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MACROECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES

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INTRODUCTION

- All European countries are faced with socioeconomic inequalities in health
- The societal impact of these inequalities goes beyond population health
- We want to estimate the macroeconomic implications (and gaps in knowledge)
- In order to provide better underpinning for intersectoral policies on health inequalities

WORK PLAN

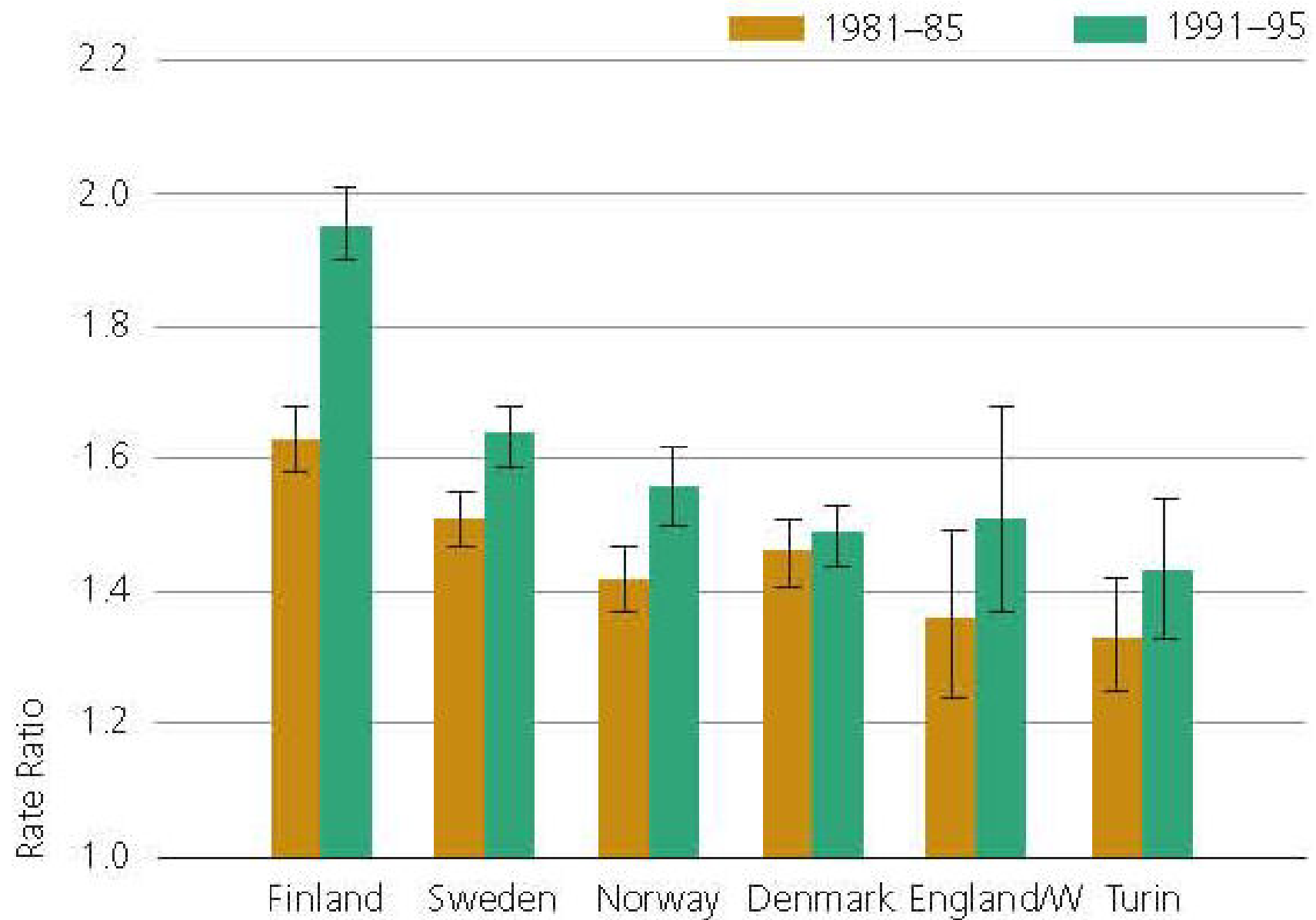
- Describe health inequalities
- Assess macroeconomic implications
- Identify intervention options
- Give policy recommendations
- Identify gaps in knowledge

DESCRIBE HEALTH INEQUALITIES ...

