Personality & Lost Work Time: Connections and Interventions

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Overview

- Behavioral & psychological characteristics of individuals, especially personality traits (e.g. Big 5), strongly influence health and longevity.

- Traits also predict work cutbacks and lost income due to health reasons.

- ***How do we leverage these data to improve employee wellness and health initiatives***?

- We'll conclude with practical solutions we've developed.

Personality Traits Predict Health, Wellness, Longevity and Work Performance and Engagement

- Personality encapsulates individuality – what makes each person unique.

- People are not interchangeable.

- Personality traits impact: 1) how healthy we are, 2) how long we live, and 3) how well we perform on the job, including job turnover.
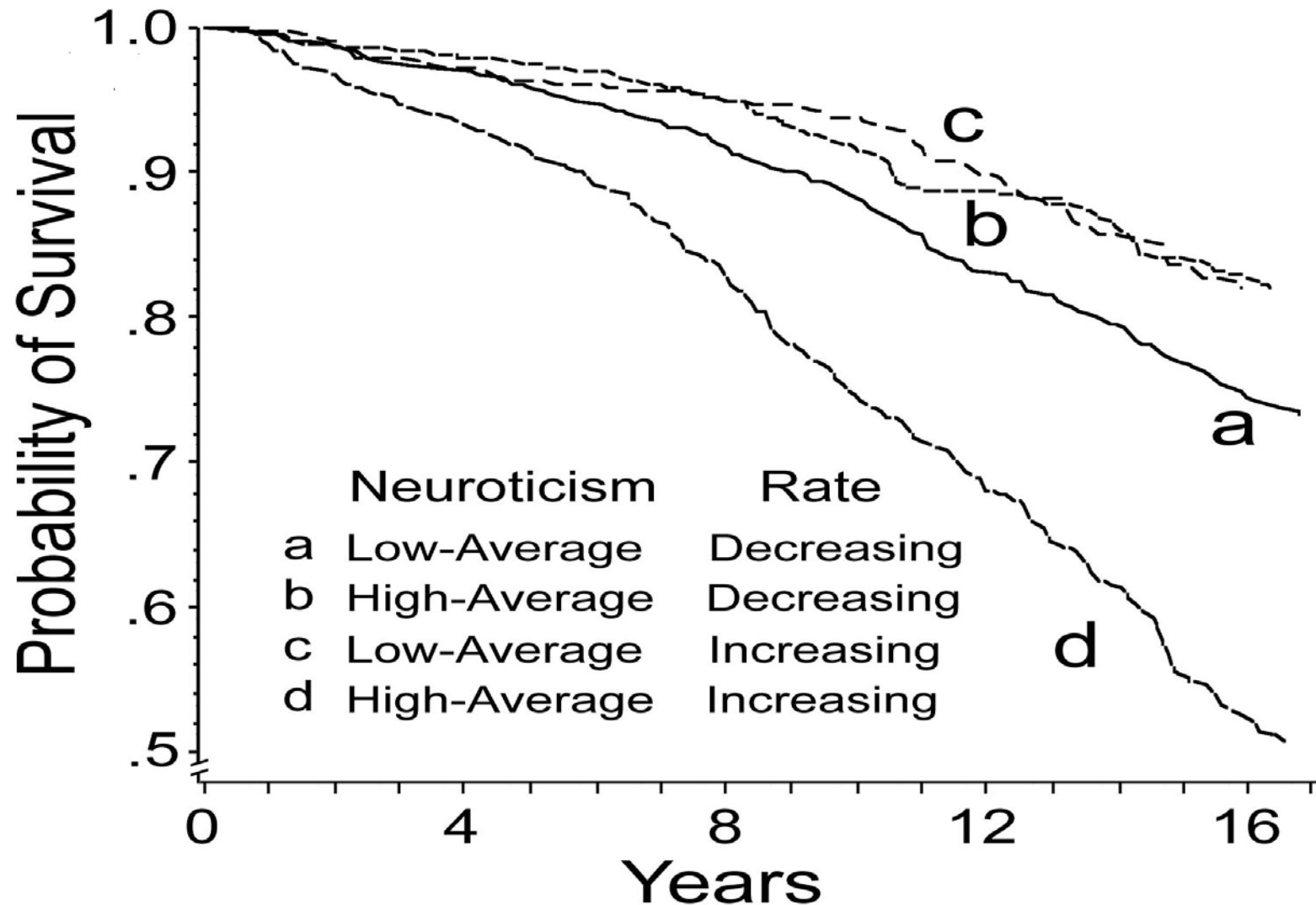
Conscientiousness Effect on Mortality
N = 31,358 (Graham, Mroczek et al., 2016)
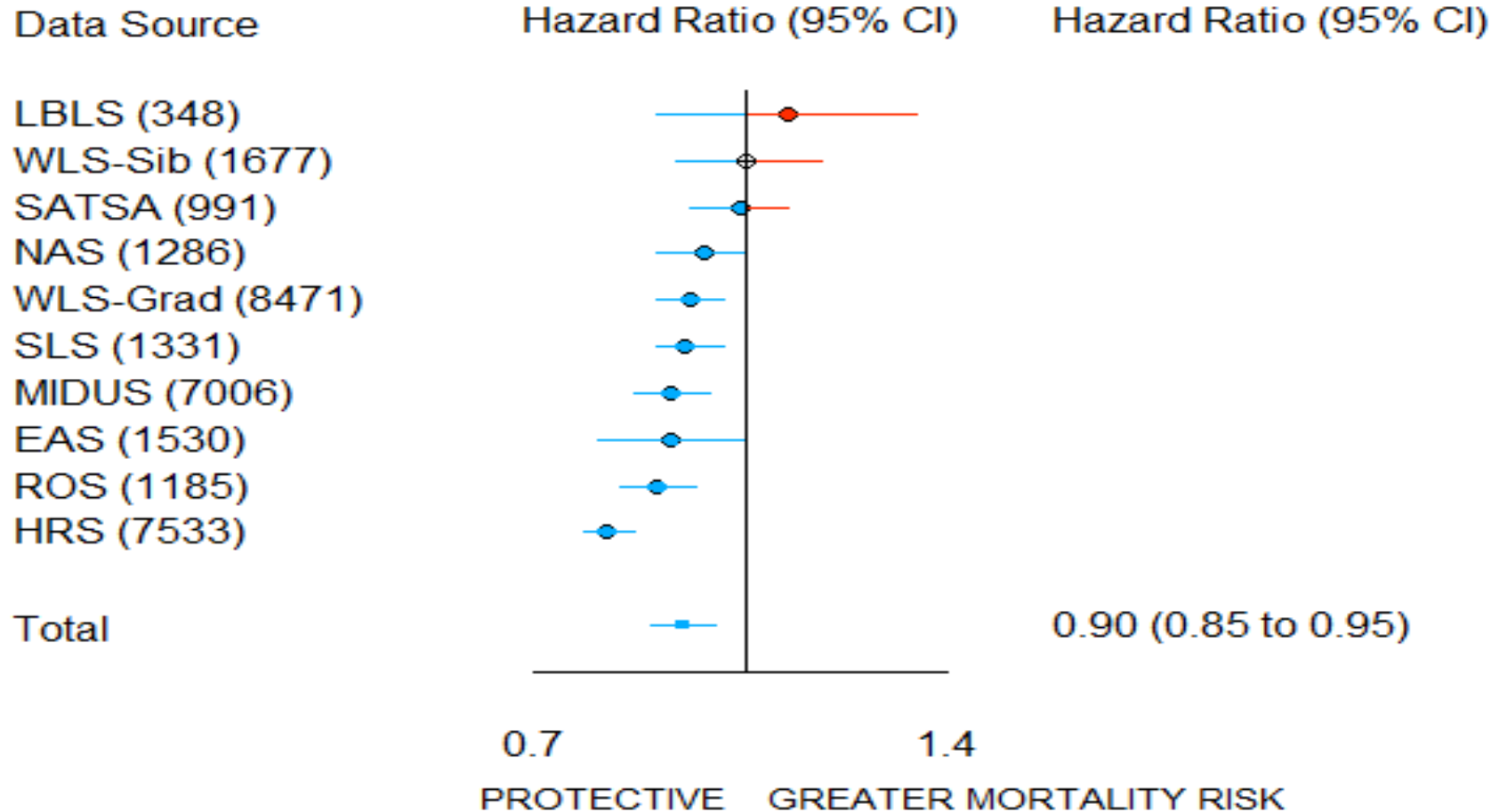
Neuroticism Change and Longevity N=1,643 (Mroczek & Spiro, 2007)

