

**HelpAge**

**International**

# Perspectives on ageing and agency: implications for policy and data systems

Winchester Workshop to support establishment of  
City Group on Ageing and Age-disaggregated data

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# Questions from practice

1. How do we define old age ?
  2. How do we view ageing and older people ?
  3. What data issues have emerged in our work on policy?
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1. What do we recommend as users of data on ageing and older people?

# Old age

“The term we use to describe someone in later life”

# Contrasting perspectives on ageing & older people

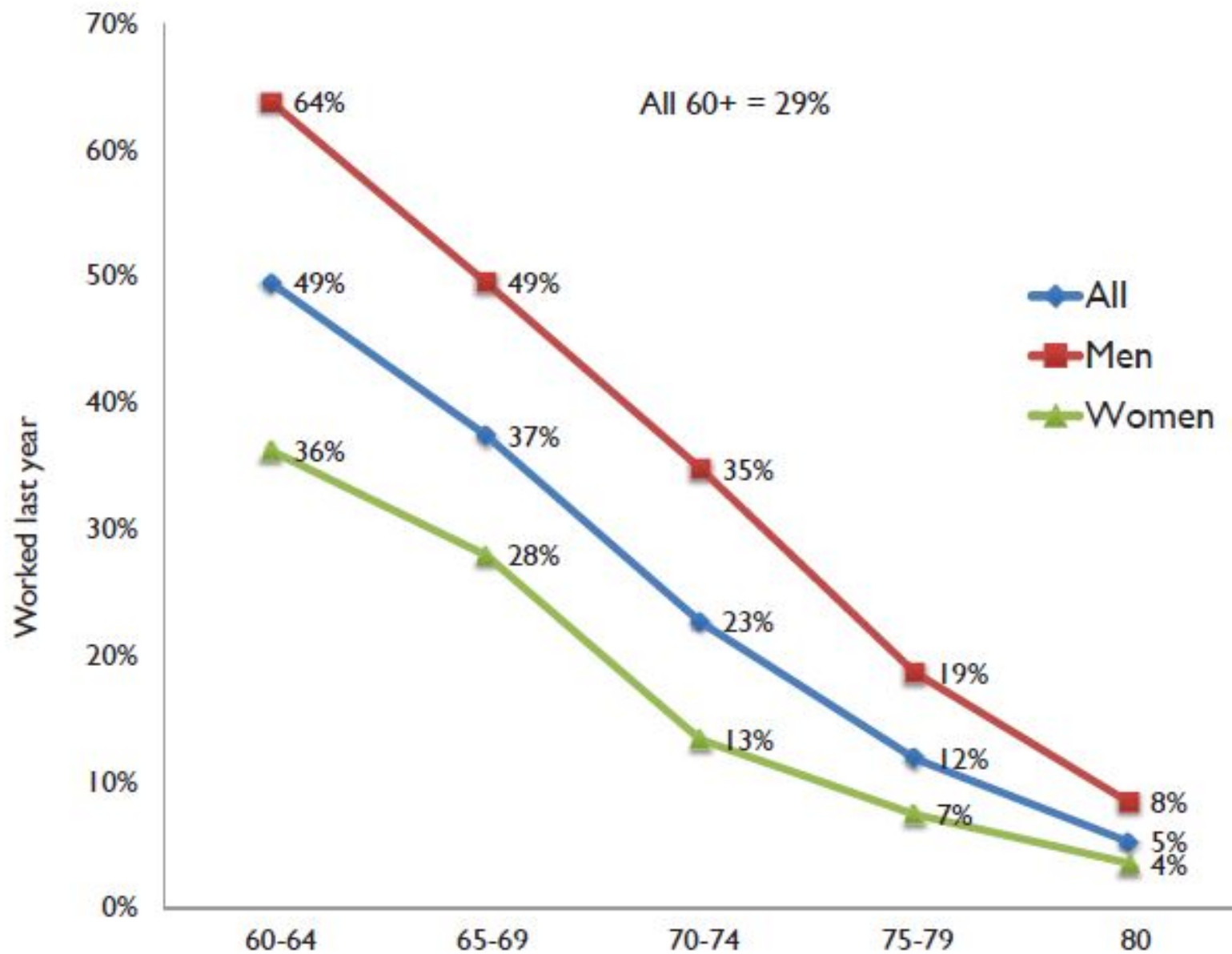
- Global narrative – demographic focus
- Burden of population ageing
- Decline, dependency, loss, spent economic units
- “Them and us”
- Older people as passive

- Potential – individual & society
- Multi-faceted – data critical
- Context, nuance, inequality
- Life course – “all in”
- Ageism recognised
- Older people as agents

An open, empty cardboard box is shown from a high-angle perspective, resting on a wooden surface. The box is made of grey corrugated cardboard and is open on all four sides. The text "60+" is printed in a large, bold, red font across the center of the box's interior. The background consists of dark, weathered wooden planks.

