claim. In this case, the claim finalisation date is used as a condition in place of intimation date.

4 Refers to statutory claim payments only. Does not include common law payments.

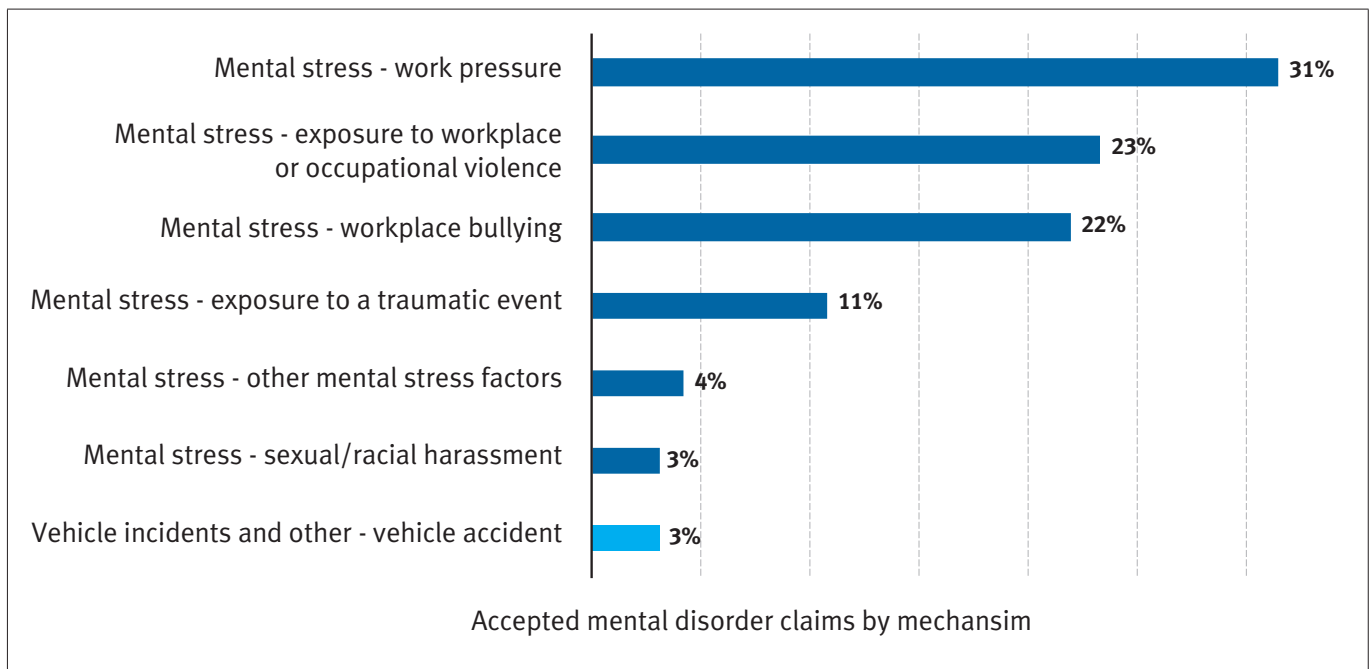
5 Claim rates were calculated using the five year average number of serious claims (over the period) divided by the 2016 Census labour force employment values multiplied by 1,000

3. Mental disorder claims

3.1 Mechanism of injury

Over the period, around 95 per cent of accepted mental disorder claims in Queensland were linked to various types of mental stress and 3 per cent were linked to vehicle incidents. Chart 1 shows that around one third of the accepted mental disorder claims were associated with work pressure (a subcategory of the mental stress mechanism group). Notably, exposure to work-related violence and/or workplace bullying accounted for almost half of the accepted mental disorder claims.

