



# Early intervention with regard to axial SpA in the workplace

Regional pilot project by **Prevent** and **AbbVie**  
on early identification, intervention and reintegration  
of employees with Axial SpA (axial spondyloarthritis)

## ● Background

- Approx. 1 in 5 adults experiences chronic lower back pain
- 3% of adults: chronic back pain is caused by inflammation
- **Axial SpA** (axial spondyloarthritis) is characterised by frequent spinal infections and often takes 7-10 years to be diagnosed correctly
- Difficult to make the distinction between mechanical and inflammatory back pain
  - ➔ importance of early diagnosis to optimally treat this inflammatory disease!
- The burden of the disease is high for patients AND for society: it hits people aged 30-45 in the prime of their productive years
- Direct and indirect costs can also be limited through early diagnosis and customised treatment

# ● Project set-up

- **Objective** = diagnose at early stage by raising awareness of stakeholders in the workplace, refer the patient to a specialist and take measures to facilitate reintegration.
- **Duration** = 6 months (starting September 2015)
  - 1) **Preparation phase / awareness-raising**  
Workplace as setting: early diagnosis benefits employees AND employers
  - 2) **Screening by occupational physicians**  
If necessary, referral to rheumatologist + KPIs
  - 3) **Information on job retention and reintegration**
- **Means** = screening tool, training and info package for occupational physicians, brochure for employees and employers, brochure for rheumatologists