

# A National Work Ability Index - Network supporting Occupational Health in Germany

Hans-Martin Hasselhorn, Univ. of Wuppertal  
Bernd Hans Müller, Univ. of Wuppertal  
Gabriele Freude, BAuA, Berlin  
Juhani Ilmarinen, FIOH, Helsinki  
Jürgen Tempel, OHP  
Dipl.-Ing., MST Simon Kaluza, BAuA, Dortmund

Presentation at the International Conference on Occupational Health Services  
25-27 January 2005, Helsinki

University of Wuppertal, Germany



**Imagine...**

**there is a useful instrument  
for promoting Occupational  
Safety and Health (OSH)**

**and no one is using it...**

*or:*

**“How to increase the use of the Work Ability Index (WAI) within OSH in Germany?”**

- 1. What is the WAI?**
- 2. The WAI Network**
- 3. Does it work?**

*from OHP perspective*

# 1. What is the WAI?

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## Work Ability Index (WAI)

- questionnaire instrument for assessing Work Ability
- aim to improve WA
- in OH useful
  - as check list
  - for benchmarking
  - for epidemiological investigation
- used by OH physicians, OH nurses
- *(WAI has strengths and limitations)*

# 1. What is the WAI?

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**The WAI instrument covers  
with ten questions  
seven components:**

- 1: work ability vs. best ever**
- 2: work ability vs demands**
- 3: number of diagnosed diseases**
- 4: work impairment due to diseases**
- 5: sickness absence last 12 months**
- 6: estimation of future work ability (2 years)**
- 7: mental resources**

## 2. The WAI Network

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**Overall aim:**

***promotion of the use of the WAI in Germany***

**by establishing...**

- a) national WAI User Network**
- b) national WAI Database**
- c) WAI User Program**
- d) International cooperation**

