



Employers' Response to Workers With Progressive Cognitive Impairment: A Systematic Literature Review

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Introduction

The world's population is ageing. Globally, the number of persons living over the age of 65 will double by 2050, and in ten years, one in four people living in Canada will be over the age of 65. People are also choosing to work longer for personal and practical reasons (i.e., stay in school longer and have kids later, or removal of mandatory retirement ages). As we live and earn longer the likelihood of working with multiple health conditions rises. As age is a primary risk factor for developing mild cognitive impairment or early onset dementias (MCI/EOD), going forward, we anticipate a significant rise in the number of people who are either experiencing symptoms or are diagnosed with MCI/EOD while on the job. Yet, to date, little work has been done to understand the employer's experiences and needs related to cognitive impairment in the workplace.

Who we are

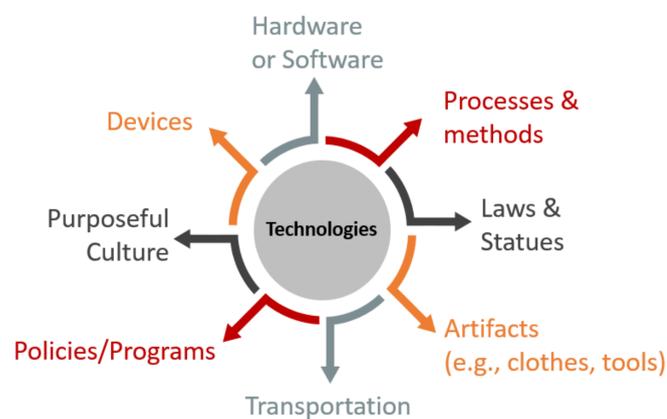


Cog@Work is a program of research and network whose goal is to enable affordable, sustainable and inclusive workspace models for employees with mild cognitive impairment and early onset dementia (MCI|EOD)

Our goal



Empower employers and employees with the information, skills, and **technologies** to co-create affordable, sustainable and inclusive workspaces for people with MCI|EOD



Systematic Literature Review

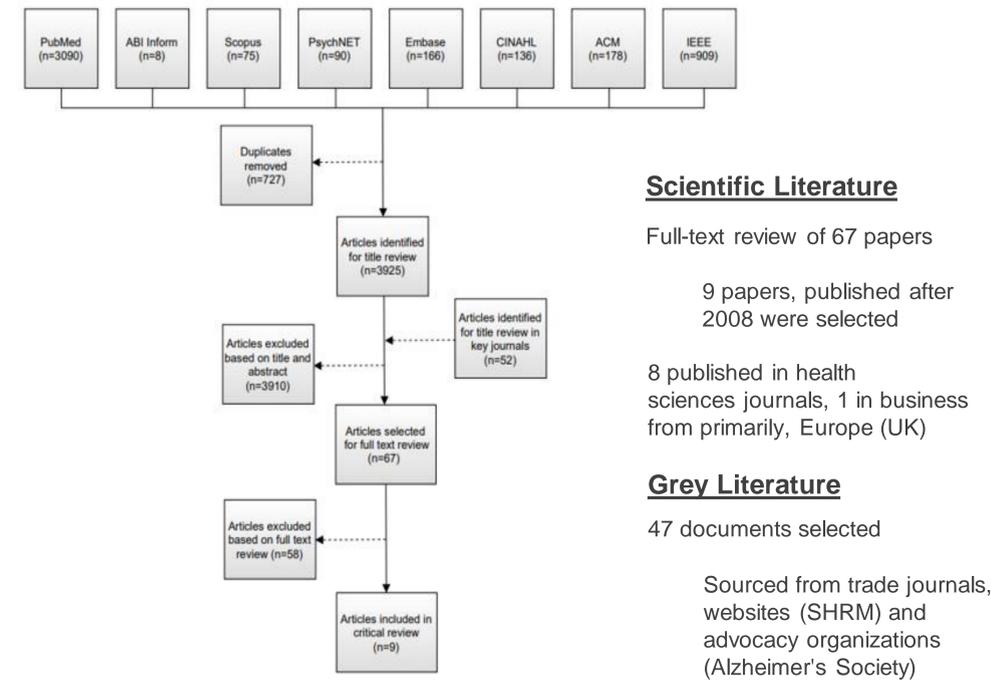
What are the barriers and facilitators to development and employer adoption of technologies to address MCI and EOD in the workplace? What influences an employer's ability or motivation to support employees with MCI|EOD?

Eligibility Criteria & Search Method

- ✓ Scientific and grey literature
- ✓ Published post-1960
- ✓ Written in English and any country
- ✓ Explicit focus on MCI/EOD
- ✓ Include the employer's perspective
- ✓ Evaluate or focus on a technology

Three members of the Cog@Work team blindly reviewed the titles and abstracts of over 3900 peer reviewed papers, collected from 8 databases.

Search Results & Methods of Analysis



Thematic analysis, using a mix of deductive and inductive coding was performed using NVivo 12. Initial coding was into broad categories for perceived barriers & facilitators. As themes emerged from the data, additional codes were added.

Analysis and Discussion

Facilitator: Any factor that enabled employers to support employees with cognitive impairments

- Early diagnosis and disclosure
- Workplace education and culture
- Expert supports to help employers
- Workspace modifications to help employees

Early diagnosis and disclosure improves opportunities for accommodation, sustained employment and allows employers to anticipate and manage health and safety risks. Employers also require education and training to improve understanding of the disease, how symptoms manifest in the workplace, and to foster a safe and inclusive workspace that limits stigma. Technologies for employers were in the form of expert supports (i.e., consultation with occupational therapists or social workers) with domain expertise and other facilitating technologies included workspace modifications to create a more dementia friendly environment.

Barrier: Any factor that if present, would be a roadblock for employers who want to adopt or develop technologies that help support employees with progressive cognitive impairment

- Length of time to diagnose
- Stigma and low rate of disclosure
- Lack of employer facing technologies
- Technologies are reactionary
- Weak Business Case

Diagnosis is a lengthy and complex process. Workplace performance is often impacted by disabilities related to MCI/EOD; however, both the employee and employer are unaware of the underlying disease process and any change in performance is attributed to other factors. To avoid stigma associated with MCI/EOD, employees delay diagnosis, and conceal information from employers. Technologies evaluated were often employee facing, rarely took the perspective of employers into account, and by design, reactionary. Technologies that supported a proactive approach were not considered. There also lacked a rationale for why employers should invest time and organizational resources into fostering a sustainable workspace for employees who develop MCI/EOD.

Progressive Cognitive Impairment is not on organizations radar

- Organizational awareness & imperative is lacking
- Progressive cognitive impairment is treated like other disability accommodation
- Risk management, low budget approach to accommodation
- Change starts with workplace culture
- Early disclosure facilitates technology support and planning
- Few novel technologies exist to support the employer

Cog@Work is partnering with employers and through case study methodology, explore their experiences, perspectives and needs related to technologies that can support employees with progressive cognitive impairment.