



## What is STREAM?

STREAM is a **four-year longitudinal study** with annual measurements among **persons aged 45-64** in the Netherlands. Participants fill in an online questionnaire on topics such as: health, work, knowledge and skills, social circumstances, and financial situation. See the **STREAM Research Framework** for an overview of constructs measured.

More than **12,000 employees, 1,000 self-employed persons, and 2,000 non-employed persons** participated in the first measurement. In the second measurement 82% of the original participants participated, in the third measurement this was 80%. In the fall of 2013 the last measurement will be conducted.

For data collection an existing Intomart GfK internet panel is used. For 89% of baseline participants, **data linkage** with information from **Statistics Netherlands** is possible.

To obtain additional insight, **qualitative studies** have and will be conducted among STREAM participants.

STREAM is being conducted by **TNO**, in close collaboration with the **VU Medical Center** and the **Erasmus MC**.

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# STREAM Newsletter

Issue 2

## Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation

### Theme: Qualitative Studies

## 'All those things together made me retire' – Results from a qualitative study on early retirement

A qualitative study was conducted among thirty STREAM participants (60-64 years) who retired early, i.e. before the age of 65. The study aimed to explore reasons for this early retirement.

We found that 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. Push and pull factors led to changes in motivation, ability and opportunity to continue working, which in turn influenced early retirement.

More specifically, this study aimed to identify in which ways health influences early retirement. Health, both poor and good, played a role for half of the participants. For poor health, four pathways to early retirement were identified: 1. employees felt unable to work at all due to health problems, 2. health problems resulted in a self-perceived (future) decline in the ability to work, and employees chose to retire early, 3. employees with health problems were afraid of a further decline in health, and chose to retire early, and 4. 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 them to do so.

These results suggest that it is important to improve the fit between the physical and psychosocial job characteristics on the one hand, and the abilities and wishes on the employee on the other hand. Next to 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.

*See references de Wind et al., 2013 & Reeuwijk et al., 2013 in Publications below.*

**STREAM is interested in (inter)national and multidisciplinary collaborations to conduct innovative research with practical implications. Contact us for possible partnerships!**

**Don't forget to register for the symposium that STREAM is organizing!**  
(see next page for information)



# Qualitative Study on Health & Productivity

The goal of the study was to explore how older employees could remain **productive** at work in spite of health problems.

Four pathways through which health could influence **productivity** were identified: **1.** Poor health did not cause an imbalance and did not influence **productivity**; **2.** Poor health created a temporary imbalance in (work) demands and external and internal resources after which adjustments occurred and **productivity** was maintained, **3.** Adjustments were made in an effort to restore an imbalance, but **productivity** remained reduced, and **4.** An imbalance was present but no adjustments were made and **productivity** remained reduced.

Whether adjustments occurred and were sufficient in restoring **productivity** was influenced by work-related factors (e.g. job autonomy), work and home relations (e.g. support), health (e.g. visibility of the problem), personal factors (e.g. ability to ask for help) factors and other barriers and facilitators (e.g. motivation, psychological well-being).

See reference Leijten et al., 2013 in Publications below.

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## European Cohort Studies on Healthy Ageing at Work Symposium

The symposium aims to connect European cohort studies in order to exchange knowledge and highlight important research questions in the context of demographic change. Furthermore, the symposium aims to facilitate discussion and collaboration between research groups and scientists on existing data and future (joint) cohorts.

Focus will be on labour participation and work productivity of older persons. The symposium addresses scientists with a public health, psychological, sociological, economical, and epidemiological background, and especially those involved in (designing) cohort studies.

