

# Workplace Accommodation Use for Individuals with Mental Function Limitations

A segment from the NARRTC 2011 presentation:  
Update from the  
RERC on Workplace Accommodations  
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# Purpose

To examine the relationships between functional ability, job requirements, and characteristics of accommodation use.

Presentation Focus:

Accommodation used by those with **different mental function impairments** across age groups.

# Why Investigate Age?

- The workforce is Aging
  - In 2012, 19% of all employees will be 55 or older<sup>1</sup>
- Age is Highest Predictor of Disability
  - About 30% of those 65-74 have a disability<sup>2</sup>

1. Tossi, M. (2004) "Labor Force Projects top 2012: the Graying of the U.S. Workforce," Monthly Labor Review Online
2. Erickson, W., Lee, C. (2008) 2007 Disability Stats Report: The United States. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics.

# Methods

- Survey relating characteristics of the individual to the accommodation
  - Administered dominantly electronically
  - Marketed through consumer lists, national publication lists, social networking venues.
  - Inclusion Criteria:
    - Individual has 1 or more functional limitations
    - Individual is currently employed or volunteers

# Job Characteristics

- EEOC Categorization
- Relationship to Employer
- Location of Work
- Pay Rate and Hours/wk

# Functional Limitations

Broad functional limitation categories were selected from the ICF and further delineated by specific activities.

Example: Mental Function Impairment

“I have difficulty taking in or processing information.”

# Accommodations

- Accommodations divided into 4 categories
  - Universal features
  - Adaptations
  - Help or Assistance
  - Assistive Technology

# Satisfaction, Importance, Frequency

- Recorded for each accommodation individually.
- Instrument was nominal Likert scale for each construct.



# Population Demographics

373 individuals responded to the survey, of which 80 reported impairment with mental function.

61% Female; 29% under the age 55

## Race:

- 1% African
- 5% Native American
- 90% Caucasian
- 3% multi-racial

Ethnicity: 90% non-Hispanic

# Population Demographics

## Educational Background

Some High School / Diploma	13%
Some College / Associates Degree:	25%
Bachelors Degree:	34%
Master's Degree	22%
Ph.D. / Professional Degree	5%

