

## Job-Related Functional Capacity Evaluations (FCEs)

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Beginning in the 1970s, U.S. physicians who understood that a history and physical examination are not enough to assess employability or work disability began referring patients to physical or occupational therapists for measurement of such functional capacities as lifting, standing, walking, sitting, and carrying. Reneman et al. (2001) have criticized the lack of job-relatedness of this type of functional capacity evaluations (FCEs). Jette & Badley (2002) characterized measuring lifting, standing, walking, sitting, and carrying as one level removed from any legitimate concept of work disability. These criticisms apply to testing a worker on a sedentary job on various lifts and carries, regardless of the relevance of lifting and carrying to the person's job. Traditional FCEs ignore important individual differences in background, personality, motivation, or vocational interests (Feinstein, Josephy, & Wells, 1986; Owens, 1999). Reneman and Dijkstra (2003) reviewed research indicating that the quantity and/or quality of FCE reliability and validity studies published in the 1990s were insufficient to support claims of FCE reliability and validity. They emphasized that *psychometrics* (emphasis in the original) are key to FCEs; and while psychometric studies on FCEs are rare, the literature on reliability of job analysis is large to permit summarization with meta-analytic techniques (Voskuijl & van Sliedregt, 2002; Dierdorff & Wilson 2003).

Examination of PAQ ratings on a worker's job can facilitate communication between provider, patient, occupational therapist and others about elements of work that functional limitations or disability make problematic. Problematic items can be targets for treatment and the proper focus of FCE when treatment is complete. A job-related FCE that is supplemented by psychological assessment can help to identify needs for reasonable accommodation on the job. To structure a job-related FCE, the occupational specialist identifies problem elements and examines PAQ ratings on relevant jobs, as in [this example](#).

### References

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