Personality and Work Cutbacks (Turiano, Mroczek et al., 2012)

- Used a national sample, Midlife in the U.S. (MIDUS), data from 10 year longitudinal follow-up: N = 3,451.

- Work cutbacks (lost work time) assessed with items asking about work loss and limitations in past 30 days because of physical health reasons.

- Measures *impairment* due to physical health, but captures some absenteeism as well.

Traits Predict Work Cutbacks Due to Health Reasons Over 10 Years (Turiano, Mroczek et al., 2012; N =3,451)

Predictor	b (se)	Standardized coefficient
Demographics		
Age	.92 (.14)***	.11
Gender	.21 (.15)	.03
Education	-.28 (.08)***	-.07
Personality (1995)		
Agreeableness	.04 (.09)	.01
Conscientiousness	-.21 (.08)**	-.05
Extraversion	-.29 (.09)***	-.07
Neuroticism	.14 (.07)*	.03
Openness	.19 (.09)*	.04
Personality Change		
Conscientiousness Chg.	-.19 (.07)**	-.04

Attaching income data to work cutbacks (Graham, Mroczek, 2015; N=4,516)

- Lost monetary amounts ranged from $3,451 to $8,144 annually (per standard deviation of a trait), depending on the personality trait.
- Added work cutbacks due to mental health in this study.
- By attaching income data to the results of Turiano et al. we obtain a rough estimate of how much money is lost to self or employer, due to personality-related work cutbacks attributable to physical & mental health.
- Considerable, given that U.S. median household income is about $52,000, and that profit margins for many small businesses is less than this.

Applying this work: Discovery with Delivery

- We can use personality trait measurements to more precisely identify who is most at risk for certain health outcomes.

- Organizations can **target and tailor** health and wellness resources toward the most high-risk people.

- Personality assessments may potentially be part of a **prevention toolkits** that organizations can use to improve health and lower health care costs.

How are we applying this work?

- Personality assessment is an exciting and efficient solution because it can help organizations save money by reducing healthcare costs and work cutbacks.

- In line with the increasing emphasis on Personalized/Precision Medicine and Person/Patient Engagement.

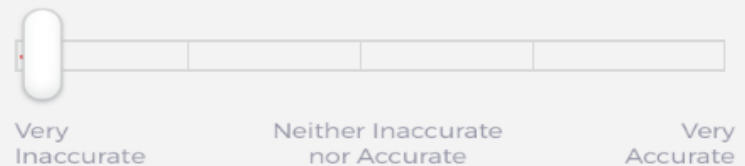- Personalized Medicine tailors treatments and preventions based on individual characteristics.

