

# Relations between health status and labour participation outcomes among older workers over time

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## Impact

This paragraph highlights the (additive) societal, economic and scientific relevance of this dissertation and its potential societal, economic and scientific impact.

### Societal and economic value

Due to demographic changes, one of the key objectives of the Dutch and European politics is to increase general labour participation rates, amongst others by prolonging older workers' working lives (1-3). Several policy measures have already been developed and implemented and have been proven successful in order to increase older workers' labour participation rates, such as increasing the statutory retirement age (3, 4). However, still a substantial proportion of older workers leaves the labour market early – that means before reaching the statutory retirement age (4, 5). Most of these older workers leave the labour market through disability benefits, unemployment, or via early retirement (2-4, 6-10).

Leaving the labour market (earlier), can have major societal and economic implications for various stakeholders. For older workers themselves, leaving employment (early) can have a negative effect on their mental health (4, 11) and may also have negative financial implications (one may not have sufficient pension) (12). Early labour market exit imposes also high costs for employers. These costs comprise costs for sick leave and (contribution to) disability pensions. It may lead to loss of specific expertise and in difficulties in finding sufficiently (qualified) employees (12). Early labour market exit is also associated with high costs for society due to societal contribution to unemployment benefits and costs for sick leave and disability pensions (13). Because the number of older workers increases in size and people in older age categories are at higher risk of having (one or more) health problem(s), the number of (older) people receiving disability benefits increases (14). This increase in disability benefits is mainly attributable to an increase in WIA benefits (Work and Income According to Work Capacity Act) (14, 15). As such, the sustainability of (Dutch) social security and pension systems may be threatened (3, 16).

In 2019, in total 818,378 people in the Netherlands received disability benefits, of which 69 per cent was through the WAO or the WIA (15). For people aged 55-64 years, the number of people receiving disability benefits (WAO/WIA) was respectively 134.073 for males and 136.803 for females (15). For people aged 65