Overview of publications

Published articles


De Wind A, Ybema JF, Van der Beek AJ. Psychosocial job characteristics and older persons' early exit from the workforce. [Psychosociale werkkenmerken en vervroegde uittreding ouderen]


Article concepts

Rob Gründemann et al. Low educated employees' work-needs. [Werkbehoeften van laagopgeleide werknemers] [Dutch]

Daphne Rohrich et al. The association between health, work ability and unpaid work with the intention to start working in paid employment.

Fenna Leijten et al. The effects of work-related factors and work engagement on mental and physical health: one year follow-up study among older workers.

De Wind et al. The role of ability, motivation and opportunity to work in the transition from work to early retirement – Testing and optimizing the Early Retirement Model.
Other reports
Ybema JF, Geuskens G, van den Heuvel S. Sustainable employability of older persons: Results from the first STREAM measurement [Duurzame inzetbaarheid van ouderen: Resultaten van de eerste meting van STREAM]. 2011, TNO. [Dutch]
Van den Heuvel S, Ybema JF, Leijten FRM, De Wind A. Sustainable employability of older persons: results from the first two STREAM measurements [Duurzame inzetbaarheid van ouderen: Resultaten van de eerste twee metingen van STREAM]. 2012, TNO. [Dutch]
Ybema JF, Vos, F, Geuskens GA. Sustainable employability: from research to practical approaches [Duurzame inzetbaarheid: van onderzoek tot aanpak in de praktijk]. [Dutch]

Published articles


Background
Due to the aging of the population, there is a societal need for workers to prolong their working lives. In the Netherlands, many employees still leave the workforce before the official retirement age of 65. Previous quantitative research showed that poor self-perceived health is a risk factor of (non-disability) early retirement. However, little is known on how poor health may lead to early retirement, and why poor health leads to early retirement in some employees, but not in others. Therefore, the present qualitative study aims to identify in which ways health influences early retirement.

Methods
Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 employees (60-64 years) who retired before the official retirement age of 65. Participants were selected from the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, a summary was made including a timeline, and the interviews were open coded.

Results
In 15 of the 30 persons, health played a role in early retirement. Both poor and good health influenced early retirement. For poor health, four pathways were identified. First, employees felt unable to work at all due to health problems. Second, health problems resulted in a self-perceived (future) decline in the ability to work, and employees chose to retire early. Third, employees with health problems were afraid of a further decline in health, and chose to retire early. Fourth, employees with poor health retired early because they felt pushed out by their employer, although they themselves did not experience a reduced work ability. A good health influenced early retirement, since persons wanted to enjoy life while their health still allowed to do so. The financial opportunity to retire sometimes triggered the influence of poor health on early retirement, and often triggered the influence of good health. Employees and employers barely discussed opportunities to prolong working life.

Conclusions
Poor and good health influence early retirement via several different pathways. To prolong working life, a dialogue between employers and employees and tailored work-related interventions may be helpful.

Data
Qualitative interviews

Link:

Abstract
A longitudinal study with one year follow-up among older employees shows that psychosocial job characteristics are of influence on early exit from the workforce to disability pension, unemployment, and early retirement. Physical load is not of influence on these routes of exit from the workforce.


Objectives: This study aimed to investigate the relative contribution of health, job characteristics, skills and knowledge, and social and financial factors to the transition from work to (non-disability) early retirement.

Methods: Employees aged 59-63 years (N=2317) were selected from the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation in the Netherlands (STREAM). Individual characteristics, health, job characteristics, skills and knowledge, and social and financial factors were measured using a questionnaire at baseline. Information on early retirement was derived from the one-year follow-up questionnaire. Logistic regression analyses were used to identify predictors of early retirement. Population Attributable Fractions (PAF) were calculated.

Results: Older age [odds ratio (OR) 1.79], poor physical health (OR 1.78), a positive attitude of the partner with respect to early retirement (OR 3.85), and the financial possibility to stop working before the age of 65 (OR 10.2) predicted the transition to early retirement, whereas employees that reported high appreciation at work (OR 0.58) and higher focus on development of skills and knowledge (OR 0.54) were less likely to retire early. PAF were 0.75 for the financial possibility to stop working, 0.43 for a positive attitude of the partner with respect to early retirement, 0.27 for low appreciation at work, 0.23 for a low focus on development, and 0.21 for poor health.

Conclusions: The financial possibility to stop working before the age of 65 importantly contributes to early retirement. In the context of rapidly diminishing financial opportunities to retire early in the Netherlands, the prolongation of working life might be promoted by workplace health promotion and disability management, and work-related interventions focusing on appreciation and the learning environment.


