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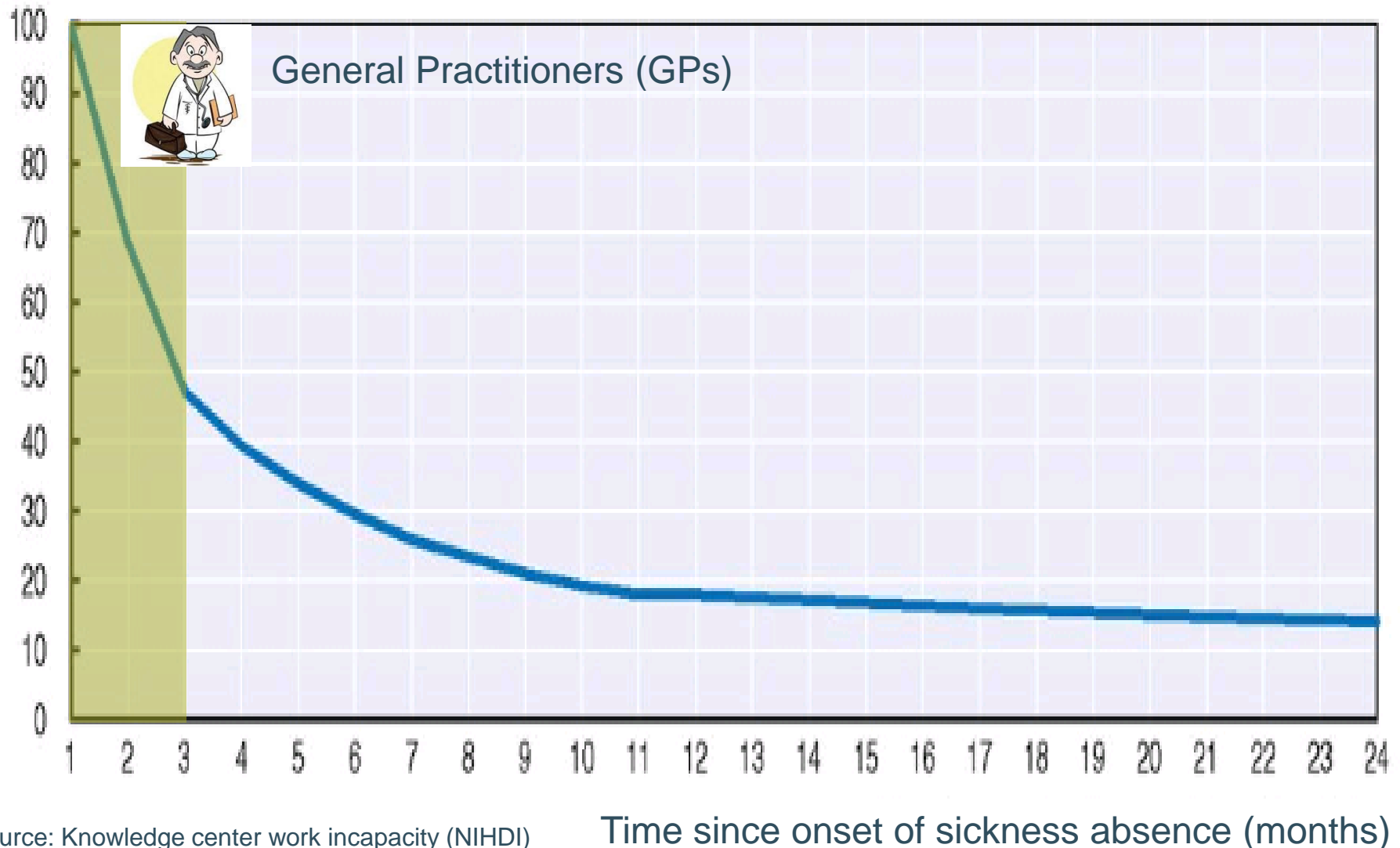
# Prevention by general practitioners of long-term absence from work

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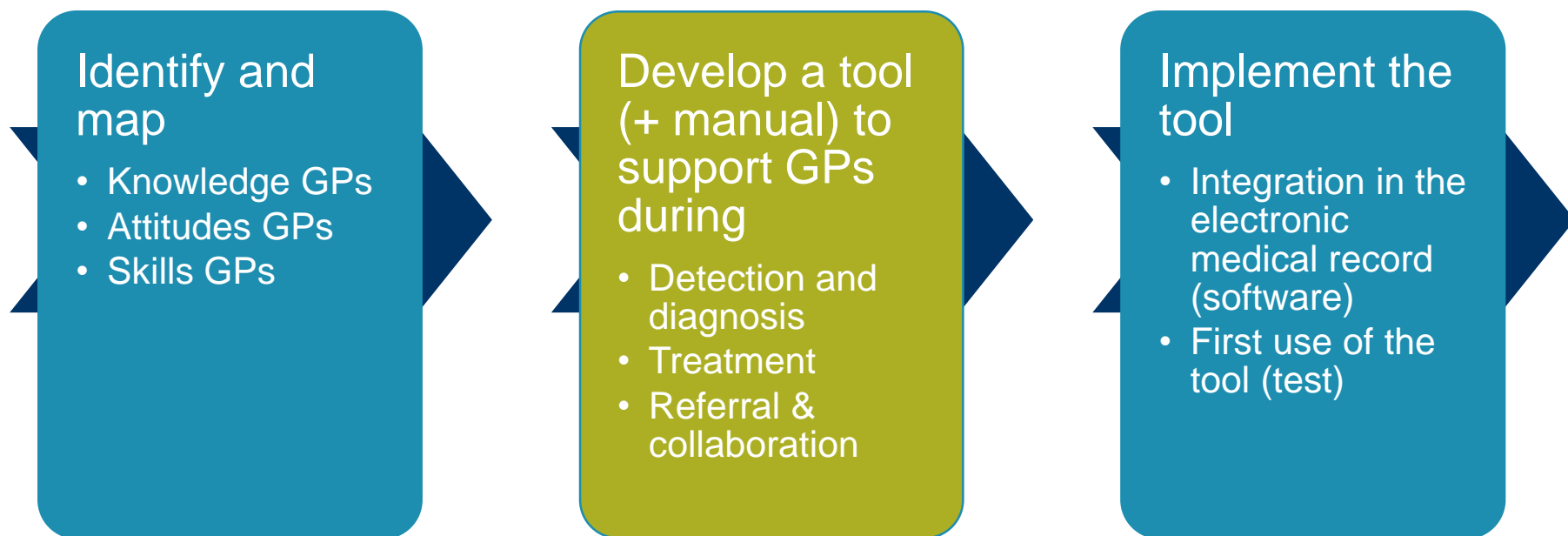
Supported by dr. Saskia Decuman & Dr. Patrick Verheijen (Knowledge Centre Work Incapacity NIHDI)