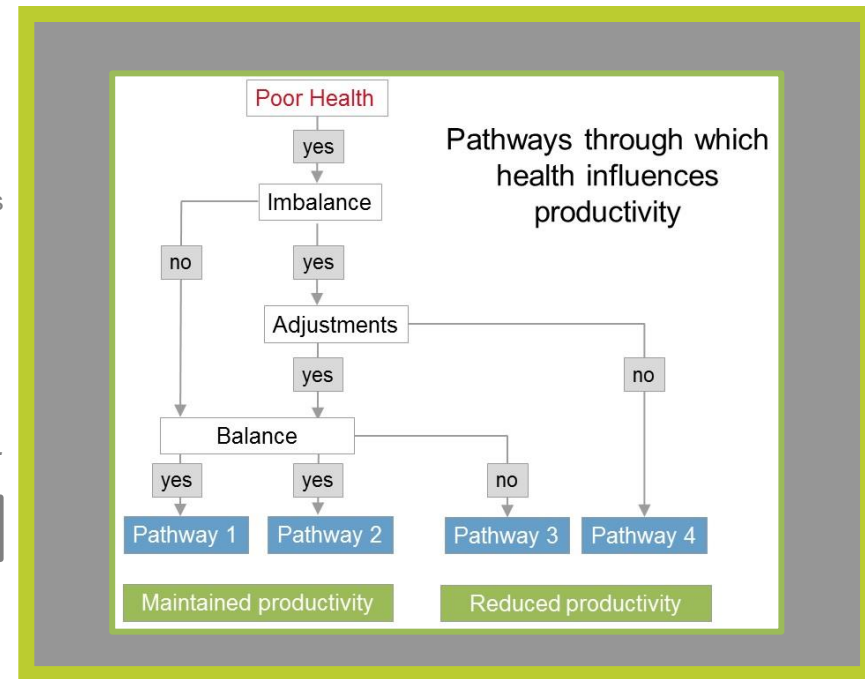
\*Pdf: [PROGRAM](#)

### Date /// Venue

October 24 (1.00 pm - 6.00 pm) & October 25 (9.00 am - 1.00 pm), 2013 /// TNO, Polarisavenue 151, Hoofddorp, The Netherlands. Close to Amsterdam Schiphol Airport

### Registration

Registration for the symposium and joint dinner (October 24) is open until October 1 by sending an email to [infoSTREAM@tno.nl](mailto:infoSTREAM@tno.nl). Please provide your address and indicate whether you will attend dinner. Registration fee is 75 euros, dinner 40 euros. Payment details will be given in the confirmation email.



## Publications

De Wind A, Geuskens GA, Reeuwijk KG, Westerman MJ, Ybema JF, Burdorf A, Bongers PM, van der Beek AJ. "Pathways through which health influences early retirement: a qualitative study". *BMC Public Health*. **2013**;13:292.

Link: [PMID: 23551994](#)

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]. *Economische Statistische Berichten*. **2013**;98(4655):152-155. [Dutch]

Link: [Economisch Statistische Berichten](#)

Leijten F, Van den Heuvel S, Geuskens G, Ybema JF, de Wind A, Burdorf A, Robroek S. "How do older employees with health problems remain productive at work?: a qualitative study". *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. **2013**;23(1):115-24.

Link: [PMID: 23054226](#)

Leijten FRM, Van den Heuvel SG, Ybema JF, Robroek SJ, Burdorf A. "Do work factors modify the association between chronic health problems and sickness absence among older employees?" *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*. **2013** [Epub ahead of print]

Link: [PMID: 23440271](#)

Reeuwijk KG, de Wind A, Westerman MJ, Ybema JF, van der Beek AJ, Geuskens GA. "All those things together made me retire": qualitative study on early retirement among Dutch employees". *BMC Public Health*. **2013**;13:516.

Link: [PMID: 23714371](#)

Sanders J, Van Wijk E, Boneschansker O, Ybema JF. "From employment to employment mobility among low educated persons aged 45 and above" [Van baan naar baanmobiliteit bij laagopgeleide 45-plussers]. *Tijdschrift voor Arbeidsvraagstukken*. **2012**;28: 474-490. [Dutch]

Link: [Boom Lemma tijdschriften](#)