

A stylized illustration of a tree with brown branches and green leaves. A person in a blue suit and yellow cap is sitting on a branch, using a laptop. Various objects are hanging from the branches, including a tractor, a car, a cup, a bag, a book, a toy car, and a toy truck.

Mental retirement?

Trajectories of work engagement preceding retirement among older workers

Astrid de Wind, Fenna R.M. Leijten, Trynke Hoekstra,
Goedele A. Geuskens, Lex Burdorf, & Allard J. van der
Beek

Introduction

- ‘Tapering off prior to retirement’ (career stage theory; Super, 1980)
- ‘Short-timer’s attitude’ (Atchley, 1976)
- ‘Mentally retired employees’ (Henkens et al, 2003)
- ‘Pre-retirement work disengagement’ (Damman et al, 2013)



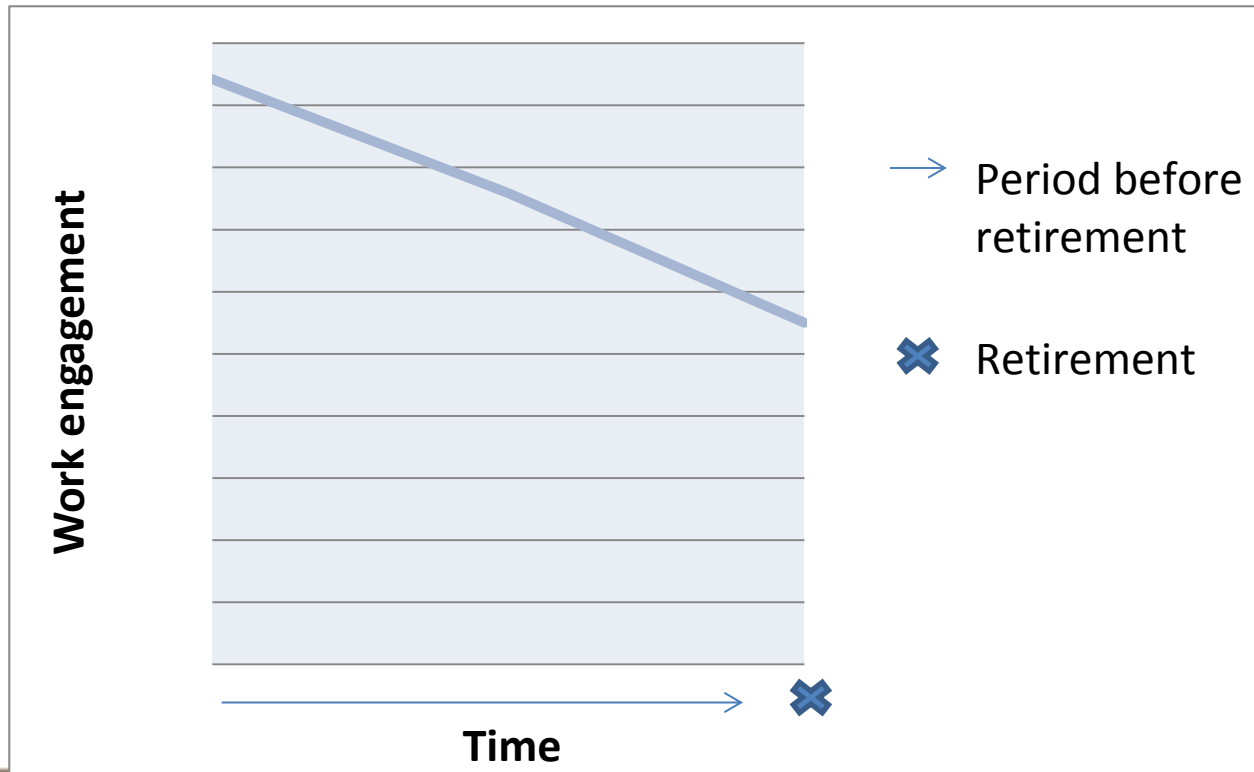
Research aims

1. Identify different trajectories of work engagement in older workers approaching the retirement age
2. Examine their associations with retirement

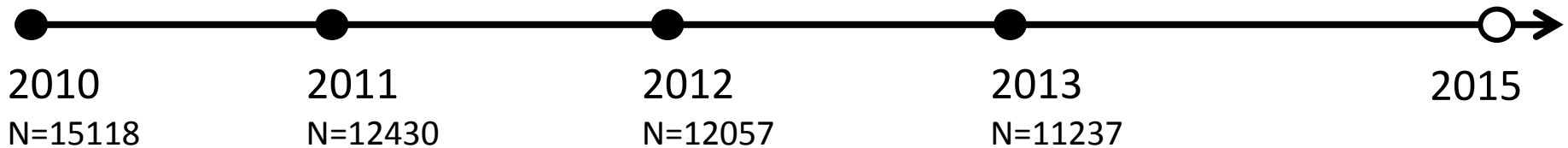


'Mental retirement'-hypothesis

- Older workers 'clock out' from work due to the prospect of retirement
- Anticipation of retirement is reflected in a declining trajectory of work engagement



