

# women's health *australia*

the australian longitudinal  
study on women's health

## Intimate partner violence, health and social support: Findings over the long term

**Dr Deborah Loxton**  
*ALSWH Deputy Director*  
**Jennifer Powers & Karly Furber**



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

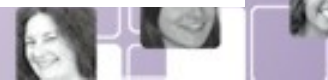


THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEWCASTLE  
AUSTRALIA



# Design

|             | 1973-78 cohort | 1946-51 cohort          | 1921-26 cohort | Survey    |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>1996</b> | 18-23          | <b>45-50 (N=13 716)</b> | 70-75          | <b>S1</b> |
| <b>1998</b> |                | <b>47-52 (N=12 338)</b> |                |           |
| 1999        |                |                         | 73-78          | <b>S2</b> |
| 2000        | 22-27          |                         |                |           |
| <b>2001</b> |                | <b>50-55 (N=11 200)</b> |                |           |
| 2002        |                |                         | 76-81          | <b>S3</b> |
| 2003        | 25-30          |                         |                |           |
| <b>2004</b> |                | <b>53-58 (N=10 905)</b> |                |           |
| 2005        |                |                         | 79-84          | <b>S4</b> |
| 2006        | 28-33          |                         |                |           |
| <b>2007</b> |                | <b>56-61 (10 638)</b>   |                |           |
| 2008        |                |                         | 82-87          | <b>S5</b> |
| 2009        | 31-36          |                         |                |           |
|             | ↓              | ↓                       | ↓              |           |



## ALSWH results: 1946-51 cohort

- Surgical menopause, cervical cancer
- Inadequate Pap testing
- High levels of symptoms, chronic conditions
- Depression, anxiety
- High use of health services
- Poor physical and mental health

Loxton D, Powers J, Schofield M, Hussain R, Hosking S. Inadequate cervical cancer screening among mid-aged Australian women who have experienced partner violence. *Preventive Medicine*, 2009, 48 (2), 184-188.

Loxton D, Schofield M, Hussain R & Mishra G. History of domestic violence and physical health in mid-life. *Violence Against Women*, 2006; 12(8): 715-731.

Loxton D, Schofield M & Hussain R. Psychological health in midlife among women who have ever lived with a violent partner or spouse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2006; 21(8): 1092-1107.

Loxton D, Schofield M & Hussain R. History of domestic violence and health service use among mid-aged Australian women. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 2004; 28(4): 383-388.



## Research aims

- To examine the long-term health impact of IPV over an 11 year period
- To determine the changes in mental health over an 11 year period that are attributable to IPV
- To determine the effects of social support on the association between mental health and IPV





## Data

- 1946-51 cohort from 1996, 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2007
- Lived with a violent partner spouse
- Grouped:
  - Living with a violent partner at each survey
  - Time since last experienced IPV