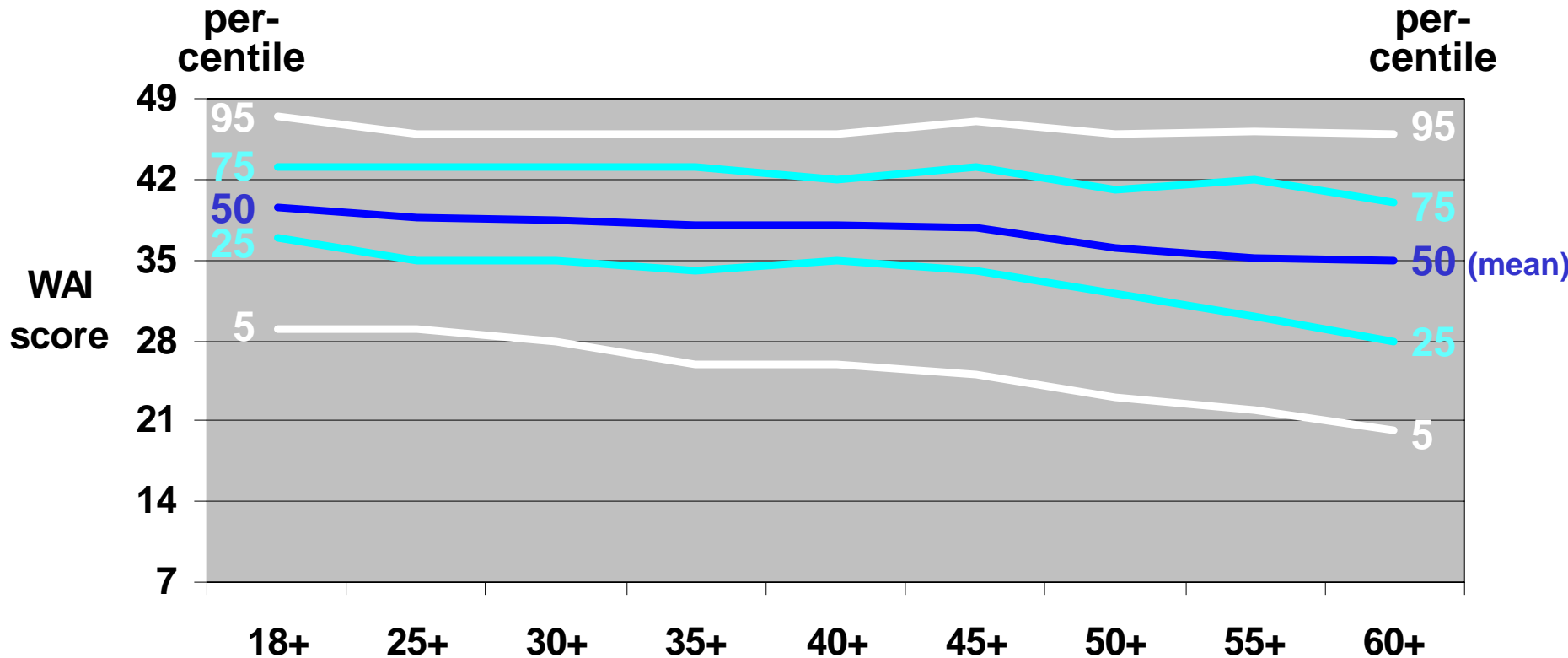
# a) WAI User Network

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- **About 50 members (increasing), many OHP**
- **Meetings, newsletter, home page**
- **Support by**
  - **Information (internet, flyers, information sheets, practical examples)**
  - **Mutual exchange**
  - **Reference scores**
  - **WAI User Program**



# b) WAI Data base

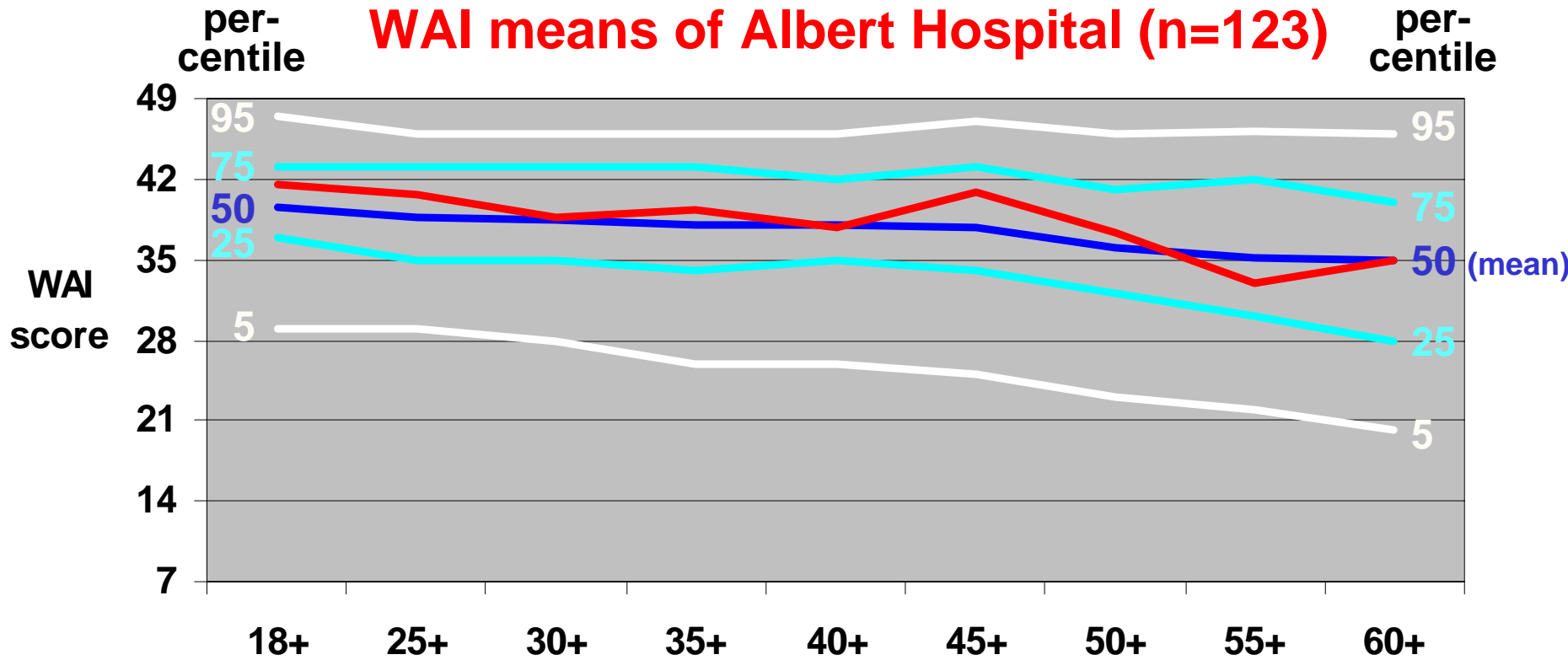


**WAI – Reference Scores for Nurses (n=2793)**

(source: German WAI network, Hasselhorn & Müller, 2004)