STREAM: Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation

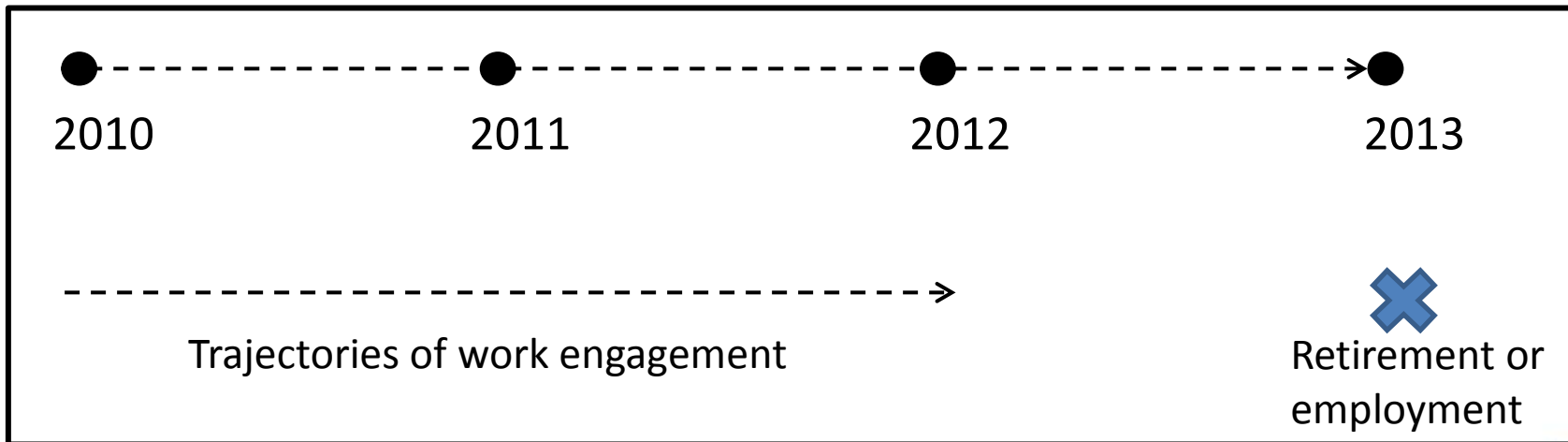


- >15.000 employees, self-employed persons and non-working persons, aged 45-64 years
- Yearly online questionnaires 2010-2013 (and continuation from 2015 onwards)
- Questions about, among others, work, work engagement and (transitions to) retirement



Methods

- Study population: employee, 55-62 years
- Step 1: identifying groups of employees with similar trajectories of work engagement
 - Latent class growth mixture modeling
- Step 2: studying whether trajectory membership related to (early) retirement
 - Logistic regression analyses

