

Multisectorial collaboration to reduce work absence - a pilot project

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Background

Many actors are often involved to reduce the length of work absence in patients with musculoskeletal disease, but often there is little or no collaboration between these actors.

Objective

To improve the collaboration between the multidisciplinary Return-To-Work team at HRD and actors in other sectors.

Aim

Establish at least two new strategies that could possibly contribute to reduce the numbers of patients on sick-leave, or their length of work absence.

Methods

A group consisting of general practitioners, employers, a patient partner, representatives from The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service (NAV) and clinicians from HRD met to discuss how to improve their collaboration. The reference group for the project included a local medical officer, a patient partner, a NAV representative, a career supervisor, and the leader of our rehabilitation unit. Experiences and challenges related to musculoskeletal disorders and work were discussed.

Also, interviews were conducted by the project leader with general practitioners at different doctor's offices, and with leaders of Healthy Life Centres (Frisklivssentraler).

Results

New summary for outpatient clinic

Headings in the summary:

- Reason of the problem
- Perpetuating factors
- The patients goal(-s)
- Suggested treatment
- Challenges at the workplace
- The patient's responsibility
- Information to the GP

1 day course for patients

Content:

- Health promoting factors in musculoskeletal disease
- Fear- avoidance
- Information about rights and responsibilities during work absence
- Health benefits in work

Discussion and conclusion

Talking with actors across sectors was found valuable for those involved, and it resulted in two specific new working routines for our Return-To-Work team. Collaborating with actors in other sectors develop a common understanding of the challenges and needs around these patients.