Chart 1. Proportion of mental disorder claims by mechanism of injury*

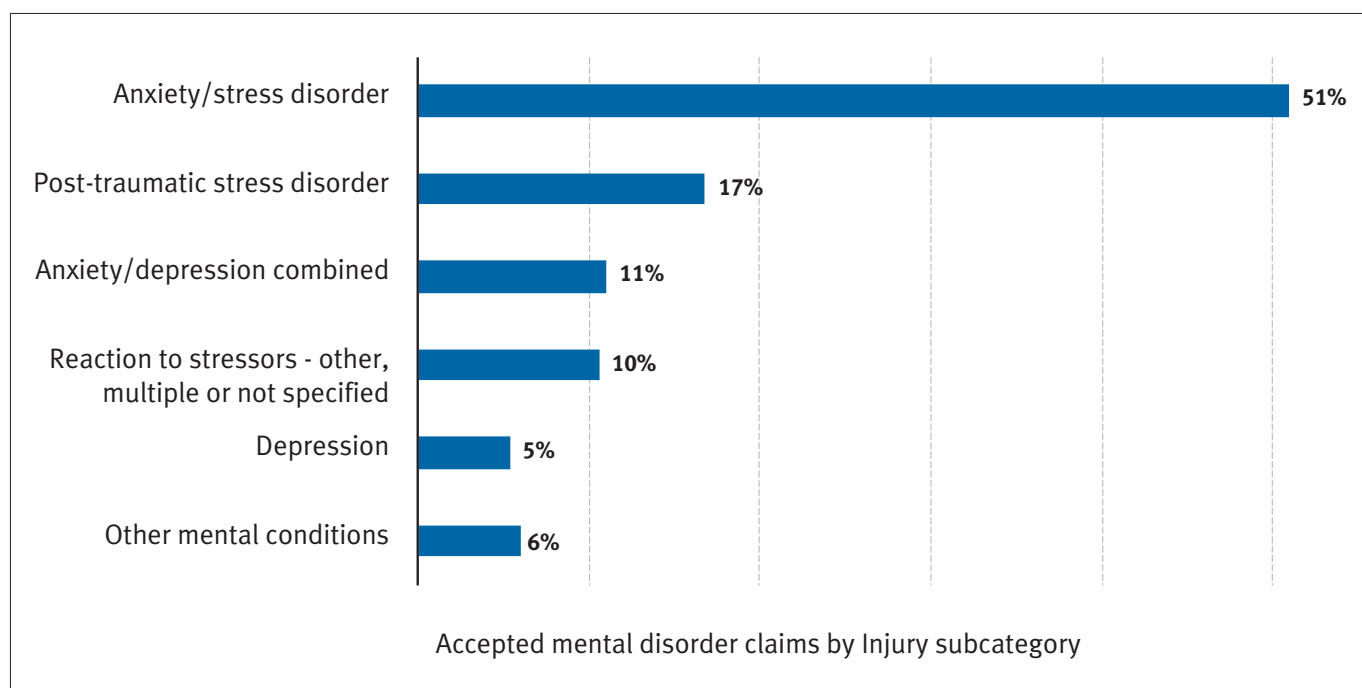


*Mechanism categories accounting for less than two percent of mental disorder claims are not shown.

3.2 Nature of injury/disease

Chart 2 shows the proportion of accepted mental disorder claims over the period by injury/disease subcategory. Over half of the accepted mental disorder claims were for an anxiety/stress condition. Notably, 17 per cent of the mental disorder claimants experienced post-traumatic stress disorder.

Chart 2. Proportion of mental disorder claims by injury subcategory



3.3 Occupation

This section examines the top ten occupations for mental disorder claims based on the incidence rate of accepted claims. Table 2 and Chart 3 show that miscellaneous labourers experienced the highest rate of mental disorder claims with approximately 3.6 accepted claims for every 1,000 workers in this occupation group (minor group – 3 digit). As Chart 3 indicates, this rate sits well above the mental disorder claim rate for all occupations, 0.5 accepted claims for every 1,000 Queensland workers. It's important to note that some claimants may have been categorised as miscellaneous labourers due to limited information, which might partially