# Population Job Characteristics

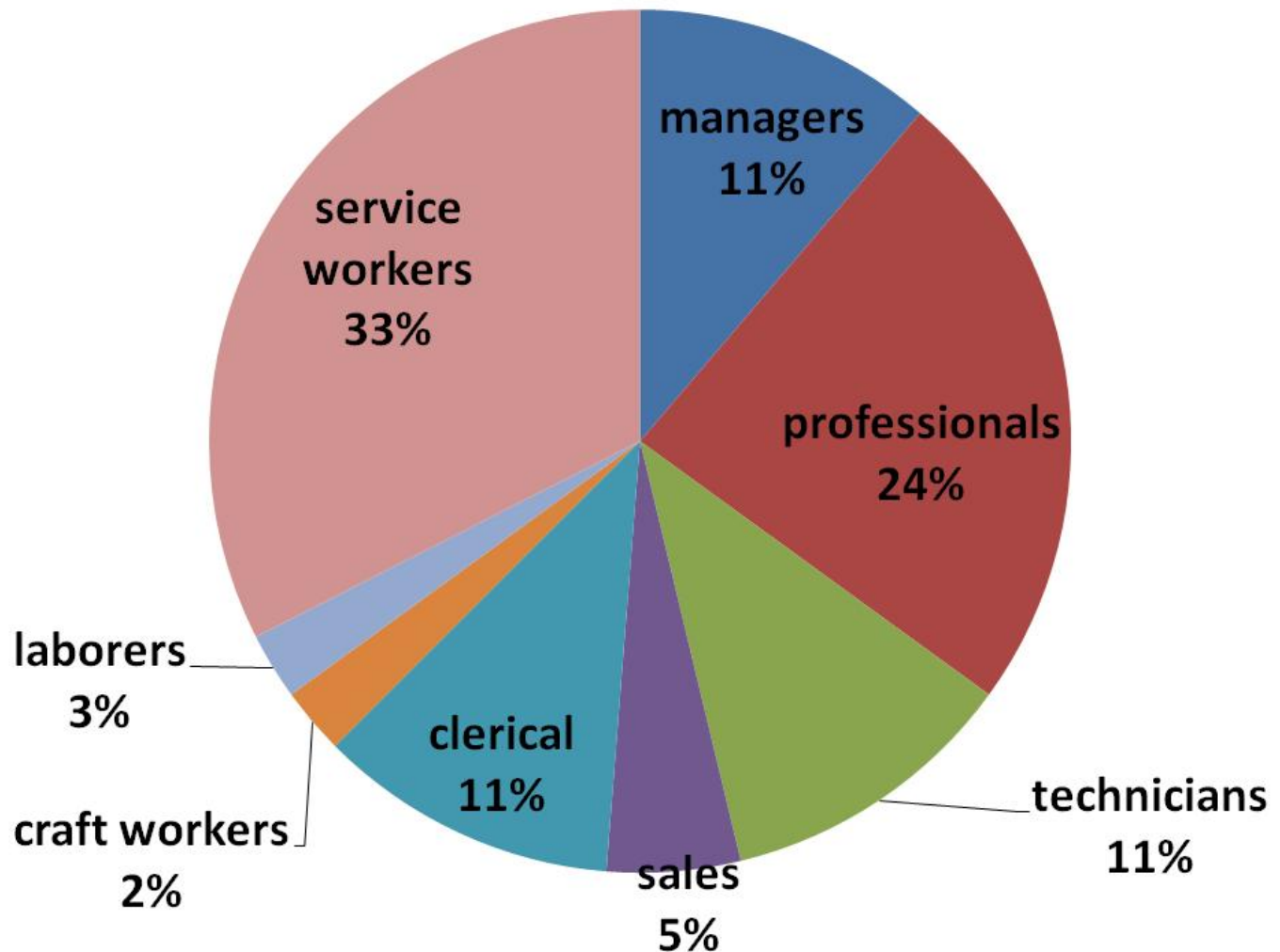
## Job Type

One full-time	23%
One part-time	56%
Multiple Jobs	21%

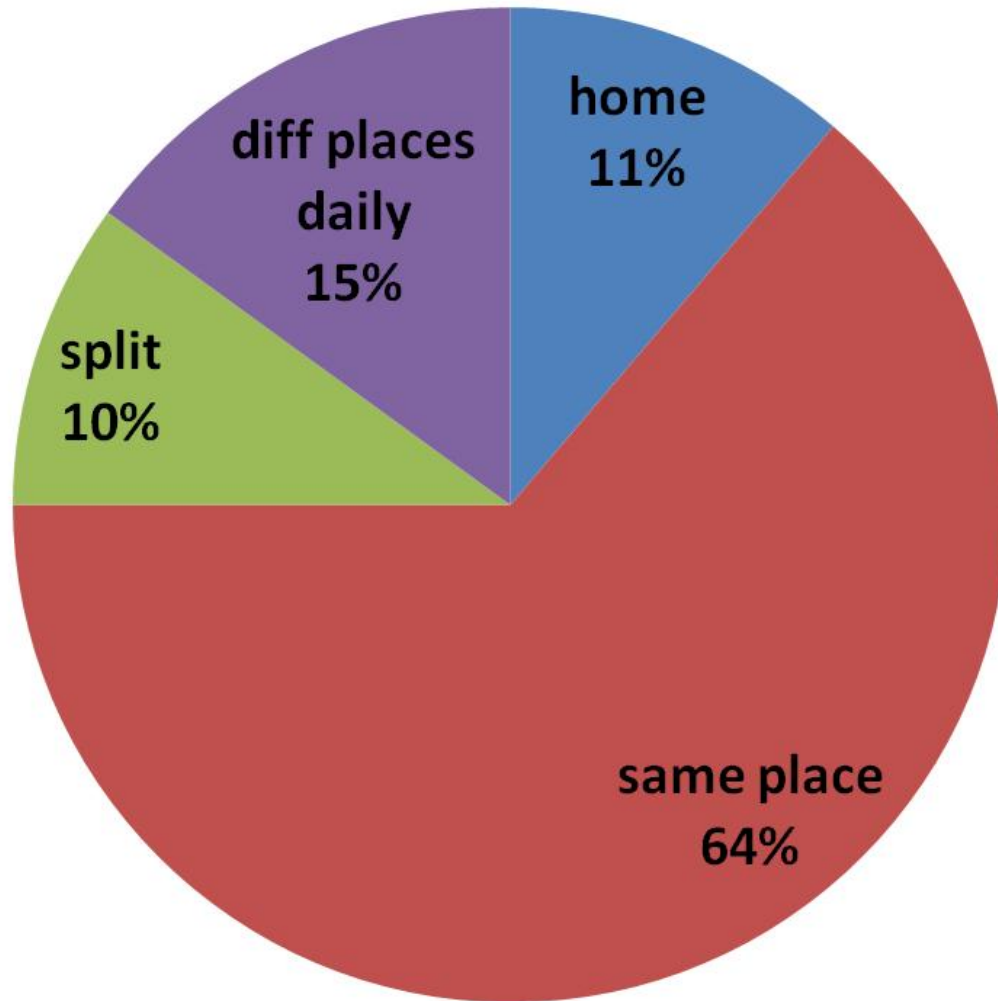
## Employment Type

Employee	76%
Self – Employed	15%
Volunteer	9%

