

Labour market trajectories following sickness absence due to self-reported all cause morbidity – a longitudinal study

Preliminary results

Pernille Pedersen, Thomas Lund, Louise Lindholdt, Ellen A. Nohr,
Chris Jensen, Hans Jørgen Søgaard, Merete Labriola

Public Health and Quality Improvement, Central Denmark Region, Aarhus, Denmark

Psychiatric Research Unit West, Regional Psychiatric Services West, Central Denmark Region, Herning, Denmark

Introduction

- Sickness absence causes have different impact on the individuals' chance of return to work
- The RTW process after sickness absence is complex and evolving as it covers a series of events, transitions and phases of employment status

Aim

- The aim of this study was to investigate differences in RTW and employment trajectories in individuals on sick leave for mental health reasons and individuals with other health-related reasons for sick leave.

Outcome measures

- Employment status during the 51 weeks following the questionnaire and recorded weekly
- 1) Time-to-event analysis
 - Receiving social benefits: Yes / No
- 2) Sequence analysis
 - 1) sickness absence, 2) working, 3) unemployment, 4) temporary support, and 5) permanent support

Exposure variables

- Self-reported reason for sickness absence
 - Mental health reasons (anxiety, depression, burn out etc.)
 - Other health reasons (musculoskeletal disorders, cancer, or chronic pain)

Results

Table 2 Baseline characteristics of the study population

Variable	Mental health reasons (n=725)		Other health reasons (n=1,311)		P-value*
	n/mean	%/sd	n/mean	%/sd	
Gender (female)	481	66.3	679	51.8	<0.001
Age (years)	42.3	10.6	45.7	11.2	<0.001
Highest level of education					
Primary school/Secondary school	182	25.1	405	30.9	
Tertiary education <3 years	307	42.3	617	47.1	<0.001
Tertiary education >3 years	236	32.6	289	22.0	
Employment					
Supported jobs /early age pension	24	3.3	37	2.8	
Student	43	5.9	36	2.8	
Unemployed	105	14.5	130	9.9	
Unskilled worker (e.g. cleaning)	100	13.8	263	20.1	
Skilled worker (e.g. artisan)	93	12.8	293	22.4	<0.001
White collar worker (e.g. nurse)	320	44.1	427	32.6	
Self-employed	40	5.5	125	9.5	
Recovery expectations					
0-30%	87	12.0	90	6.9	
40-60%	160	22.1	151	11.5	
70-90%	180	24.8	211	16.1	<0.001
100%	298	41.1	859	65.5	

*P-values indicate tests of differences between exposure groups by *Chi2 test* or *t-test*

Time-to-event analysis

Table 3 Change of having returned to work in individuals on sick leave due to mental health or other health reasons at 1 year follow-up

Reason for sickness absence	CIP% (95% CI)	Crude analysis * RR (95% CI)	Adj. model 1 RR (95% CI)	Adj. model 2 RR (95% CI)	Adj. model 3 RR (95% CI)
Other health reasons <i>n</i> = 1,311	67 (65;70)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)	1 (ref)
Mental health reason <i>n</i> = 725	56 (52;59)	0.87 (0.80;0.93)	0.89 (0.82;0.96)	0.92 (0.85;0.99)	1.01 (0.95;1.08)

RR: Relative risk. CI: confidence interval, CIP (Cumulative Incidence Proportion) shows the percentages of individuals having returned to work, *: Adjusted for effect of the psychoeducation intervention, Adj. model 1: Adjusted for effect of intervention, gender, and age, Adj. model 2: Adjusted as in model 1 and also for education and employment, Adj. model 3: Adjusted as in model 2 and also for RTW expectations.