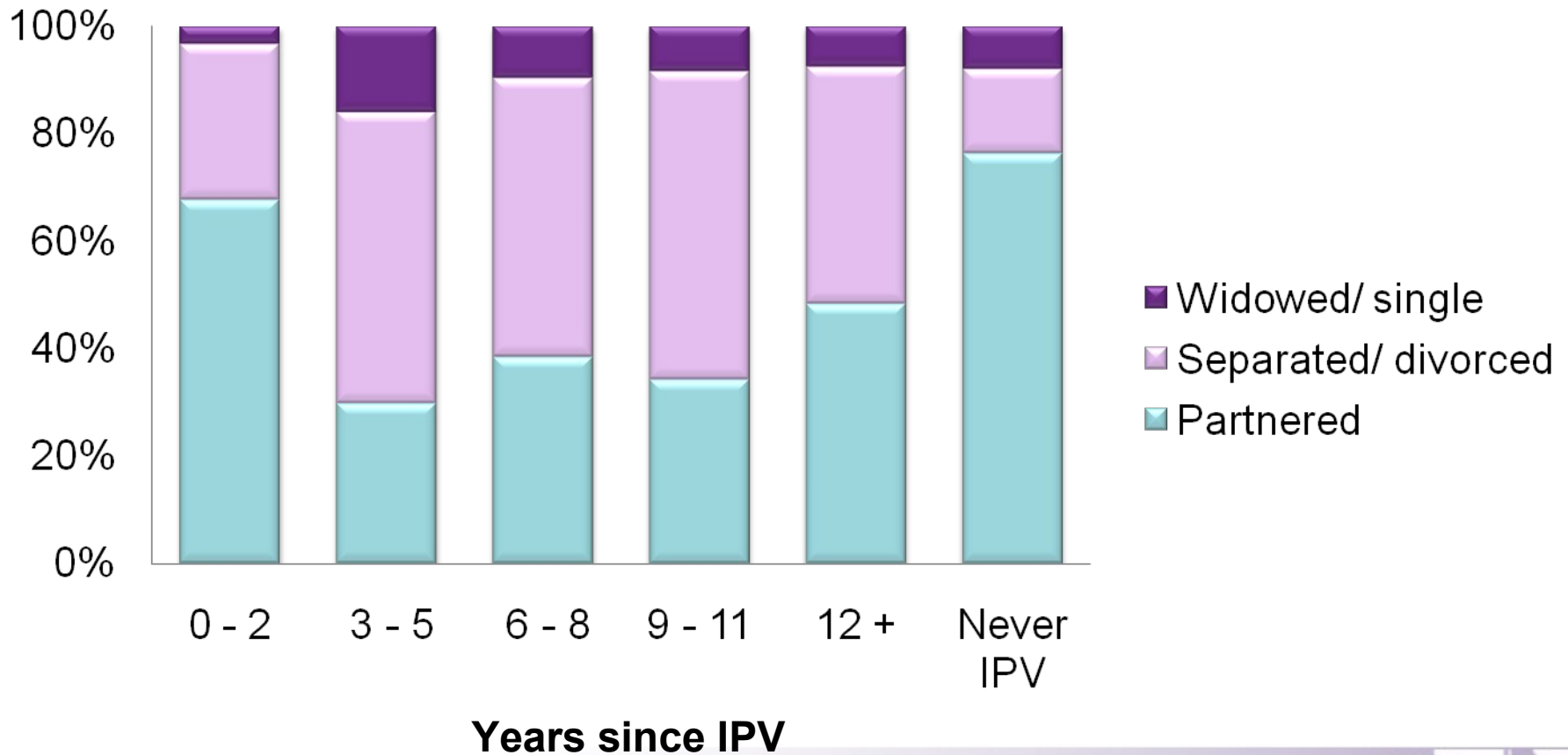


## Intimate partner violence

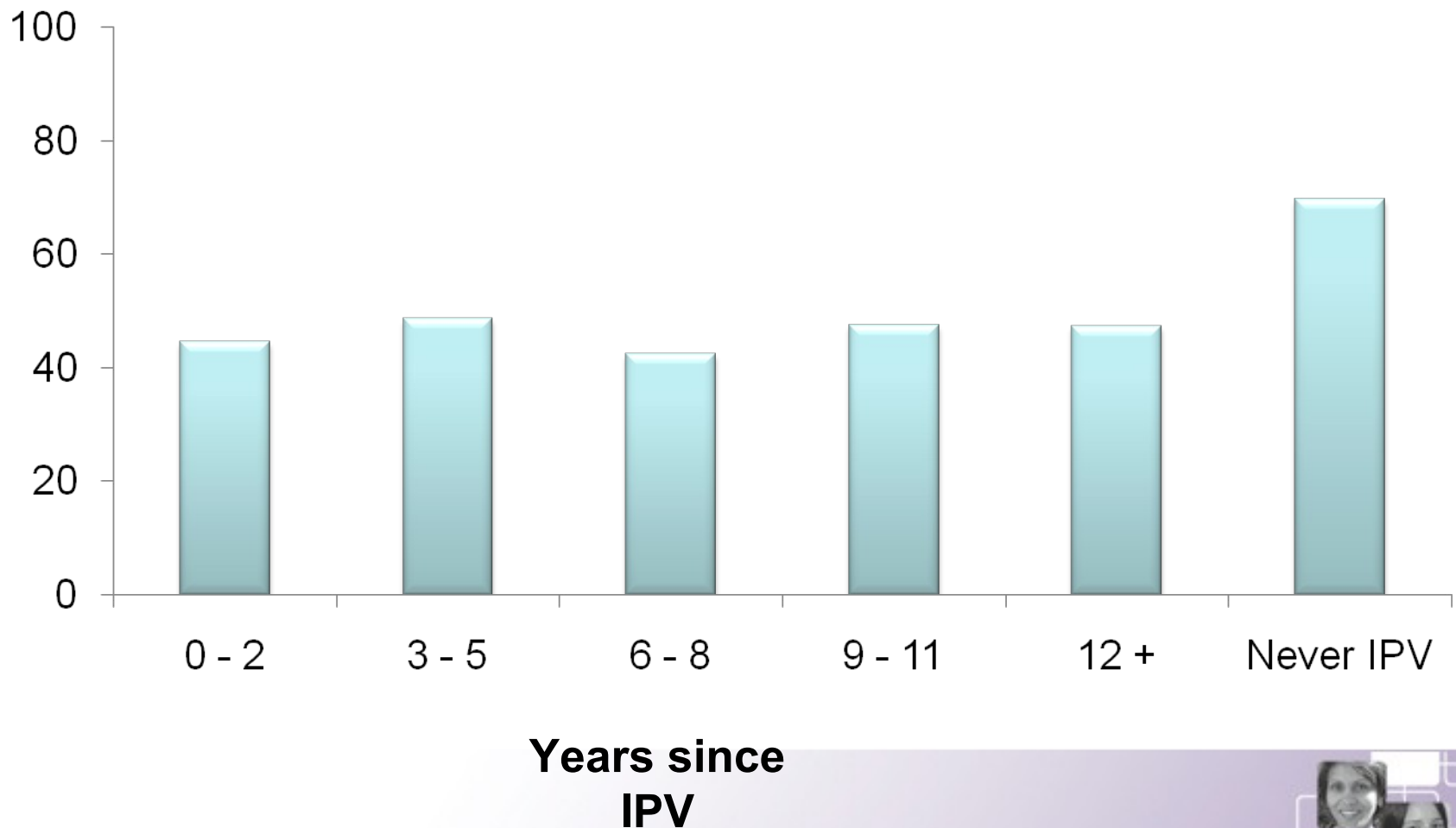
| Age         | Ever experienced IPV (%) |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 45-50 years | 12.9                     |
| 47-52 years | 13.9                     |
| 50-55 years | 14.4                     |
| 53-58 years | 14.7                     |
| 56-61 years | 15.0                     |