explain why this occupation is overrepresented. Unsurprisingly, health and welfare support workers and defence force members, fire fighters and police also experienced relatively high claim rates, 3.17 and 2.70 claims per 1,000 workers, respectively.

Most at risk occupations



Health and welfare support workers



defence force members, fire fighters and police



Automobile, bus and rail drivers

The average workdays lost for mental disorder claims made by miscellaneous labourers was 165 days per claim, which is similar to the average workdays lost per mental disorder claim for all occupations. However, defence force members, fire fighters, police and prison and security officers took, on average, 231 and 220 workdays off per mental disorder claim, respectively.

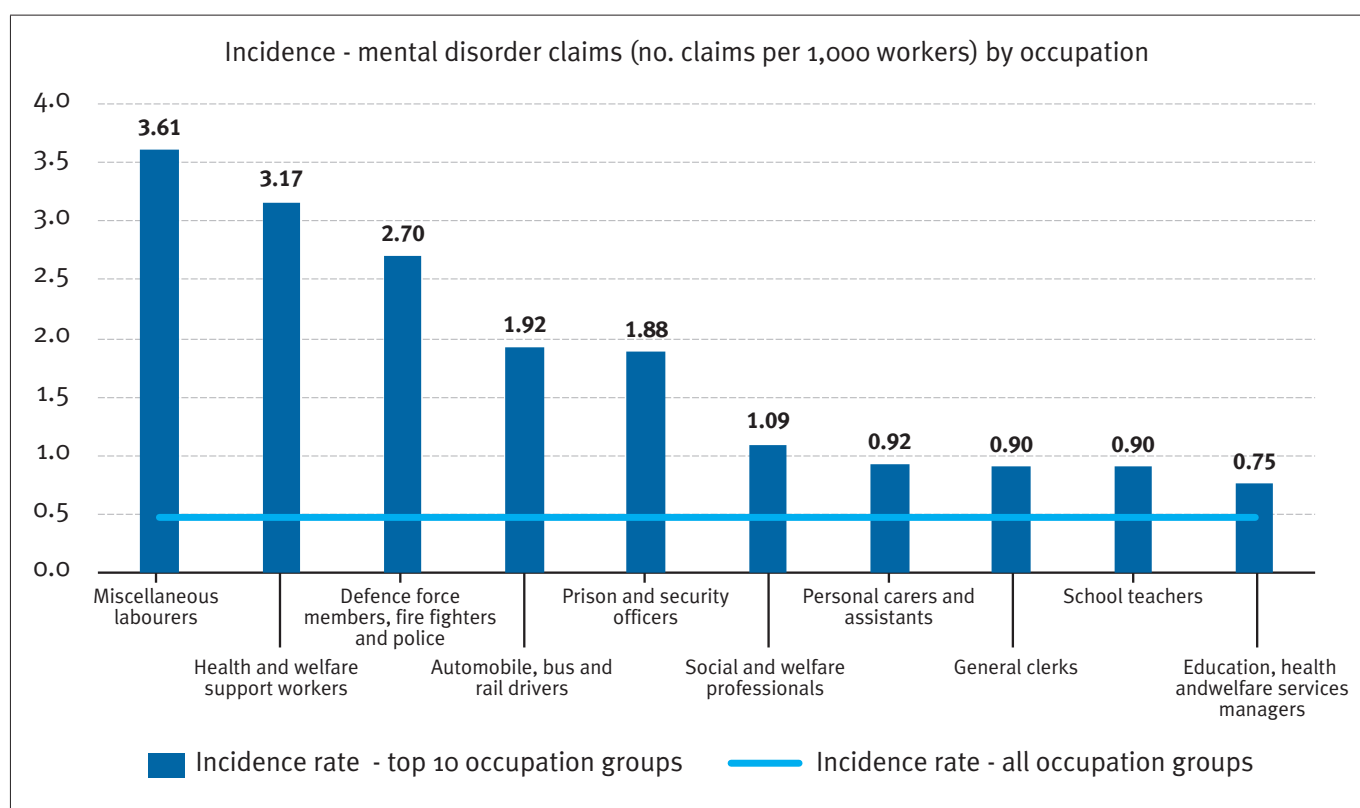
The nature of the occupations listed in Table 2 and Chart 3 suggest that workers receiving compensation for mental disorders are usually those required to interact with other people, often under challenging circumstances. Moreover, using workdays lost as a proxy for claim severity, it seems, on average, the severity of mental disorder claims increased for those employed in occupations where the risk of exposure to violence or trauma is high.