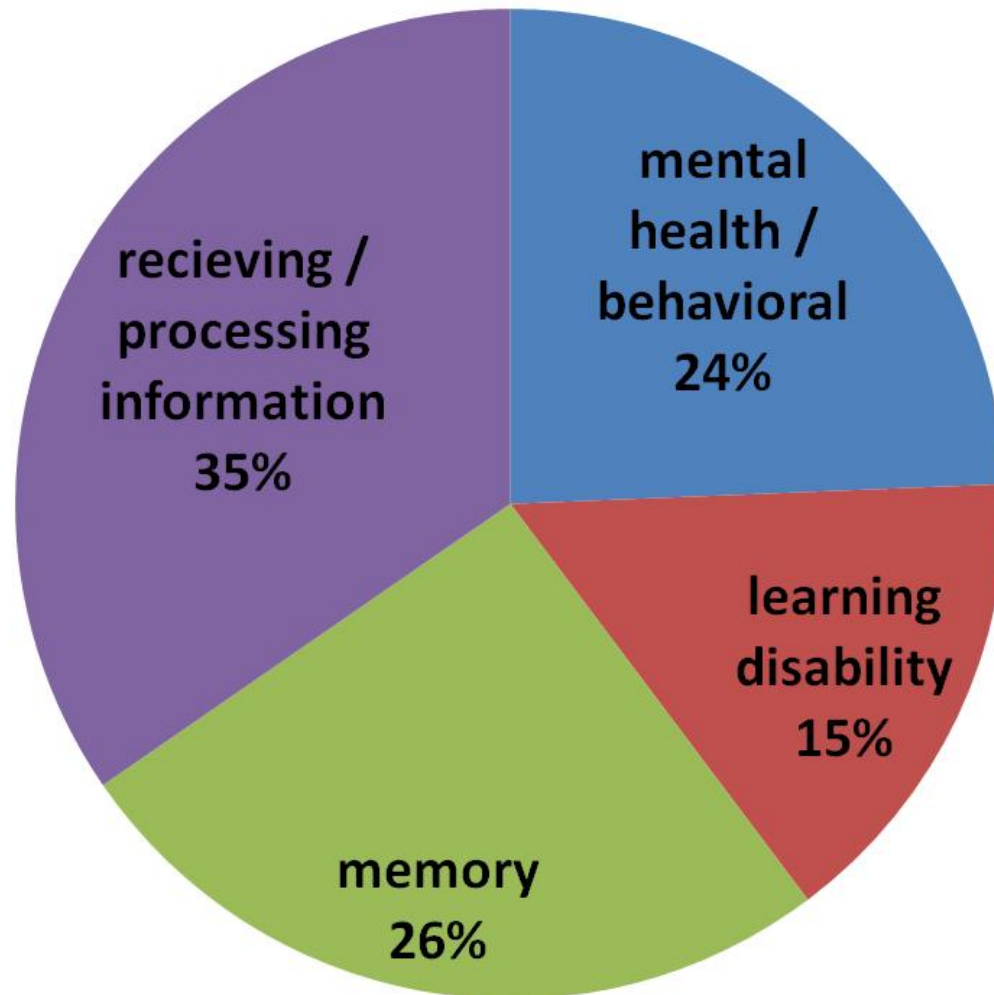
# Population – EEOC Job Category



# Population – Location of Work



# Reported Limitation Group



# Additional Limitations

Older workers with mental function limitation have **MORE** limitations than younger workers