- 10 315 women who completed Survey 5
- Adjusted for oversampling in rural/remote areas

## Characteristics and time since IPV: Relationship status

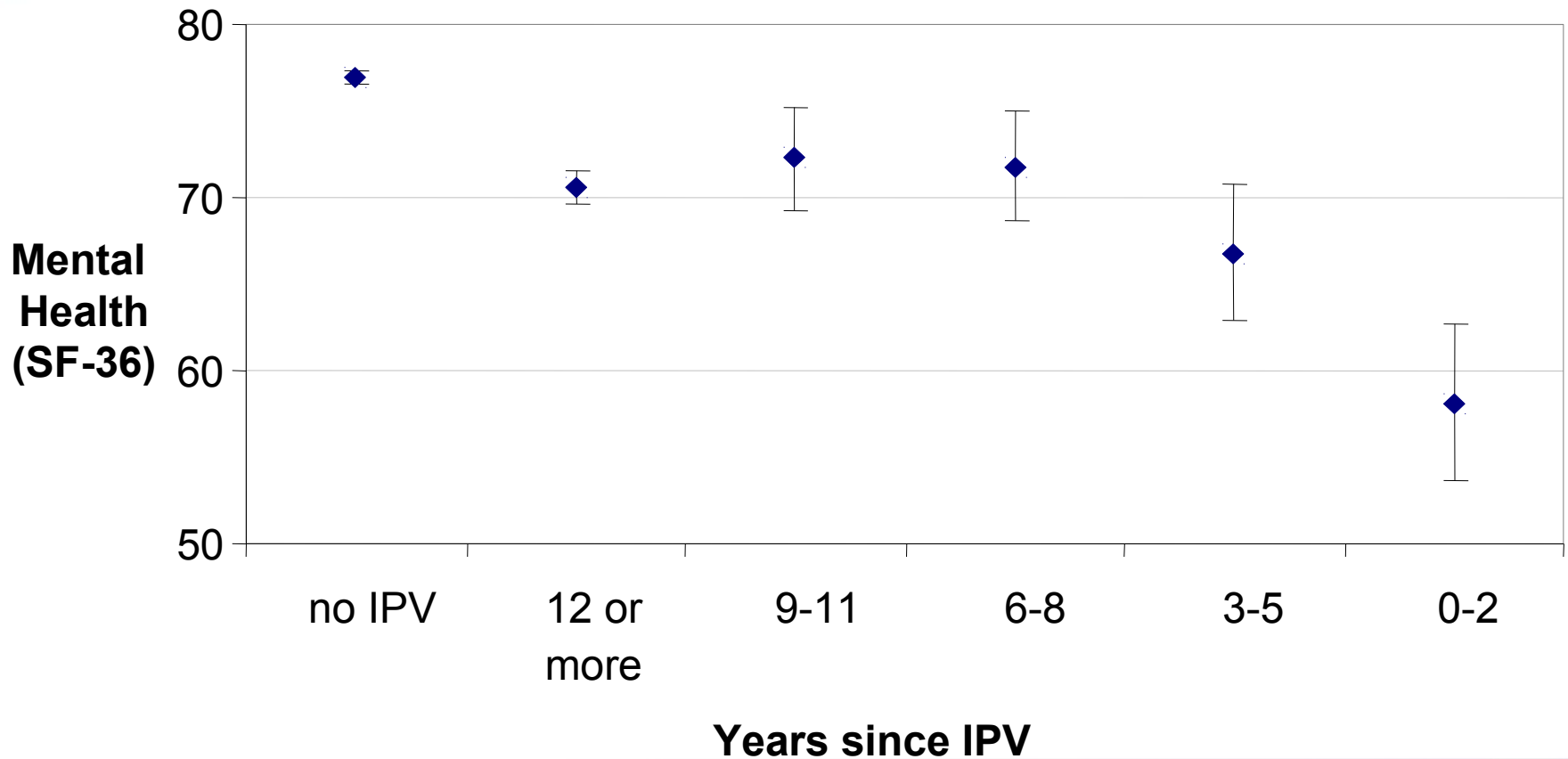


