

## **Work-focused Healthcare in musculoskeletal practice**

### Keynote Sessions

Faculty:

Nathan Hutting

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are characterised by pain and reduced physical functioning, often resulting in decreased quality of life. Work-related MSDs are health problems in which working conditions (i.e., physically demanding, repetitive activities or a poor work environment) significantly contribute to the onset or progression of the disorder but are not necessarily the sole cause. Even if work-related environmental factors do not directly cause MSDs, the symptoms can be work relevant (i.e., the work can influence the symptoms, or the symptoms can affect the ability to work). Work-related MSDs are burdensome to patients, employers, and society, as they are associated with high rates of disability, absenteeism, presenteeism, loss of productivity, longer recovery timeframes, and workers' compensation costs.

Treatments for MSDs are usually delivered by healthcare providers such as general practitioners, physiotherapists, osteopaths, and chiropractors. As such, healthcare providers have a crucial role in preventing unnecessary work loss. Several government policies have embedded work as a health outcome by encouraging healthcare professionals to participate in work-focused health conversations and tackle obstacles to work participation.

The absence of work-focused health care often creates an obstacle to work participation due to the lack of consistent, supportive conversations about work and agreed therapeutic goals aimed at work participation. Evidence suggests that conversations about work have not been clearly defined or embedded within clinical practice. In this lecture, the importance of providing work-focused healthcare in musculoskeletal practice, characteristics of work-focused healthcare and (practical) examples of work-focused healthcare will be presented.

### **About Our Speaker:**

Nathan Hutting

Nathan is an associate professor at the HAN University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands (research Group Occupation and Health). He also works as a physiotherapist in a private practice. He is an executive committee member of the Dutch Association for Manual Therapy. He is the member organisation delegate of the Netherlands to the International Federation of Orthopaedic Manipulative Physical Therapists (IFOMPT). He is also a board member of the association VvAA, the business services provider for professionals in the Dutch healthcare sector, with over 130,000 members. His current research topics include musculoskeletal conditions, self-management, patient-centred care, shared decision making and occupational

health. Nathan has published about 45 peer-reviewed articles. He has made numerous international congress presentations and has chaired focused symposia at the World Physiotherapy Congresses in 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023. He is also an associate editor of BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders and a member of the International Advisory Board of Musculoskeletal Science and Practice.