Older workers average 2.8 limitations

Younger workers average 2.1 limitations.

	Under age 55	Over age 55
Mobility	35%	65%
Upper Extremity	19%	22%
Hearing	12%	30%
Vision	15%	35%
Speech	31%	30%

# Commonly-Used Accommodations

## **Top Accommodations**

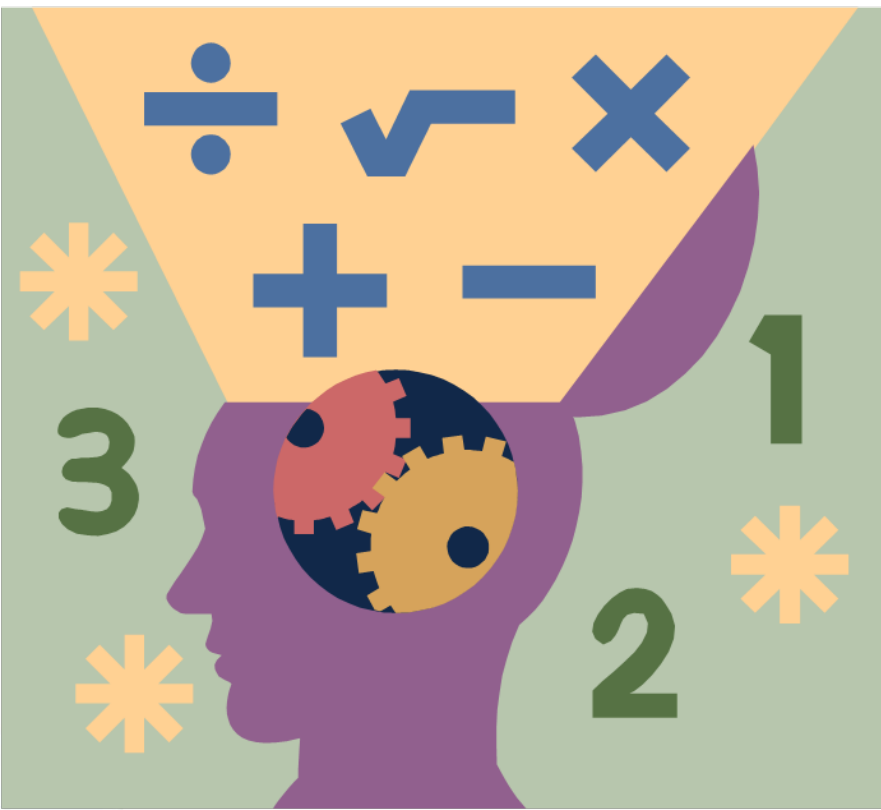
- Memory Aids
- Adjustable Schedule
- Co-Worker Help
- Flexible Schedule
- Different Work Area