Abstract
Purpose The goal of this qualitative study was to gain insight into how older employees remain productive at work in spite of health problems.
Methods

Twenty-six semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with older employees, 46–63 years of age, who reported a poor health in the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability, and Motivation. Demographic, health, and work information was gathered, followed by information on adjustments made in response to health problems. Inductive and deductive analyses were done independently by two researchers.

Results

Four pathways through which poor health could influence productivity were identified: (1) poor health did not influence productivity; (2) poor health created a temporary imbalance in demands and external and internal resources after which adjustments were made and productivity was maintained; (3) adjustments were made in response to an imbalance, but productivity remained reduced; and (4) no adjustments were made and productivity was reduced. Whether and which adjustments occurred was influenced by factors in various domains, such as: visibility of the problem (health), autonomy (work-related), support (relational), and the ability to ask for help (personal). Sustainable productivity was influenced by internal factors that enhanced or hindered the creation of a balance, and by whether appropriate adjustments were made.

Conclusions

The influence that health can have on productivity depends on the individuals’ unique imbalance and personal disposition. Helpful a priori work place characteristics and personal well-being should be promoted so that a balance between demands and resources can be found in times of poor health.

Data

Qualitative interview study (purposeful participant selection on T1 & T2)

Link:

PMID: 23054226


Abstract

Objectives

The aim of this study was to (i) assess how common chronic health problems and work-related factors predict sickness absence and (ii) explore whether work-related factors modify the effects of health problems on sickness absence.

Methods

A one-year longitudinal study was conducted among employed persons aged 45-64 years from the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (N=8984). The presence of common chronic health problems and work-related factors was determined at baseline and self-reported sickness absence at one-year follow-up by questionnaire. Multinomial multivariate logistic regression analyses were conducted to assess associations between health, work factors, and sickness absence, and relative excess risk due to interaction (RERI) techniques were used to test effect modification.

Results

Common health problems were related to follow-up sickness absence, most strongly to high cumulative sickness absence (>9 days per year). Baseline psychological health problems were strongly related to high sickness absence at follow-up [odds ratio (OR) 3.67, 95% confidence interval (95% CI) 2.80-4.82]. Higher job demands at baseline increased the likelihood of high sickness absence at follow-up among workers with severe headaches [RERI 1.35 (95% CI 0.45-2.25)] and psychological health problems [RERI 3.51 (95% CI 0.67-6.34)] at baseline. Lower autonomy at baseline increased the likelihood of high sickness absence at follow-up among those with musculoskeletal [RERI 0.57 (95% CI 0.05-1.08)], circulatory [RERI 0.82 (95% CI 0.00-1.63)], and psychological health problems [RERI 2.94 (95% CI 0.17-5.70)] at baseline.

Conclusions

Lower autonomy and higher job demands increased the association of an array of common chronic health problems with sickness absence, and thus focus should be placed on altering these factors in order to reduce
sickness absence and essentially promote sustainable employability.


Abstract
Purpose - This study aims to provide the following empirical and theoretical contributions to the literature. First, the study provides an empirical test of theories proposed in the literature stating that turnover and retirement (two kinds of work withdrawal) involve different employee decisions. Second, it aims at providing a more general theoretical framework understanding turnover and retirement intentions integrating insights from different theories.

Design/methodology/approach - Research hypotheses are tested using the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM). This dataset includes information from approximately 15,000 respondents in the Netherlands. Respondents between the age of 45 and 64 were the target group in order to model transitions in the labour market for older workers. This dataset provides a unique opportunity to test turnover and retirement intentions.

Findings - First, the results show that personal characteristics such as income, age or health add more to the explanation of retirement intentions compared to turnover intentions and that work characteristics provide a better explanation of the turnover intention compared to retirement intention. Secondly, by focusing more closely on retirement intentions, the results show that organizational motivators can increase older workers labour market participation.


Background
Due to the aging of the population and, subsequently, higher pressure on public finances, there is a need for employees in many European countries to extend their working lives. Factors predicting early retirement have been identified in quantitative research, but little is known on why and how these factors influence early retirement. Therefore, the present quantitative study aimed to explore which factors influence retirement before the age of 65 in Dutch employees, and why and how these factors influence early retirement. Focus was on non-health related factors.

Methods
A qualitative study among 30 employees (60-64 years) who retired before the age of 65 was performed by means of face-to-face interviews. Participants were selected from the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM).

