

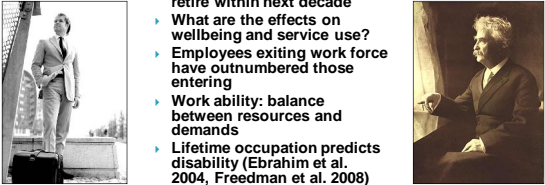
Midlife work ability predicts disability in old age – A 28-year prospective study

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Why focus on midlife work ability and old age disability?



- ▶ Baby boom generation to retire within next decade
- ▶ What are the effects on wellbeing and service use?
- ▶ Employees exiting work force have outnumbered those entering
- ▶ Work ability: balance between resources and demands
- ▶ Lifetime occupation predicts disability (Ebrahim et al. 2004, Freedman et al. 2008)
- ▶ What about the effect that work ability has on old age?

OBJECTIVE


To investigate if midlife work ability predicts disability in self-care activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL)



DESIGN

Finnish Longitudinal Study of Municipal Employees (FLAME)

- ▶ Population-based, prospective 28-year follow-up
- ▶ Targeted municipal employees, aged 44-58-years
- ▶ In 1981 baseline n=6257 (out of N=7344)
- ▶ At last follow-up in 2009 n=3093 (73.1% of survivors)
- ▶ Postal questionnaires, 5 data collection waves



PROFESSIONAL GROUP

- White-collar employees
- Blue-collar employees

WORK ABILITY

"Work ability compared to the lifetime best?" (Tuomi et al. 1991)
 Score range: 0-10, (0=unable to work, 10=work ability at its best)
 Categorized: 9-10= excellent, 7-8=moderate, 0-6=poor

STUDY GROUPS


White-collars with:	Blue-collars with:
I Excellent work ability	IV Excellent work ability
II Moderate work ability	V Moderate work ability
III Poor work ability	VI Poor work ability

OUTCOMES

5 ADL tasks: transferring to and from bed, dressing, bathing, toileting, feeding

ADL index:

- 1 =independent without difficulties
- 2 =some difficulties in at least one task
- 3 =a lot of difficulties in or unable to perform at least one of the tasks of transferring, dressing or bathing
- 4 =a lot of difficulties in or unable to perform toileting and/or feeding



OUTCOMES

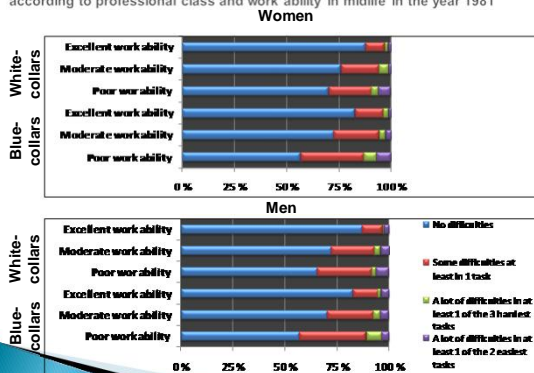
7 IADL tasks: light household tasks, doing laundry, preparing food, shopping, handling finances, administering and taking medication, using the telephone

IADL index:

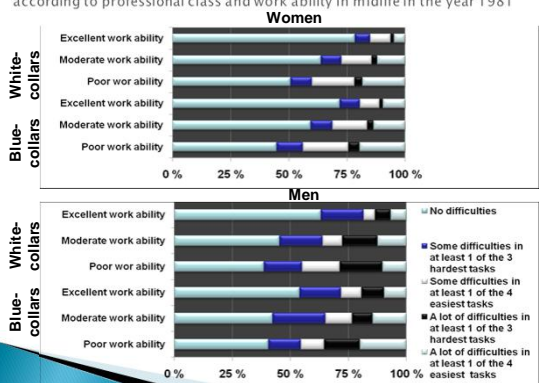
- 1 =independent without difficulties
- 2 =some difficulties in at least one of the task of coping with light housework, doing laundry or preparing food
- 3 =some difficulties in at least one of the task of using the telephone, administering and taking medication, handling finances or shopping
- 4 =a lot of difficulties or unable to perform at least one of the tasks of coping with light housework, doing laundry or preparing food
- 5 =a lot of difficulties in or unable to perform at least one of the tasks of using the telephone, administering and taking medication, handling finances or shopping



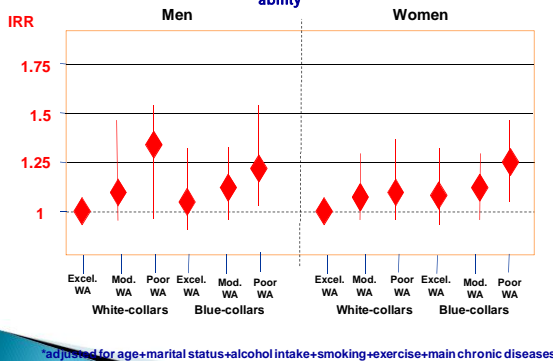
ADL disability at follow-up in 2009 according to professional class and work ability in midlife in the year 1981



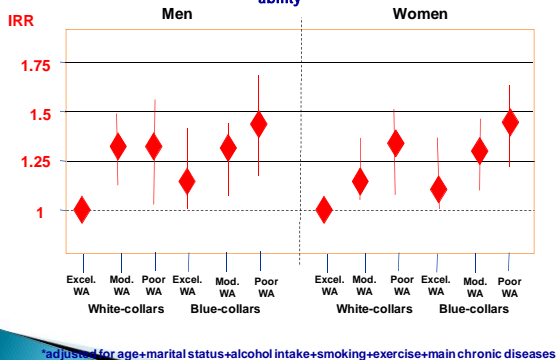
IADL disability at follow-up in 2009 according to professional class and work ability in midlife in the year 1981



Risk for ADL disability according to midlife professional group and work ability*



Risk for IADL disability according to midlife professional group and work ability*



CONCLUSIONS

- Work ability in midlife predicted disability 28 years later, after adjusting with chronic diseases and lifestyle factors in midlife
- Results more pronounced in women than men and for IADL disability than ADL disability
- Results expand the current knowledge on long-term effects of work on later life functioning
- Improving the working life conditions and focusing on timely early prevention could have far-reaching effects for the aging population
- Work demand should be adjusted to employee resources to help to ensure better functional ability for people also years after their retirement

Thank you for your attention!

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