

STREAM newsletter 10
March 2017

NEWS STREAM



STREAM in 2017

STUDY on TRANSITIONS in EMPLOYMENT, ABILITY and MOTIVATION

We celebrate the tenth edition of the STREAM newsletter with a brand new look! And although the look is new, the aim of the newsletter remains the same: to keep you updated on developments of STREAM in the recent past, present and future.

Last year, the sixth wave of STREAM was conducted. Questionnaires were sent to 20,515 participants, and almost 15,000 respondents participated (response 71.8%). Of the cohort that started in 2010, 9,516 participants responded (68%) and of the cohort that started in 2015, 5,218 (81%). In total, 46% (N=6,970) of the respondents who started in 2010, have participated in all waves since then!

In this tenth edition of the newsletter we will highlight a recently published study by Astrid de Wind, in which she used STREAM data to analyse whether older employees experience mental retirement. We will also accentuate the recently defended dissertation of Jos Sanders on sustaining the employability of lower educated workers through development, mobility and work redesign. Jos used STREAM data in two chapters of his dissertation.

We hope you will enjoy our new and improved news letter!

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'Mental retirement?' Trajectories of work engagement of older employees preceding retirement

Recently published in: **Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health**

de Wind A, Leijten FRM, Hoekstra T, Geuskens GA, Burdorf A, van der Beek AJ

Before actual retirement, employees may already disconnect themselves from work, which could be referred to as "mental retirement". To see whether "mental retirement" indeed exists, our study aimed to identify different trajectories of work engagement in older workers approaching the retirement age, and to examine the associations of these trajectories with actual retirement. In line with the concept of mental retirement we expected that the anticipation of retirement would be reflected in a decreasing work engagement.

The findings of this study do not support the existence of mental retirement, as decreasing work engagement was not associated with actual retirement. The analyses revealed that as many as 76% of the employees had a steady high work engagement and 5% of the employees even increased their work engagement over the years. One in eight employees (13%) had a steady low work engagement. And another 6% had a decreasing work engagement over the years (see figure 1).

Also, we did not find that employees with decreasing work engagement were more likely to retire. Counterintuitively, those with increasing work engagement were more likely to retire, which suggests that some groups of employees take a "final sprint" or develop "second thoughts" with regard to their work in the period approaching their retirement.

Scand J Work Environ Health. 2017;43(1):34–41. doi:10.5271/sjweh.3604

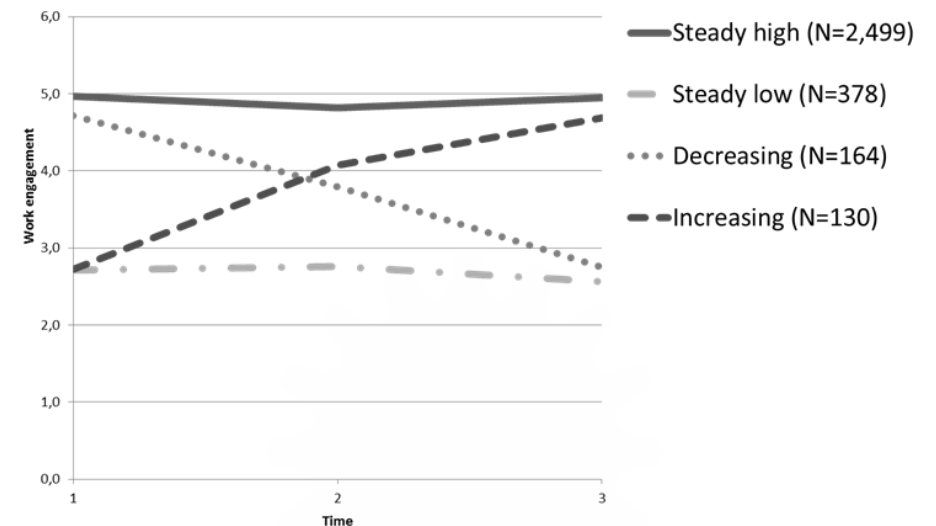


Figure 1: Trajectories of mental retirement in older workers



Dissertation Dr. Jos Sanders 'Sustaining the employability of the low skilled worker, development, mobility and work redesign'

On July 8th 2016, Jos Sanders, senior research scientist at TNO Sustainable Productivity and Employability successfully defended his dissertation at Maastricht University.

Central aim of the dissertation was to gain a better understanding of what causes low skilled workers to barely participate in activities aimed at sustaining their employability and on finding effective ways to stimulate this participation in order to cure current and prevent future skills mismatches. Jos' dissertation uses STREAM data in two chapters and offers some highly relevant insights for HR practitioners, especially in companies employing low skilled workers. In August 2016, Dutch [Nieuwsuur](#) broadcasted a ten minute news-item relating Jos' findings (on STREAM data) to the massive problems former V&D staff ran into trying to find a new job. Problems that were caused mainly by an absence of skills development during employment at V&D (in Dutch).

Job mobility among less educated older workers (chapter 5)

Less educated older workers are significantly less mobile across jobs than higher educated older workers, causing their employability to be relatively fragile in the dynamic 21st century labour market. This study uses STREAM data (T1 and T2, 2010 and 2011) and aims to answer the question "what role self efficacy plays in job to job mobility among less educated older employees".