Results
For most employees, a combination of factors played a role in the transition from work to early retirement, and the specific factors involved differed between individuals. Participants reported various factors that pushed towards early retirement (‘push factors’), including organizational changes at work, conflicts at work,
high work pressure, high physical job demands, and insufficient use of their skills and knowledge by others in the organization. Employees who reported such push factors towards early retirement often felt unable to find another job. Factors attracting towards early retirement ('pull factors') included the wish to do other things outside of work, enjoy life, have more flexibility, spend more time with a spouse or grandchildren, and care for others. In addition, the financial opportunity to retire early played an important role. Factors influenced early retirement via changes in the motivation, ability and opportunity to continue working or retire early.

**Conclusion**

To support the prolongation of working life, it seems important to improve the fit between the physical and psychosocial job characteristics on the one hand, and the abilities and wishes of the employee on the other hand. Alongside improvements in the work environment that enable and motivate employees to prolong their careers, a continuous dialogue between the employer and employee on the (future) person-job fit and tailored interventions might be helpful.

**Data**

Qualitative interviews

**Link**

http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/13/516/abstract


**Abstract**

Continued employment is an important challenge for lower educated persons aged 45 and above. Job changes are a meaningful and sometimes necessary strategy for continued employment. Voluntary external job-job mobility is rare among lower educated persons aged 45 and above. In this report the central question is whether increasing confidence in ability (self-efficacy) to find a new employer is important for stimulating voluntary external mobility among lower educated employees aged 45 to 64. To answer this question we use data of 11,987 employees aged 45 to 64, of which 3,212 were had a lower education. The data come from the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM). It appears that confidence in ones own ability is positively related to the intention to change jobs and with actual job changes. Higher educated persons aged 45 and above appear to score higher in both confidence in own ability and the intention to change jobs. The association between both concepts however does not differ for lower and higher educated persons. This finding suggests that confidence among lower educated employees aged 45 and above in successful job-job transitions could lead to an increase in voluntary external mobility. An important further research question is then if such mobility leads to a less susceptible position in the labor market.

**Data**

T1+T2

**Link**

Boom Lemma tijdschriften


**Abstract**

**Objective:** This study examines whether mental and physical health relate differently to work ability and whether these associations vary with coping style.
**Methods:** A 1-year longitudinal study was conducted among 8842 employees aged 45 to 64 years from the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation. On-line questionnaires measured self-perceived mental and physical health at baseline and coping and work ability at follow-up. The data were analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis.

**Results:** Active coping and good mental and especially physical health predicted high work ability at follow-up. Avoidant coping was negatively related to work ability. Seeking support was unrelated to work ability. Interaction effects of coping and health on work ability were weak.

**Conclusions:** Successful coping styles and good health predict high work ability, and thus, promoting such factors can help improve sustainable employability.

**Data**
T1+T2

**Link**
PMID: 24064781

---


**Abstract**

**Aims:** The objective of the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM) is to acquire knowledge on determinants of transitions in employment and work productivity among persons aged 45-64 years.

**Research framework:** A research framework was developed, in which transitions in employment (e.g. leaving the workforce, entering the workforce, job change) and work productivity are influenced by the following determinants: health, job characteristics, skills and knowledge, social factors, and financial factors. Central explanatory variables in the framework are the ability to work, the motivation to work, and the opportunity to work.

**Study Design:** STREAM is a prospective cohort study among 12,055 employees, 1,029 self-employed persons, and 2,034 non-working persons, all aged 45 to 64 years at baseline. The study sample was stratified by age and employment status (employed, self-employed, non-working), and was drawn from an existing internet panel. The baseline measurement was carried out in 2010 (response: 70%), and with yearly follow-up measurements in 2011 (response: 82%), 2012 (response: 80%), and 2013. At each wave, participants fill out an online questionnaire covering all aspects of the research framework.

**Place and Duration of Study:** The Netherlands, between October 2010 and December 2013.

**Methodology:** Quantitative data on all aspects of the research framework were assessed with an online questionnaire, qualitative data were assessed with interview studies, and the questionnaire data can be linked to register data at Statistics Netherlands for 89% of the participants.

**Results:** Transitions in employment between the first three waves of data among the participants are described.

**Conclusion:** STREAM will provide insight in the determinants of healthy and productive labour participation among persons aged 45 years and older, which will support the development of interventions prolonging working life in good health, while maintaining good work productivity.

**Data**
T1+T2

**Link**
In this article the following questions were researched:

1. To what extent are lower educated employees’ work-needs different from the work-needs of middle and high educated employees?
2. How do lower educated employees’ work-needs change as they get older?
3. To what extent do older lower educated employees’ work-needs get fulfilled in their work?
4. Is the fulfillment of older lower educated employees’ work-needs of influence on their job satisfaction and intention to continue working?

