

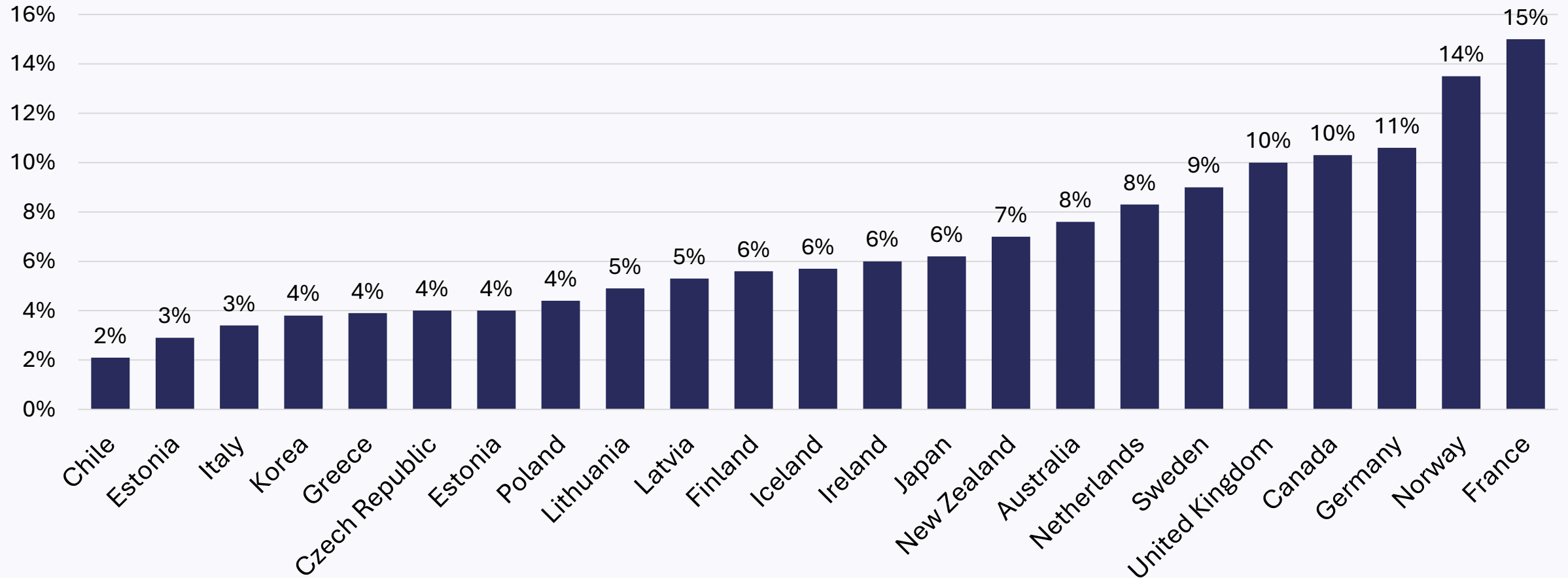
Economic benefits of addressing mental health

Francesca Colombo
10 October 2025, Global Parliamentary Network Webinar,
online session



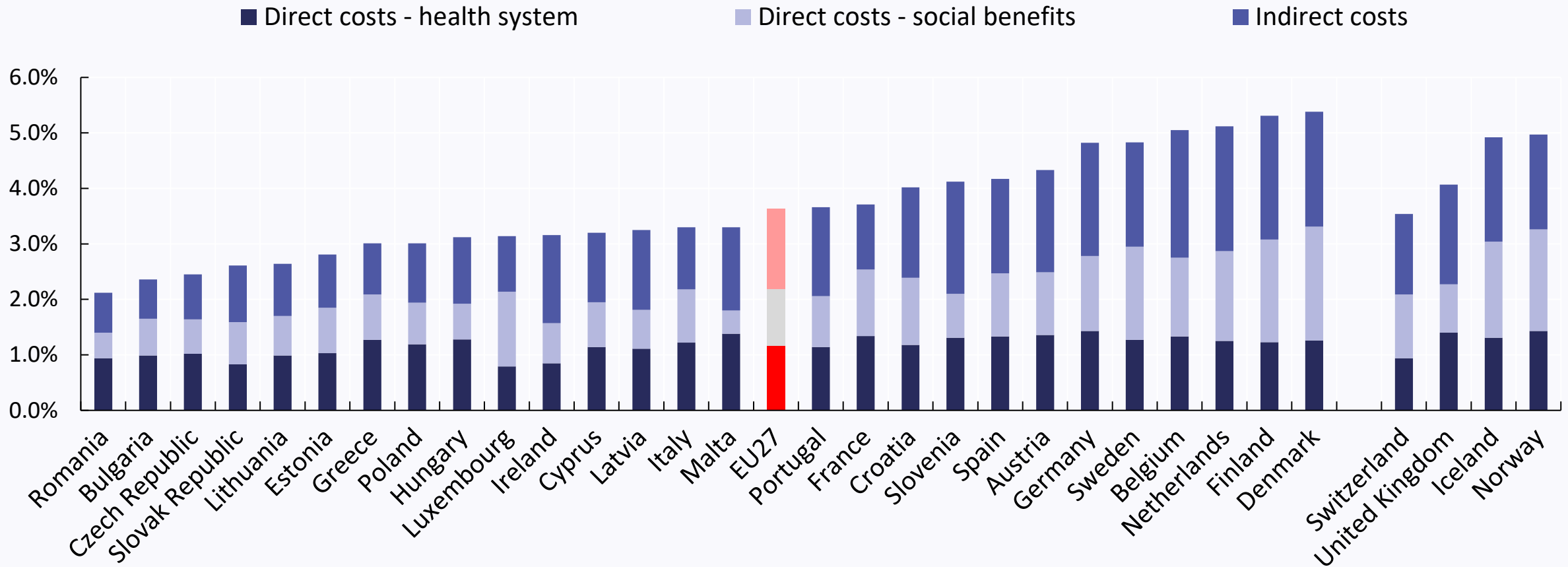
Spending on mental health is relatively high...