“In Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, England/Wales, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, ...

rates of premature mortality are substantially higher among those with lower levels of education, occupational class, or income”

Rate Ratios for total mortality by occupational class: men



Rate Ratio for total mortality by educational level: women

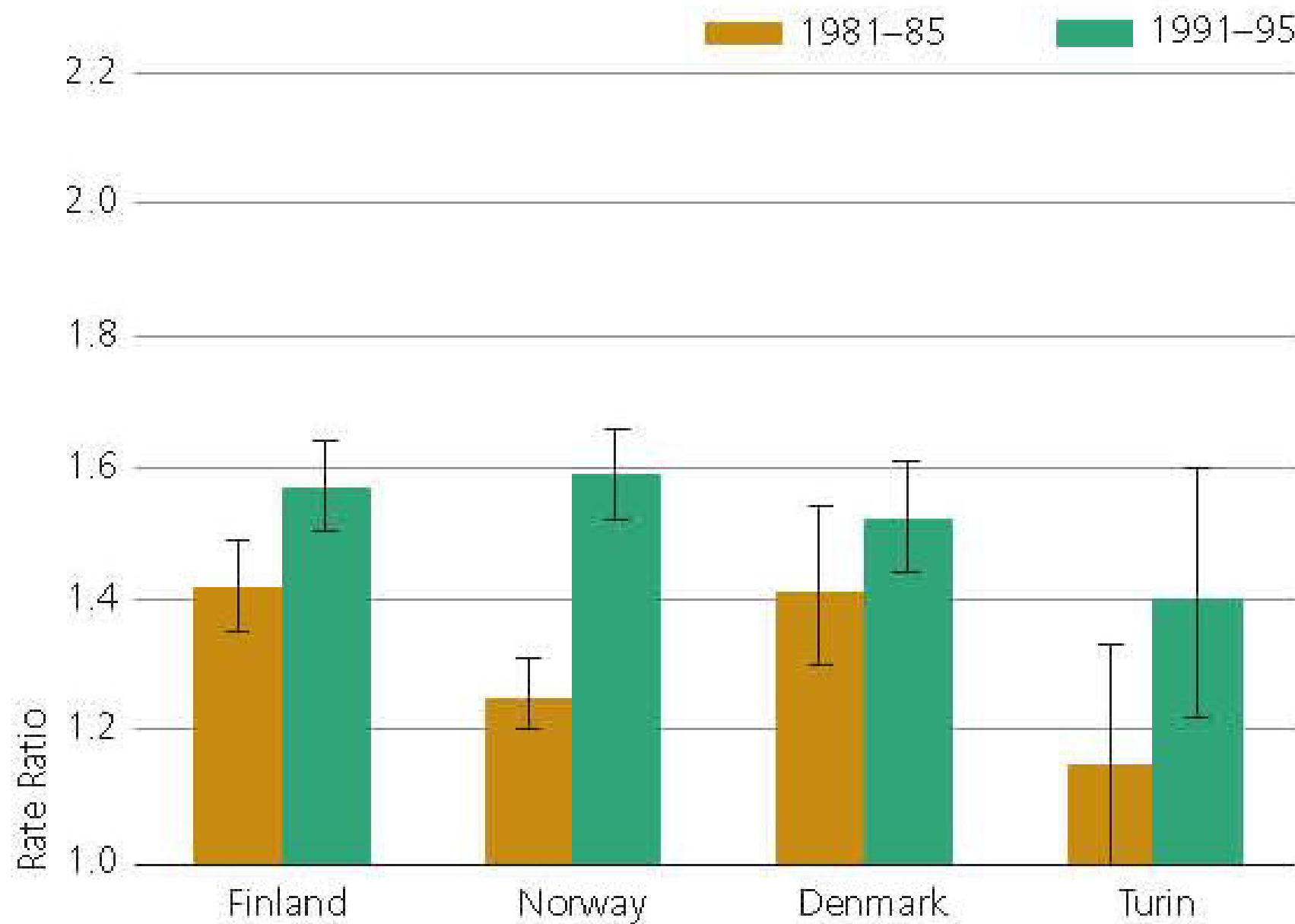
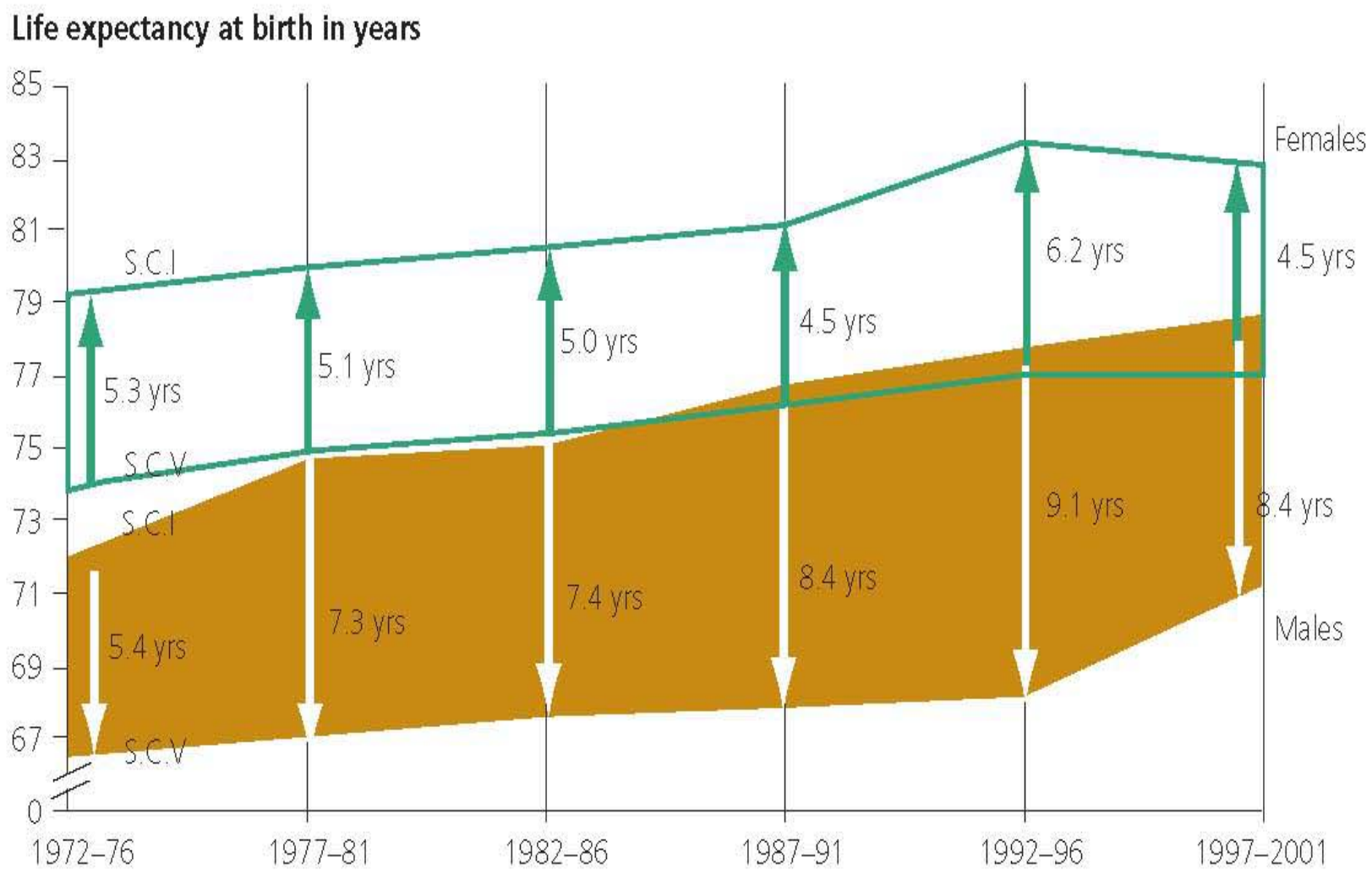