# Characteristics and time since IPV: Percentage of women able to manage on their income



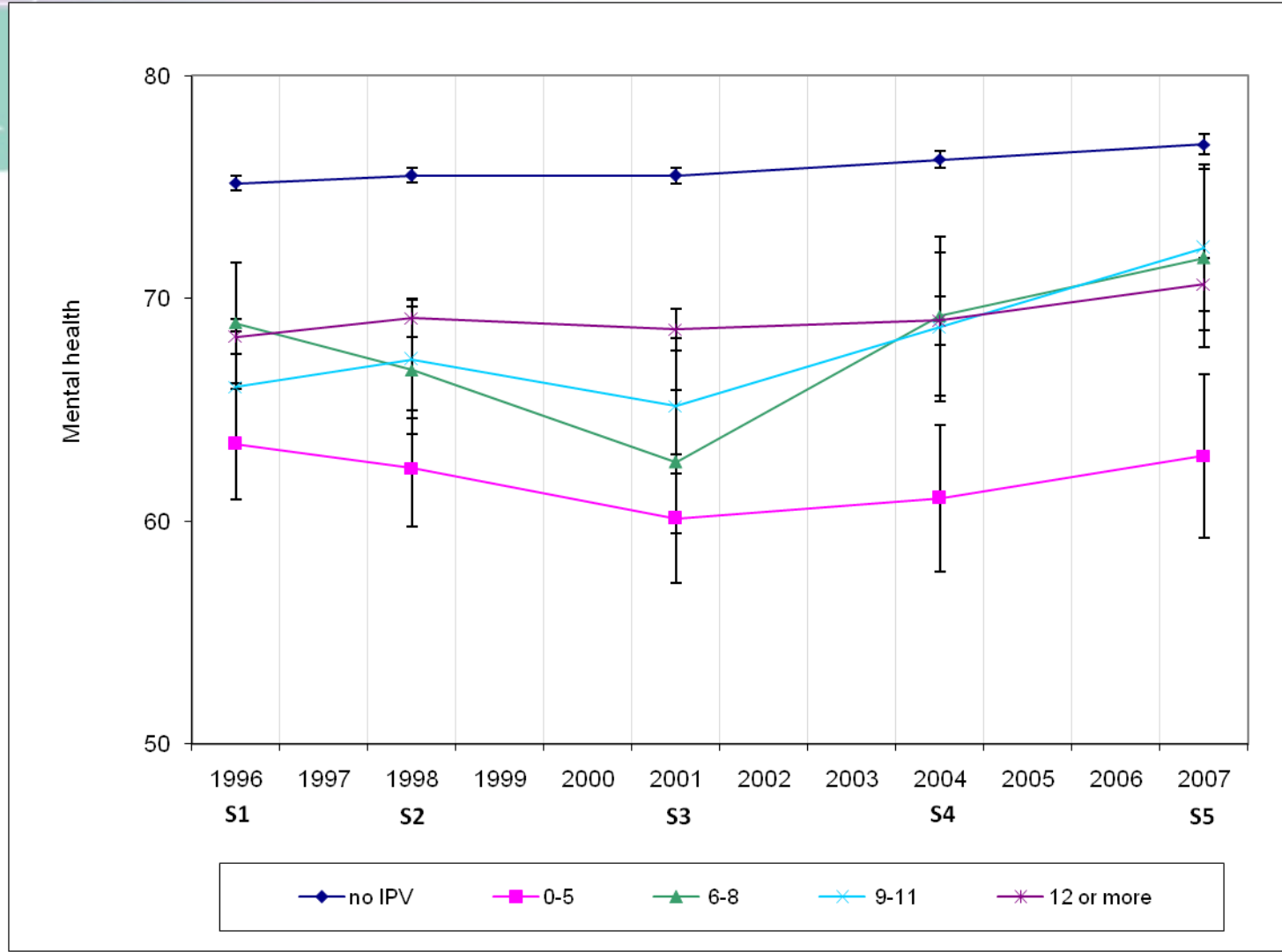


## Mental health in 2007 and time since IPV