# b) WAI Data base

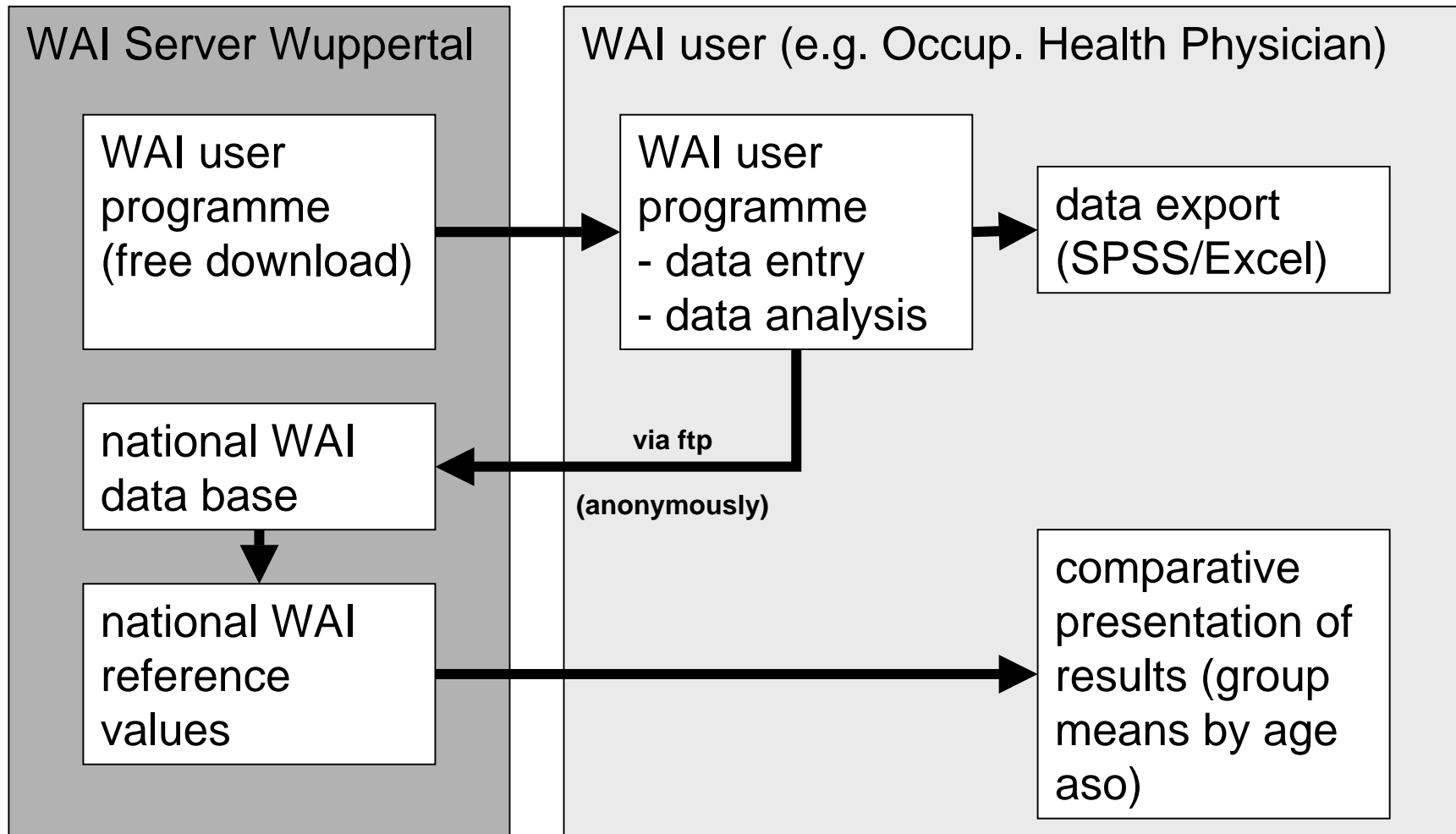


## WAI – Reference Scores for Nurses (n=2793)

(source: German WAI network, Hasselhorn & Müller, 2004)



# c) WAI User Program



## 3. does it work?

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### *Indicators for “success”*

- + Interest: rather high, esp. large companies
- Interest could be better among indiv. OHP
- + Parts of Union fight the instrument
- + Initiation of critical review of the WAI instrument
- + methodological questions solved
- + perspective = positive

### *Costs*

- + *1 person year and IT*
- sustainability needs to be assured

***The establishment of a User Network in OS & H can be a useful instrument to promote a certain topic, especially when a topic***

- a) is emerging and***
- b) is promising.***

**Thank you!**

**[wai@uni-wuppertal.de](mailto:wai@uni-wuppertal.de)**

**[www.arbeitsfaehigkeit.net](http://www.arbeitsfaehigkeit.net)**