



# Exploring self-control in working with a chronic disease: a qualitative synthesis

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**OBJECTIVE:** Working with a chronic disease can be challenging. Self-control could play an important role for workers with a chronic disease in sustainable work participation. The aim of this qualitative synthesis is to present an overview of elements of self-control and factors influencing its exertion, from the perspective of workers with a chronic disease.

**METHODS:** Four databases were systematically searched for relevant articles up to October 2017 (PubMed, PsycInfo, Embase, and Cinahl). Search terms were related to work, seven chronic diseases, subjective needs to continue working, and to qualitative research. The included articles were thematically analyzed using ATLAS.ti.

**RESULTS:** The search yielded 6,445 articles of which 17 studies were included. The analysis revealed four main themes related to self-control:

1. Disclosure
2. Balanced decision making
3. Requesting work accommodations and support
4. Responsible disease management



**CONCLUSION:** Four elements of self-control for workers with a chronic disease were identified. These elements of self-control are helpful in developing a strategy for occupational health professionals to support these workers in strengthening their self-control at work and to facilitate sustainable employment.