

# Priorities in Occupational Health Research: A Delphi Study in the Netherlands

van der Beek et al. (1997)

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## For which topic were research priorities identified?

occupational health

## In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe - Netherlands

## Why was it conducted at all?

In general, there is a need for knowledge, instruments, and transfer of knowledge and skills that contribute optimally to preventing workers from developing or continuing to have health problems on the one hand, and enabling people who have (had) health complaints to return to their jobs on the other hand. Much is still unknown and many methods, techniques, and instruments have to be developed in the wide field of occupational health and safety. For instance, for several work related diseases the relevant risk factors are insufficiently identified and there seems to be a lack of knowledge about the effectiveness and efficiency of occupational health care. Funds are not infinite, so that choices have to be made. This stresses the importance of identifying priorities in occupational health research and development. However, it is unclear which specific areas deserve emphasis, not to mention the corresponding research questions.

## What was the objective?

to achieve a coherent program of topics for research in occupational health and safety with well founded priorities and to relate them to perceived gaps and needs in the Netherlands

## What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 16 research topics

## How long did the research prioritization take?

No information provided.

## Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

Delphi; interview; workshop

## How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: interviews with key informants for each of five themes, 33 key informants asked to indicate topics that they themselves considered of great importance for research needs and knowledge, development of methods and techniques, or transfer of knowledge and skills. Step 2: 2-round Delphi: Delphi round 1: topics divided among seven headings, in each heading 100 points had to be allocated among topics. Step 3: Delphi round 2: participants were asked to re-rate topics. Step 4: 5 workshops: participants were asked to formulate concrete research questions for six topics and asked to evaluate feasibility and desirability of possible research projects

## Which stakeholders took part?

Occupational health and safety services, scientific research institutes and universities, governmental and other administrative bodies. Interviews: 33 participants. Delphi round 1: 90 participants. Delphi round 2: 110 participants.

## How were stakeholders recruited?

For each of five themes six key informants were selected, three scientific researchers (in all, nine from universities and six from research institutes) and three from occupational health and safety services (in all, 10 from independent consulting services and five from departments within large companies).

## Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.