Table 2. Top 10 occupations based on incidence rate of accepted mental disorder claims

Occupation minor group (3 digit)	No. serious claims (annual average)	Proportion of mental disorder claims	Incidence rate (no. claims per 1000 workers) ⁶	Average costs per claim*	Average workdays lost per claim*
All occupations	871	100%	0.5	\$52,395.24	167
Miscellaneous labourers	76	9%	3.61	\$52,358.74	165
Health and welfare support workers	76	9%	3.17	\$45,680.27	163
Defence force members, fire fighters and police	51	6%	2.70	\$89,811.02	231
Automobile, bus and rail drivers	27	3%	1.92	\$30,264.25	86
Prison and security officers	22	2%	1.88	\$61,638.36	220
Social and welfare professionals	20	2%	1.09	\$57,371.66	194
Personal carers and assistants	44	5%	0.92	\$33,056.89	134
General clerks	39	4%	0.90	\$55,634.85	191
School teachers	62	7%	0.90	\$41,926.48	127
Education, health and welfare services managers	10	1%	0.75	\$61,824.18	158

* Based on accepted and finalised serious claims

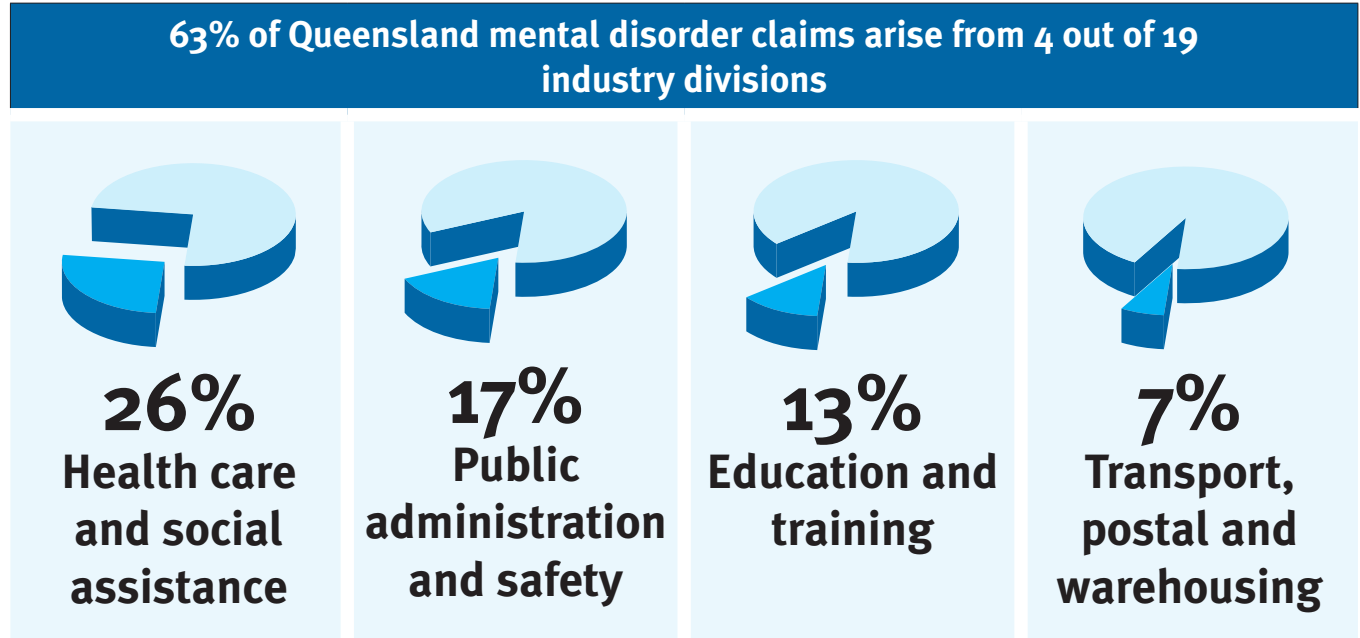
Chart 3. Top 10 occupations based on incidence rate of accepted mental disorder claims



