Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of Work Disability and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: What to Expect and What not

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Reviewer: Joost van der Gulden

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Evaluation of work disability and the ICF: what to expect and what not

This is a short, well-written and well-argued debate paper on the usefulness of the ICF in the field of social insurance, that is worth to be published.

I have only some minor remarks and suggestions:

• The authors have chosen to use three heads: background, discussion and summary. ‘Results and discussion’ might be a better description for the second part of this paper.

• The authors argue that the ICF have some limitations: lack of temporal perspective, missing definitions for personal factors and failure to describe causality and consistency.

In my opinion it has serious advantages to use the ICF to describe the status quo in social insurance. It is possible to describe patient’s history and prognosis in words to overcome the lack of time perspective. The same solution might be chosen to describe relevant personal factors and the aspect of causality and consistency (which is as yet only required in Switzerland, Denmark and the Netherlands – see Table 1).

• A major advantage of the ICF schedule is that it can be used to explain the claimant (and his employer) why ‘being ill’ is not the same as ‘work disability’. This might prevent misunderstanding and irritation. It is therefore important to evaluate this application of the ICF (patient education) in further research.