

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.

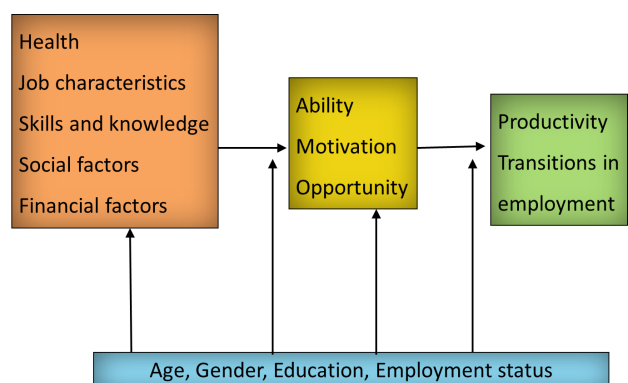


Figure 1: STREAM research framework

Response rate

- * More than 12,000 employees, 1,000 self-employed persons, and 2,000 unemployed persons participated in the first measurement. In the second measurement 82% of the original participants participated, in the third measurement this was 80% and in the fourth measurement 74%. Figure 2 shows the participants flow over the years.

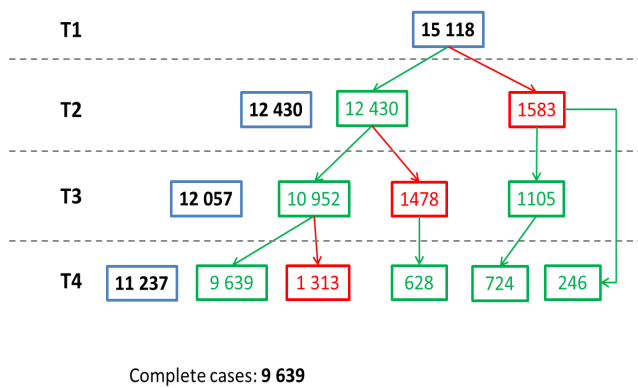


Figure 2: Participation flow of the STREAM participants (T1 to T4)

Transitions

- * Participants' work status can be categorized into three groups in STREAM: employed, self-employed, or non-employed (i.e. unemployed, (early) retired, housewife/man, in school, or disability pension). In total, 77% of STREAM respondents that participated in all measurements (9639) did not change work status throughout all measurements. Of the complete case sample, 61% was employed at each measurement, while respectively 5% and 11% was self-employed and non-employed.
- * About 20% of the employed and 12% of the self-employed at baseline were non-employed in 2013. Of the persons non-employed at baseline, about 12% were either self-employed or employed in 2013.
- * Figure 3 shows the transitions in employment status for the employed and non-employed. For reasons of readability the category employed contains the employed as well as the self-employed participants.

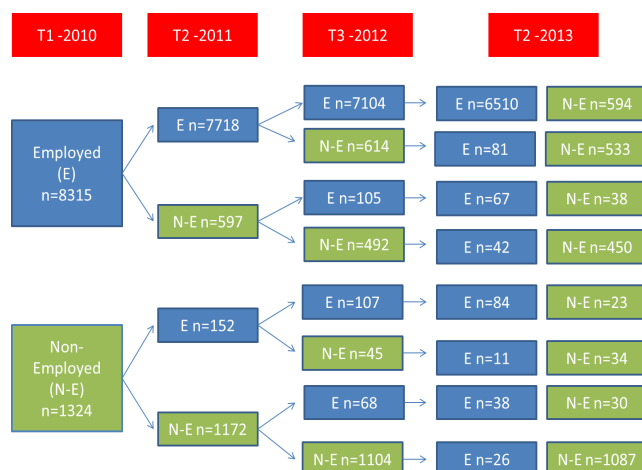


Figure 3: Transitions in employment status of complete cases (n=9639)

Findings

- * Barriers of productivity maintenance are psychological health complains, negative life events, and a low motivation. Facilitating factors are psychological well-being, optimism, and a high motivation.
- * Psychosocial work-related factors are of influence on early exit from the workforce to disability pension, unemployment, and early retirement. Physical load at work was not of influence on early exit.
- * An active or a support seeking coping style predicts a higher work ability than a passive (avoidant) coping style.
- * Among older employees, higher work engagement is good for health, in particular mental health.
- * Health problems, in particular psychological health problems, may lead to a decreased work ability and productivity.
- * Poor physical health, a positive attitude of the partner with respect to early retirement and the financial possibility to stop working before age 65 predicted the transition from work to early retirement, whereas employees that reported high appreciation at work and higher focus on development of skills and knowledge were less likely to retire early.

More results can be found at our website, which also contains a list of publications.

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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