**60+**

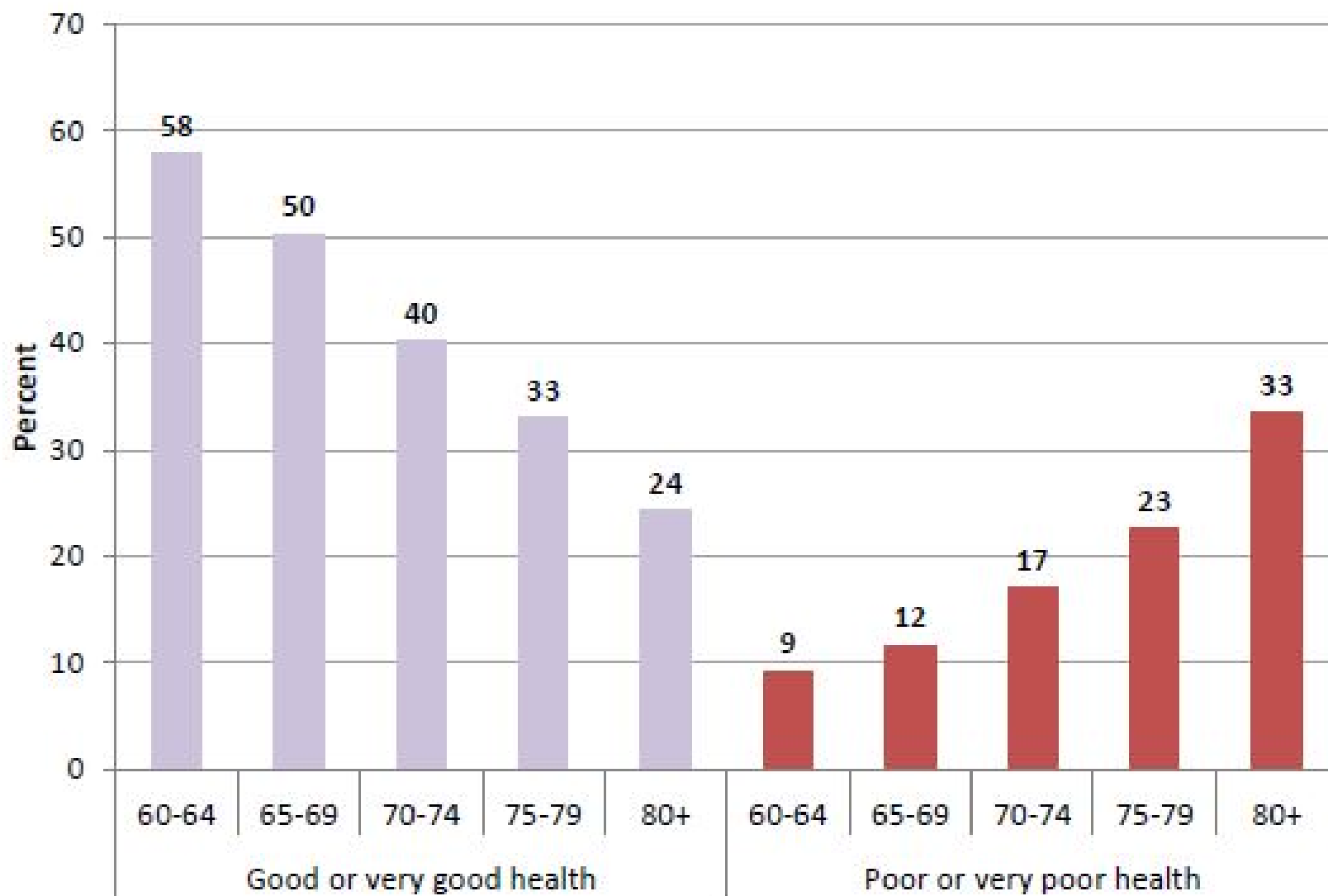
“Seeing” later life with data  
Work over previous year in Myanmar