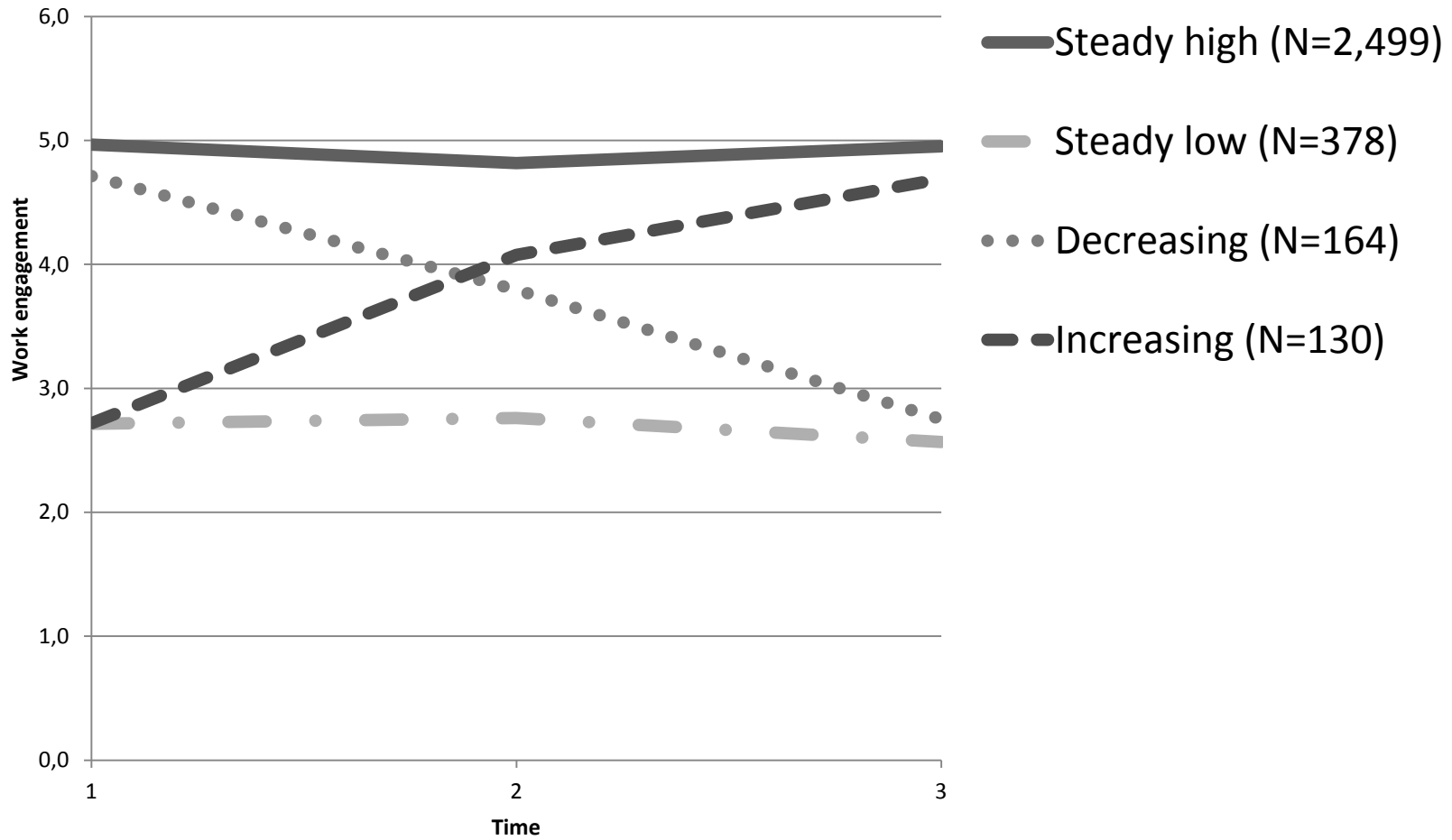


Results (1): Descriptives

| Characteristic | Total study population (N=3,171) |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Age (55-62 years) | 58.2 |
| Gender | - |
| Women | 41.7 (1,323) |
| Men | 58.3 (1,848) |
| Educational level | - |
| Low | 27.7 (878) |
| Medium | 35.3 (1,120) |
| High | 37.0 (1,173) |
| Employment status T3/4 | - |
| Employee | 83.8 (2,658) |
| (Early) retiree | 16.2 (513) |



Results (2): Trajectories



Results (3): Predictors of retirement

| | OR | 95% CI | OR | 95% CI |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|-----------|
| | Univariate | | Multivariate | |
| Trajectory of work engagement | | | | |
| Steady high | 1.00 | - | 1.00 | - |
| Steady low | 1.16 | 0.87-1.54 | 1.46 <i>a</i> | 1.05-2.04 |
| Decreasing | 0.69 | 0.42-1.13 | 0.79 | 0.46-1.37 |
| Increasing | 1.45 | 0.94-2.23 | 1.60 <i>b</i> | 0.96-2.67 |
| Age (years) | 2.14 <i>a</i> | 2.00-2.29 | 2.19 <i>a</i> | 2.04-2.35 |
| Gender (women) | | | | |
| Women | 1.00 | - | 1.00 | - |
| Men | 1.21 | 0.68-1.00 | 1.56 <i>a</i> | 0.51-0.81 |
| Educational level | | | | |
| Low | 1.00 | - | 1.00 | - |
| Medium | 1.05 | 0.83-1.34 | 1.18 | 0.89-1.56 |
| High | 1.12 | 0.88-1.42 | 1.24 | 0.94-1.64 |

a p-value<0.05
b p-value=0.07



Results (3): Predictors of retirement

| | OR | 95% CI | OR | 95% CI |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------|
| | Univariate | | Multivariate | |
| Trajectory of work engagement | | | | |
| Steady high | 1.00 | - | 1.00 | - |
| Steady low | 1.16 | 0.87-1.54 | 1.46 a | 1.05-2.04 |
| Decreasing | 0.69 | 0.42-1.13 | 0.79 | 0.46-1.37 |
| Increasing | 1.45 | 0.94-2.23 | 1.60 b | 0.96-2.67 |
| Age (years) | 2.14 ^a | 2.00-2.29 | 2.19 ^a | 2.04-2.35 |
| Gender (women) | | | | |
| Women | 1.00 | - | 1.00 | - |
| Men | 1.21 | 0.68-1.00 | 1.56 ^a | 0.51-0.81 |
| Educational level | | | | |
| Low | 1.00 | - | 1.00 | - |
| Medium | 1.05 | 0.83-1.34 | 1.18 | 0.89-1.56 |
| High | 1.12 | 0.88-1.42 | 1.24 | 0.94-1.64 |

a p-value<0.05
b p-value=0.07



Conclusions and discussion

- No support for the concept of 'mental retirement'
- Alternative processes and explanations;
 - I. Steady low work engagement trajectory associated with (early) retirement
 - Low work engagement throughout the career?
 - Decrease in work engagement took place before first measurement?
 - II. Increasing work engagement trajectory associated with (early) retirement
 - Second thoughts
 - Final sprint



Interventions

- Early interventions
- Increasing work engagement starting point for dialogue about possibilities to prolong a working life



Already clocked out...?



Contact:

Astrid de Wind: a.dewind@vumc.nl