We're developing *health-care plan tailoring software*, based on assessment of individual differences in traits and other behavioral characteristics.
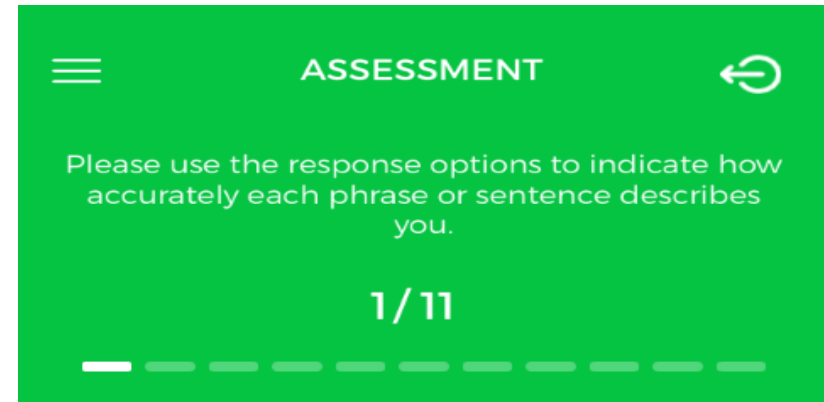
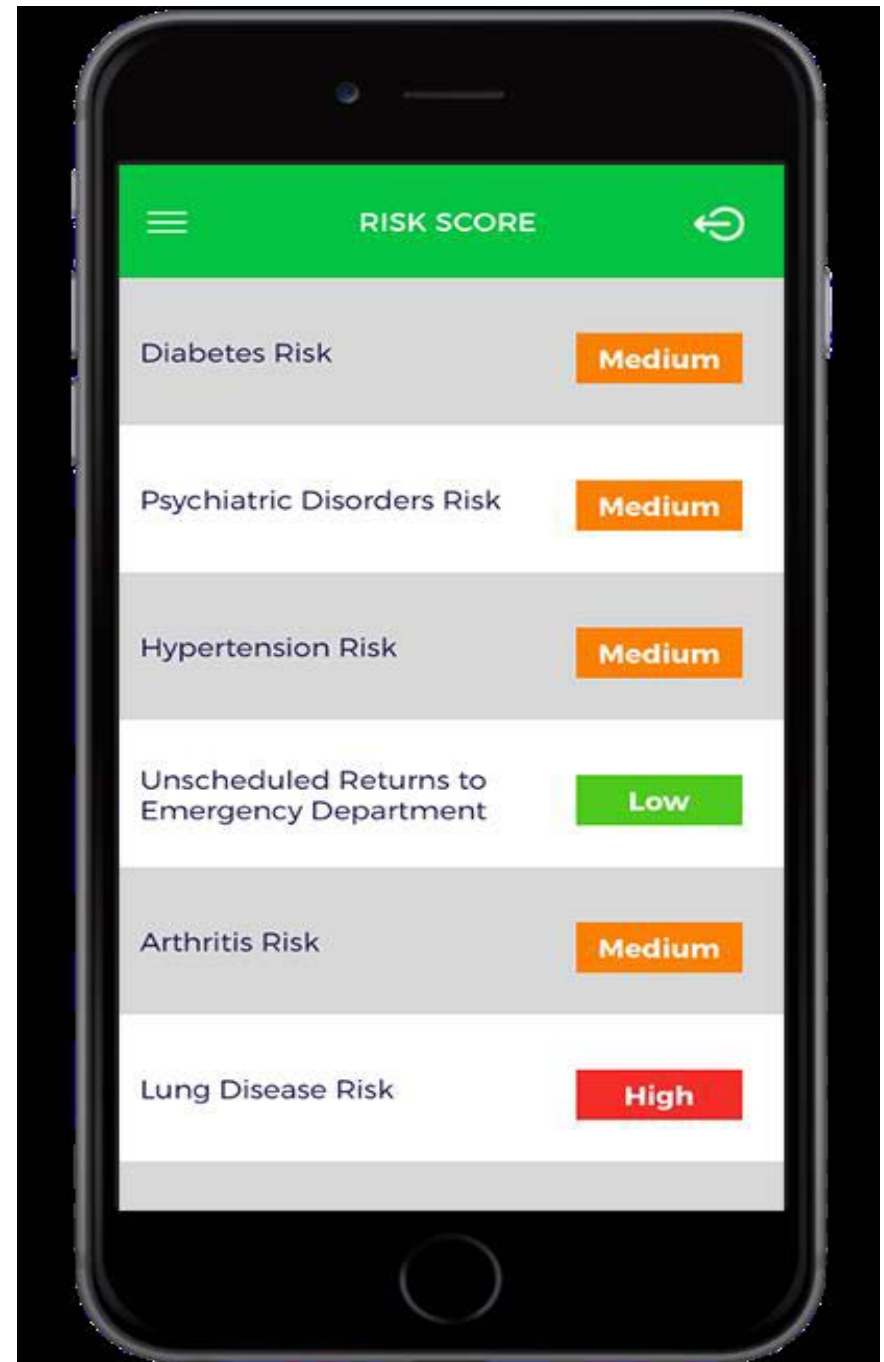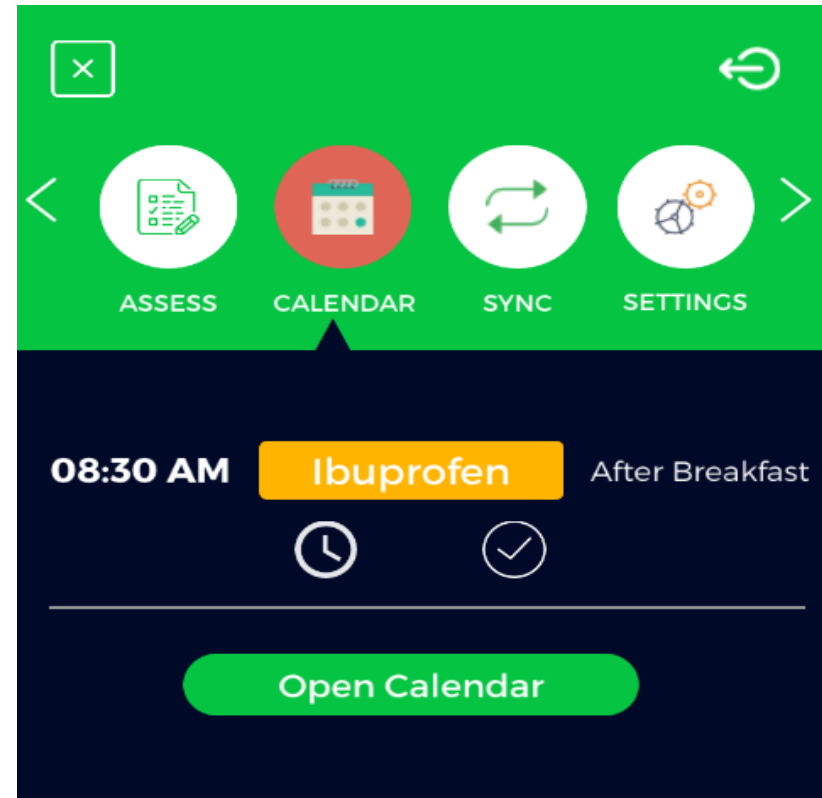Personality assessments are used to assign health risk profiles.

Targeting and tailoring reminders and health-promotion tips, based on an individual's personality-based risk.

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We are also in search of strategic collaboration opportunities.

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