# “Seeing” later life with data

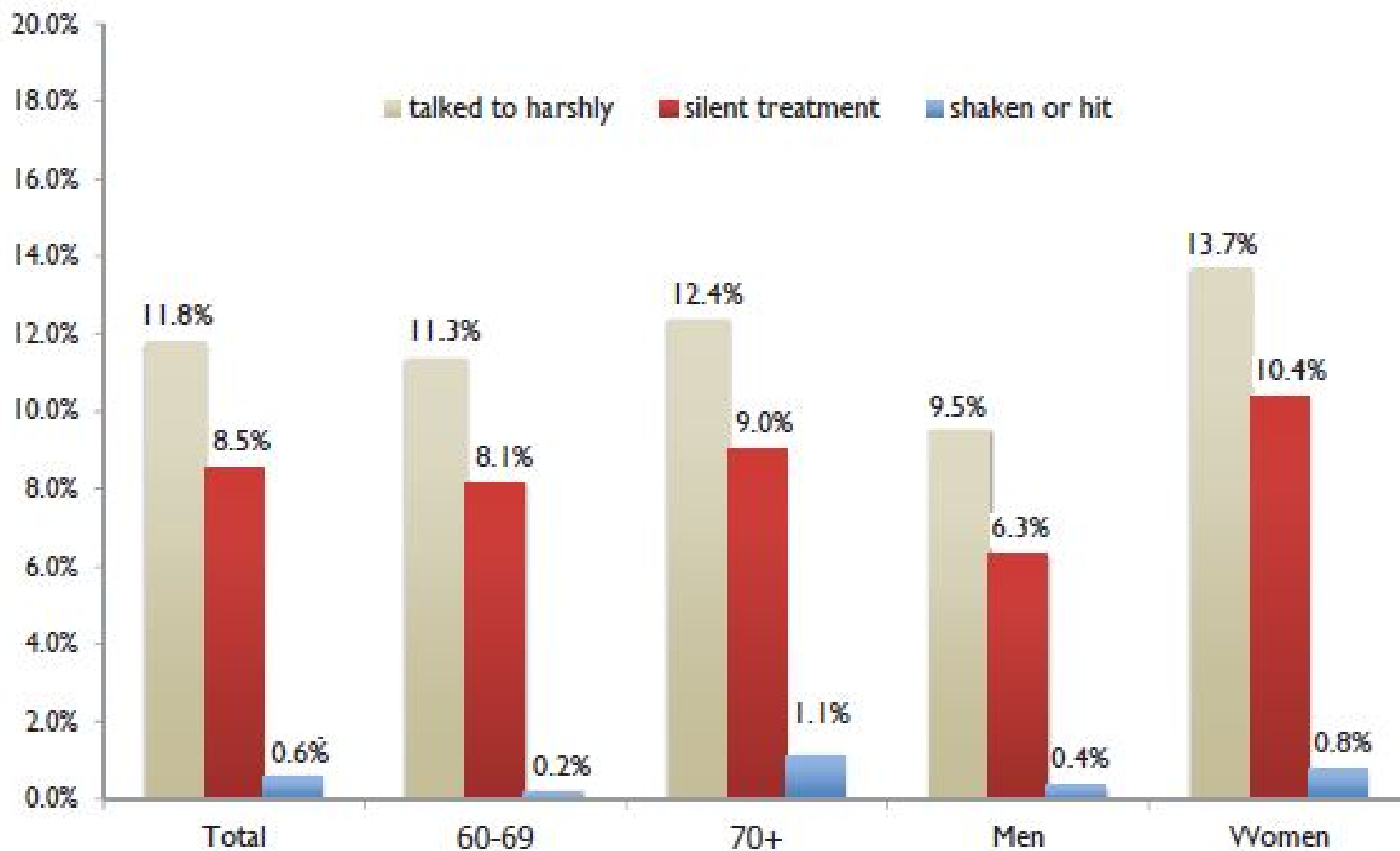
## Self-reported health in Thailand





# “Seeing” later life with data

## Experience of elder abuse in Myanmar



# Data informing policy

- Agenda setting
- Design & choice of policies, programmes
- Forecasting
- Monitoring & evaluating the implementation of policy

Gelders, B (2015) Good Practice and barriers in the use of Data for Policy and Advocacy in Asia-Pacific

# Some data issues

“I have the income I need”

- Poverty measured at household level
- Exclusion of homeless, IDPs, refugees, people in institutions
- Limits of old age dependency ratios
- Life course effects of education, employment, maternity/paternity, health status, disability
- Proof of identity

# “I enjoy the best possible health and quality of life”

- Age limits on surveys used to measure access to universal health coverage
- Financial risk measured at household level
- Basis to plan for long-term care – NCDs, disability, functional limitation
- Beyond age & health status – social engagement, education, income

# “I am safe and secure, free from discrimination and abuse”

- Limited collection of data on violence, abuse, neglect of older women & men
- Existing surveys limited in scope – focus, countries, age limits
- National surveys on elder abuse are rare (17% of 133 countries surveyed in 2014)
- Lack of harmonised set of questions

“My voice is heard”





# Our call on data

- Close data gaps to measure impact of SDGs on older people
- Include older people in data collection, analysis, dissemination, utilisation
- Disaggregate data & recognise intersections
- At a minimum, disaggregate in 5 year cohorts
- Conduct surveys with older people; include thematic modules in national surveys and censuses

# Our call on data

- Address technical issues – sample size, comparability, linkage with administrative data
- Remove age caps from international surveys
- Conduct qualitative studies to inform quantitative findings
- Explore how we can make better use of composite evidence from longitudinal studies of ageing

# Thank You !

**HelpAge**

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