Spending on mental health - % of government health spending



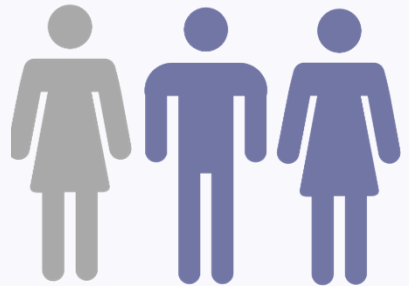
... but dwarfed by costs outside the health system.

Estimated direct and indirect costs related to mental health problems, European countries, % GDP



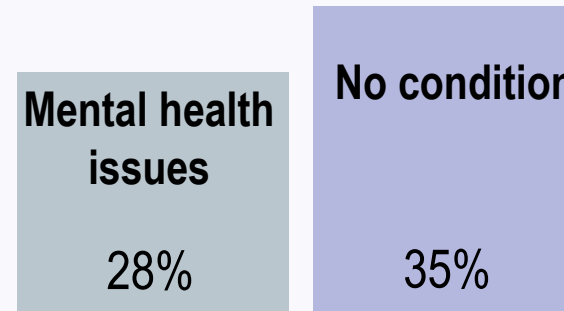
The impacts of poor mental health are seen across sectors

HEALTH



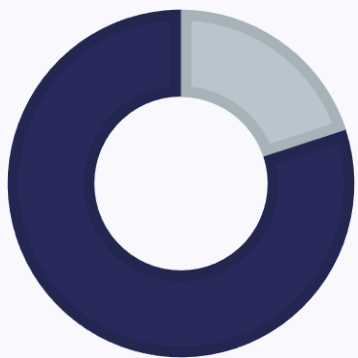
2 in 3 individuals experiencing mental health issues report **difficulty in accessing medical care**

YOUTH



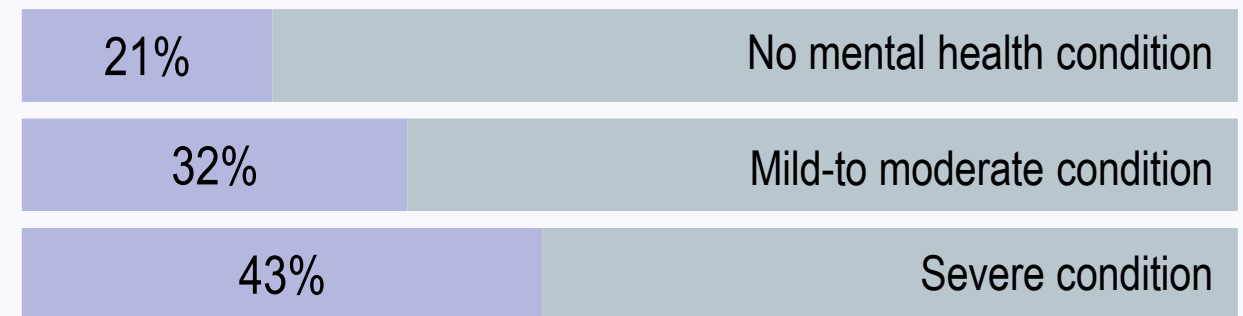
Working-age adults experiencing mental health issues are almost **20% less likely to have completed tertiary education**

EMPLOYMENT



Individuals experiencing mental health issues are **20% less likely to be in employment**

SOCIAL BENEFITS



Cross-sectoral mental health burden requires cross-sectoral action



Prioritise **employment outcomes** as part of **mental health care**.



