

Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM)



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Introduction

Due to the ageing of the population and global economic competition, there is a societal need for workers to extend their working lives while maintaining a high productivity. To support this by means of interventions and policies, more insight is needed in determinants of transitions in employment, productivity, and health of older persons. This requires large multidisciplinary prospective studies.

The Study on Transitions in Employment, Ability and Motivation (STREAM) provides knowledge about the conditions in which persons of 45 and older are able to participate longer, productively and healthy in paid jobs. Thus STREAM offers starting points for interventions and policy to promote sustainable employability.

Examples of specific knowledge that will be developed:

- * Which factors (quality of work, health, skills, financial and social context) determine transitions in employment status, productivity, work ability and motivation among (self-)employed and unemployed?
- * How do quality of work and changes in employment status influence health?

Methods

- * STREAM is a Dutch prospective cohort study among 15,000 persons aged 45-64 at baseline with four measurements in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- * The study population was drawn from an existing Intomart GfK internet panel and stratified by age and employment status (employee, self-employed, non-working).

- * Participants fill out an extensive yearly online questionnaire, that covers all aspects of the main research framework (Figure 1).
- * According to this framework, the impact of determinants on productivity and transitions in employment is mediated by the ability, motivation and opportunity to work. These relationships may differ, among others, by age, gender, educational level, and employment status.
- * Data from the online questionnaires can be linked to register data of Statistics Netherlands for 89% of the participants at baseline.
- * Qualitative studies (interviews) are conducted with participants from STREAM to provide additional insights in causal mechanisms, e.g. in reasons of early retirement.

Key findings

Baseline measurement:

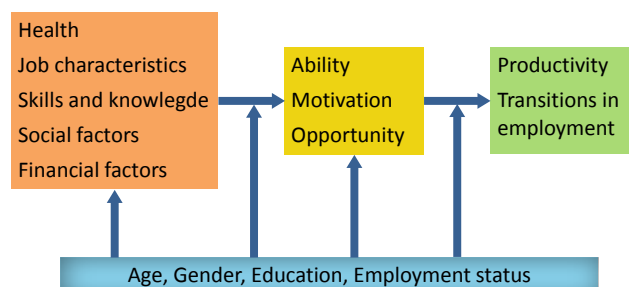


Figure 1: Framework to investigate determinants of productivity and transitions in employment

- * Employees with a lower education and employees with a longstanding illness have a decreased employability; they are less vital, participate less in training and education and their job mobility is lower.

- * Good health and low knowledge obsolescence are related to a higher work ability, a higher intrinsic motivation, and more opportunities for work.
- * The work ability of older persons without a paid job is strongly related to their vitality.
- * Unemployed older persons feel a decreased opportunity to work: most of them report that they do not get the chance to work and that employers find them too old.

First follow up

- * Most people that worked in 2010 and were not working in 2011 stopped because of retirement, in particular among the employees (see Figure 2).

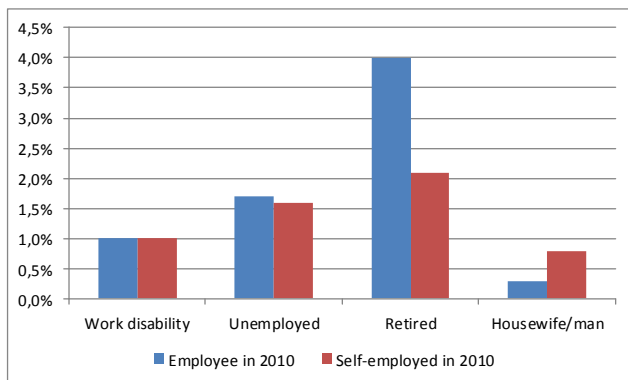


Figure 2: Exit from work between two measurements

- * Among the persons not working in 2010, 10% found a job as employee and 2% started working as a self-employed person. About one third of the persons who were unemployed in 2010 started working, while only a small proportion of the work disabled and retired persons and those who were houseman/wife started working (see Figure 3).

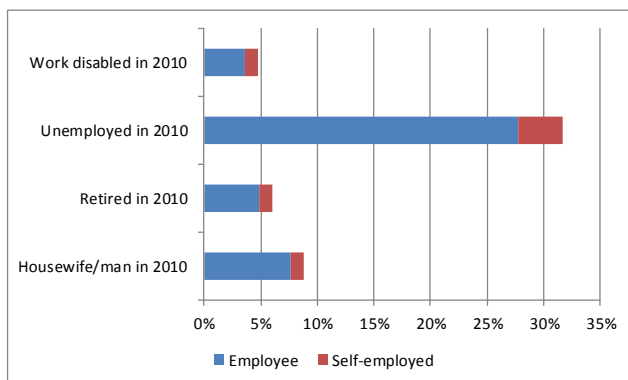


Figure 3: Inflow in work between 2 measurements

- * Of all types of health problems, psychological problems are related to sickness absence most strongly, in particular if high work demands are present.

- * Of all types of health problems, psychological problems are related to sickness absence most strongly, in particular if high work demands are present.
- * Of all work-related factors, in particular a healthy social climate promotes work continuation until the official retirement age.
- * Poor physical and mental health are important predictors for exit from work due to unemployment and work disability, but not for early retirement.

Qualitative studies

- * An interview study among participants who retired early showed that poor health results in early retirement due to a misfit between job demands and the ability to perform the working tasks (without worsening health problems). Good health influences early retirement via a misfit between what people want to do in their lives while being in good health and what they expect to be able to do while working.
- * An interview study among participants with health problems showed that to avoid productivity loss at work adjustments are needed. These adjustments could be work-related, relational or personal. Barriers are negative life events and a decreased motivation, facilitators are psychological well-being, optimism and a high motivation.

Context

STREAM is a project carried out by TNO, the Netherlands organisation for applied scientific research. In this project, TNO works in close cooperation with two universities: Erasmus Medical Centre and VU University Medical Centre. Furthermore, STREAM has close contacts with international colleagues working on similar cohort studies in the field of work, health and ageing. STREAM is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

More information on STREAM is available at:

<http://www.tno.nl/STREAM>

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