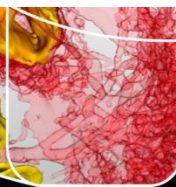


# Solutions to participate in work: Perspectives of people with a chronic disease

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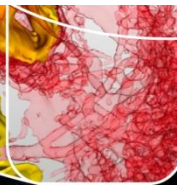
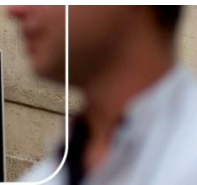


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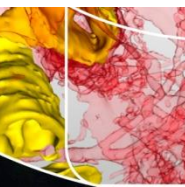
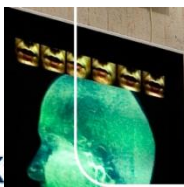
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**I declare no conflict of interest**





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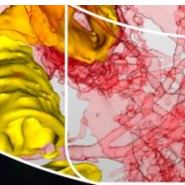
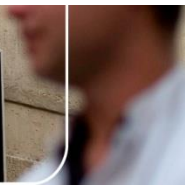
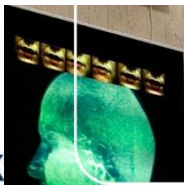


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# Methods

## Research questions:

- Which solutions do you use to be able to participate in work?
- Which support (type / by whom) do you need to find or use these solutions in daily practice?



# Methods



## Five focus group meetings:

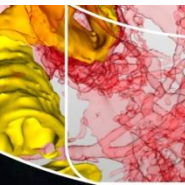
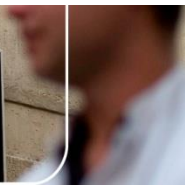
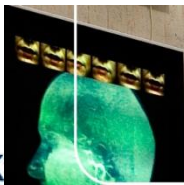
Included people with a chronic disease;

- Either working or actively looking;
- Rheumatic disease, kidney disease, visual handicap, mental illnesses, heart condition, Lyme disease, diabetes, back problems etc.

Recruited via GPs, patient associations



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# Solutions to participate: Focus group meetings

## Acceptation and coping

- Start from scratch to rebuild life
- Focusing on what they could still do

*Quote: 'But you need to focus on what you can do, rather than on what you can't do. That is my motto in life'.*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.





# Solutions to participate

## Insight into abilities and limitations

- Learning what is possible and what is not

*Quote: ‘It’s mainly about finding your own limits. The saying goes “Once bitten, twice shy” – well ... I think I’ve been bitten at least ten times already...’*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.



# Solutions to participate

## Communication work environment

- Disclosure

*Quote: 'So, being open allows you to let other people see what you can or can't manage and what your needs are'.*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.





# Solutions to participate

## Communication work environment

- Learning and communication of boundaries

*Quote: ‘Whenever I work too long, my supervisor says ‘Time to go home!’. Then she simply says: ‘Since you’ve been worked half an hour more today tomorrow you can leave half an hour earlier.’ So no she’s really the one who sets my limits’.*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.



# Solutions to participate

## Active management

- Managing energy levels
- Asking for help (colleagues and organisation)
- Obtaining information

*Quote: ‘Simple keep negotiating over the tasks to be done and, with a bit of help from your colleagues, you can manage’.*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.



# Solutions to participate

## Self-efficacy

- Believing and communicating qualities
- Knowing skills and abilities

*Quote: 'Eight years ago, during a job interview, I said 'I know perfectly well what I'm capable of. Once I'm hired, you'll see that I'm an extremely good worker. Except that, in this situation, I also have certain limitations'.*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.



# Solutions to participate

## Skills development

- Social skills training
- Job application skills

*Quote: 'I've received training on applying for jobs where I learnt how to write application letters. And during those sessions, I also learnt to take things step by step: not expecting to immediately get the job'.*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.



# Solutions to participate

## Work environment

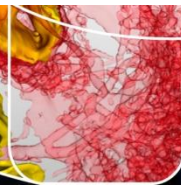
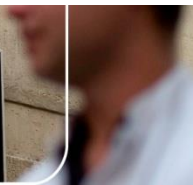
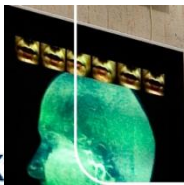
- Autonomy
- Adaptations to the work environment

*Quote: 'If a deadline is set for Friday, for me it automatically shifts to the preceding Tuesday or Wednesday so that if I have a bad day, I can still finish it on time'.*

Vooijs, M. Perspectives of people with a chronic disease in participating in work: A focus group study. J Occup Rehabil 2017.







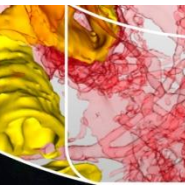
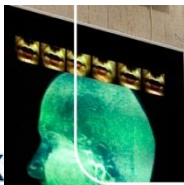


# Needed support



## Emotional support

- Need for understanding / empathy / interest
- Help in learning to accept the disease and to gain overview in 'everything'



# Needed support



## Informative support

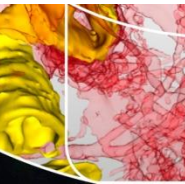
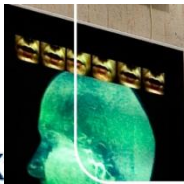
- Providing low-threshold information concerning regulations
- Information about which companies accept people with a chronic disease

# Needed support



## Instrumental support

- Adaptations / aids
- Training programs
- Supporting in obtaining and maintaining work



# Needed support

## Type of support

- Active, personal and based on requests of the individual
- Proactive



# Needed support

## **Social environment**

Important source to learn to accept / cope with disease

## **Manager / colleagues**

Social support and understanding in work, thinking along with solutions

## **Patiënts associations**

Contact with others (with same disease), information, practical tips

## **GP / medical specialist**

Most often contacted for advice regarding illness and work

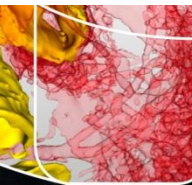
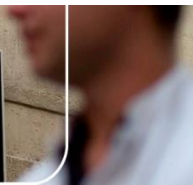
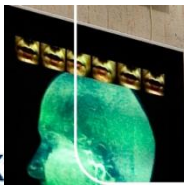
## **Occupational health professionals**

Practical tips, advice to employer, supporting retaining and returning to work



# Solutions and support: Conclusion

- Acceptance, support by family and friends, is a first step towards work participation.
- Disclosing the disease is important in work, for the use of other solutions such as setting boundaries, asking for help and autonomy.
- Emotional, informative and practical support of various stakeholder is required.





# What can stakeholders do?

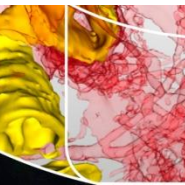
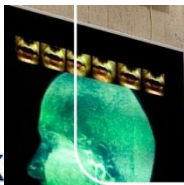
- Ask what the individual wants and needs
- Ask the individual which solutions they have to retain or return to work
- Providing support in finding solutions
- Employers: Providing empathy and facilitating the employee in work adjustments



# What can individuals do?



- Learn to accept and to cope with the disease
- Find and use solutions, such as believing in oneself, asking for help, energy management
- See a professional who can provide support and information on additional solutions/interventions
- When feeling save, explain situation to employer



# Thanks for your attention!

## Are there any questions?