For **youth**, **school-based programmes** have been prioritised, **preventing early school leaving** is also key.



In **workplaces** countries have been implementing **psychosocial risk assessment** regulation and prevention, but **return to work support is lacking**.

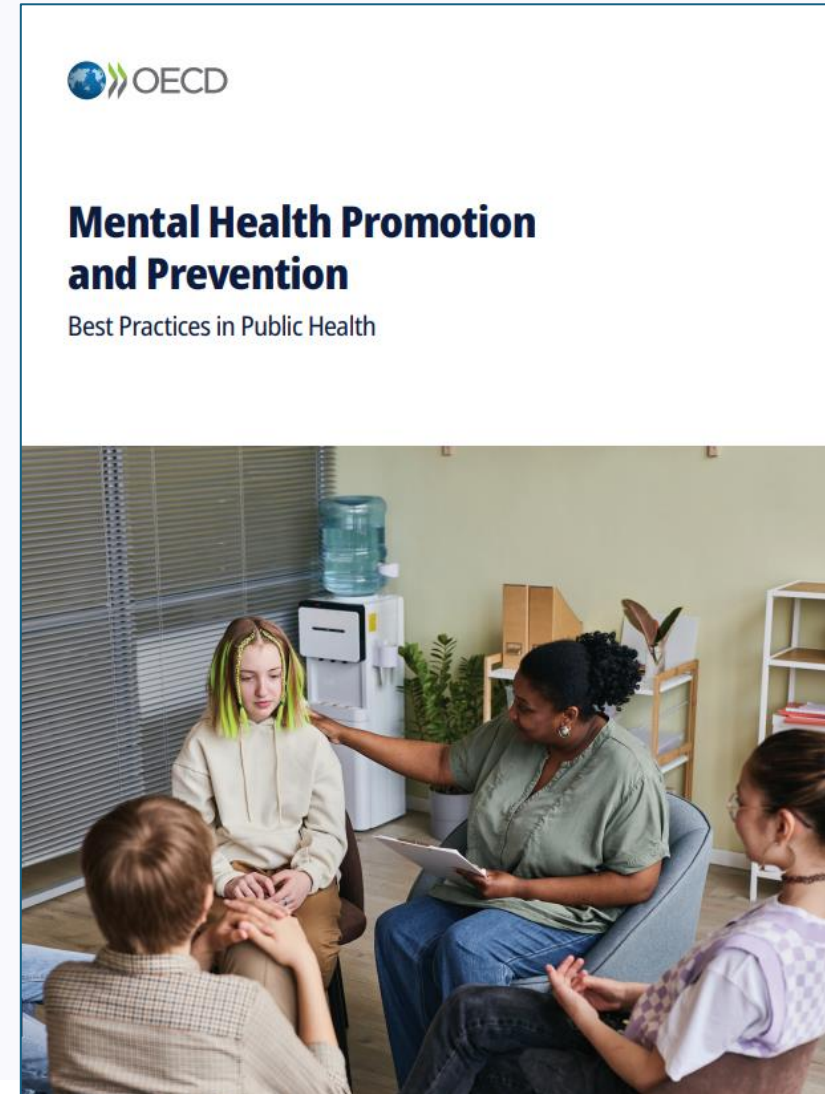


Little progress has been made by **welfare systems** – e.g. mental health **support for individuals on unemployment benefits is rare**.



There is evidence of best practice policies delivering good results

	Ease Access	School Front-line	MH Literacy	Prevent suicide
Prompt mental health care (Norway)	✓			
@Ease (Netherlands)	✓			
Belgium's reform	✓			
iFightDepression® tool (Germany)	✓			
This is Me (#to sem jaz) (Slovenia)	✓	✓		
Zippy's friends (multiple)		✓		
Icehearts (Finland)		✓		
Mental Health First Aid (multiple)			✓	✓
Next Stop: Mum (Poland)	✓		✓	
VigilanS (France)				✓
Suicide Prevention Austria			✓	✓

