Stress Research Institute

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Individual office rooms and open-plan offices affect performance on demanding tasks.

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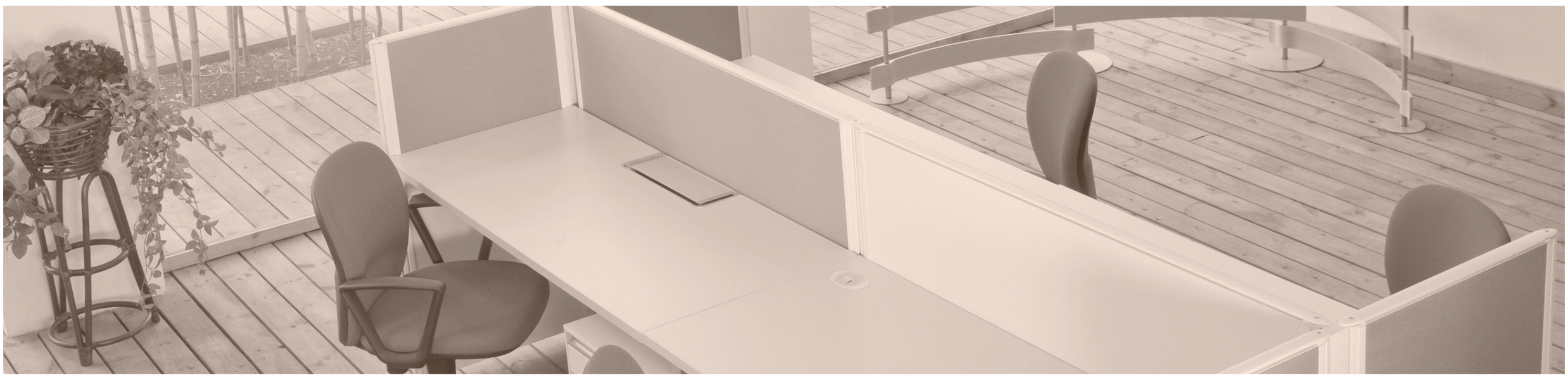


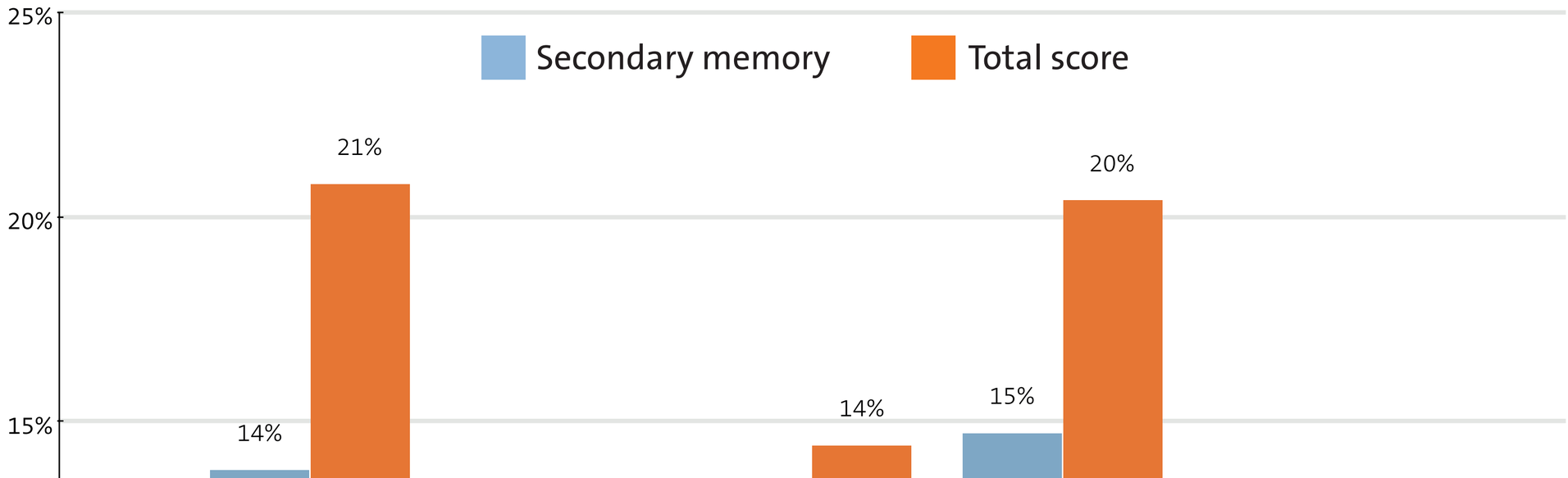
The physical work environment has been associated with indicators of both health and performance. This study focuses on how performance on a memory test is affected in normal working conditions compared to a quiet (with low amount irrelevant stimuli) baseline in different office designs, including individual office rooms, small open-plan office, medium-sized open-plan office and large open-plan office.

A repeated analysis of covariance analysis was conducted on the total memory performance and a multivariate repeated measures of covariance on secondary memory and primary memory.

The results showed that the drop in performance was higher in large open-plan office compared to small open-plan office. However, contrary to our hypothesis we found a higher drop in performance for employees in individual office rooms than for those working in open-plan office environments.

These results indicate that employees in small open-plan offices in comparison to large have better possibilities to conduct cognitively demanding tasks and that individual office rooms might not be as advantageous as is suggested.

Drop in performance between T1 and T2 (in %)



Stress Research Institute is a knowledge centre in the area of stress and health. The Institute is part of the Faculty of Social Science, Stockholm University, Sweden and conducts basic and applied research on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary methodological approaches.
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