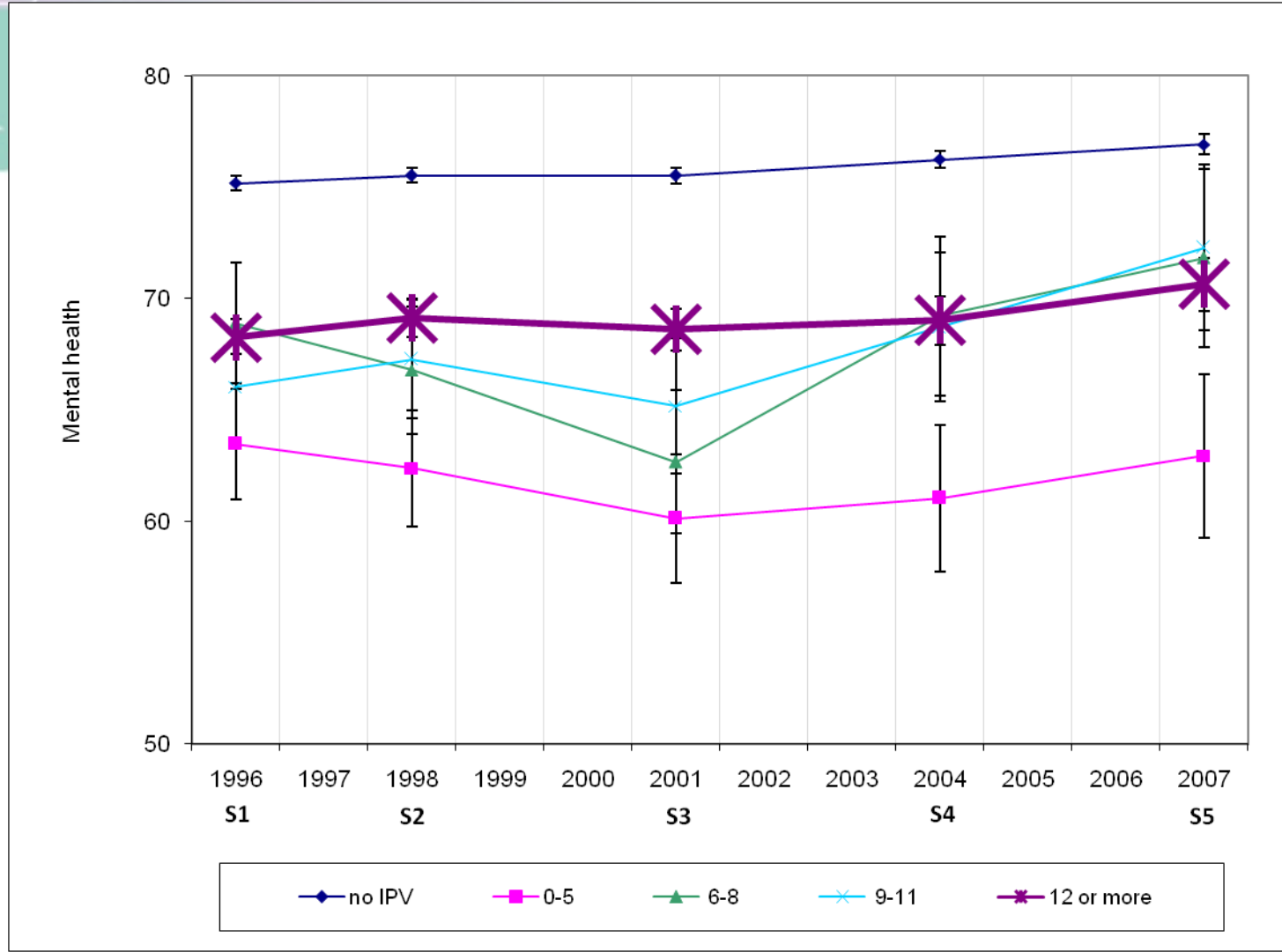


SF-36 Mental Health Index – higher scores indicate better mental health

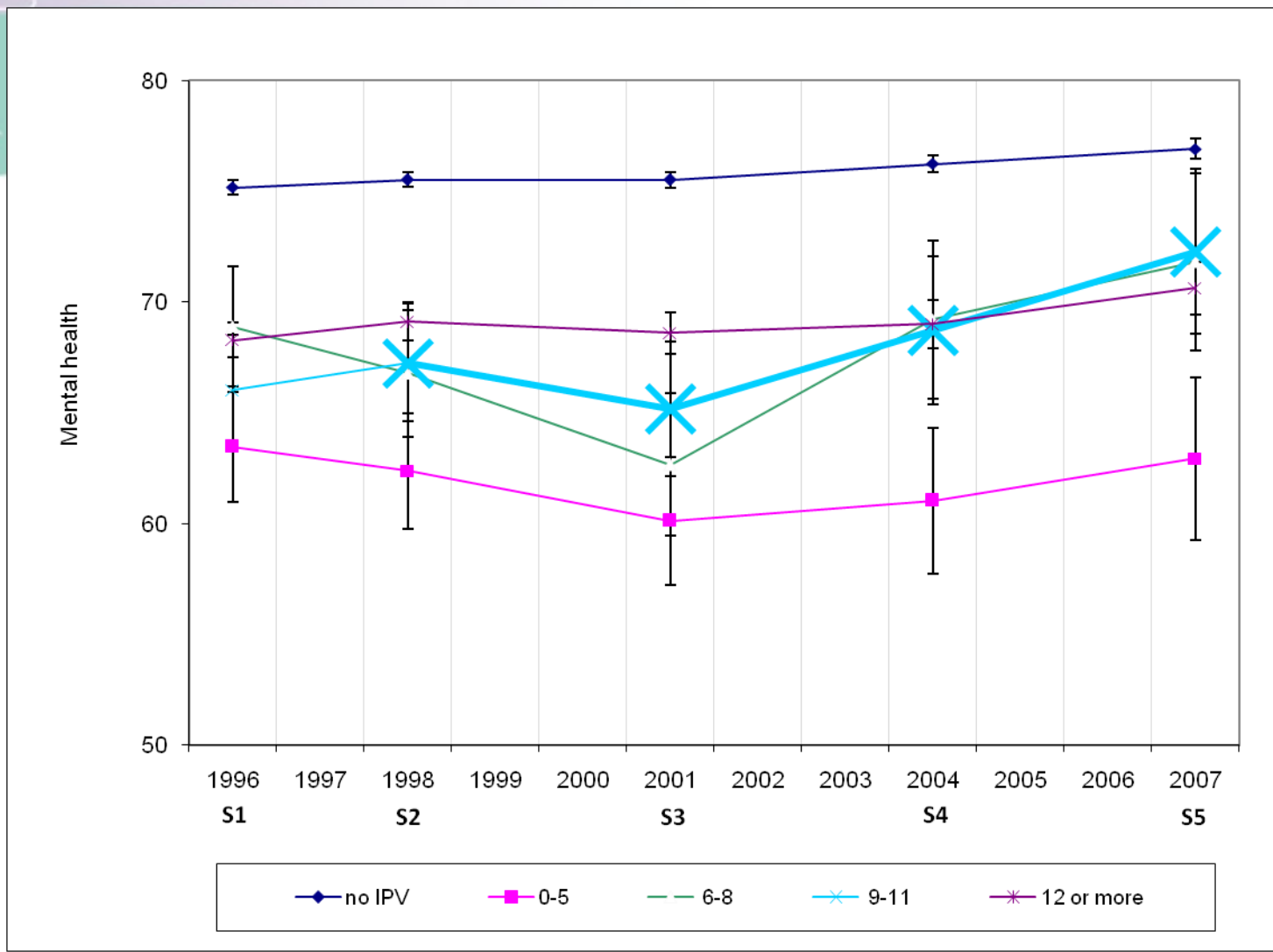
# Time since IPV by mental health (unadjusted)