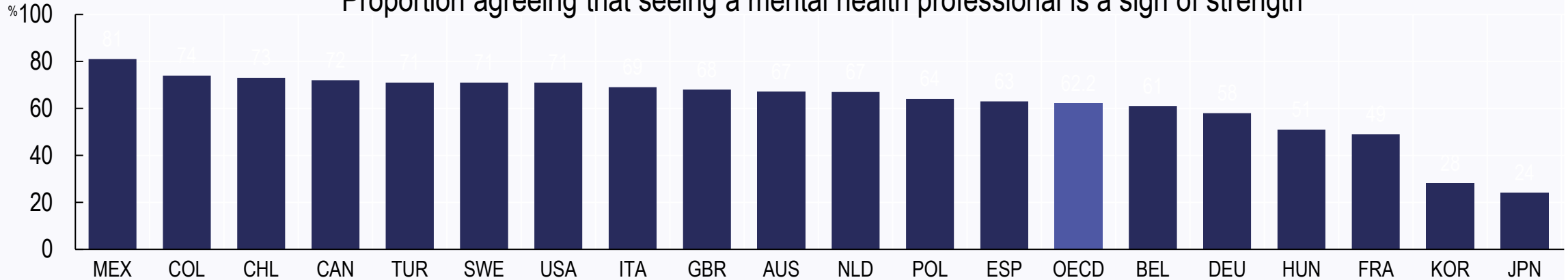


But gaps in implementation reduce impact

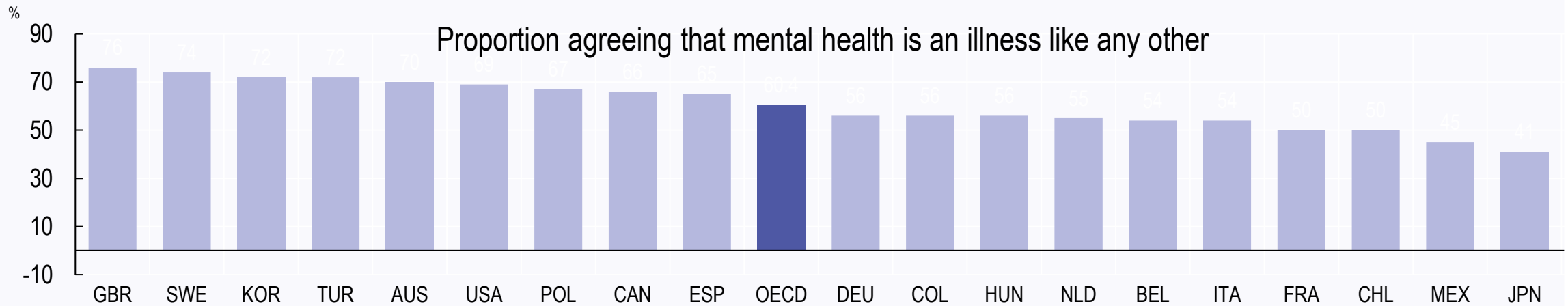
- **2 in 5 respondents** find it difficult to find information on how to deal with mental health problems
- **Less than half of countries** fully cover psychological therapies, counselling and outpatient services in their benefits basket
- **Return-to-work** and **employment support** for people with mental health conditions are very limited

... and stigma still hinders action.

Proportion agreeing that seeing a mental health professional is a sign of strength



Proportion agreeing that mental health is an illness like any other

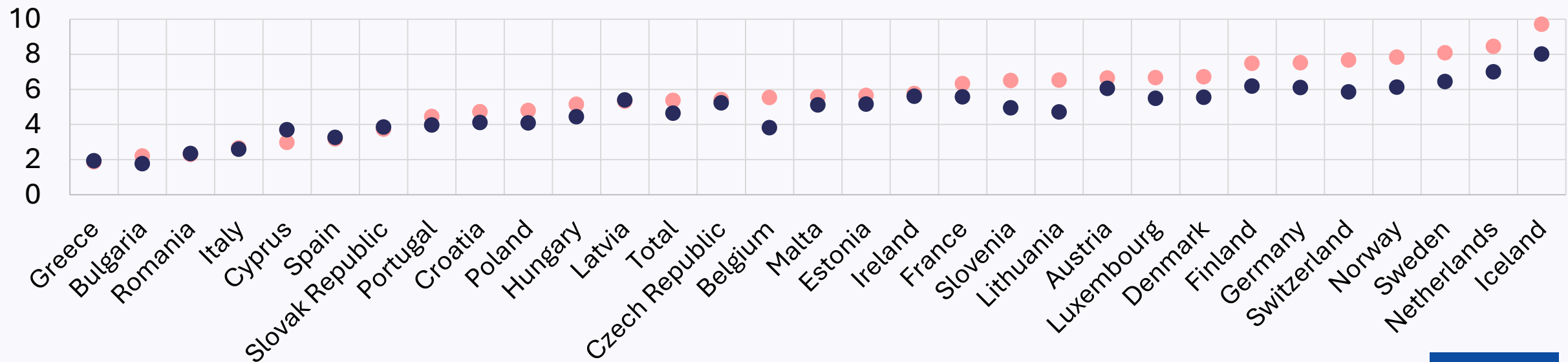


Urgent need to fill the knowledge gap on the most effective investments: new OECD work

New OECD work is simulating the **expected economic impact of mental health interventions** on medical expenditures and labour market cost, on top of DALY gained

- Workplace web-based intervention (mobile app)
- Workplace Cognitive behavioural therapy

Disability adjusted life years (DALYs) gained per 100 000 population



Find out more



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<https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/mental-health.html>

