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CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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## Health and coping predict work ability: a prospective study on the differential effects of mental and physical health among aging workers

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**Objective** This study examines whether mental and physical health among older employees relate to work ability and whether coping styles moderate the effects of health.

**Methods** A one-year longitudinal study was conducted among 8842 employees aged 45–64 years from the Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability, and Motivation (STREAM). Online questionnaires measured self-perceived mental and physical health (short form-12 health survey) at baseline, and coping styles (Utrecht Coping List) and work ability (Work Ability Index) at follow-up. Covariates were gender, age, type of work, and work ability at baseline. The data were analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis. Interaction terms were tested to assess whether coping styles moderated the health-work ability association.

**Results** Active coping and good mental and especially physical health were related to a high work ability at follow-up. “Avoidant coping” was negatively related to work ability. The coping style “seeking support” was unrelated to work ability. Interaction effects of coping and health on work ability were weak.

**Conclusions** The contribution of good coping styles and good health to high work ability suggests that promoting such factors can help to improve sustainable employability.

**Key terms** interaction effect; sustainable employability.

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