Towards a longer Worklife!
Ageing and the quality of worklife
Prof. Juhani Ilmarinen, FIOH and JIC Ltd
Blik op Werk: National Conference  The power of Workability
DeFabrique in Maarssen, 9th February 2010,
The Netherlands

Ageing and work: milestones of the Finnish experiences

- 1981-2009  Longitudinal studies on ageing workers by FIOH
- 1990-1996  FinnAge - Respect for the Ageing programme by FIOH
- 1996  Cabinet Committee: Ageing people at work
- 1998-2002  Finnish National Programme on Ageing Workers
- 2003–2007  New National Programmes of different ministries
- 2005  - Pension reform
- 2006  - Life Course and Work by FIOH
- 2007  - New political programmes

3 Generations at work

- Youngest generation integrates too late
- Middle generation has non-solid work careers
- Oldest generation exits too early
- Altogether: we are losing 5-6 productive years/person, which has marked, negative effects on our society
Work ability model

- Physical demands
- Mental strain
- Supervisory support
- Work enjoyment
- Work enthusiasm
- Expertise
- Education
- Symptoms
- Functional capacity

Explanatory power of the regression models for the work ability, 30–64 years
Work Ability Index
7 Items

- Current work ability compared with the lifetime best
- Work ability in relation to the demands of the job
- Number of current diseases diagnosed by physician
- Estimated work impairment due to diseases
- Sick leave during the past year (12 months)
- Own prognosis of work ability two years from now
- Mental resources

Lea Katajarinne
Finnish Institute of Occupational Health
ICOH 2003

Scoring of the Questionnaire (range 7-49 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Work ability</th>
<th>Objective of measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 - 27</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>RESTORE WORK ABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 - 36</td>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>IMPROVE WORK ABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 - 43</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>SUPPORT WORK ABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 - 49</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>MAINTAIN WORK ABILITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Work Ability Index by age
WAI (7-49) in selected occupations with age, Freude, BAuA, Berlin

Work Ability Index classes by industrial branch (n=3704)

COMPANY X

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAI I</th>
<th>WORK DISABILITY COSTS/YEAR/PERSON</th>
<th>SICKNESS ABSENCE COSTS/YEAR/PERSON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>7086 €</td>
<td>3571 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODERATE</td>
<td>3000 €</td>
<td>1257 €</td>
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<td>GOOD</td>
<td>1557 €</td>
<td>643 €</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>857 €</td>
<td>200 €</td>
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</table>
Work ability index (7-49) among working men and women by older age groups
Gould and Polvinen, 2006

WAI as Resource for the organisation
• Indicate the status of work ability and need for promotion
• Early indicator of risks of work disability and early exit
• Initiate preventive actions
• Evaluate the effects of actions
• Validated method for Occupational Health Services and for health promotion
• Initiate the discussion about ageing and work
• Improve the awareness of human work ability
• Improve the collaboration between employers and employees due to win-win possibilities
• Can be used as base for cost-benefit analysis

Promotion of Work Ability
Promotion of work ability: integration of actions

Role of managers and supervisors

- The management is the most important factor influencing work ability:
  - a good age management improves the work ability, and
  - a poor age management deteriorates the work ability, independent of gender, age and type of job
- A good age manager has:
  - a fair and friendly attitudes towards ageing
  - promote the collaboration between generations
  - finds individual solutions
  - has good communication skills about ageing matters
- Managers and supervisors need also PWA

Promotion of Work Ability: how to do it?

- Train HRM and OHS for Work Ability Concept and Work Ability Index (WAI)
- Make a survey with WAI and survey over the floors of the Work Ability House – instead of survey you can also use expert groups for each floor
- Make a prioritized plan for the promotion and share the duties, name the one taking the lead
- Ensure that the management is fully committed
- Motivate the supervisors and employees to participate,
- Give enough time for interventions; follow-up the interventions, measure the participation rates
- Make the second survey with WAI and survey over the targets of the interventions
- Report over the effects by age, gender, job etc.
Lessons learned from Finland

• Promotion of Work Ability is the common goal for employers and employees since 1989, defined later in Occupational Health Act (2002) and in Occupational Safety Act (2003)
• The commitment of the employer is crucial
• The participation rates of employees for multi-interventions are decisive
• Time needed for multi-interventions is 1-2 years
• The co-operation and role of Occupational Health Services (health oriented) and HRM (other dimensions) is important
• Cost-benefit analysis most welcome
• Multi-interventions focusing on human resources, work and management are most effective

How do you get both employer and employees enthusiastic for PWA?

• For employees: a better work ability and health improves the well-being at work and the quality of life
• For employers: a better work ability and health of the personnel improves the quality of work and productivity
• For both: Work careers will be better and longer
• For employees and society: the quality of life in retirement will be better, the health care cost will be lower

Economic appraisal

• Over 200 companies of various size from different branches
• Method: Tervus Economic Appraisal
• Benefit / Cost ratio variation between 3 and 10
• Benefit: Reduction of absenteeism and work disability 50%, increase in productivity 50%

Source: Bergström and Ahonen 2000
Heavy jobs – working until 67?

Basic problem and basic solution: relationship between human resources and work demands

Heavy jobs - decrease of workload

- 40 vs 60 year old in heavy jobs
- Difference due to biological ageing about 20 % in cardiorespiratory and muscular capacities
- If the workload is same, the older have 20 % higher strain at work
- Effects due overload: health problems, absence rates, disability risk, accident risk, productivity loss
- Solution: decrease of workload 20 % ( 2 hrs/day, or one day/week )
- Compensation: other work tasks demanding more mental and social skills, utilizing the knowledge, experiences and networks of older workers
Towards a longer worklife

Pension Reform

- Attitudes towards ageing must be changed (attitudinal reform)
- The awareness level of managers and supervisors in age-related issues needs to be improved (management reform)
- Better age and life course-adjusted, flexible working life is needed (work life reform)
- Health services should meet the increasing needs of older workers (reform of occupational health services)
- Improvement of horizontal and vertical co-operation between key actors is needed (co-operation reform)
Lessons learned from Finland: how to make successful reforms?

• Make positive things first – negative later!
• Make first the work life better, so that people can and will work longer
• After that, reduce the options for early retirement, if needed