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Mental retirement and its relations with skills obsolescence, training, and job enrichment

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Objectives Mental retirement may occur when workers approach the end of their career and stop investing in new knowledge and social relationships at work. If workers stop investing in new knowledge, their skills may lose economic value and become obsolete. The processes of mental retirement itself and mental retirement that results in skills obsolescence might be countered by training and job enrichment. This is especially important because of the ageing of the population and the need to prolong working life while maintaining high productivity and good health. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the concept of mental retirement and its relationships with skills obsolescence, training, and job enrichment.

Methods Based on a literature study and mind maps of scholars and employees in a large Dutch company, a conceptual model of mental retirement was constructed. Data of 12 055 employees aged 45–64 years included in the longitudinal Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM) were used to investigate this model. Factor analysis was applied. Besides, regression analyses were conducted to study the relationships between mental retirement, skills obsolescence, training and (the richness of) working tasks.

Results Preliminary findings suggest that mental retirement is a multidimensional concept consisting of three constructs, ie, lower proactive developmental behavior, lower work engagement and lower willingness to continue working in the present job during the next year.

Conclusion Additional findings and conclusions will be available in the coming months.

Key terms older worker.

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