

Appendix

Interview guide

Background questions before interview

- Age
- Sex
- Professional title
- Length of education
- Duration of working hours
- Employed since year
- Diagnosis
- Debut year of disease

Semi-structured interview

1. Describe how a typical day at work looks like for you?
2. How does your health affect your work today?
3. What is it that makes it possible to work today?
4. Does your employer and colleagues know about your health situation?
5. Do you have or have you had any adjustment or support at work and in such cases what?
6. Do you miss any support today?
7. Do you see any need for support later on and in such cases what?
8. Do you feel that you can influence your work environment vs work situation?
9. How do you look at the opportunities for a long professional life?

Background questions after the interview

- Individual conditions/family situation
- Financial/economic incentives
- Healthcare contacts
- Sickness benefit

- How would you assess your general state of health?
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Reasonable
 - Poor
 - Very poor
- How important is work to you on a scale from 1-10?
 - 10 point VAS scale
 - 0 = not at all important
 - 10 = extremely important)
- Thinking about your health - do you think that you can still be doing your current job in two years?
 - No, I don't
 - I don't really know
 - Yes, I definitely will be
- Current work ability compared with lifetime best on a scale from 0 to 10?"
 - 10 point VAS scale
 - 0= Cannot work at all
 - 10=Work ability at lifetime best

Table I. Thematic analysis of factors enabling work despite chronic health conditions

Quotes from study participants	Condensation	Sub-theme	Main theme
<p><i>"There are no problems getting help. I've always had good gadgets, a suitable chair, a Mousetrappner mouse and other devices to help me at my workstation. I'm eternally grateful for this."</i> - participant number 6</p> <p><i>"I find it extremely hard to concentrate and take in what I'm doing when there are several of us in an office"</i> - participant number 7</p>	<p>No problems getting help when asking</p> <p>Problem to work undisturbed</p>	<p>Physical adaptation/aid</p>	<p>Adaptation</p>
<p><i>"I would have avoided a great deal of stomach-ache if it hadn't been so complicated. Because there is actually mental stress involved as well. The whole thing took a good year. If it had gone a bit more quickly, I might have perhaps been in a better state than I am now."</i> - participant number 4</p> <p><i>And I have a good boss who has been keen to find suitable tasks for me to do. My bosses have actually shown that they want things to work for me during the years that I've got left."</i> - participant number 10</p> <p><i>"I used to have greater responsibility in my job, but I felt that it got too much for me. I needed to change the tasks I did for the good of my health. This means that what works for me now is less responsibility, flexitime and I can manage my time better. I now enjoy my job too!"</i> - participant number 3</p>	<p>Modification, wish to get earlier</p> <p>New tasks – possibility for longer working life</p> <p>More flexibility, less responsibility, manage better</p>	<p>Modifications to work tasks</p>	
<p><i>"I don't need to go off sick. If my work allows it, I can work flexitime and go home earlier that day to rest. And I can now also plan my new work tasks better."</i> participant number 10</p>	<p>Planning/own strategies reduces sick leave</p>	<p>Changes in approach to work</p>	
<p><i>"When I'm doing my hobby and producing something with my hands, it's a way for me to get rid of everything – clear my memory somehow, as it were."</i> - participant number 1</p> <p><i>"Then, when I was given other work tasks to do I gained a better balance. I can do things in my spare time like go to the gym and do other nice things."</i> - participant number 10</p> <p><i>"If I could modificate my current work more, I think I can work at 67, because I think the job is fun. Now I just feel I'm working, going home, sitting and doing nothing and</i></p>	<p>Spare time activities reduces mental stress</p> <p>Modifications to work tasks benefits private life</p> <p>Desire for more possibilities/adjustments</p>	<p>Work–life balance</p>	<p>Life-style</p>

<p><i>then I'm going to bed. I have no energy to train or invite friends, I can't even think of it. But I've actually searched for another job, [laughing], I'm 63 years old and have searched for another job! - participant number 9</i></p> <p><i>I'll be 63 soon. I have just started thinking about changing my work situation, maybe decrease working hours. I have not thought so before, but now the work takes so much energy and removes so much from my private life. I have no energy for my grandchildren nor my home, that's how it is</i></p> <p><i>"It's a health benefit to go to work, despite bad health. I am soon getting cleaning service at home, because I can't do it myself, it is an adjustment at home so I've got energy for work instead." - participant number 1</i></p>	<p>Unbalance work/leisure time</p> <p>Adjustments at home</p>		
<p><i>"One thing that's extremely important is that if I don't move about, I feel worse. A gym class and yoga are very important, just as important as the medication I take." - participant number 10</i></p>	<p>Time and energy for training/rehabilitation</p>	<p>Physical activity</p>	
<p><i>"I'm almost constantly in pain, but you still learn to live with it somehow." - participant number 9</i></p> <p><i>"I couldn't keep doing the job I was doing then, when I was very ill, but when I got better, I wanted this job 100% and everyone said that I was mad... But I said that it was maybe something that I could definitely do. Otherwise, I might as well stop." - participant number 7</i></p>	<p>Learn to live with pain</p> <p>Believe in own ability</p>	<p>Acceptance</p>	<p>Confidence in one's own abilities</p>
<p><i>"If there's something wrong, I fix it. I don't just sit there and wait for someone else to do something." - participant number 1</i></p>	<p>Can influence and control</p>	<p>Decision latitude</p>	
<p><i>"I'm lucky that I think I've got a job that I enjoy and find interesting. Otherwise, I would have gone home a long time ago and gone on sick leave." - participant number 4</i></p>	<p>Work interesting</p>	<p>Intellectual stimulus</p>	<p>Motivation</p>
<p><i>"The job is extremely important. That's all there is to it. It's particularly important since I can enjoy the social aspect and be stimulated. It definitely means that I enjoy it a great deal." - participant number 7</i></p>	<p>Colleagues important</p>	<p>Social cohesion</p>	
<p><i>"... apart from working to pay for food and rent, work is definitely a major driving force for the social side of things, allowing you to feel that you can make a difference." - participant number 8</i></p>	<p>Meaningful, can make a difference</p>	<p>Sense of purpose</p>	

<i>"It was the prompt support I got from my boss and the company's healthcare team. I would say that it was completely down to the help I got and my own attitude that I could go back to work." - participant number 6</i>	Early support at the employers initiative	Superiors	Support from others
<i>"I've got a specialist doctor and feel supported. I feel lucky. Then, I've got a good healthcare centre. I'm insisting on working. My doctor says that it is indeed up to me to decide this." - participant number 2</i>	Adequate health care contacts	Healthcare	
<i>"One of the best sources of support came from the social insurance fund and my employer, who didn't push too hard." - participant number 10</i>	Cooperation on rehabilitation	Social security	