We answer these question through literature research and through analyses of a large-scale dataset of persons 45 years and older (STREAM).

Daphne Rohrich et al. The association between health, work ability and unpaid work with the intention to start working in paid employment.

Purpose
To investigate the association between health, work ability and unpaid work with the intention to start working in paid employment in different groups of non-working older persons.

Methods
In this cross-sectional study, 1,975 persons aged 45-64 years who participated in the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM) were included. Participants were classified as unemployed, retired, housewife/husband or work disabled. Demographics, vitality, work ability, unpaid work (charity work, informal care, looking after others’ children), years since the last job, financial information and the intention to start working in paid employment were assessed by questionnaire. Logistic regression analyses were performed stratified by non-working status.

Fenna Leijten et al. The effects of work-related factors and work engagement on mental and physical health: one year follow-up study among older workers.

Abstract
Objectives: The goals of this study were to determine whether work-related factors and work engagement were differently associated with mental and physical health and whether work engagement modified associations between work factors and health.
Methods: A one-year longitudinal study with employed persons aged 45 to 64 years was conducted within the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability, and Motivation (N=8837). With an online questionnaire, work-related psychosocial and physical factors and work engagement were measured at baseline and health, assessed with the Short Form-12 Health Survey, at baseline and one-year follow-up. General linear regression models (GLM) were used to assess associations of dichotomized work engagement and work factors with standardized continuous scales of mental and physical health (range 11.27-71.80). Interaction terms were tested to assess whether work engagement modified work factor-health associations.

Abstract

Objectives: Determinants in the domains health, job characteristics, skills, and social and financial factors may influence early retirement through three central explanatory variables, i.e. the ability, motivation, and opportunity to work. Based on the literature, we created the Early Retirement Model. This study aims to investigate whether data support the Early Retirement Model and how the model could be improved.

Methods: Employees aged 58-62 years (N=1,862), who participated in the first three waves of STREAM were included. Determinants were assessed at baseline, central explanatory variables after one year, and early retirement after two years. Structural equation modeling was applied.

Other reports

Ybema JF, Geuskens G, van den Heuvel S. Sustainable employability of older persons: Results from the first STREAM measurement [Duurzame inzetbaarheid van ouderen: Resultaten van de eerste meting van STREAM]. 2011, TNO. [Dutch]

Abstract

In this report we focus on findings that depict the sustainable employability of employees, self-employed persons, and non-employed persons using the first STREAM measurement. We use three indicators: health, education, and mobility in the labor market. Among employees those persons with a lower education and those work-disabled score less good on certain aspects of sustainable employability and good health and little skills obsolescence are related to higher work ability, working because it is pleasurable, and with more opportunities to work. Concerning the sustainable employability of self-employed persons it appears that persons became self-employed because they were looking for new challenges and thus they are a positive selection of employed persons. They are, compared to employees and self-employed persons motivated by a different reason, higher educated and have higher vitality scores. Concerning non-employed, their work ability is strongly related to their vitality scores. Alongside unemployed persons, work disabled, retired, and housewives, are focused on trying to find paid employment.
Van den Heuvel S, Ybema JF, Leijten FRM, De Wind A. Sustainable employability of older persons: results from the first two STREAM measurements [Duurzame inzetbaarheid van ouderen: Resultaten van de eerste twee metingen van STREAM]. 2012, TNO. [Dutch]

Abstract
In this report we focus on determinants of sustainable employability, we use results from the first and second STREAM measurements and from interview studies carried out within STREAM. Specifically, we focus on how persons with health problems can remain productive and how sickness absence can be avoided. Furthermore, we explore what determines whether persons will continue participating in the labor market or exit the labor market. The most important findings with regard to maintaining productivity is that favorable work-related factors and personal well-being should be stimulated before health problems occur because these factors are important when adjustments need to be made and when a new balance in demands and ability has to be found in light of health problems. With regard to the influence of work-related factors and health on sickness absence it appears that especially favorable work-related factors (i.e. lower task demands, high autonomy) should be stimulated among persons with health problems. Concerning work-related factors that of influence on continued labor market participation, it appears that especially a good social climate contributes. Poor physical and mental health are important predictors of exit to unemployment and work disability. For exit to early retirement only physical health and financial opportunity play an important role.

Ybema JF, Vos, F, Geuskens GA. Sustainable employability: from research to practical approaches [Duurzame inzetbaarheid: van onderzoek tot aanpak in de praktijk]. [Dutch]

Abstract
Description of the design and results of STREAM concerning transitions out of employment to retirement, unemployment, and work disability, and the changes in health alongside these transitions. In addition a description of the National Employability Plan: an approach for sustainable employability within companies.