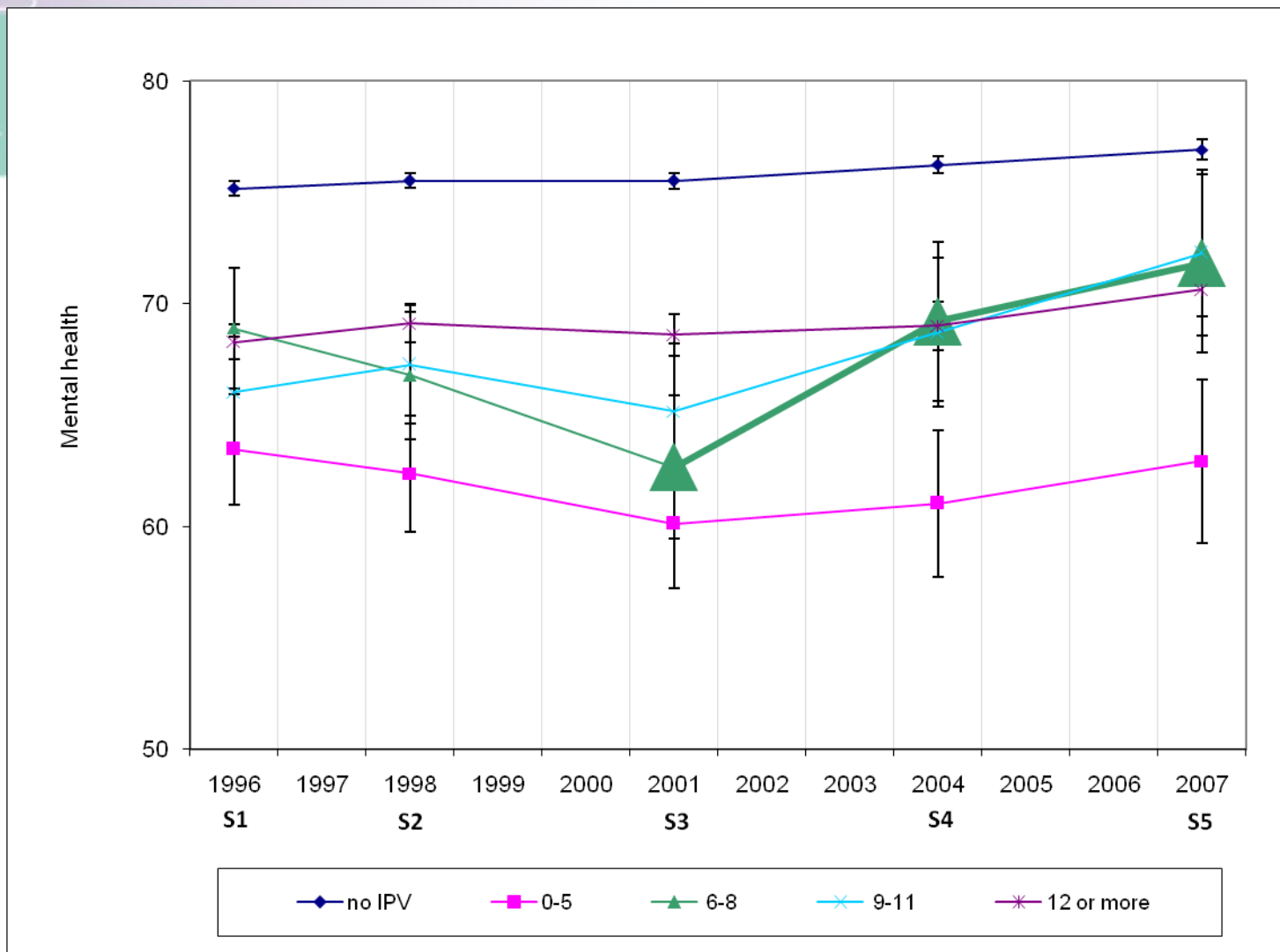
# Time since IPV by mental health (unadjusted)