Results (see also: figure 2) show that **lower levels of job change self-efficacy explain less educated older employees' relative immobility**. Active encouragement of job change self-efficacy could therefore be an important step in increasing *voluntary* job-to-job mobility. I suggest small steps in job changes, for instance through job crafting and work redesign.

Effect of development on perceived skills shortages (chapter 7)

Less educated older workers are also significantly less active in 'developmental activities', such as training. This will lead to an increase in skills shortages, causing their employability to be even more fragile. Remedying or preventing these skills shortages is therefore an important challenge for both employer and employee.

This study uses STREAM data (T1, T2 and T3) and aims to analyse whether the participation in developmental activities is effective in that it contributes to employees' recovery from perceived skills shortages (skills rematch probability).

Results show that **training, either short (1-5 days) or longer (>5 days), has a significant positive effect on the skills rematch probability**. Instructions or training on the job does not have an effect. There is no difference between low and higher educated older employees.

Results also show a **strong positive relationship between organisational stability and skills rematch probability**.

I suggest to try and '**slow down**' **organisational change**, but, since I am realistic in that this is may be an unrealistic strategy, I also suggest employers to learn to facilitate employees to **cope with organisational instability and remain open and ready for change**.

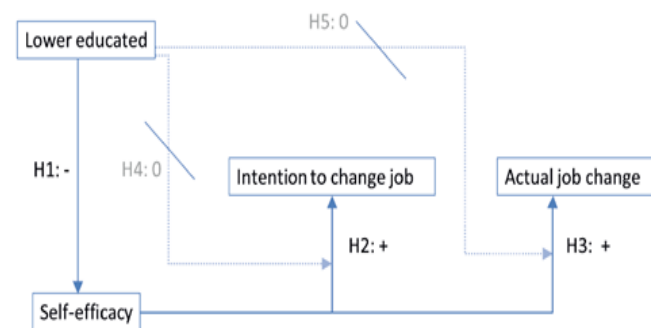


Figure 2: Path model for the prediction of job change intentions and actual job change





Other selected publications

de Wind A, Leijten FRM, Hoekstra T, Geuskens GA, Burdorf A, van der Beek AJ. “Mental retirement?” Trajectories of work engagement preceding retirement among older workers. *Scandinavian Journal of Work Environment & Health* 2017;43(1):34-41* [LINK](#)

de Wind A, van der Pas S, Blatter BM, van der Beek AJ. A life course perspective on working beyond retirement—results from a longitudinal study in the Netherlands. *BMC Public Health*. 2016; 16:499* [LINK](#)

Ybema JF, van der Meer L, Leijten FRM. Longitudinal Relationships Between Organizational Justice, Productivity Loss, and Sickness Absence Among Older Employees. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine* . 2016; 23(5): 645–654 [LINK](#)

Dorenbosch L, Boneschansker O, Fermin B, Andriessen S, Sanders J, Geuskens G. Multi-jobbing as an employability strategy [Multi-jobbing als employability-strategie]. *Tijdschrift voor Arbeidsvraagstukken* 2015;31:165-185. [Dutch] [LINK](#)

Leijten FRM, van den Heuvel SG, van der Beek AJ, Ybema JF, Robroek SJW, Burdorf A. “Associations of work-related factors and work engagement with mental and physical health: a 1-year follow-up study among older workers”. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. 2014;online first. [LINK](#)

Leijten FRM, van den Heuvel SG, Ybema JF, van der Beek AJ, Robroek SJ, Burdorf A. “The influence of chronic health problems on work ability and productivity at work: a longitudinal study among older employees”. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*. 2014;40:473-82. [LINK](#)

Leijten FR, de Wind A, van den Heuvel SG, Ybema JF, van der Beek AJ, Robroek SJ, Burdorf A. The influence of chronic health problems and work-related factors on loss of paid employment among older workers. *J Epidemiol Community Health*. 2015 Nov;69(11):1058-65. Epub 2015 Jun 25. [LINK](#)

Ybema JF, Geuskens GA, van den Heuvel SG, de Wind A, Leijten FRM, Joling C, Blatter BM, Burdorf A, van der Beek AJ, Bongers PM. “Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM): The Design of a Four-year Longitudinal Cohort Study among 15,118 Persons Aged 45 to 64 Years”. *British Journal of Medicine & Medical Research*.2014;4:1383-99. [LINK](#)

*newly added to the list

What is STREAM?

STREAM is a **longitudinal study** 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.

More than **12,000 employees, 1,000 self-employed persons, and 2,000 non-employed** persons participated at baseline (2010). In 2016, **almost half** of them had **participated in each wave**. In 2015, a **new cohort** was invited to participate, to again include persons aged 45-49 and to include more working persons in the other age groups (N=6,738).

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.

STREAM is conducted by **TNO**. Collaborating partners are VU University Medical Center, Erasmus Medical Center and the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute.



TNO innovation
for life

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

More information on STREAM is available at: **www.tno.nl/STREAM**

Contact: **infostream@tno.nl**