⁶ Claim rates were calculated using the five year average number of serious claims (over the period) divided by the 2016 Census labour force employment values multiplied by 1,000

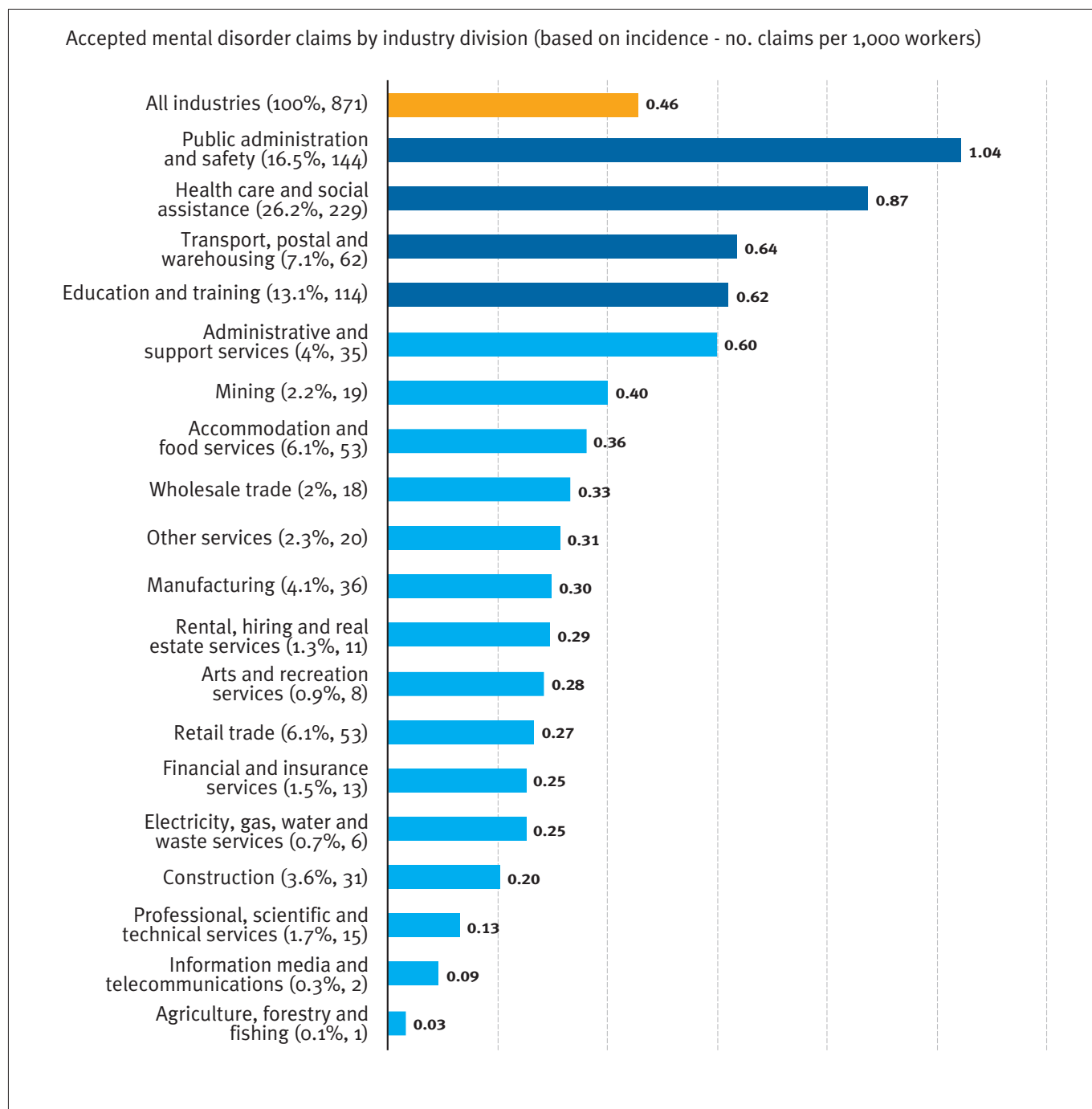
3.4 Industry

The four industries with the highest accepted mental disorder claim rates for Queensland accounted for almost two thirds (63 per cent) of the mental disorder claims over the period. Chart 4 shows all industry divisions by the accepted mental disorder claim rate⁷. The chart also shows the industry proportion and the five-year annual average number of claims for each industry.



⁷ Claim rates were calculated using the five year average number of serious claims (over the period) divided by the 2016 Census labour force employment values multiplied by 1,000

Chart 4. Industry division based on incidence rate of accepted mental disorder claims, including proportion and five year annual averages*



*Claims where the industry division is unknown are not shown.

3.4.1 Top four industries by industry subdivision

Table 3 shows the top four industry divisions broken down into industry subdivisions. The industry subdivision provides a slightly more granular view of the mental disorder claims data. As Table 3 indicates, the public order, safety and regulatory services subdivision was overrepresented in relation to the incidence rate. Moreover, when compared with all other subdivisions, workers in the public order, safety and regulatory services subdivision were approximately 5.7 times more likely to make a mental health disorder claim. Notably, social assistance services and rail transport also had relatively high claims rates.

