

## The Work Ability Index

The **Work Ability Index (WAI)** assesses the working ability of occupationally active people. The WAI comprises a questionnaire which may be filled in by the workers themselves or by others, e.g. by the occupational health physician during occupational health assessments. The major aim of the use of the WAI in enterprises is to promote the work ability of the employees. The WAI is also being used in organisational epidemiology and in occupational science.

The WAI-Questionnaire was developed and validated by Finnish working life researchers in the 80ies. Since then it has been translated into 25 languages. In Germany it has been used for about 10 years, mainly within occupational health surveillance.

## The German WAI Network Project

The German WAI Network Project was established in 2003. Its overall aim is to promote the use of the WAI instrument. This is (to be) carried out on three levels:

### 1. Establishment of a WAI User Network

Current and future users of the WAI are (will be) invited to participate in the WAI User Network. They shall contribute with their specific experience with the instrument and with their expertise.

### 2. Establishment of a national WAI Data Base

With support from all Network participants a German WAI DataBase will be established and continuously updated. Age and branch specific reference values will be generated which will then be accessible via internet for benchmarking purposes.

### 3. Download WAI User Program

The widespread use of the WAI shall be promoted by providing an electronic program for WAI data entry, analysis and presentation (including branch specific reference values for benchmarking). This WAI User Program will be free of charge and available via internet. The program includes a device (file transfer protocol, ftp) for uncomplicated feeding in of the local WAI data into the National database.

## Current activities

By the end of 2006 about 100 individuals, small, medium and large enterprises, public and private organisations were members of the network. The project will last until June 2007 and possibly be continued thereafter. Currently, the networks activities comprise a) organisation von user meetings, b) promotion of mutual user support, c) consultation, d) different publications, e) extension of the national database, and f) provision of WAI software.

## Project Team

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