# After three months, the chances to return to work diminish (Belgium): Prevention!

Percentage of people remaining on sickness/disability benefits



# Goals of the project



# Research methods

## Results of survey (n= 323) and learning from existing tools

- Desk research and four interviews

## Formulating first series of recommendations

- Expert panel: multidisciplinary committee (n=15)

## Feedback on the first series of recommendations

- Two interviews and one expert panel with GPs (n=7)
- Two expert panels (n=8; n=12) with mental health care users
- Contact by email with employment services
- Three (group) interviews with software providers

## Towards a final first series of recommendations

- Expert panel: multidisciplinary committee (n=10)

## Formulating a second series of (final) recommendations

- Delphi study among 43 GPs (2 rounds: n=29)
- Expert panel: multidisciplinary committee (n=11)

## Consensus about the tool

Cut-off criterion Delphi study<sup>1</sup>  
= at least 70% of the GPs  
'(rather) agrees' with:

- Aim of the tool
- Content
- Form
- Timing

Feedback of the  
multidisciplinary committee

## Different functions of the tool

People on incapacity with a job  
contract

People without a job contract

All people on incapacity for  
work

<sup>1</sup> Sources: de Meyrick, 2003; Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000; Iqbal & Pison-Young, 2009; Jorm, 2015

# How to use the tool?



Activate tool in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) = click on 'work and return-to-work'



Activate tool = first consultation



Option = deactivate (parts of) the tool



No strict procedure



# Part 1: People on incapacity with a job contract

# Provide a first view on work satisfaction of patients



## Patients' survey

- How satisfied or dissatisfied are you, in general with ... (1= very dissatisfied, 5= very satisfied)?
  - ... your work?
  - ... your direct supervisor?
  - ... your colleagues?
  - ... the work pressure?

## How & when?

- Reminder
  - Email to patients
- Complete the questionnaire
  - During the consultation
  - Before the next consultation



# Support a more profound conversation about work



## GPs ask patients

- How is your collaboration with
  - colleagues?
  - your supervisor(s)?
- How does work give you satisfaction?
- What would you like to see different at your work?
- What needs to change in order
  - to feel happier at work?
  - to function better at work?

## How & when?

- Reminder in EMR during second consultation
- Open text field in EMR
- Can always be consulted

# Remind to inform about a right



## GPs inform patients

- the right to visit an occupational doctor before return-to-work

## How & when?

- Reminder
- After the prescription of the first period of work incapacity (if  $\geq 3$  weeks)
- After the prescription of the second period of work incapacity (if  $< 3$  weeks)

# Inform/support about system of allowed activity



- Inform: Websites (e.g. NIHDI)
- Support contact with
  - Employer
  - Other instances
    - Occupational doctor
    - Advisory doctor
    - ...



# Part 2: People without a job contract

# Employment services: roles and goals



- Website VDAB/FOREM/Actiris
- ⇒ specialized employment services (e.g. GTB/GOB)

# Employment services: Support in referral



## GPs ask patients

- Do you want to look whether you can find a job?
- Do you want to follow a training to get a job?

## How & when?

- Contact details VDAB/FOREM/Actiris
- Can always be consulted
- Answers can be saved



# Part 3: All people on incapacity for work

# Ask about the patients' view on return-to-work



## GPs ask patients

- When do you expect to work again? In a new or in the current job
- What do you need to go back to work?

## How & when?

- Reminder after a first period of work incapacity
- Open text field in EMR
- Can always be consulted



# Support GPs in guidance of return-to-work



## GPs ask patients

- In which work environment do you want to work?
- In which context do you think you will function well?
- What are your strengths/capabilities?

## How & when?

- Reminder after a first period of work incapacity
- Open text field in EMR
- Can always be consulted

# Provide overview



## Contacted instances

- Occupational health service
- Employment services

## Contact details

- Occupational doctor
- Employment mediator

# Provide *visual* overview



## The evolution of work incapacity

- Start date
- Duration
- Extensions
- Reasons of work incapacity / diagnosis

# Inform GPs about the new Belgian laws



Content to be defined

# Conclusion

## The tool supports GPs...

During conversations about work  
and return-to-work

In their referral

In their reflection about work  
incapacity

## A next step = implementation

Exploration: Experience of others  
implementing tools for GPs

Translation into software

Test and evaluate the use in at  
least 3 regions in Belgium

- Wallonia
- Brussels
- Flanders



# References

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