Table 3. Top four industry divisions broken down into industry subdivision by annual average number of accepted mental disorder claims

Industry subdivision	No. serious claims (annual average)*	Proportion of all mental disorder claims	Incidence rate (no. claims per 1000 workers) ⁸
All industry subdivisions	871	100%	0.46
Preschool and school education	100	12%	0.77
Public order, safety and regulatory services	82	9%	2.38
Hospitals	78	9%	0.85
Social assistance services	76	9%	1.35
Public administration	61	7%	0.71
Residential care services	43	5%	1.00
Road transport	36	4%	0.99
Medical and other health care services	31	4%	0.48
Rail transport	13	2%	1.27
Tertiary education	12	1%	0.29

*Industry subdivisions with less than 10 claims a year have been excluded from this table.

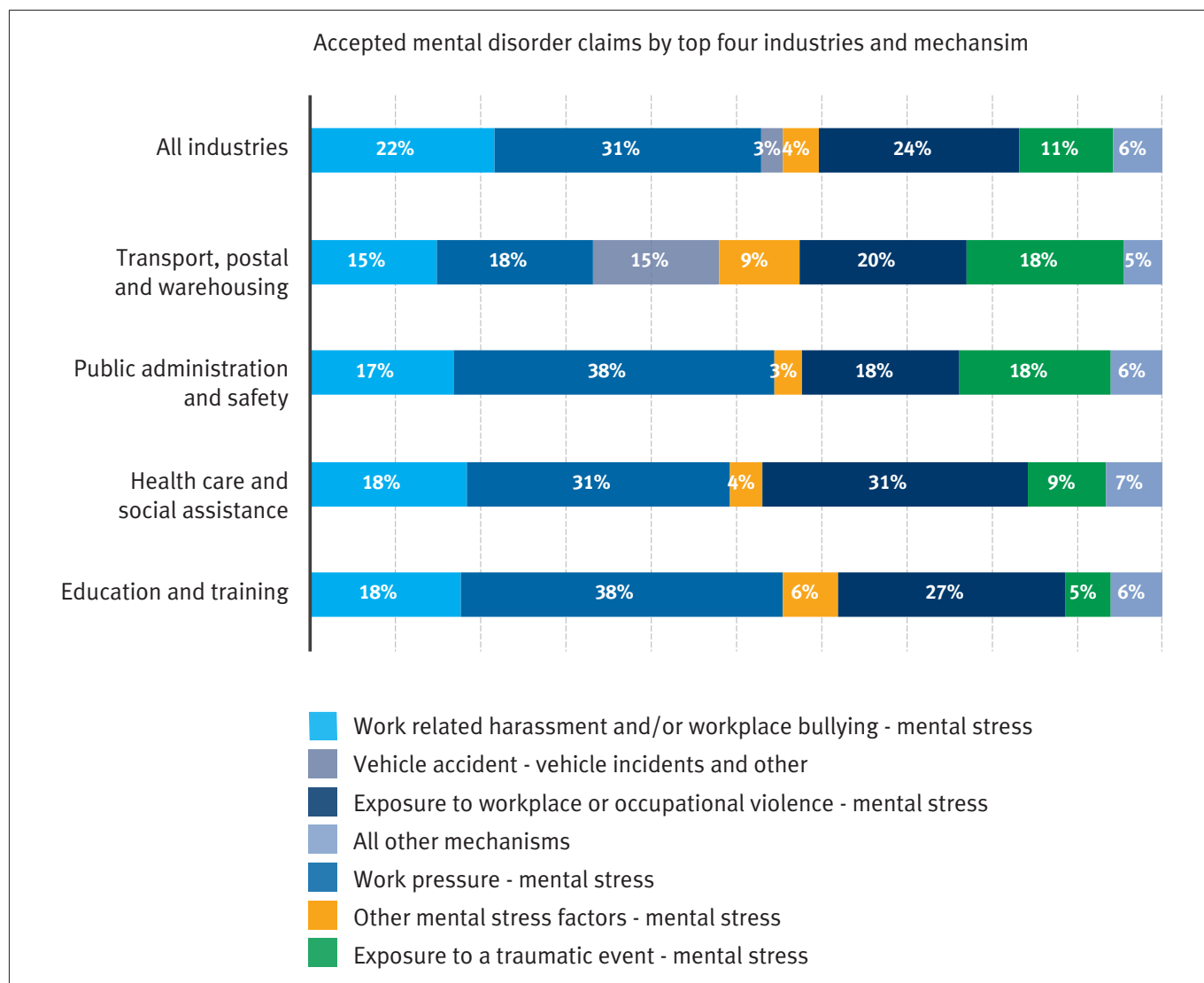
3.4.2 Mechanism and the top four industry divisions

Using the top four industry divisions highlighted above, Chart 5 shows the top five to six mechanisms for the accepted mental disorder claims as proportions for each of the top four industries and all industries combined. The standout findings include:

- Almost one third of the accepted mental disorder claims for health care and social assistance workers were associated with exposure to workplace or occupational violence.
- Work pressure featured heavily in three of the top four industries and also for all industries combined. With the exception of transport, postal and warehousing, work pressure was the recorded cause for approximately a third or more of the accepted mental disorder claims.
- Approximately 15 per cent of transport, postal and warehousing claims were for a mental disorder following a vehicle accident.
- Workers in transport, postal and warehousing and public administration and safety were relatively more likely to be compensated for a mental disorder as a result of exposure to a traumatic event.

