

Educational differences in trends in physical disabilities and experienced health in the Netherlands

“Government’s current picture of older worker’s health is not that reliable”

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As the state pension age rises, the proportion of older workers experiencing non-fatal health problems that influence their ability to work might increase despite an overall improvement in the general population’s health. However, obtaining an accurate picture of the situation is difficult because the outcomes observed are influenced by the health indicators used and the educational level of the workers. This study used a variety of health indicators to determine whether health improvements occurred in the period 1989–2018 in different health indicators and among older persons with different educational levels.

Principal Findings

- Among persons aged 55–70 years, an average decrease in disability has only occurred based on the OECD indicator that includes limitations in hearing, seeing and mobility.
- No improvement in health was found for other indicators (ADL limitations, self-assessed health and the OECD indicator excluding hearing and seeing).
- For the OECD indicator, a significant decrease in disability was only seen for medium and highly educated men and highly educated women.
- Low-educated men and women have a higher percentage of health problems and experience increasing ADL limitations over time groups.
- Trends were more favorable for persons aged- than for the younger age groups.

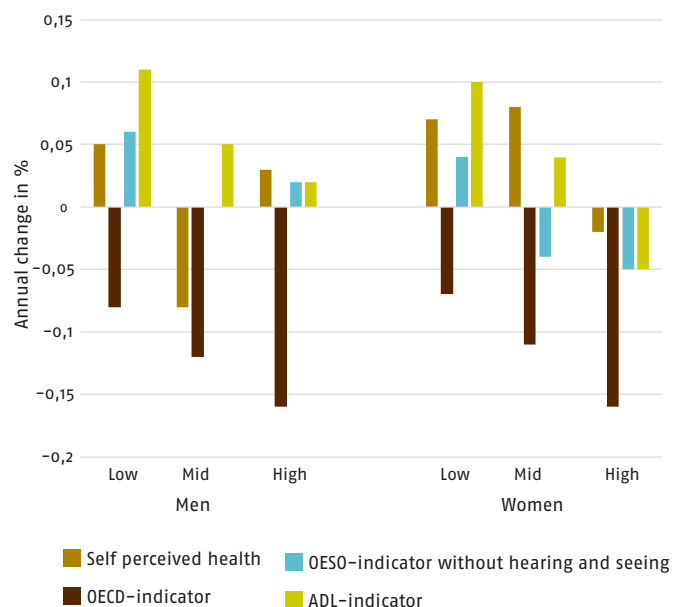


Figure: Trends in different health indicators by gender and education

Key Takeaway for the Industry

- The OECD-indicator used in the Netherlands to help determine the health consequences of increasing the state pension age provides an overly positive picture of improvements in health the age group close to retirement persons.



Want to know more? Read the paper ‘Educational differences in trends in physical disabilities and experienced health in the Netherlands’