

Influence of significant others on work participation of individuals with chronic diseases: a systematic review

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Background

What is known: Significant others such as a partner, family member or friend can influence health outcomes of individuals with a chronic disease.

Research gap: Not much is known about which specific cognitions and behaviours of significant others influence work participation.

Relevance: It is important to gain more knowledge to prevent work disability and promote work participation of workers with a chronic disease.

Aim: To identify cognitions and behaviours of significant others that are related to work participation of individuals with a chronic disease.

Method

- Systematic search of the literature (Figure 1).
- Selection and data extraction by two independent researchers.
- Quality assessment and thematic synthesis.

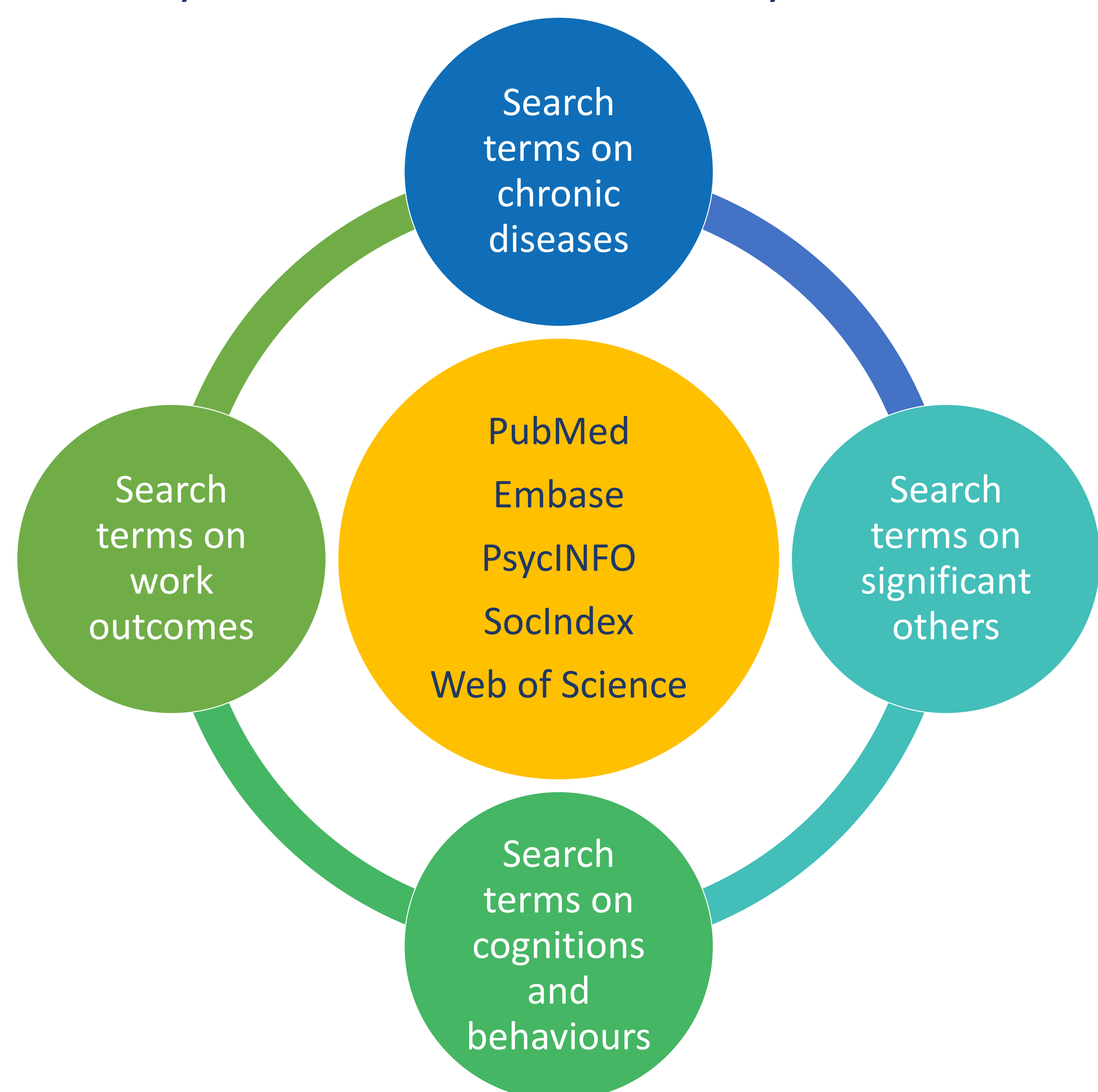


Figure 1. Global overview of the search strategy.

Results

- Out of 5,168 articles, 18 were included of moderate to high quality.
- The included studies focused on populations with chronic pain, cancer, brain injuries, and in one study severe and persistent mental illnesses.
- Twenty-seven factors were identified that were reported to facilitate or hinder work participation of workers with a chronic disease. Seven of these factors were reported in at least four studies (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Overview of factors found in at least four studies.

Discussion

Our review indicates that it may be beneficial to address significant others' cognitions and behaviours in occupational health care to prevent work disability and promote return to work.

To confirm our findings, high quality prognostic studies are needed that investigate significant others' cognitions and behaviours in relation to work participation, as the current evidence is mostly based on qualitative studies.