⁸ Claim rates were calculated using the five-year average number of serious claims (over the period) divided by the 2016 Census labour force employment values multiplied by 1,000.

Chart 5. Top four Industry divisions and mechanism for accepted mental disorder claims (proportion analysis)*



*Small rounding errors are present in this chart

3.5 Age group

3.5.1 Workdays lost (WDL) and statutory costs per claim⁹

On average, workers across all age groups required a significantly greater amount of time away from work for a mental disorder claim when compared to all other serious claims. Chart 6 shows claimant age group by the average number of workdays lost per claim for mental disorders compared to all other serious claims finalised over the period. As Chart 6 indicates, it can take up to 2.6 times longer, on average, for a claimant with a mental health condition to return to work than a claimant suffering from any other serious injury or disease. This disparity is also reflected in the average statutory costs per claim, as shown in Chart 7.

⁹ The data used in this section are based on accepted claims that were finalised between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2018

Chart 6. Average workdays lost (WDL) per claim – finalised mental disorder claims compared with all other claims

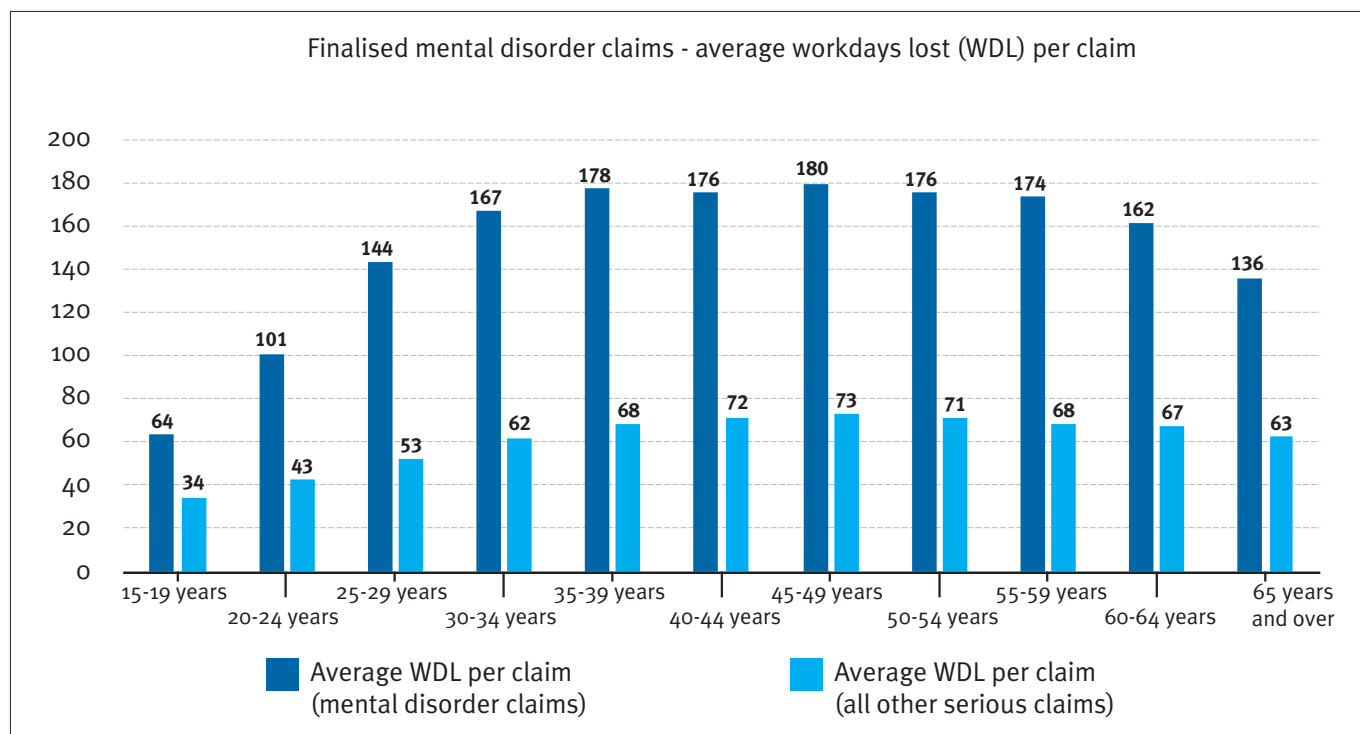
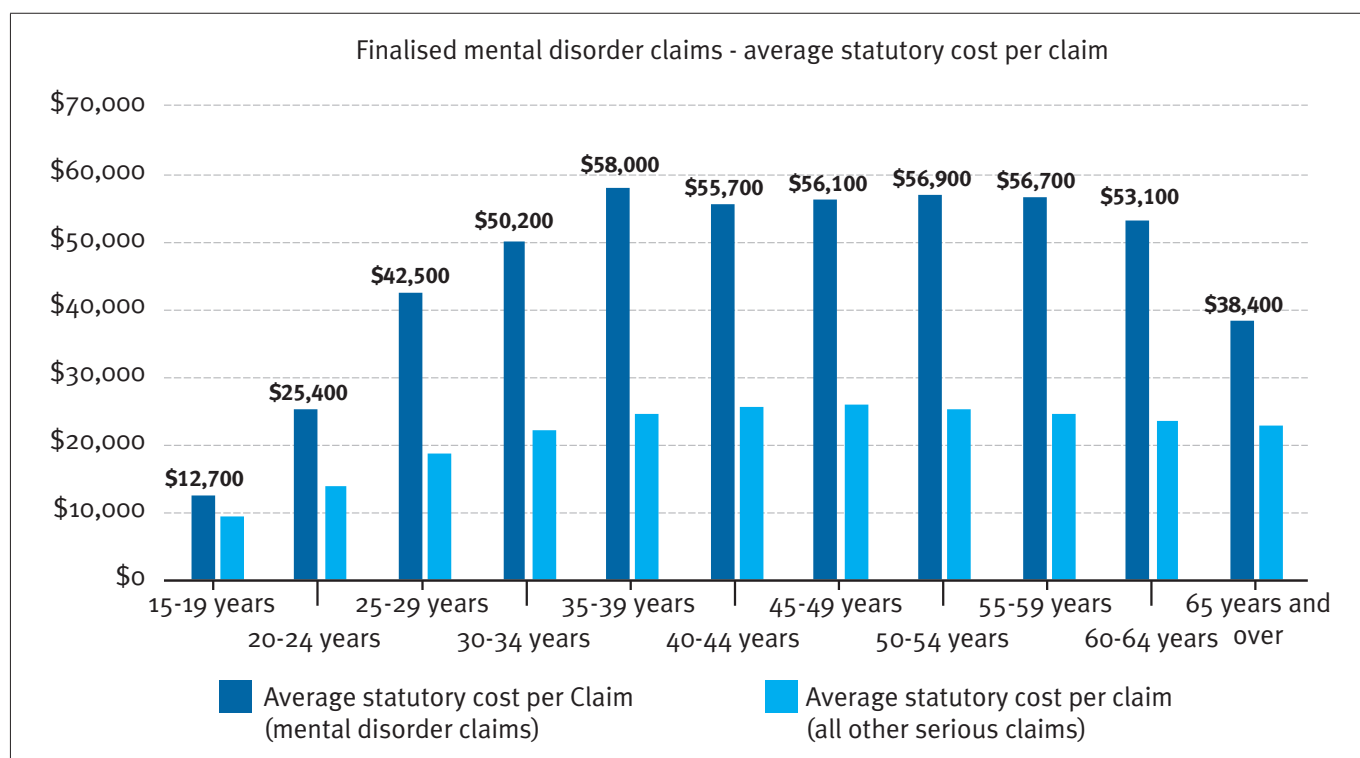


