Mental Health in Tech Report, by Tristan Piat

"*Depression and anxiety have a significant economic impact; the estimated cost to the global economy is US$ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity.*"[1]

The stakes

We are a tech start-up looking to recruit new talents to help our company grow. However the budget is tight and the company is aiming at recruiting high-performing people and cutting costs.

1) Therefore, we tried to build a standard profile for employees less prone to suffer from mental health issues for our first recruitments.[2]

2) As our company will grow, it might be more cost-effective to adapt its policy and communication regarding mental health issues. We will see if this survey can provide us with some insights regarding this matter.

Our data

Mental Health in Tech Survey[3].

Cleaning the data of this survey included removing entries for:
- people that do not work in tech companies
- people that are over 65
- people that are self-employed

This led us to a total of 843 valid entries in the survey.

The only clear indicator of mental health issue for the survey participant is the following question: "*Have you sought treatment for a mental health condition?*".
Therefore, I decided to use it as a marker for mental health issue throughout this report, for lack of additional information. Both groups (people who have sought treatment for mental health issues and those who have not) are of approximately equal size (415 and 428 entries).

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[1] https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace/en/ World Health Organization
[2] This report doesn't reflect my personal opinion on the importance of women in the workplace
[3] https://www.kaggle.com/osmi/mental-health-in-tech-survey

1) Building a standard profile

I decided to focus on 3 main aspects for the individuals who responded to the survey (age, gender and country) and compare the differences on those aspects for the two groups.

The age factor doesn't seem to have an influence on the mental health for the people employed in tech. The average employee in the industry is quite young and we can't find a significant difference for the mean and median of ages of both groups.

When it comes to gender, there are notable differences. Women in our survey have sought mental health treatment a lot more than men(71% of women and 44% of men). *(Figure 1)*

Regarding the country of the participants, the entries I worked on accounted for a total of 37 countries so I decided to group them into geographical zones and only keep the zones with a sample of over 100 people, which led me to consider North America and Western Europe only.
The data indicates that participants in this survey in North America have sought treatment for mental health issues significantly more than those from Western Europe (55% of participants in NA and 37% in Europe).*(Figure 2)*

Results : If the company is trying to build a standard profile for hiring people less prone to mental health issues, it should try to hire a *man* from *Western Europe*, with *no condition of age*.

"There are many effective actions that organizations can take to promote mental health in the workplace; such actions may also benefit productivity." [4] That's why a smarter solution may be to improve the well-being of employees. Let's see if this survey can provide us with some insights regarding this matter.

2) Insights from the survey for future development

Let's focus on the negative perception of the employees of both groups when it comes to their company's policy regarding mental health. I've noted 4 questions in the survey to evaluate that perception :
- Have you heard of or observed negative consequences for coworkers with mental health conditions in your workplace?
- How easy is it for you to take medical leave for a mental health condition?
- Do you think that discussing a mental health issue with your employer would have negative consequences?
- Do you feel that your employer takes mental health as seriously as physical health?

People suffering from mental health issues have a more negative perception of the company policy in that matter. This was confirmed for all four questions on which we focused. *(Figure 3)*
The company should therefore aim at communicating clearly on these issues, set up support programs and let the employees know about it.
"For every US\$ 1 put into scaled up treatment for common mental disorders, there is a return of US\$ 4 in improved health and productivity." [5]
For future research, it would be interesting to gather more data and check if mental health issues are correlated with the level of responsibilities.

