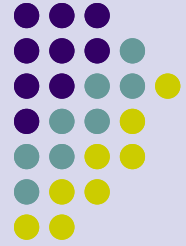
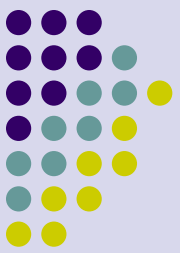


Pre-employment functional assessments: a physiotherapist's evidence based perspective



Presented by
Dr Eva Schonstein
Physiotherapist



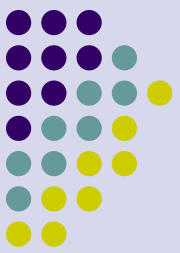
Introduction to current evidence

- Health Examinations:

"the assessment of the individual's capacity to work without risk to their own or others' health and safety" (Cox in Serra 2007 p. 306)

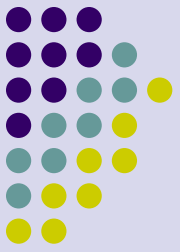
Mahmud N, Schonstein E, Schaafsma F, Lehtola MM, Fassier J-B, Reneman MF, Verbeek JH. Pre-employment examinations for preventing occupational injury and disease in workers. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2010, Issue 12. Art. No.: CD008881. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008881

<http://summaries.cochrane.org/CD008881/health-examination-of-workers-before-employment-begins-to-prevent-injuries-and-disease>



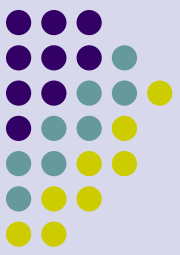
Studies included

- Seven studies, including 5872 participants
- Studies evaluated the process of health examinations including rejection of applicants with increased risks of occupational disease, injury or sickness absence.
- The evidence from all studies was rated as very low quality.



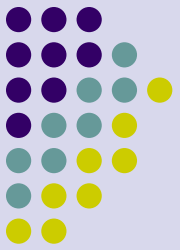
Health Examinations Include

- Pre-employment assessments
- Periodical examination
- Return to work (RTW) after sick leave



Pre-employment Assessments (PEA)

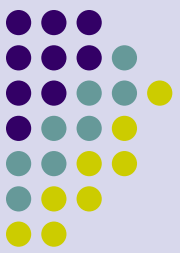
- Hypothesis: injury or disease risk factors are detected, which if addressed through appropriate recommendations, will prevent work-related injuries and/or health problems.



What is wrong with this statement?

“injury or disease risk factors are detected, which if addressed through appropriate recommendations, will prevent work-related injuries and/or health problems”

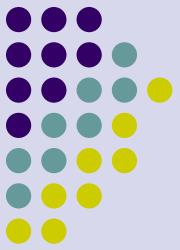
- “WILL”



What do PEA include?

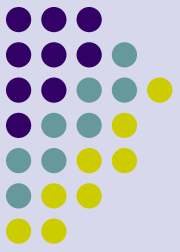
In pre-employment assessments, we evaluate:

- functional capacity in relation to job demands (PEFA)
- medical issues
- psychological tests are also sometimes administered



Conflict of interest in PEA

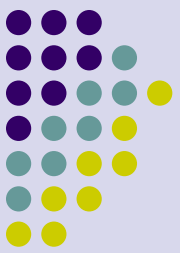
- Employers can be afraid to be burdened with the costs of ill health of an employee
- Employees may overstate their physical capacities in order to gain employment.



Consequently..

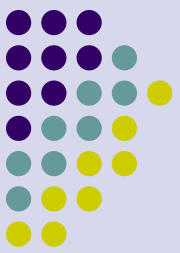
This imbalance gives rise to issues related to

- Confidentiality
- Information discrimination
- Unnecessary testing
- Possibility of appeals in case of disagreement



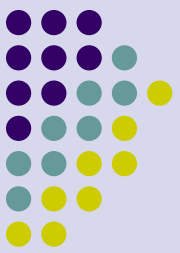
Results

- One study found that a general examination did not reduce sick leave significantly among administrative workers compared to no intervention. -
- One study found a decrease in sick leave with a more job focused pre-employment examination compared to a general health examination.



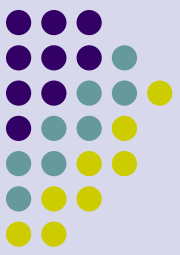
Results continued

- Three studies evaluated the inclusion of functional capacity evaluation in the pre-employment examination with contradictory effects on injury rates and number of medical visits.
- One study found a decrease in occupational asthma after incorporating a bronchial challenge test in the pre-employment examination



Results continued

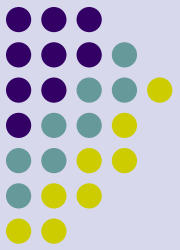
- Two studies compared job applicants that passed the health examination without problems to those who got recommendations for addressing the health problems that were found. Neither of the studies found a difference in injury rates between groups.
- The rates of rejecting job applicants varied from 2% to 35%.



Authors' conclusions:

- There is very low quality evidence that pre-employment examinations that are specific to certain jobs or health problems could reduce occupational disease, injury, or sickness absence.
- This supports the current policy to restrict pre-employment examinations to job-specific examinations.
- More studies are needed that take into account the harms of rejecting job applicants.

Thank You



- Question and Discussion