Chart 7. Average statutory costs per claim – finalised mental disorder claims compared with all other claims



3.5.2 Incidence rate and distribution

Over the period, workers aged between 45 and 49 years experienced the highest incidence rate of accepted mental disorder claims. Chart 8 shows the claim rate¹⁰ for accepted mental disorder claims by age group. Notably, workers aged between 35 and 64 years experienced a claim rate higher than the overall mental disorder claim rate across all age groups. With the exception of workers who have reached traditional retirement age, Chart 8 shows that older workers are more likely to be compensated for a mental disorder claim than younger workers.

¹⁰ Claim rates were calculated using the five-year average number of serious claims (over the period) divided by the 2016 Census labour force employment values multiplied by 1,000.

Chart 8. Age group based on incidence rate of accepted mental disorder claims

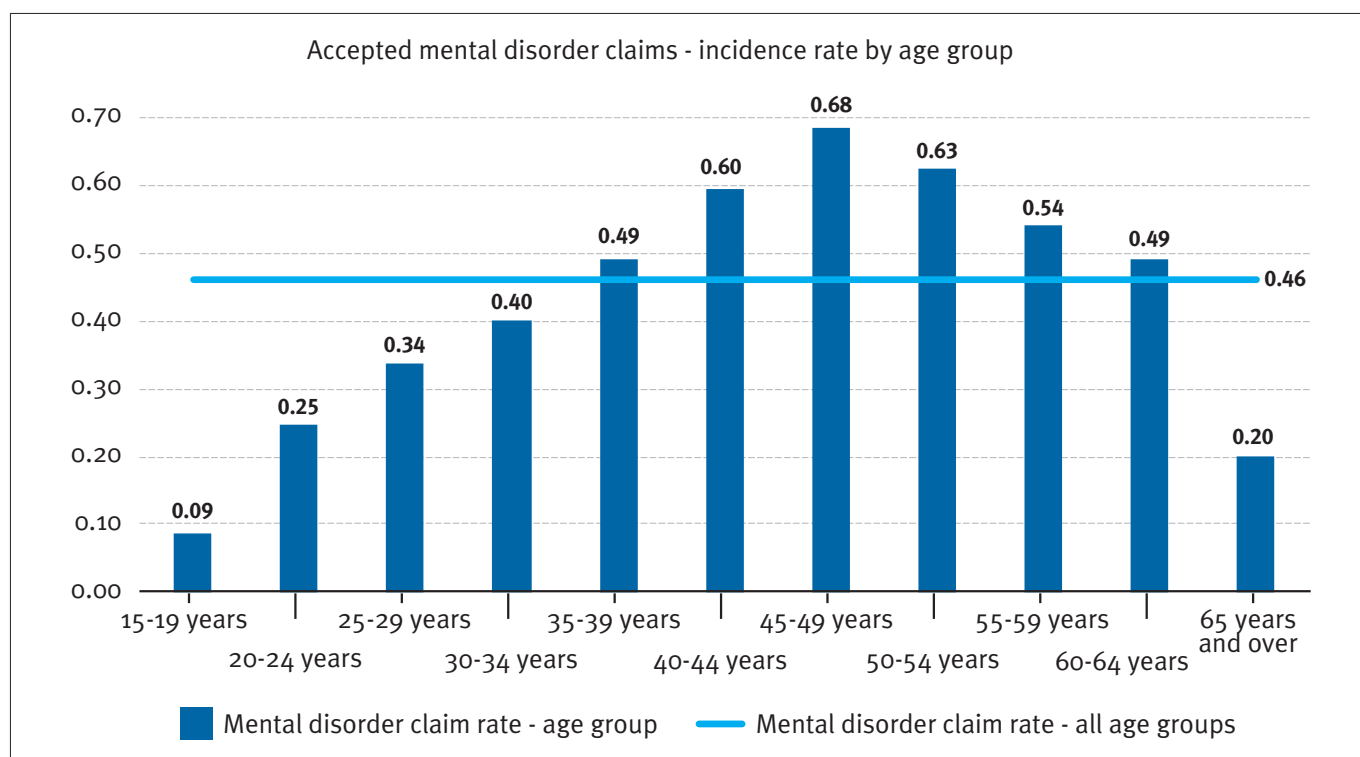
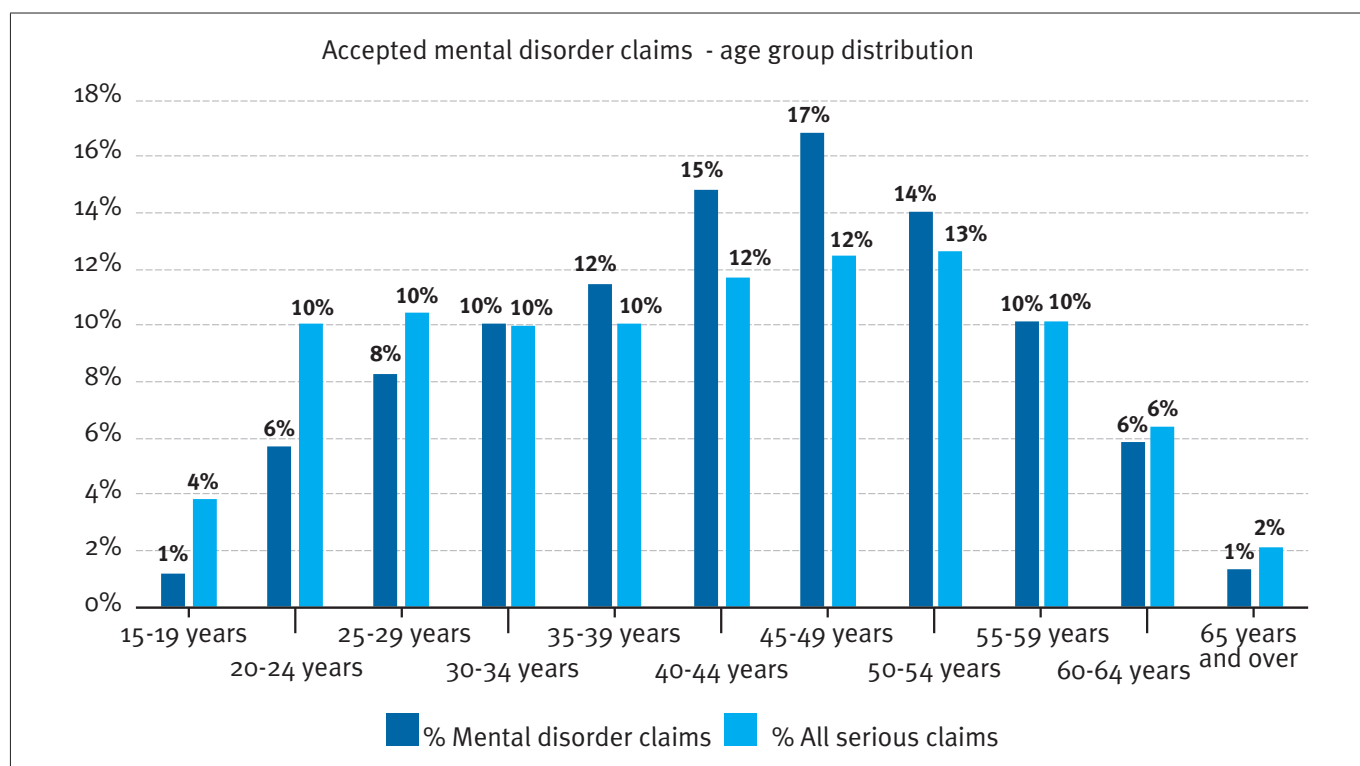


Chart 9 below shows the age group distribution of accepted mental disorder claims compared with all accepted serious claims. It's clear from Chart 9 that the distribution for accepted mental disorder claims over the period are more concentrated around the 40 to 44 and 45 to 49 year age groups compared to all serious claims, which are more evenly distributed across age groups.

Chart 9. Age group distribution – mental disorder claims compared with all serious claims



4. Summary

In summary, although the accepted mental disorder claims accounted for a relatively small proportion of all accepted serious claims over the period, they involved significantly higher statutory claim costs and workdays lost. Essentially, accepted mental disorder claims, on average, require more time off than other types of serious claims.