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[4] https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace/en/ World Health Organization
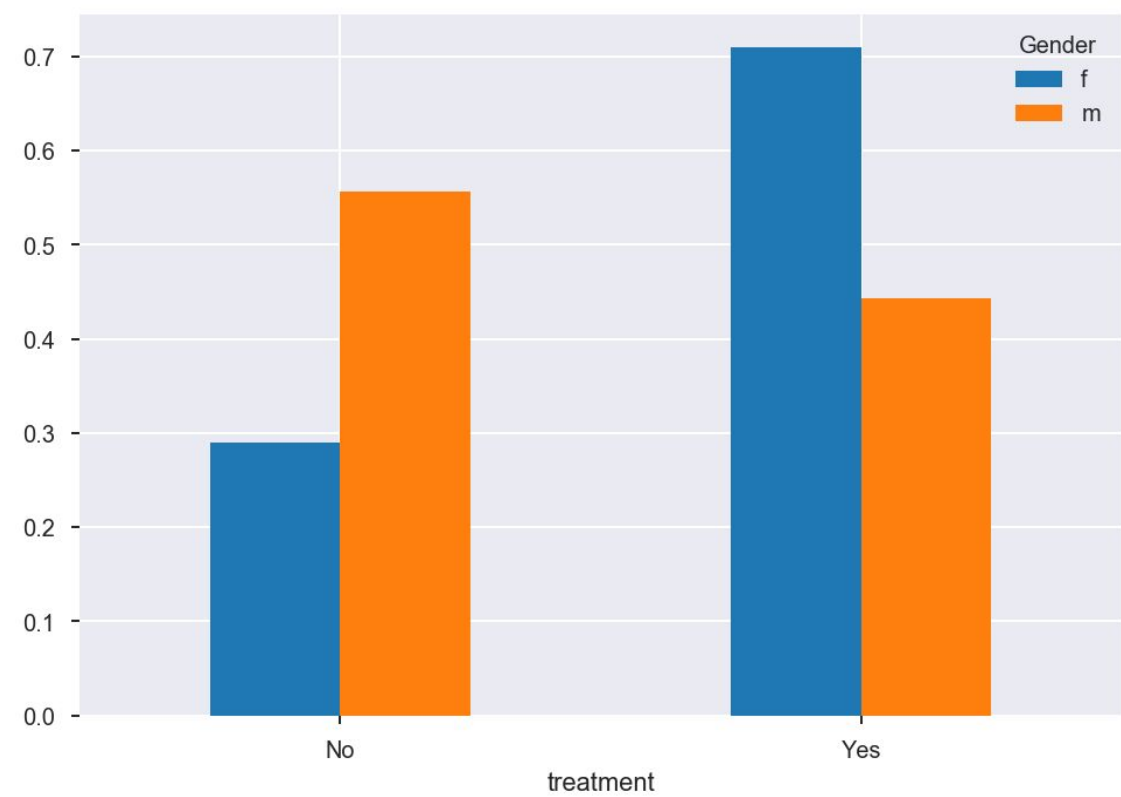[5] https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace/en/ World Health Organization
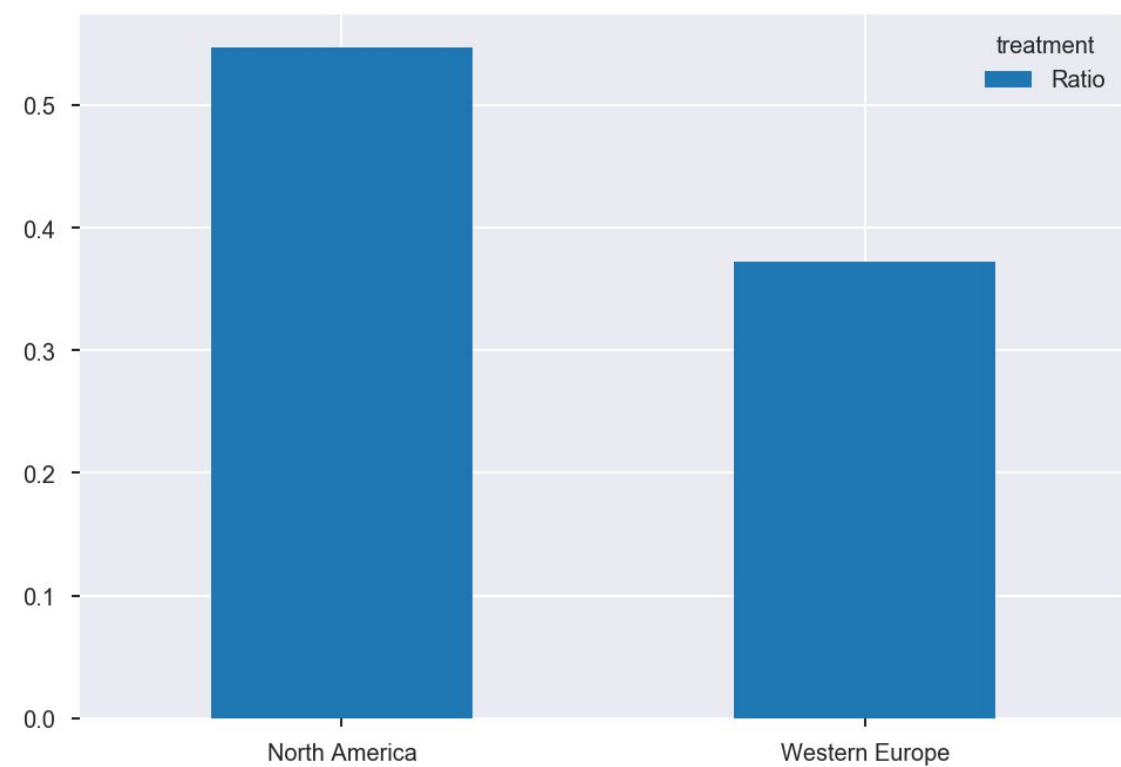
Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3