## **Top AT Accommodations**

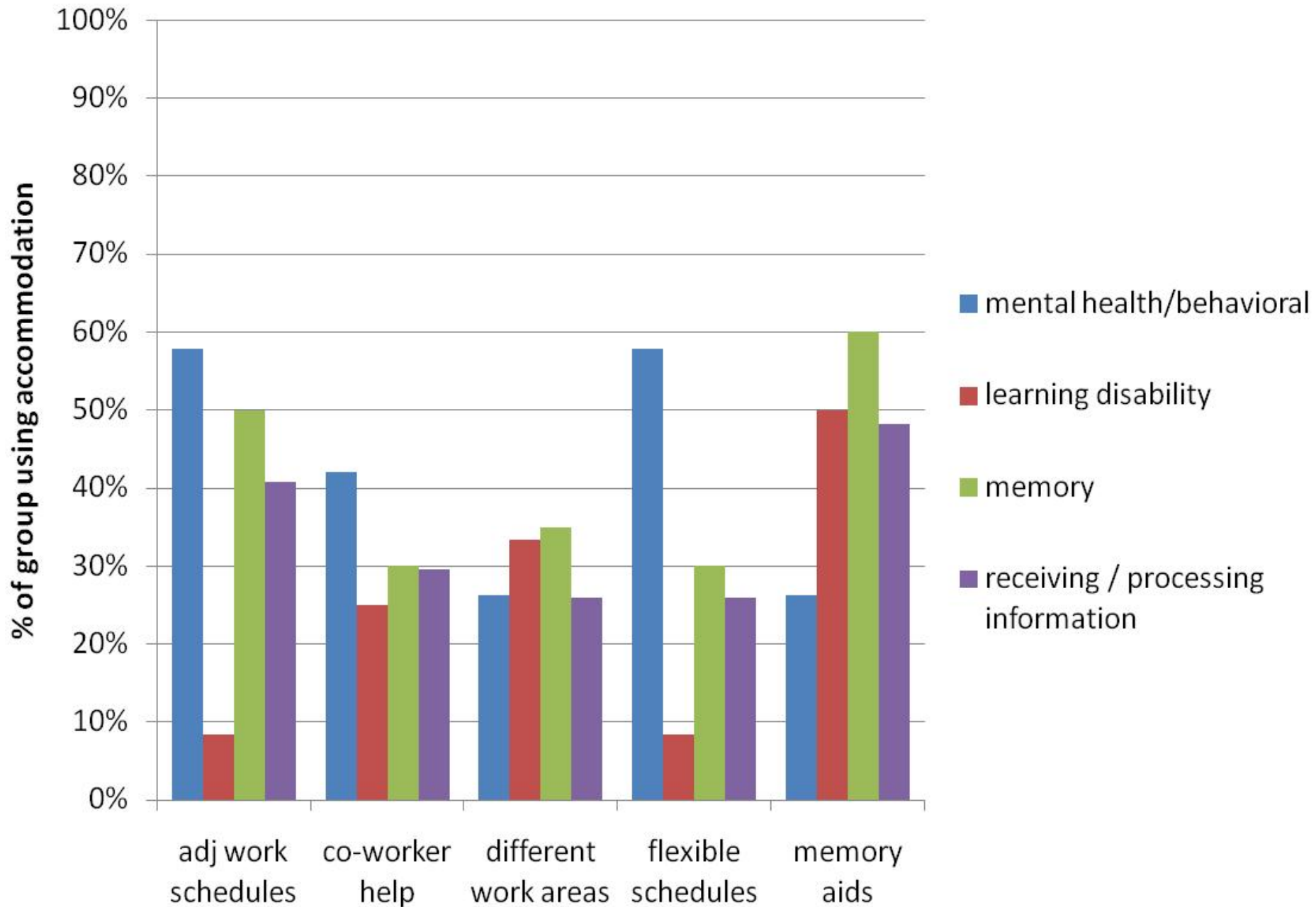
- Memory Aids
- Reading Devices
- Modified Work Surface
- Wayfinding Tools



