

# Young adults with a chronic disorder at work: development and implementation of an intervention.

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## Introduction

Finding and keeping a job is difficult for young adults with a chronic physical disorder. There is little experience with interventions aimed at improving participation in work with this age-group.

## Methods

- Literature review aimed at effectiveness of interventions with vocational services.
- Development and implementation of intervention program.
- Evaluation in a pretest-posttest design.
- Primary outcome: work.
- Secondary outcomes: change in work abilities and health (OPHI-II, COPM, SF-36).

## Objective

Evaluate the applicability and feasibility of an OT- intervention to improve the participation in work of young adults (16-25) with chronic physical disorders.

## Intervention

- Group program: 6 sessions with information and discussion about work, personal abilities and limitations, coping style, rules and regulations.
- Individual sessions with OT and jobcoach, based on personal needs.
- Guided by OT and jobcoach; assisted by professional experts and role-models.
- Duration: 1 year
- Based on MOHO (Kielhofner et al. 2004)



## Results

- Participants: 20 young adults with various chronic physical disorders (3 groups). Evaluation is based on data of 13 participants, with a mean age of 22 years at start.
- Primary outcome: Participation in work 1 and 2 years after start intervention:

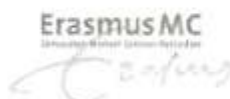
	Start (n=13)	Follow-up 1 year (n=11)	Follow-up 2 years (n=7)* * only available for first 2 groups
Paid employment	0	3 (27%)	4 (57%)
Unpaid employment	2 (15%)	4 (36%)	1 (14%)
Study	1 (8%)	2 (18%)	0

- Secondary outcomes:
  - OPHI-II: significant improvement on OPHI-II scores (Identity, Competence and Total score).
  - COPM: less problems at 1-year follow-up (29) compared to start (54). Higher scores for mean satisfaction and performance on almost all activity domains. Most improvement on 'active recreation', 'paid or unpaid work' and 'socialization'.
  - SF-36: improvement on all scales, except 'Role Emotional'. Most improvement on 'Role physical' (45%) and 'Change in health situation' (41%).
- Participants were very satisfied with the program; group sessions increased self-efficacy and information.



## Conclusion

- Intervention is applicable for young adults with chronic physical disorders, and feasible in a rehabilitation setting.
- First results look promising, but further research should establish effectiveness.



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## **Young adults with a physical disability entering the labor market: evaluation of a multidisciplinary intervention.**

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### **Introduction**

Young adults with physical disabilities often experience substantial difficulties in entering the labor market. There is little experience with interventions aimed at improving participation in work with this age-group, and little evidence of effectiveness of interventions.

**Aim:** to evaluate the feasibility of a multidisciplinary intervention to improve work participation of young adults (16-25 years) with (various) physical disabilities.

### **Methods**

Based on a review of literature, we developed an intervention program that was offered in an outpatient clinic for young adults. Feasibility was defined as implementation, including satisfaction and costs; and (preliminary) effectiveness. For preliminary effectiveness, primary outcome was work; secondary outcomes were change in work abilities and health.

In a pretest-posttest design feasibility of the intervention was evaluated. Measurements were performed at baseline and after one year, using interviews (COPM, OPHI-II) and questionnaires (PRODISQ, SF-36, Work Ability Index, Work Limitations Questionnaire).

### **Results**

A total of 20 young adults with various chronic physical disorders participated in the intervention (3 groups). Evaluation is based on data of 12 participants, with a mean age of 22.4 years at baseline.

The intervention, consisting of a group program and individual coaching, showed to be feasible and was implemented in an outpatient rehabilitation clinic for young adults. Participants were very satisfied with the program; group sessions increased self-efficacy and information. Costs of the intervention were €3138,-, the equivalent of 72 hours per participant for the first year.

Post-test 8 of 12 (67%) young adults participated in paid (n=4) or unpaid (n=4) employment. At 2-year follow-up 8 persons were employed; 5 of them were in paid employment. Employed participants showed moderate work ability and work limitations, indicating suitable employment that matches with their capacities.

All participants showed improved occupational performance, in the area of productivity as well as in the areas of self-care and leisure.

### **Conclusion:**

The multidisciplinary intervention showed to be feasible and was implemented in an outpatient rehabilitation clinic for young adults. Preliminary results of effectiveness are promising, indicating that 67% of participants achieves employment that seems to be suitable and continuous.

Publication about this intervention is submitted.

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