

## **Subsessie 16.1**

### **Training GPs to improve their management of work-related problems: results of a cluster randomized controlled trial**

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#### **Background**

Many workers who visit their GP experience a relation between their health problem and their work. However, many GPs do not proactively pay attention to their patients' work and many work-related problems are not timely recognized.

#### **Questions**

Does tailored training of GPs result in: 1) improved expectations about the ability to work among working patients visiting them? 2) increased registration of occupation and work-related problems by GPs? Do patients expect their GP 1) to know their occupation? 2) to provide guidance with respect to sickness absence?

#### **Methods**

A cluster randomized controlled trial among 32 Dutch GPs. The Intervention consisted of a five-hour training. Participating patients (age 18–63, working hours >12 h/week) completed baseline questionnaires and follow-up questionnaires after one year. Primary patient-level outcome: patients work-related self-efficacy. Primary GP-level outcomes: use of ICPC-code Z05 ('work-related problem') per 1000 patients and percentage of files containing information about occupation.

#### **Outcomes**

A total of 640 patients completed the baseline questionnaire and 281 completed the follow-up questionnaire. We found no statistically significant differences in patient-level outcomes (RTW-SE 4.6 vs 4.5) or in GP-level outcomes (use of ICPC code Z05: 11.6 vs 6.0; recording of occupation 28.8% vs. 28.6%). One third of the patients experienced a relation between their health problem and their work. Most patients expect GPs to know their occupation (93%) and provide guidance regarding sickness absence (85%).

#### **Discussion**

We found a gap between patients expectations and GPs performance with respect to work-related problems. Our training was not effective in closing this gap.

Take Home Message: GPs should routinely ask patients about their work

#### **No conflict of interest**