Work Ability Index (WAI)

Evidence based method for assessment of human resources related to work
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 workimpairment due to diseases
- Sick leave during the past year (12 months)
- Own prognosis of work ability two years from now
- Mental resources

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1. Current work ability compared with the lifetime best

Assume that your work ability at its best has a value of 10 points. How many points would you give to your current work ability?
(0 means that you cannot currently work at all)

0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
completely unable to work
work ability at its best
Number of current diseases diagnosed by a physician

In the following list, mark your diseases or injuries. Also indicate **whether a physician** has diagnosed or treated these diseases. For each disease, therefore, there can be 2, 1 or no alternatives circled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musculoskeletal disease</th>
<th>yes</th>
<th>own opinion</th>
<th>physician's diagnosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05 disorder of the upper back or cervical spine, repeated instances of pain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 disorder of the lower back, repeated instances of pain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 (sciatica) pain radiating from back into the leg</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08 musculoskeletal disorder affecting the limbs (hands, feet), repeated instances of pain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 rheumatoid arthritis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 other musculoskeletal disorder, what?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average Work Ability Index by age
WAI in Mittleren und Kleinbetrieben

Arbeitsbewältigungs-Index (ABI)


Finnish Institute of Occupational Health / Prof. Dr. Juhani Ilmarinen
Average Work Ability Index by industrial branch. Adjusted by gender and age, (n=3704)
Work Ability Index classes by industrial branch, (n=3704)
Work ability index (7-49) among working men and women by older age groups
Gould and Polvinen, 2006
Work ability compared with lifetime best (0-10) by life phase, 55-64 years
Gould and Polvinen, 2006
### Correlations between Work Ability Index items in two age groups ($r^2 > 0.30$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAI item</th>
<th>18-29</th>
<th>55-64</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Work ability in relation to job demands</strong></td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Number of current diseases</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Work impairment due to diseases</strong></td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Sick leave during the past year</strong></td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Own prognosis of work ability two years from now</strong></td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Mental resources</strong></td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Translations of WAI in 2006

- Finnish ***
- Swedish ***
- English ***
- German ***
- Dutch **
- Portuguese ***
- Danish *
- Chinese **
- Estonian **
- Russian *
- Hebrew **
- Italian **
- French **
- Japanese **
- Polish **
- Latvian *
- Spanish **
- Norwegian **
- Serbian **
- Hungary **
- Slovenia **
- Thai *
- Korean *
- Taiwanese (*)
- Vietnamese (*)
Next International Symposium on Work Ability

- 3rd International Symposium on Work Ability, October 22-24, 2007; Hanoi, Vietnam (malo-j-l@med.uoeh-u.ac.jp)