Sequence analysis

Fig 1 Weekly share of status by exposure groups

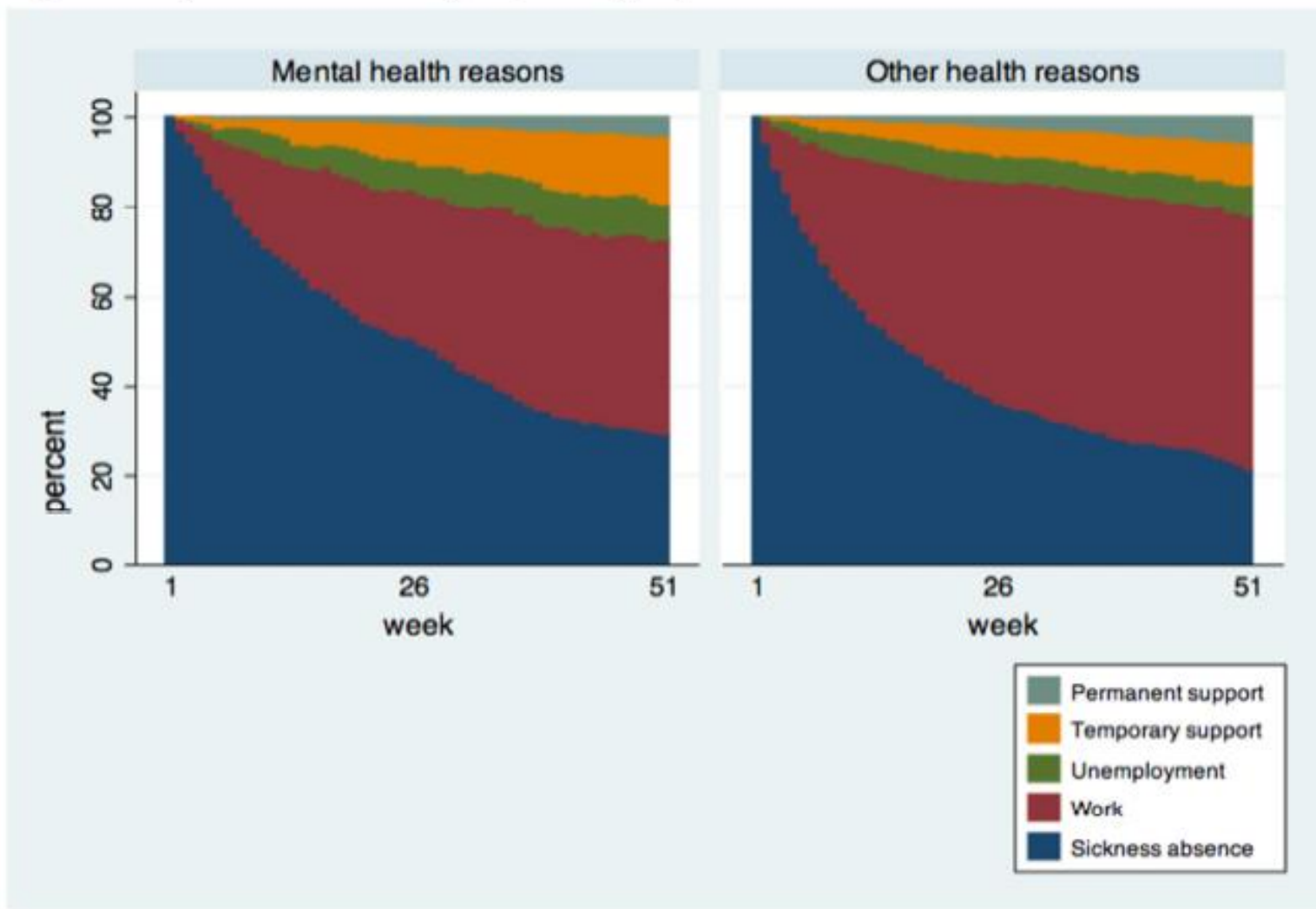


Table 4 Characteristic of labour market sequences in exposure groups

	Mental health reasons n=721 Mean (sd)	Other health reasons n=1,297 Mean (sd)	Diff	p-value*
Mean duration in...				
Sickness absence	17.50 (17.57)	22.53 (17.76)	4.97	<0.0001
Work	15.96 (17.20)	22.45 (19.00)	-6.49	<0.0001
Unemployment	3.38 (6.69)	2.80 (7.12)	0.58	0.07
Temporary support	4.18 (9.49)	2.91 (8.14)	1.27	<0.01
Permanent support	0.98 (5.42)	1.31 (6.23)	-0.33	0.24

Conclusion

- Employees on sick leave due to self-reported mental health problems
 - more weeks in sickness absence and temporary benefits
 - higher risk of not having returned to work within a year
- The difference could be explained by their lower RTW expectations at baseline.