Figure 3.

Inequalities in life expectancy at birth by occupational class in England and Wales, 1972–2001. This figure shows that the gap in life expectancy between the social classes widened until the early 1990s, and then started to decrease a little, both among men and women.

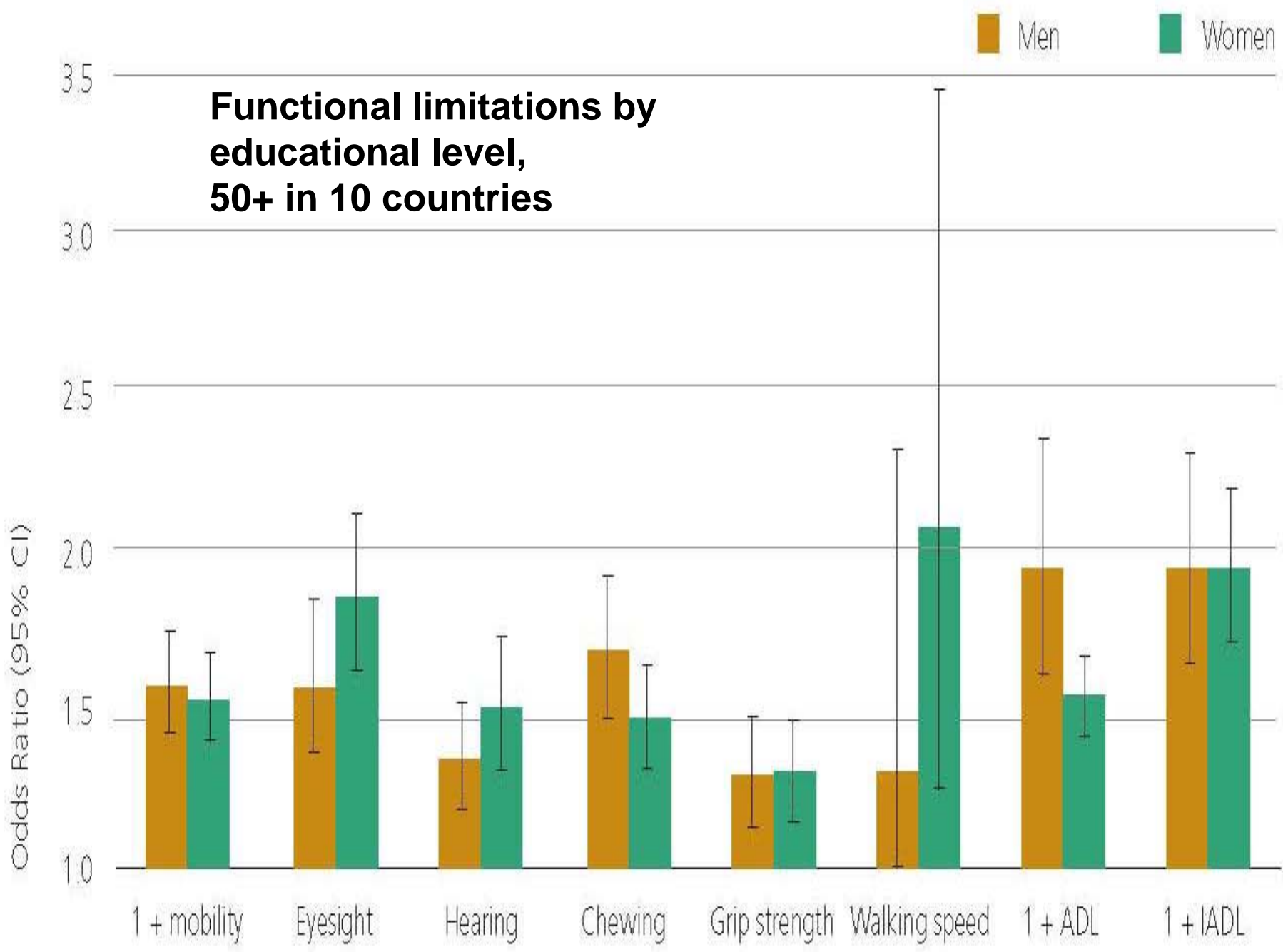


Source: ONS Longitudinal Study

DESCRIBE HEALTH INEQUALITIES

“In Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Malta, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, ...

rates of self-reported morbidity are substantially higher among those with lower levels of education, occupational class, or income”



DESCRIBE HEALTH INEQUALITIES

“Together with inequalities in mortality, inequalities in morbidity contribute to large inequalities in ‘healthy life expectancy’ ...

typically, persons with high socioeconomic positions live more than 10 years longer in good health”

MACROECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

- Effects of ill-health on labour participation, labour productivity, and income
(-> national income)
- Effects of ill-health on unemployment and disability benefits, and on utilization of health care services
(-> tax rates/health care premiums ->
-> national income)

EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

- European datasets (ECHP, SHARE, ...), pooled analyses plus variations
- Effects of ill-health in lower socioeconomic groups on labour participation, income, health care utilization ...
- Complemented by literature study

EXPECTED RESULTS

- First estimate of macroeconomic implications of health inequalities
- High degree of uncertainty, because of data problems and strong assumptions
- Costs of health inequalities will raise questions about their benefits
- Recommendations for further research will be inevitable

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