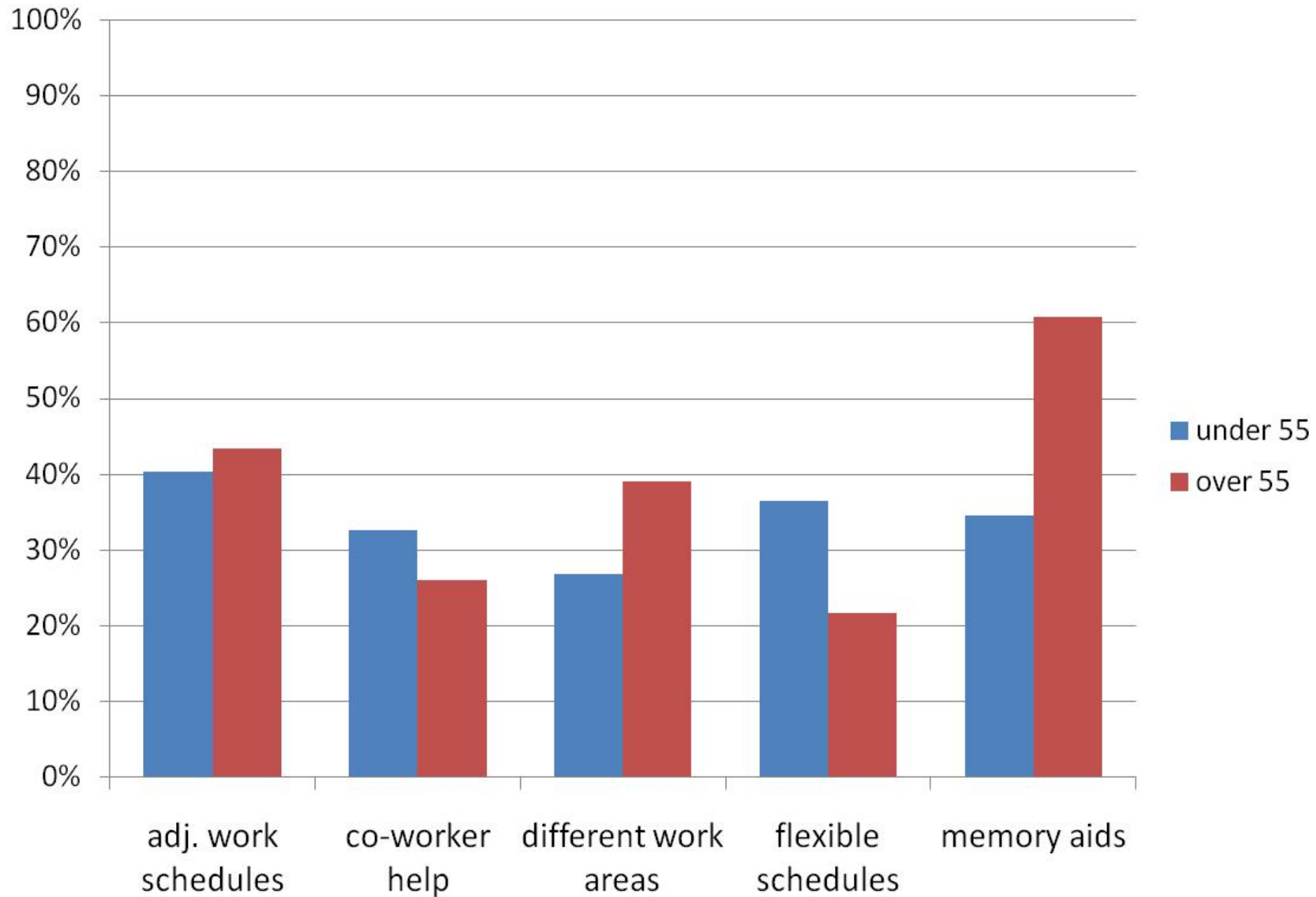
# A WORD ON STATISTICAL ANALYSIS



# Accommodation Use Described by Limitation Group



# Accommodation Use by Age Group



# Satisfaction with Accommodations

Respondents were generally satisfied with

- Adjustable & flexible schedules
- Different work areas

Respondents were NEUTRAL about co-worker help and memory aids.

# Perceived Importance of Accommodations

All accommodations were rated at least “important” by the whole group

- Age group strongly influenced Co-worker Help ( $P < 0.01$ )
- Type of Limitation strongly influenced Different Work Area ( $P < 0.05$ )

# Frequency of Use of Accommodations

Most accommodations were used “frequently” or “always”

- Age group had an influence on frequency of use of Coworker Help ( $p = 0.06$ )

# Unmet Needs

## 35% Reported Unmet Needs

- Quieter work area (6%)
- Accommodation Requests Rejected (5%)
- More Coworker Understanding (4%)

# Conclusions

- Workers with mental function impairment average more limitations than other groups
  - older workers average more limitations than younger workers
- Assistive technology is not meeting the needs of this population.
- A large percentage of the population reports unmet needs



# Study limitations

- Respondent pool is limited
- Preliminary analysis

# Thank you

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