Promoting inclusiveness and workability for people with chronic health conditions

The CHRODIS PLUS Training Tool for managers

Fabiola Silvaggi, Chiara Scaratti, Erika Guastafierro, Claudia Toppo, Matilde Leonardi
Neurological Institute C. Besta IRCCS Foundation, Neurology, Public Health and Disability Unit,
WHO-Collaborating Centre Research Branch, 20133 Milan, Italy

Abstract
The number of people living with one or more chronic diseases (CDs) has dramatically increased in recent decades and this has great social and economic implications for the employment sector. CHRODIS + WP8 has the aim to develop a Tool box that includes: training tool for employers and toolkit for the workplace adaptation, based on a biopsychosocial approach to health, thus not disease specific but targeting human functioning, person’s capabilities and chronic diseases commonalities.

Introduction
CDs have a profound impact on individuals in terms of negative employment outcomes, such as reduced workforce participation and early retirement, resulting in the loss of income and increasing the risk of poverty for the person, as well as for his/her family. But CDs also affect employers: absence from work, issues connected to employability, costs of retaining or replacing workers, and internal company policies are aspects that are crucial for hiring as well as re-integrating persons with CDs.

Why managers need this training?
In the workplace there is often a lack of information regarding the abilities and capacities of people with chronic conditions to continue working. People with a well-managed chronic diseases, on the contrary, are able to work normal hours and, if reasonable accommodation in terms of flexibility of working times or of workplace adaptation is enabled, they can often stay at work, return to work, maintain a work.

How was this training developed?
Studies that have mapped the existing training tools revealed that most of them are not specifically directed to the employers, but rather involve the rehabilitation settings, focusing on medical area, or aimed to inform patients1. Moreover, a lot of training tools are focused on specific diseases, while information on general principles of management, transferals to different diseases, lacks.

In order to promote an inclusive labor markets for all, is fundamental to redesign the role of the workplace, addressing not only the architectural space but also the general environmental setting, and in particular the "training setting" so as to develop the skills of employers and of employees.

Conclusions
The employment sector, as one of the main life domain for people, needs attention, in particular in terms of training on inclusiveness. More awareness and sensitivity could reduce discrimination in the workplace, opening the way for increasing work participation of all workers, with or without chronic conditions.

Acknowledgements
The current study is part of EU CHRODIS PLUS Joint Action, which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme (2014-2020) Grant agreement n. 761307

What are the expected benefits?

1. Increase work participation
2. Retaining full earning capacity
3. Maintaining a productive mindset
4. Staying on a regular work schedule
5. Avoiding dependence on a disability/pension system scheme
6. Having a sense of security and stability
7. Agree on reasonable accommodations with HR

How to use the training?
The Training Tool for Managers is composed of 3 sections and one Appendix that includes informative sheets on the most frequent chronic diseases.

References: