

# Development (f)or Maintenance? An Empirical Study on the Use of and Need for HR Practices to Retain Older Workers in Health Care Organizations

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*The aims of this article are to (a) examine the prevalence of HR (HRM and HRD) practices to retain older workers in health care organizations; (b) evaluate those HR practices that are specifically designed to facilitate the retention of older workers; and (c) classify those HR practices against the needs of older workers, line managers, and HR professionals. To achieve these aims, 51 interviews were conducted with older workers, line managers, and HR professionals working in 15 Dutch hospitals and care service organizations in late 2010. The study had a mixed-methods setup in that the collected information was partly quantitative (figures about the prevalence and outcomes of practices), and partly qualitative (incorporating illustrative reflections or observations offered by interviewees), the latter complementing the former. Maintenance HR practices (practices that are focused on retaining older workers in their current jobs) appeared to be by far more prevalent compared to development HR practices (practices that are focused on advancement, growth and accomplishment, and that encourage individual workers to achieve new and challenging levels of functioning). In general, both types of HR practices were evaluated as successful by older workers, line managers, and HR professionals. Unexpectedly, the successful evaluations of the maintenance practices appeared to be attributed to developmental rather than maintenance processes. Furthermore, the needs of older workers appeared to be strongly related to both development practices and, although to a lesser degree, maintenance practices. The article concludes with relevant directions for future research.*

*Key Words: career development, human capital, maintenance and development HR (HRM/HRD) practices, older workers, employee engagement, mentoring and coaching, mixed-methods study, empirical study*

In the face of the rapid aging and “dejuvenization” of the working population across most of the developed world in the 21st century (Hedge & Borman, 2012; Schalk et al., 2010; Shultz & Adams, 2009; Van der Heijden et al., 2010), there is a need to promote better employment opportunities for older people (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2012). Internationally, the most populous age group has shifted from the 20–24 group in 1980 to the 30–34 group in 1990, and, subsequently, to the 40–44 group in 2010 (Steeners, 2010). In a similar vein, in European Union member states an average increase of 12% in the proportion accounted for by the 50–59 age group has been predicted over the next 10 years (Inceoglu, Segers, & Bartram, 2012, p. 300).

Therefore, due to the expected workforce shortage, better and longer working careers are urgently needed to finance and support the longer life of European citizens (Ilmarinen, 2005, 2009). In the 21st century, the number of young employees will be too few to replace those who retire, which could be detrimental for the economic growth. The issue at stake here is doing more with fewer workers and, at the same time, with a workforce consisting of relatively more older workers (G. A. Collins, 2003). Though retention of older workers might not be an appropriate strategy in some types of organizations, due to specific skill and capability requirements that are age dependent, it may be assumed that, in general, a greater utilization of the workforce segment of older workers will be an important approach for organizations to cope with the shortage of younger workers (M. A. Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2008). It is an approach that, first and foremost, constitutes a challenge for those who are responsible for the human resource management (HRM) and human resource development (HRD) policy in organizations.

Research has shown that organizations, through applying HRM and HRD practices, offer resources and opportunities to prolong the work life of their employees (Kuvaas, 2008), and thereby add to organizational performance (White & Bryson, 2013). More specifically, earlier research showed that those practices affect worker’s attitudes and behavior (Ostroff & Bowen, 2000). Nonetheless, empirical evidence about HRM and HRD practices that are specifically suited for the older worker is largely lacking (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Kooij, Jansen, Dikkers, & De Lange, 2010). In previous research, ergonomic adjustments of the workplace and continuous career development were shown to have motivational value for older workers (Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, & Dikkers, 2008), as was the provision of training and development practices that were set up to ensure that older workers have interesting and challenging

work assignments (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009). An elaborate overview of used and appreciated practices for the older workers is, however, still missing. The research presented in this article aims to contribute to the development of such an overview. To that end, an empirical study was performed. By means of in-depth semistructured interviews, information was obtained from three types of actors: older workers, line managers, and HRM/HRD professionals. Up until now, research on the use of HRM/HRD practices for older workers has been conducted from only the employers' point of view (e.g., Loretto & White, 2006; Roman, Smeenk, Van Wersch, & De Muijnck, 2009). For instance, Letvak (2002) conducted a descriptive survey to determine the knowledge base and plans for the older nurses, incorporating one respondent group (administrators). In addition to those perspectives, our study incorporates explicitly the perspective of the older workers themselves. As such, this study comprises a mixed-methods approach in that the collected information was partly quantitative (figures about the use of practices), and partly qualitative (incorporating illustrative reflections or observations offered by interviewees), with the latter adding meaning to the former, in a complementary way (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

In this article, both HRM and HRD practices are included, for which we will use the umbrella term *HR*. Though it is clear that 21st-century HRM and HRD have "grown up" as distinctive fields in their own right, there is a great synergy between these two scholarly fields (Ruona & Gibson, 2004). HR management and development are shaped by the same changing demographics that create a shortage of skilled and experienced workers (Stein, Rocco, & Goldenetz, 2000). Notwithstanding the interdisciplinary nature of both HRM and HRD (Alagaraja & Dooley, 2003), subtle differences exist between the specific roles they play at the workplace. The role for HRM is focused on developing distinctive people practices to create core competences that translate into business strategies and that help differentiate an organization's products and services (Cappelli & Crocker-Hefter, 1996). The role for HRD features generative learning as central in future strategic alternatives (Ruona & Gibson, 2004) to create a competent and reflective workforce that utilizes learning to capitalize on emerging opportunities (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Effective HR professionals should master the basics of HRM and HRD, and this suggests the adoption of an integrated use of these knowledge domains in this study. In line with this reasoning, we refer to the concept of HR incorporating both HRM and HRD.

The objective of this empirical study is to improve knowledge and understanding of age-related HR practices—solely focused on older workers—that are actually in use, how these practices are evaluated, and whether these practices are aligned with the needs of older workers, line managers, and HR professionals. This study is confined to the health care sector for several reasons. Since the share of employees in health care is 9.9% (OECD, 2008) of the total labor force, health care is one of the main pillars of the economy. Due to the

increase in the elderly population, and consequently the population of the chronically ill, this sector is set to grow. In order to be and to remain attractive employers, health care organizations will have to compete with other sectors for workers, even more so than today. In addition, considering that working in the health care sector is mentally and physically demanding (Kirpal, 2004), a major challenge is looming for HR. For these reasons, we have chosen to conduct our research in the health care sector, in order to contribute to knowledge and understanding of age-related employment issues in this sector specifically.

## Literature Review

Before we move on with identifying valuable HR practices for the retention of older employees, conceptual clarification of aging and age-related consequences is needed. The focus underlying the present study implies, as a proposition, that HR practices for the retention of older workers are different from practices that are appropriate for the nonelderly. The basis for this proposition is that aging involves changes in work-related needs and motives, and that, accordingly, HR practices for older employees should have a different focus than those for their younger counterparts. In a more abstract sense, this proposition is elaborated in the life-span theory of Selection Optimization and Compensation (SOC) (Baltes, Staudinger, & Lindenberger, 1999), which states that successful life-span development is a result of maximizing age-related cognitive and physical gains and minimizing age-related cognitive and physical losses. A successful life-span development process involves selecting outcomes, optimizing resources to reach these desirable outcomes, and compensating for the loss of outcome-relevant means.

The proposition that aging involves changes in work-related needs and motives has been empirically demonstrated by Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, Kanfer, and Dikkers (2011), who performed a meta-analysis including 86 studies. Their study showed that chronological age is positively related to the strength of intrinsic work motives and negatively related to the strength of extrinsic work motives. In some theories, the difference between older and younger workers, as regards their needs and motives, is elaborated in more detail. One is the socioemotional selectivity theory about changes that occur during life (Carstensen, 1992; Löckenhoff, & Carstensen, 2004). According to this theory, as people age and time boundaries are consequently perceived, the more present-oriented goals related to emotional meaning are prioritized over future-oriented goals that are aimed at information acquisition and expanding horizons. A similar difference between older and younger people derives from Higgins's (1997, 2000) regulatory focus theory. This theory distinguishes between self-regulation focused on promotion versus self-regulation focused on prevention. Aspirations, accomplishment, growth, and development involve and induce a promotion focus, while responsibilities, safety, and security implicate a prevention focus. Whereas younger adults are, in general,

more growth oriented in their goals, older adults demonstrate a stronger orientation toward maintenance and loss prevention (Ebner, Freund, & Baltes, 2006; Lockwood, Chasteen, & Wong, 2005). Together, these life-span development theories shed light on changes people face as they age.

Based on the aforementioned life-span development theories, it can be argued that age involves more dimensions than just chronological (calendar) age. Simultaneously, however, the other aging dimensions, such as functional age and organizational age (De Lange et al., 2006; Kooij et al., 2008) are highly related to chronological age. For that reason, it is worthwhile to elaborate HR practices for the chronologically older workforce category.

The term *older worker* may refer to workers aged from 40 to 75, depending on the specific kind of job and on the worker (G. A. Collins, 2003; De Lange et al., 2006). For the purpose of this study, it was decided to define older workers as workers aged 55 and above. Although in many countries the age of 50 indicates the beginning of a decline in participation rates (OECD, 2012), in this study 55 is used as the age limit, which is in line with collective agreements (for instance, in the Dutch collective labor agreements for care service organizations [2008–2010], in which “55 and older” is particularly mentioned, and for hospitals [2009–2010] in which 55 is also used, although currently the approach changes to a more life-span perspective wherein older workers get prepared for longer careers). In addition, several reports and studies considered 55 as a dividing line between the older and younger employees (Rocco, Stein, & Lee, 2003).

Elaborating on the aforementioned aging life-span developmental theories, we differentiate between maintenance and development HR practices for older workers (Kooij et al., 2010). In line with Toh, Morgeson, and Campion (2008), this distinction is made based on the discrepancy between the shared goals of the two types of HR practices. Hence, maintenance HR practices are focused on retaining employees in their current level of functioning, or are focused on recovery to previous levels after a certain kind of loss (see Table 1 for specific examples). Development HR practices, however, are focused on advancement, growth, and accomplishment, and encourage individual workers to achieve new and challenging levels of functioning (see Table 1 for specific examples as well).

This view on the distinction between HR practices aimed at maintenance or development (Gong, Law, Chang, & Xin, 2009; Kooij et al., 2010) is, by itself, unrelated to age differences between employees. It materializes differently, however, for different employee categories as a result of the various motives and needs that prevail in those categories (Baltes et al., 1999; Carstensen, 1992; Ebner et al., 2006; Higgins, 1997, 2000; Löckenhoff & Carstensen, 2004; Lockwood et al., 2005). This brings us to Research Question 1:

*RESEARCH QUESTION 1: Which maintenance and development practices for retaining older workers are part of HR in health care?*

**Table 1. An Overview of Maintenance and Development HR Practices Based on Kooij et al. (2010)**

<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>Development</i>
Additional leave	Job enrichment
Early retirement (part-time)	Participation in decision making
Demotion	Horizontal job change
Exemption from overtime	Second career/job movement
Working part-time	Job redesign
Ergonomic adjustments and safety and health training	Mentoring roles
Performance appraisal	Career planning
Flexible working arrangements (working week of 4x9)	Continuous development on the job
Courses to keep up-to-date	Promotion
Job alleviation	Training in which new things are learned
	Sabbatical leave
	Job development interview
	Health checks

In the next section, we elaborate on this issue by outlining the whole of HR practices that fit in with the situation of the category of older workers.

The difference between maintenance versus development HR practices can be clarified in terms of the Job Demands–Resources model (JD-R model; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). According to this model, two simultaneous processes have an impact on the work outcomes of employees: (a) a health impairment process caused by job demands, and (b) a motivational process evoked by job and personal resources. *Job demands* refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skills, and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. *Job resources* refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that are (a) functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; and (c) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. These job resources supplement the *personal resources*, which are aspects of the self, generally linked to resilience, and which refer to individuals' ability to successfully control and impact on their environment (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007).

In order to determine the usefulness of maintenance and development HR practices, criteria from two different stances are used. The aforementioned demands–resources distinction relates to the different approaches that underlie

the two types of HR practices: maintenance practices focus on the reduction of job demands, whereas development practices are set up in order to create new and more job and personal resources, or to help employees to cope with job demands themselves. Maintenance practices adapt the work situation to existing employee capabilities, while development practices enable employees to perform well and to cope with existing job demands (Evers, Kreijns, Van der Heijden, & Gerrichhauzen, 2011). In terms of work outcomes, improvement of both approaches can be successful. There is a difference, though, as regards the type of successfulness involved. The successfulness of maintenance practices derives from an overall job alleviation that results from demand adaptations that are brought about, whereas development practices are successful given the enrichment of the job situation or the personal efficacy growth of employees.

The triplet successfulness dimensions (job alleviation, job enrichment, and personal efficacy) are key components of the empirical framework that is used in the present study. It is supplemented with four commonly used criteria of general success (cf. Roman et al., 2009): effectiveness (the extent to which desired goals are achieved), efficiency, degree of actual implementation, and relevance. According to the JD-R model, an investment in the growth of resources, rather than in the reduction of demands, is generally the more productive approach (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker, Van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010; Schaufeli & Dijkstra, 2010). For that reason, different evaluations of maintenance practices and development practices can be expected, not only in terms of the JD-R criteria job alleviation, job enrichment, and personal efficacy, but also in terms of the general success criteria that were mentioned earlier. For instance, Van der Heijden, De Lange, Demerouti, and Van der Heijde (2009) found that line managers' ratings of employability related negatively to overall promotions for older workers, while the self-rated employability of older workers related positively to promotions throughout the career. Possibly, line managers may differ according to age-related supervisory attitudes. They may assume that older workers are no longer motivated by development in their jobs, and consequently focus on maintenance practices as the best option to support older workers. However, along the life span, a shift, not a decline, in workers' motivators is observed: older workers seem to be more intrinsically motivated, replacing extrinsic, competitive ones (Inceoglu et al., 2012; Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Ng & Feldman, 2010). Following the theoretical outline above, we expected maintenance HR practices to be more prevalent, but development practices to be generally evaluated highest, particularly by the older workers themselves. Answering the following research questions will shed light on these issues:

*RESEARCH QUESTION 2: To what extent are the used HR practices, as experienced by older workers, line managers, and HR professionals, successful in terms of:*

- (a) satisfying the purpose for which they are intended (effective);
- (b) being balanced in the time, money, and effort they consume (efficient);



- (c) being actually implemented;
- (d) being considered relevant;
- (e) contributing to job alleviation;
- (f) contributing to job enrichment;
- (g) contributing to personal efficacy?

In line with this reasoning, we assumed that respondents' needs are focused rather on development than on maintenance HR practices. Therefore, we formulated Research Question 3:

*RESEARCH QUESTION 3: Which HR practices for older workers are needed according to these workers themselves, the line managers, and the HR professionals?*

## Method

In this section we describe the sample selection and procedures.

### Sample and Procedure

In order to identify used HR practices, their assessments and needs, we approached, through a contact person in an association of 23 health care organizations, in particular hospitals and care service organizations situated in the north of the Netherlands. The representatives of the specific organizations were given information by telephone followed by an e-mail in which the objective of the study was explained. We introduced the study as research on "HRM for retaining older workers" and emphasized voluntariness and confidentiality of responses. To enhance participation, we promised feedback about the findings by means of written reports to be sent to the contact persons of each organization.

Of the 23 healthcare organizations, 15 (representatives) reacted positively, constituting a response rate of 65%. Almost all of the participating organizations were similar in size: between 1,000 and 2,500 employees, with one outlier downward (nearly 200 employees), and with one outlier upward (5,200 employees). Interviews were planned in each organization, with two older workers appointed to a care/cure job, one line manager of a care/cure department, and one representative of the HR department. This planning was largely realized, but in some cases appeared to be not entirely possible due to practical circumstances. In three organizations, two rather than one HR professional was interviewed, one being the general HR professional, and one being an expert on health and safety matters. In three organizations, no line manager could be interviewed, and in two organizations, only one older worker could be approached. All in all, 51 interviews were thus conducted with Dutch employees, constituting three respondent groups: older workers (41%), line managers (24%), and representatives of HR departments (35%; see Table 2). Eighty percent ( $N = 41$ ) of the respondents were female.



**Table 2. Sample Characteristics**

	<i>Total group</i> (N = 51)	<i>Older Workers</i> (N = 21)	<i>Line Managers</i> (N = 12)	<i>HR professionals</i> (N = 18)
Male	10 (20)	1 (5)	3 (25)	6 (33)
Female	41 (80)	20 (95)	9 (75)	12 (67)
Age in years	50.7 (8.81)	57.0 (4.18)	47.0 (7.49)	46.0 (8.92)
Job duration in years	12.09 (10.34)	18.50 (12.62)	7.40 (5.72)	7.75 (4.44)
Work week in hours	30.13 (7.74)	26.60 (8.71)	31.42 (7.22)	33.39 (5.03)

*Note:* Cell entry denotes *ns* and % for male and female, and M and SD for the other variables.

The mean age of all respondents was 50.7, and 57.0 for the older workers (55+), consisting of care and cure employees and (specialist) nurses working on diverse levels. The mean age of the line managers and HR professionals was 47.2 and 45.7 years, respectively. The mean job duration was 12.2 years for the total group, and 18.5 years for the older workers, 7.4 for the line managers, and 7.8 for the HR professionals. The total group of respondents worked, on average, 30 hours a week and had several types of jobs, ranging from care or cure employee to HR manager. The older workers worked, on average, 26.6 hours a week, and the line managers and HR professionals 31.4 and 33.4, respectively.

The interviews, which were conducted in late 2010 by teams of two trained coworkers, with one of them handling the interview questions and the other recording and taking notes, consisted of two parts. In the first part (see appendix), the interviewees were invited to mention all HR practices that they knew about for older employees used in their organization. As an aid to perform that job, the interviewers presented and explained a fourfold typology of HR practices to them, with practices focused on, respectively, labor conditions, labor contents, work relations, and working conditions (Roman et al., 2009). No further prompts were given; that is, the interviewers refrained from giving concrete examples of practices. As for each practice that was thus mentioned by the interviewee, a series of questions was asked. First, the interviewee was asked to describe in detail what the practice consisted of and what it was supposed to bring about. In addition to this information, which had a qualitative nature, the interviewee was asked to give quantitative assessments, drawn from his/her own experiences, using 10-point Likert scales, in terms of its effectiveness, efficiency, level of factual implementation, and relevance (the aforementioned general success criteria), and also in terms of its contribution to the employees' job alleviation, job enrichment, and personal efficacy (the aforementioned JD-R criteria). In this article, we considered scores up to, and including, 4.99 as (relatively) low, and scores from 5 to 10 as (relatively) high. Finally, the interviewee was invited to further explain his/her assessments. This generated additional qualitative information, complementary to the

quantitative assessments in that it revealed the context and underlying reality, and therewith added to the clarity of those assessments (cf. Greene et al., 1989, who call this the complementarity way of combining quantitative and qualitative information in mixed-methods research). Bryman (2006), similarly, reported about “putting meat on the bones” (p. 106).

As can be seen, the interview format clearly reflected the list of research questions. In addition to the assessments given, the interviewee was asked to explain and justify those assessments and to provide examples of them in practice. The latter was done in order to expel as much as possible self-serving and other biases from the assessments given. The results from this part of the interview thus consisted of (a) a list of practices, (b) (quantitative) assessments of those practices, and (c) illustrative examples and/or reflections concerning them.

The second part of the interview mirrored the first part, in that the interviewee was asked again to mention and describe HR practices for older people. Now it was about practices that they felt were needed, regardless of their availability in their organization. As such, the results from this part of the interview consisted simply of a list of needed practices.

The interviews were recorded on audiotape and fully transcribed. The analysis of the texts produced that way, together with the interviewer notes, was mainly a matter of identifying the HR practices that had been mentioned in the interviews. As the interviewees had to name and describe practices without any help from the interviewers, the words chosen by them to perform that job were often quite different from standard HR terminology, and also different from the words chosen by other interviewees who referred to similar practices. As a consequence, the interview outcomes could not easily be brought together into a common pool. Following the approach of Miles and Huberman (1984), first a list of all mentioned practices was established, exactly as worded by the interviewees. Next, one of the authors grouped the practices that she interpreted as being similar into categories, attaching codes (labels) to those categories. Miles and Huberman distinguished between predefined and postdefined codes, the former devised in advance, before the inspection of the list, and the latter devised progressively during and resulting from that inspection (1984, p. 60). The use of postdefined codes, or open coding as it is called by Corbin and Strauss (2008), fits in with an entirely inductive research approach. In the present study, a combined approach, using both predefined codes and postdefined codes, was taken. The predefined codes were derived from what is already known from existing literature on HR activities (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Kooij et al., 2010). A check of the resulting categorization by the other authors, and a number of discussions based on that check, resulted in a few adaptations of the category system, the allocation of some practices to categories, and the identification and labeling of some new categories. As such, we identified 11 different used practices, and 17 different needed practices (see Tables 3 and 4).

Apart from the identification of practices, the analysis of the interview outcomes was rather straightforward. Descriptive statistics were used for processing the quantitative assessments, and a selection was made out of all the explanations underpinning these quantitative assessments, put forward by the interviewees, to be used as illuminating evidence (e.g., Combs & Onwuegbuzie, 2010), in addition to the results about the HR practices and their assessments.

## Results

Table 3 portrays an overview of the answers related to Research Question 1. Distinctions between maintenance and development HR practices, and between the different success criteria (see Research Question 2) are reported.

Of the 11 kinds of HR practices that were mentioned, 4 (36%) were classified as development practices. Moreover, Table 3 shows that of the 98 times that HR practices were mentioned, only 7 (7.14%) could be classified as development practice. Maintenance practices were mentioned most frequently by the older workers, the line managers, and the HR professionals. We found that respondents emphasized two issues: additional leave (78%) and night shift exemption (73%). Less important was the issue early retirement (12%). Other maintenance and development HR practices were mentioned by only 2 to 6% of the respondents.

Table 3 shows details of the success scores for the distinguished HR practices, starting with maintenance practices followed by the development practices. Of the 11 distinguished HR practices in use, 77 evaluations were measured. The mean score on general success and JD-R criteria taken together was 6.83, which is relatively high. Out of the 77 possible results, we discerned 65 results that were evaluated as successful and 11 evaluated as not successful (one outcome was not scored).

### Evaluated Success Regarding the Maintenance Practices

The results for the success criteria of the most frequently mentioned HR practices—additional leave (78%) and night shift exemption (73%)—showed the same pattern. Whereas the scores for all items were evaluated as relatively high, job alleviation scored relatively low, and job enrichment scored just above a score of 5. This is in contrast to our expectations because maintenance practices were expected to alleviate demands rather than to enhance personal efficacy and job enrichment. Further inspection of the data provides more detailed results. Although the previously mentioned HR practices scored quite highly on effectiveness, additional leave scored relatively lower, which can be attributed to the large number of part-timers who save up their hours and appeared not to use them to enhance their vitality. As one respondent said:

For the full-timers, I gave an eight, but the effectiveness for the part-timers is only a four. Part-timers work less and do not need additional

**Table 3. Used HR Practices and Respondents' Evaluations**

<i>HR practice</i>	<i>n (%)</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Efficiency</i>	<i>Level of Implementation</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Contribution to Job Alleviation</i>	<i>Contribution to Job Enrichment</i>	<i>Contribution to Personal Efficacy</i>
<b>Maintenance</b>								
Additional leave <sup>a,b</sup>	40 (78)	7.05 (1.62)	6.56 (1.87)	7.38 (1.46)	7.17 (1.55)	4.07 (2.48)	5.14 (2.42)	6.60 (1.93)
Night shift exemption <sup>b</sup>	37 (73)	7.83 (1.06)	7.09 (1.54)	7.60 (1.21)	7.62 (1.48)	4.50 (2.76)	5.21 (2.27)	7.20 (1.78)
Early (part-time) retirement	6 (12)	7.80 (0.45)	7.00 (1.22)	7.17 (1.33)	7.00 (3.54)	5.67 (4.04)	4.50 (4.95)	7.63 (0.48)
Menopause help	3 (6)	7.67 (2.31)	6.33 (1.15)	8.33 (1.15)	7.33 (2.89)	4.67 (0.58)	8.00 (0.00)	7.67 (0.58)
Flexible scheduling	2 (4)	7.00 (0.00)	5.50 (2.12)	4.50 (0.71)	6.50 (2.12)	4.00 (2.83)	4.50 (2.12)	5.50 (3.54)
Dispensation from task redesign	2 (4)	9.00 (0.00)	7.00 (0.00)	5.00 (0.00)	7.00 (0.00)	8.00 (0.00)	8.00 (0.00)	8.00 (0.00)
Healthy aging sessions	1 (2)	3.00 (-)	8.00 (-)	5.00 (-)	4.00 (-)	7.00 (-)	8.00 (-)	5.00 (-)
<b>Development</b>								
Career and retirement coaching	3 (6)	8.67 (0.58)	8.00 (0.00)	7.33 (0.58)	8.00 (0.00)	7.00 (1.73)	7.67 (0.58)	8.00 (0.00)
Assignment of mentor tasks	2 (4)	7.00 (0.00)	7.50 (0.71)	7.00 (0.00)	7.50 (0.71)	4.50 (0.71)	5.50 (2.12)	7.00 (0.00)
ICT training	1 (2)	10.00 (-)	10.00 (-)	10.00 (-)	10.00 (-)	3.00 (-)	8.00 (-)	8.00 (-)
Work ability monitoring	1 (2)	8.00 (-)	8.00 (-)	7.00 (-)	6.00 (-)	7.00 (-)	6.00 (-)	7.00 (-)

*Note:* Cell entries in column 2 are number (%) of respondents mentioning the HR practice. Columns 3 to 9 are means (standard deviations between brackets) of respondents' evaluations for the HR practice, measured on 10-point Likert scales. (-) indicates that the statistic could not be calculated.

<sup>a</sup>This includes Personal Life-Span Budget, which is used in hospitals; the older the employee, the higher the personal budget.

<sup>b</sup>In a few cases respondents answered from an employee perspective as well as from an organizational perspective. As the figures from the organizational perspective did not differ substantially, we confined to presenting the employee perspective.

**Table 4. Needs per Respondent Group**

<i>HR Practice</i>	<i>Mentioned as an HR Practice in Use<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Times Mentioned</i>	<i>By Respondent Group</i>
<b>Maintenance</b>			
Flexible scheduling	Yes	9	Older workers: 5 Line managers: 2 HR professional: 2
Job alleviation	Yes	7	Older workers: 4 Line managers: 2 HR professional: 1
Early retirement	Yes	2	Older worker: 1 Line manager: 1
Additional leave	Yes	1	Line manager: 1
More paid breaks	No	1	Older worker: 1
Increased income	No	1	Older worker: 1
Working more	No	1	Older worker: 1
Reduced workload	No	1	Older worker: 1
Facilitating hobby that is not necessarily linked to one's job to find passion	No	1	HR professional: 1
Peer conversation/ communication with colleagues	No	1	Older worker: 1
<b>Development</b>			
Career and retirement coaching	Yes	11	Older workers: 3 Line managers: 2 HR professionals: 6
Work ability monitoring	Yes	7	Older workers: 3 Line manager: 1 HR professionals: 3
Sport facilities	No <sup>2</sup>	4	Older worker: 1 Line manager: 1 HR professionals: 2
Job mobility	Yes <sup>3</sup>	4	Older worker: 1 HR professionals: 3
ICT training	Yes	4	Older workers: 3 Line manager: 1
Assignment of mentoring tasks <sup>4</sup>	Yes	3	Older worker: 1 HR professionals: 2
Job adaptation	Yes	2	Older worker: 1 HR professional: 1

<sup>1</sup>Note: Instruments known from Table 3 are mentioned along with new HR practices.

<sup>2</sup>Note: It was not mentioned as being age-specific.

<sup>3</sup>Note: This is mentioned the other way around: no job rotation for older workers. Apparently, a need exists for job rotation for older workers.

<sup>4</sup>This is about being a mentor for younger colleagues.

leave to build up an extra store of additional leave hours. (Line manager 19, Organization 12)

In addition, there is a difference between line managers and employees with respect to this HR practice. This is aptly described by one respondent:

Employees are positive, but managers fear the accumulation of additional hours as they predict a shortage of employees in the longer run. (Older worker 15, Organization 5)

None of the two most frequently mentioned HR practices—additional leave and night shift exemption—imply a considerable amount of job alleviation (4.07 and 4.50). These maintenance practices did not appear to be associated with job alleviation. Although exemption from night shifts included reduction of tasks, this advantage was offset by doing the tasks all by themselves and being responsible for a substantial number of clients. This individual responsibility can be experienced as stressful. Consequently, job alleviation obtained a low score, which was expressed by one respondent as follows:

The older employee can get *other* tasks, but not fewer tasks. (HR professional 50, Organization 8)

Regarding whether the job became more purposeful (job enrichment), the scores were 5.14 for additional leave and 5.21 for night shift exemption. In general, these HR practices do not cause changes in the job, and although older workers prefer being exempted from night shifts, this could also be explained by another perception related to personal efficacy. One respondent said:

No, work does not get more interesting when you turn 55. (Older worker 29, Organization 6)

The question of whether older workers became more resilient (personal efficacy) as a result of these HR practices was answered by means of scores of 6.60 for additional leave and 7.20 for night shift exemption. Respondents indicated a higher personal efficacy, particularly, because of the balanced combination of work and private life, which provides more relaxation and thus yields more job satisfaction. However, more leisure time also has its disadvantages, as reported by one respondent:

It is sometimes difficult to keep up the skills. Due to many days off, you lag behind the other employees. (Older worker 9, Organization 4)

As stated previously, early retirement (12%) showed the same patterns as the above-mentioned HR practices but with different explanations. The

aim (early full-time/part-time retirement) is certainly achieved (effectiveness: 7.80), but, unfortunately, at the cost of finance:

The high premiums employees must pay if they wish to retire early. (Line manager 1, Organization 9)

Menopause help—a mentor who supports women entering menopause—is mentioned three times (6%) and scored high on level of implementation (8.33). Job enrichment scored high because of its link with personal efficacy. As stated by one of the respondents:

Work is improved by a more appropriate alignment of the work/home life balance. (Older worker 14, Organization 5)

Flexible scheduling (4%) involves employees being able to specify their preferences and to have these views taken into account. Nevertheless, this HR practice scored lowest on all mean scores (5.36). Two respondents (4%) mentioned the HR practice dispensation from task redesign. This implies that heavier tasks do not have to be executed by older workers. Healthy aging sessions (2%) did not reach their aim and scored a 3.00 regarding perceived effectiveness: of the employees over 55, only 2 out of 10 participated in such sessions. The 7.00 and 8.00 scores for job alleviation and job enrichment are striking, as we would expect no changes in a job as a result of these sessions. One respondent explained:

Employees can learn from it, which results in job alleviation through greater motivation and pleasure, and more job enrichment. (Line manager 39, Organization 10)

### **Evaluated Success Regarding the Development Practices**

None of the development practices are mentioned more than three times. The results of this empirical study should therefore be treated with caution, but nevertheless, we do note some highlights, especially related to the needs of the respondents. Furthermore, we agree that development practices provide perspective on other tasks, that is to say, aimed at development of work and growth in a broad sense. Although this definition is quite stretched, only four HR practices are mentioned: Career and retirement coaching (6%) focused on career/life after retirement scored high on every aspect, though to a somewhat lesser extent on job alleviation. Coaching could be executed by the manager, and by an external coach as well. The same pattern of high scores applied to assignment of mentoring tasks (4%), although to a much lesser extent. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training (2%) obtained very high scores except for job alleviation. Work ability monitoring (2%) showed relatively high scores on all success items.



## **Evaluated Success Regarding the Maintenance Versus the Development Practices**

Overall, we can say that the respondents gave relatively high scores for most HR practices, although some variances are relatively high. Furthermore, we found that 18% of the maintenance scores have a relatively low evaluation, but with considerable variance. With regard to development practices, we have found that 7% of the development practices are evaluated as low. Relating these outcomes to the distinction between maintenance and development, we found only two low scores for general success, that is, for healthy aging sessions, and one low score for flexible scheduling (both being maintenance practices). In contrast, we found eight low scores for the success items related to the JD-R, for both maintenance and development. Concerning job enrichment, we found low scores only for maintenance HR practices. As the preceding quotes pointed out, respondents overall felt no job alleviation through the HR practices. They showed that positive evaluations could be attributed to job enrichment on many occasions, and always to personal efficacy.

### **Prevalence and Evaluations per Respondent Group**

Furthermore, the data from this study were used to test whether differences in the prevalence of HR practices are found among the older workers, line managers, and HR professionals. Descriptive analyses showed that additional leave and night shift exemption were mentioned by far the most often by representatives from all three groups. To test whether the means of the scores of the three respondent groups differed significantly, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was executed. The results of the analysis showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the scores for the three respondent groups.

A more in-depth analysis of prevalence and assessments per respondent group showed differences with regard to the amount and content of mentioned HR practices. HR professionals mentioned six kinds of HR practices, opposed to four HR practices as mentioned by older workers and line managers; since HR is the profession of the HR professionals, we might expect this. Also, we found older workers answering less in accordance with the expected JD-R model line of reasoning than HR professionals: Of the four kinds of HR practices that the category of older workers mentioned, they gave low evaluations on job alleviation, whereas the HR professionals evaluated three practices as low with regard to job alleviation and job enrichment.

In sum, the general success issues showed a rather consistent and positive picture. In contrast, the success criteria related to JD-R showed more negative scores particularly on job alleviation as regards the maintenance and development HR practices. Respondents seem to experience the added value of maintenance HR practices mainly through personal efficacy, and to a lesser extent through job enrichment, while development HR practices' added value is mainly seen through job and personal enrichment. In the next section, we deal with the needs of the respondents.

With regard to Research Question 3, Table 4 shows that 51 respondents provided 10 needed maintenance practices (mentioned 25 times), and 7 needed development practices (mentioned 35 times). The expectation that older workers would want to be supported by development practices that focused on enforcing job resources is partly supported.

The results for the needs regarding HR practices showed that career and retirement coaching was mentioned most frequently (11). This development practice can take many forms. Sometimes it is referred to as interviews on career and retirement issues by the manager with the employee, and sometimes as interviews by parties outside the organization.

Development practices that were less often mentioned included work ability monitoring (7 times), but taken together with the adjoining sport facilities (4 times), this was mentioned as often as career and retirement coaching. As one respondent put the need for it:

Management should pay more attention to the health of employees and not just to the patients. (Older worker 14, Organization 5)

The need for flexible scheduling, which is a maintenance practice, and therefore aimed to reduce job demands, was mentioned 9 times. The respondents indicated that schedules should be adapted to the capacity of the employee, and that management should consider how to deal with additional leave for older workers. Job alleviation was mentioned 7 times. Seconding older workers to work sites that are less demanding, both physically and mentally, was a reported option as well. In this respect, job alleviation takes the form of maintenance whereas job adaptation (mentioned twice) takes the form of development: adaptation to new job circumstances. ICT training is offered to older workers where changes in ICT lead to other job content with more responsibilities.

Interestingly, the older workers, line managers, and HR professionals differed as regards the number of HR practices that were mentioned. Most reported needs came from older workers (28), while HR professionals presented 21 ideas, followed by line managers (11). Older workers emphasized flexible scheduling (5) and job alleviation (4). On the other hand, HR professionals stressed career and retirement coaching (6).

Overall, we can conclude that the need to use development practices is strongly recognized by older workers, line managers, and HR professionals, but flexible scheduling and job alleviation still deserves to be addressed in order to align them to the needs of and to retain older workers.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

In the final section, we restate the research aims and then present results and conclusions followed by areas for future research, theoretical contributions, and implications for HR practice.

## **Restatement of the Research Aims**

Three objectives, translated into a series of research questions and subquestions, underlie the study presented in the preceding sections. The first (corresponding to Research Question 1) was to construct a list of used HR practices for older employees in health care organizations. More specifically, the aim was to get an overview of both the maintenance practices (i.e., protective practices enabling older workers to continue functioning the way they do) and the development practices (i.e., supportive practices enabling older workers to achieve new levels of functioning) that were in use. The second objective of the study (Research Question 2) was to evaluate the success of the HR practices listed. To that end, success was conceptualized in two ways. On the one hand, the concepts of effectiveness, efficiency, level of implementation, and relevance were used as general success criteria. On the other hand, some specific concepts derived from the JD-R model were applied. In this JD-R model, two types of working conditions are distinguished. One is called job demands (conditions that generate physiological or psychological pressures) and the other is called job/personal resources (conditions that open up new opportunities and perspectives). This distinction was translated into three success criteria: job alleviation, job enrichment, and personal efficacy. The third objective of the study (Research Question 3) was to investigate the needs of involved organizational members with respect to HR for older employees. Data were collected by means of interviews with older workers, line managers, and HR professionals using a sample of 51 respondents from 15 health care organizations. These respondents were invited to participate in a semistructured interview to explain their experiences and their needs with respect to HR management for older workers.

## **Results and Conclusions**

The first step was to identify the prevalence of maintenance and development practices focused on older workers in the health care sector. Based on the answers obtained from all interviews combined, 11 different types of HR practices for older workers were identified as being in use in the health care-sector practice. Two of them stand out as being mentioned by the vast majority of the three respondent groups: additional leave and nightshift exemption. These are clearly maintenance practices, and the same is true for 5 other practices (early [part-time] retirement, menopause help, flexible scheduling, dispensation from task redesign, healthy aging sessions) of the 11 mentioned HR practices. Only 4 of the practices mentioned by the respondents had a development nature. This all contributes to a highly asymmetric picture, with a strong prevalence of maintenance practices and a weak prevalence of development practices. Moreover, this conclusion is in line with the outcomes regarding research wherein the JD-R model is empirically tested, and in which the balance currently tends to focus on reducing job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

With regard to the success of the maintenance and development practices identified, it can be said that these practices are experienced as being fairly successful overall. Apart from a few exceptions, the scores for the three other general criteria of success (efficiency, level of implementation, and relevance) conveyed a similar picture. The amorphously positive conclusion that thus takes shape is true for both the maintenance and development practices. The outcomes with regard to the JD-R success criteria (job alleviation, job enrichment, and personal efficacy) add, however, some further qualifications. Based on these outcomes, maintenance and development practices appeared distinct when compared as regards the type of their success. By their very nature, maintenance practices can be expected primarily to cause a reduction of demands, operationalized in this study as job alleviation. In contrast, development practices can first be expected to cause a provision of resources, operationalized as enhanced job enrichment and personal efficacy. As for the development practices, the assessments of the respondents reflected these expectations, with mainly positive scores for the measures of enhanced job enrichment and personal efficacy, and a mixture of positive and negative scores for the job alleviation measures.

Unexpectedly, with respect to the maintenance practices, the respondents' assessments were nearly the opposite in comparison with their expectations. Admittedly, the scores for job enrichment for the two "outstanding" maintenance practices (additional leave and night shift exemption) were negative, which still aligns with the above-mentioned expectations. However, contradicting the latter, the scores for job alleviation for these practices were also negative, while the scores for enhanced personal efficacy tended to be straightforwardly positive. In the case of the other maintenance practices that were mentioned by the respondents, a similar pattern of scores was found. It is a pattern that would be compatible with the nature of development, rather than with maintenance practices. It thus seems to be the case that, remarkably, maintenance practices are beneficial, not so much because they directly reduce the workload of the employees involved, but because they add to the personal efficacy of those employees, enabling them to successfully deal with their workload. In conclusion, whereas we assumed maintenance practices to be predominantly alleviation tools, these maintenance practices appeared to impact in a developmental manner. This conclusion reflects comments made by respondents that HR practices do not instigate job alleviation since these practices do not themselves entail lighter duties but rather more other duties or fewer hours with the same tasks.

Furthermore, this study revealed no significant differences in success scores among the three different respondent groups. Nevertheless, we found the aforementioned developmental nature with regard to the maintenance HR practices in a more pronounced manner among the older workers. These are the very receivers themselves of the implemented HR practices (Khilji & Wang, 2006). The providers of the (intended) HR practices—line managers

and HR professionals—appear to score more amorphously negative for job alleviation and job enrichment. Thus, our analysis of a developmental nature considering the maintenance HR practices seems particularly appropriate for the older workers. The older workers were explicit in their assessments of practices in the light of job alleviation; inserting maintenance HR practices does not contribute to job alleviation at all; and positive scores are mainly related to high scores on personal efficacy. Maintenance HR practices are thus received positively by all respondents, and even in a more pronounced manner regarding the older workers, but they work out in a developmental way.

Examining the needs of the three respondent groups, our expectations that respondents' needs were focused on development rather than on maintenance practices were met with the results of this study. Career and retirement coaching was mentioned the most often. This HR practice is approached from a broad stance: "career development is related to future job assignments" (Gilley, Egglund, & Gilley, 2002, p. 12), and should not be equated with solely upward mobility (Fornes, Rocco, & Rosenberg, 2008) but with sideways mobility and retirement as well. Apparently, a lot could be gained by employing this practice more often. Furthermore, where sports facilities and work ability monitoring are used, which is seldom the case, it is always offered to all ages. It seems that as sport facilities are required for all ages, work ability monitoring could be focused on older workers. In addition, flexible scheduling was mentioned nine times. Needs such as "starting later" and "flexible but regular schedules" were particularly frequently mentioned, primarily by the older workers. Finally, while we found dispensation from task redesign as a maintenance practice in use (see Table 3) with good scores for job alleviation, the opposite HR practice, job mobility, was also mentioned seven times to be a wish. The idea of learning and doing new things could appear challenging, but the knowledge of being secure in a job appeared also to be attractive. In sum, retaining older workers could improve by using more development practices alongside the existing maintenance practices.

Overall, the most noteworthy outcome of the study is that maintenance practices appeared to be successful in terms of developmental outcomes no less than development practices are. This result gives rise to a reconsideration of two issues. The first is the distinction between maintenance and development practices. The difference between the two types of HR practices is not reflected in a difference in terms of the generated outcomes. In a sense, maintenance practices can, as a consequence, be called development practices. Especially the pattern of scores given by the older workers, compared to the scores of the line-managers and HR professionals, points to this conclusion. As the older workers, being the receivers of the HR practices, are the ones with firsthand experience regarding the practice outcomes, this may be viewed as an extra support of it. The conclusion is, in short, that development-through-maintenance, or maintenance-for-development, might be a

workable HR formula. This may hold for the care of older employees, but also for HR and management development in general.

The second issue to be reconsidered is the age-relatedness of HR practices. The development outcomes of HR practices for the older workers appeared to be no less salient than their counterparts, the maintenance outcomes. This being the case, it becomes questionable whether a focus on maintenance is a wise HR policy for older employees. In contrast to suggestions derived from life-span development theories (Baltes et al., 1999; Carstensen, 1992; Higgins; 1997, 2000; Löckenhoff & Carstensen, 2004), an HR policy focused on development might be a just as fruitful one.

### **Limitations**

First, although the distinction between maintenance and development HR practices is a well-thought-out and evidence-based one (Kooij et al., 2010), there is no single accepted theory yet for classifying various practices into different bundles or categories (Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005). As we argued, some HR practices were not uniformly subject to maintenance or development HR practices, depending on the interpretation of the HR practice in question. For example, a training can be categorized as either a maintenance practice, focused on retaining skills of the current required level, or as a development practice, focused on helping employees reaching higher levels of functioning (Kooij et al., 2010). We have chosen to align all practices that are promising regarding even the mere prospect of growth and the development of the job or the employee's competences into the category of development HR practices.

Second, the majority of our sample consisted of female employees. More research focusing on a more gender-balanced environment (Verdonk, Benschop, De Haes, & Lagro-Janssen, 2009) would be highly needed. Research into the generalizability of our findings to other occupational settings and/or countries is recommended as well.

Third, in our study, the distinction between older ( $\geq 55$ ) and younger workers is merely based on chronological or calendar age, whereas chronological age appears to function as a proxy indicator for a broad constellation of age-related processes (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Kooij et al., 2008). Nevertheless, as other aging dimensions appeared to be highly related to chronological age, it seemed worthwhile to focus on HR practices specifically designed to facilitate the retention of the chronologically older workforce category.

Fourth, notwithstanding the researchers' attempts to ensure that self-serving and other biases were expelled as far as possible from the data collected, it could possibly have played a role in encouraging respondents to ascribe certain outcomes that they may not have articulated if no prompts were given. Undoubtedly, this could have (unconsciously) taken place. Nevertheless, as these biases and prompts given were the same in all interviews, they cannot explain any of the differences.

## Areas for Future Research

Despite the aforementioned limitations, we now know that future research should focus on the use of development HR practices, possibly tailor-made, over and above maintenance HR practices. This study adds value to the scholarly literature in the field by providing a list of actually used and needed HR practices, solely focused on older workers. In addition, we know now that the three respondent groups' evaluations of these HR practices show a similar developmental pattern. Even more, the older workers evaluated the maintenance HR practices in a more pronounced developmental manner. General success criteria were rather positive overall. Additional empirical research is needed on the age effects of maintenance and development HR practices in the light of retaining the older worker longer. In our empirical study, we have worked with only single-item measures; we should extend and deepen our understanding of these correlations using psychometrically validated measurement scales for the HR practices. Further attention should be given to extending our knowledge to other age categories as well, and to a broader set of development HR practices. A systematic HR knowledge database could be established in order to more safely conclude on the use of the most appropriate HR practice in a certain situation in future benchmarking approaches.

## Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this study comprise four theoretical contributions. First, we have argued that most research has been restricted either to a mere social psychological component of older people (Ebner et al., 2006; Higgins, 1997; Lockwood et al., 2005), or HRM/HRD (Gong et al., 2009), without taking into account the knowledge on aging. By being the very first study bridging the gap between different stakeholders' perceptions of maintenance and development practices focused on older workers, we aimed to partly close the gap regarding more knowledge on aging at work. As far as we know, this study is the first to focus on all potential HR practices, specifically designed to facilitate the retention of older workers.

Second, we found support for the idea that current HR practices are mainly focused on maintenance, and, more specifically, on reducing employees' job demands. These practices were evaluated as being effective, efficient, implemented in the organizations, and relevant. Although far fewer development HR practices were mentioned, they had higher scores for job enrichment and personal efficacy. Moreover, most needs mentioned were closely linked to development HR practices. We have thus found support for the JD-R model, which states that to retain older employees, more job resources should be made available (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007).

Third, this study is the first that brings about a list of the needs of the relevant respondent groups (see also Roman et al., 2009). We have thereby offered a list of the HR practices in use—the state of the art, as it were—while relating this to the aim to retain older workers. We now know which HR



practices to focus on in future scholarly work and in practice, indicating a more developmental scope than focusing on retaining older workers on the same level of functioning.

Fourth, we know there are slight differences between the actual experiences of used HR practices and perceptions regarding the needs for them among the older workers, line managers, and HR professionals. This study is one of the first to incorporate different respondent groups consisting of management and HR professionals (representing the intended part; see also Khilji and Wang, 2006) and the older workers themselves (representing the receivers of the implemented HR practices). Though the evaluations with regard to the maintenance HR practices showed a developmental nature, this trend was more pronounced for the older workers than for the line managers and HR professionals. Also, older workers emphasized needs for flexible scheduling and job alleviation, whereas HR professionals emphasized needs for development practices, such as career and retirement coaching. Overall, more emphasis appeared to be appropriate using development HR practices, but flexible scheduling and job alleviation still need attention to retain older workers' engagement.

### **Implications for HR Practice**

HR practices that are focused on the retention of older workers are experienced as effective. Although governments are undermining these practices through legislation (such as additional leave, nightshift exemption, and early retirement), they are (highly) appreciated by older workers. We now know that these maintenance HR practices are evaluated positively not so much because of their maintenance nature but because of their developmental nature. Older workers themselves made clear that they appreciated these HR practices because they contributed to their personal efficacy (e.g., more leisure time to compensate for working hours). This could implicate that preserving maintenance HR practices, even by law, could contribute to retaining older employees.

Compared to maintenance practices, development HR practices are used much less frequently but scored highly nevertheless, in particular in the light of job enrichment and personal efficacy (job and personal resources). More career and retirement coaching and work ability monitoring, along with sport facilities and job adaptation are HR practices that could be used easily to retain older workers. Nevertheless, there were considerable variances in the extent to which maintenance HR practices were evaluated positively in terms of success. It seems that to successfully implement these HR practices for retaining older workers, HR should explicitly recognize the organization's responsibility (Sun & Pan, 2008) and adapt these HR practices slightly. For instance, apparently, a lot can be gained by having good conversations between manager and older worker, incorporating the experiences the older worker has with regard to the last working years (being the third stage of working; Rocco et al., 2003)

and the years after retirement. Though the majority of respondents mentioned the annual job interview as a used HR practice, only a few reported this to be (also) focused on facilitating the retention of older workers. HR should incorporate the item of older workers in the yearly job interviews.

We hope that this study encourages more practical and theoretical attention to the used HR practices for older workers in particular.

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**Appendix I. Interview Format Underlying the Interviews Conducted**

<i>We would like to know how this HR practice manifests in practice:</i>		<i>We want to know the intention of this HR practice: Is it meant to contribute to ...</i>			
<i>Is it ...</i>					
<i>Effective</i>	<i>Efficient</i>	<i>Implemented</i>	<i>Job Alleviation</i>	<i>Job Enrichment</i>	<i>Personal Efficacy</i>
Does it satisfy the purpose for which it is intended?	Is it in balance to time, money, and effort?	Do all parties (employer/ employees) cooperate/ is it actually implemented?	Reduction of task requirements?	Enrichment of the work (useful, future prospects better in work, job developing)?	Personal efficacy? Increasing personal effectiveness (does it make more resilient, feeling better)?
Notes + Score 1-10	Notes + Score 1-10	Notes + Score 1-10	Notes + Score 1-10	Notes + Score 1-10	Notes + Score 1-10
(1= totally not, 5 = neutral, 10 = completely)					
<b>MEASUREMENT/ HR PRACTICE</b>					
Name:					
Purpose:					
Content:					

For each HR practice mentioned by the respondent, the interviewer filled out this format per HR practice specifically designed to facilitate the retention of older workers.