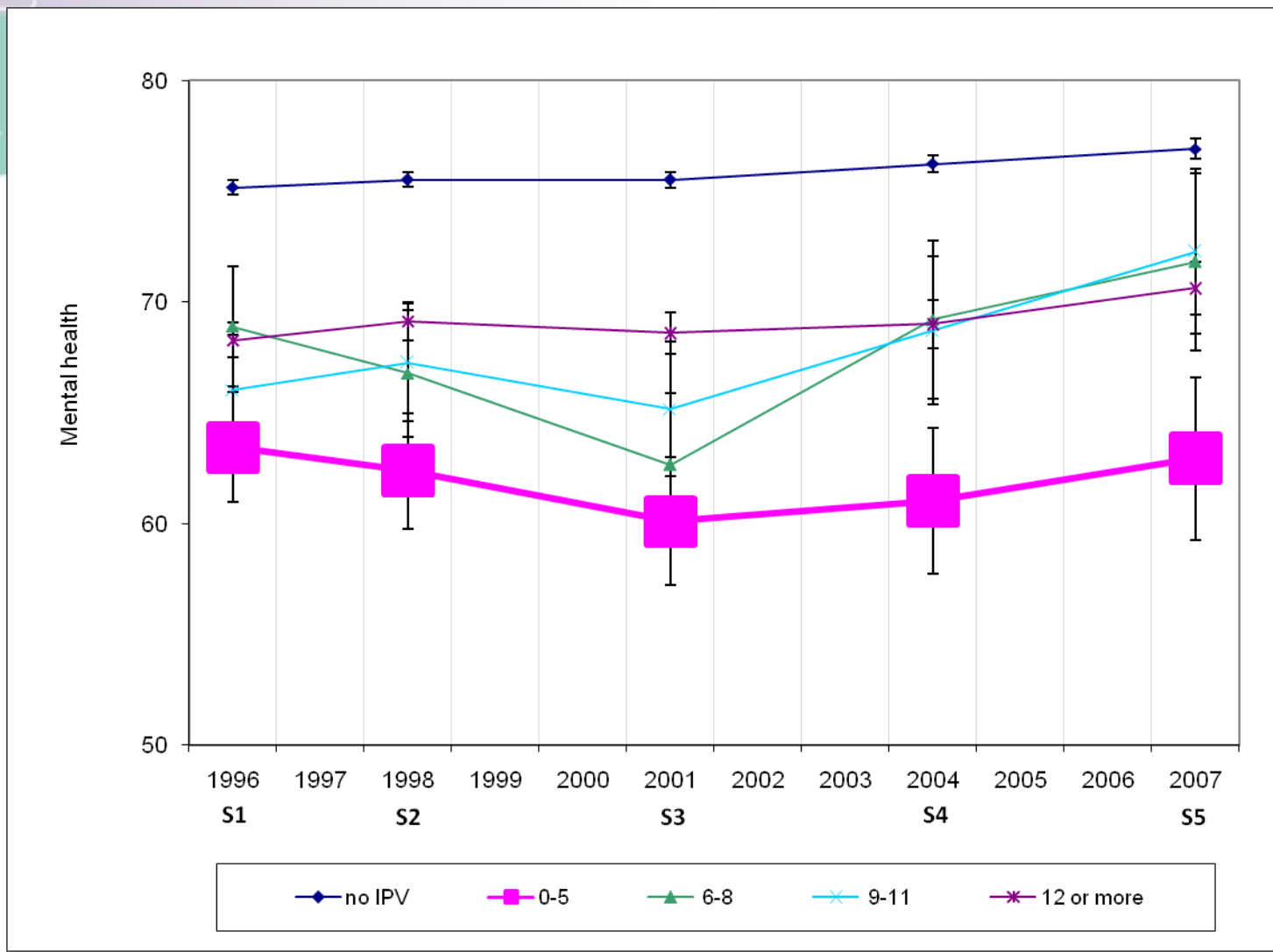
# Time since IPV by mental health (unadjusted)



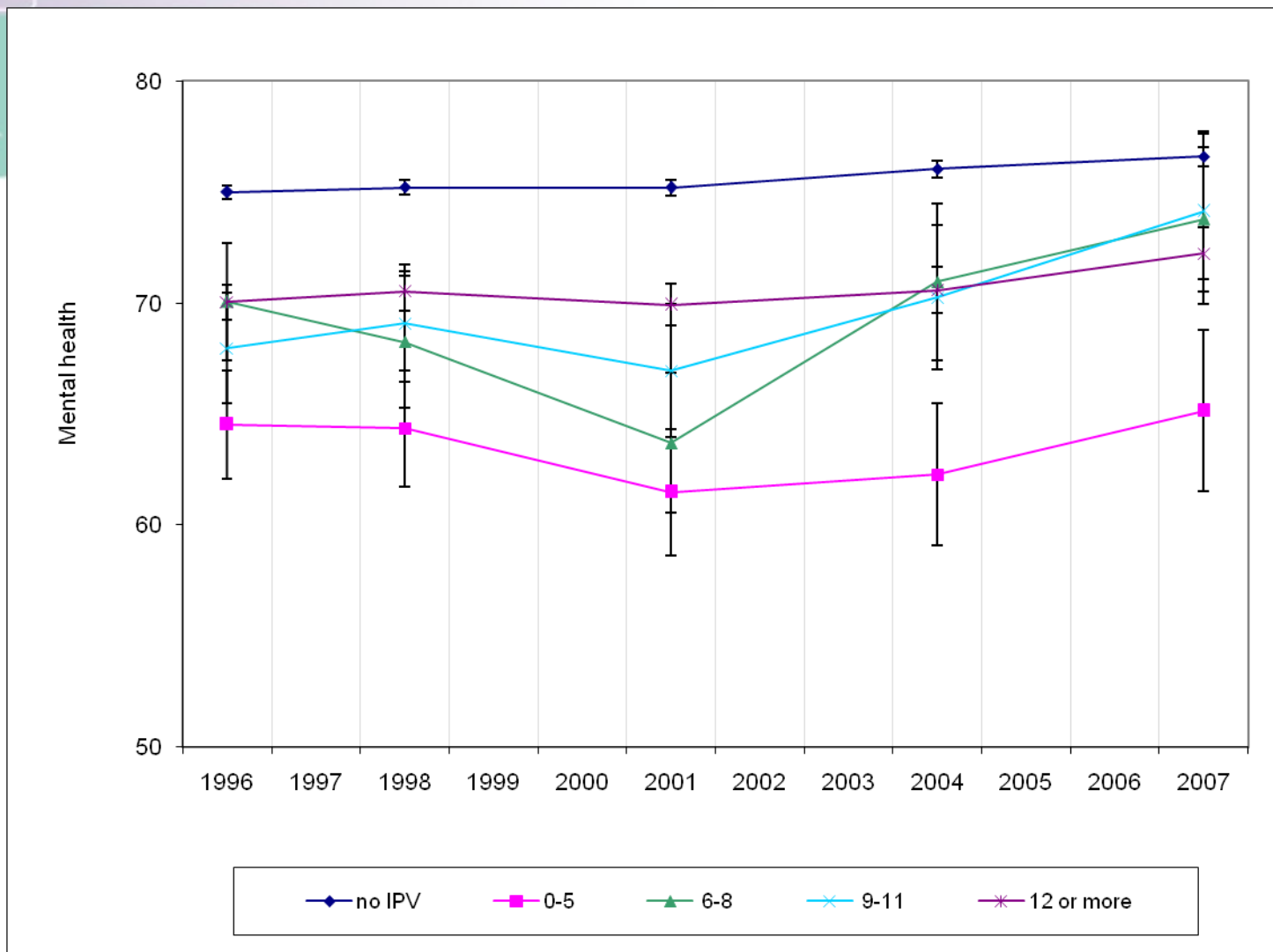
# Time since IPV by mental health (unadjusted)



