

Effects of a workplace intervention in inpatient occupational rehabilitation: a randomized clinical trial

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Introduction

Workplace interventions have been effective in increasing return to work (RTW) for people on sick leave. However, it has not been investigated whether a workplace intervention provides additional benefit when added to inpatient occupational rehabilitation. Thus, the aim of this study is to evaluate whether adding a workplace intervention to an inpatient occupational rehabilitation program can reduce the number of sickness absence days and improve time until sustainable RTW compared to a standard program without a workplace intervention.

Methods

The design was a randomized clinical trial with parallel groups. Participants were workers, 18-60 years old, sick listed with musculoskeletal, psychological or general and unspecified diagnoses. The standard rehabilitation program lasted 2+1 weeks (with one week at home between) and consisted of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, physical training and work-related problem-solving, including creating a RTW plan, and was the same for both groups. The intervention group got in addition a workplace intervention during the third week at home. The work-place intervention included both group-based and individual preparations before the home period and a work-place meeting between the sick listed worker, the employer and a coordinator from the rehabilitation center. The main outcome was number of sickness absence days during 12 months of follow-up, and time until full sustainable RTW (defined as four weeks without sick-leave), measured by registry data.

Results

168 individuals were included in the trial. Data on sickness absence is obtained and results are expected to be ready June/July 2018.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of this study will be of interest for individuals on sick leave, clinicians, researchers and decision makers.