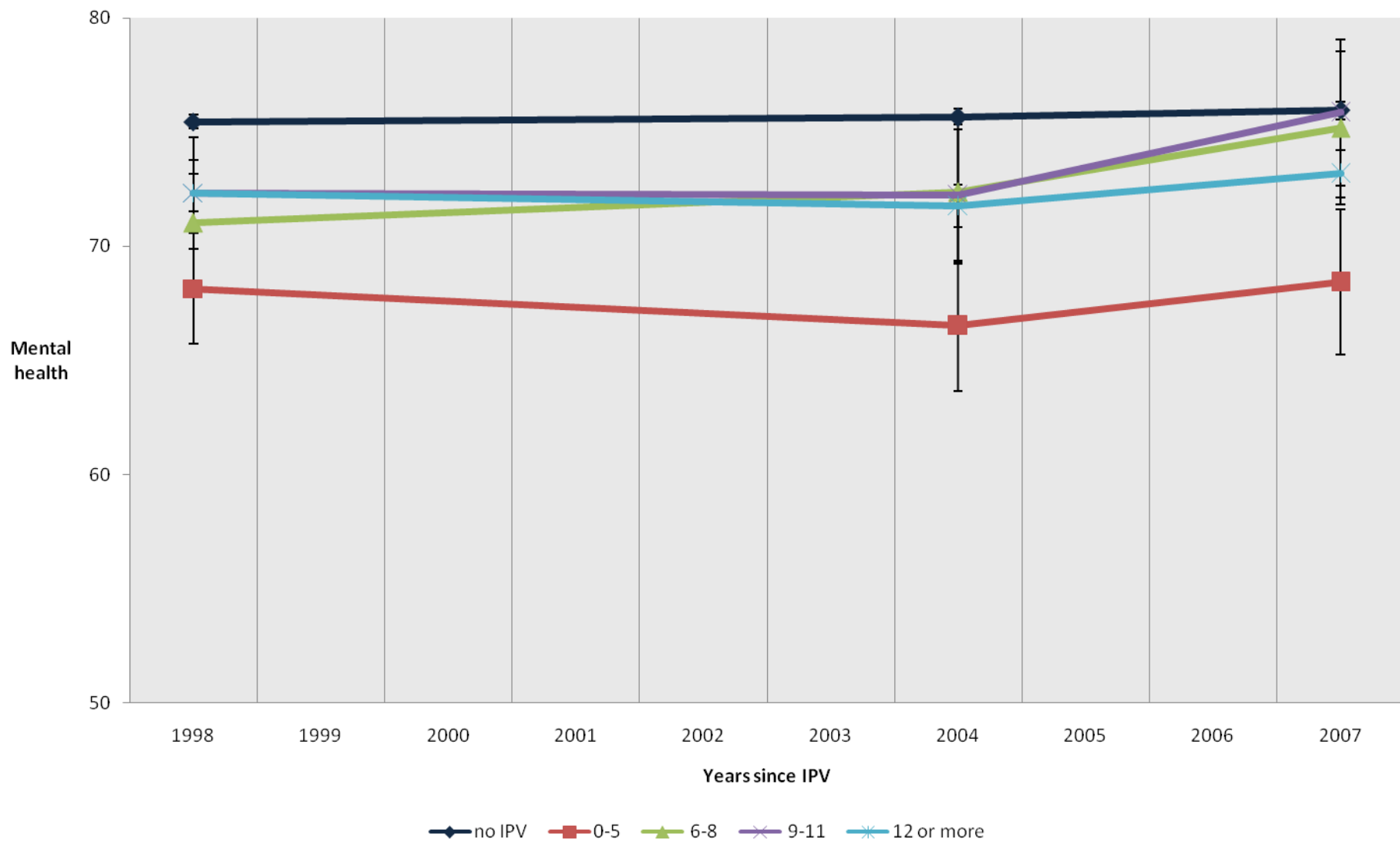
# Time since IPV by mental health (unadjusted)



# Time since IPV by mental health (adjusted)



# Mental health adjusted for demographics & social support







## Limitations and strengths

- Measure of IPV
- Self report
- Before 1996?
- Severity
- National community based sample
- Longitudinal data





## Summary

- Women's mental health does improve after partner violence ceases
- The improvement happens over many years
- Demographics impact on mental health and on improvement of mental health
- Social support impacts on mental health and is a key variable in recovery from intimate partner violence

