

Title

“Multisectorial collaboration to reduce work absence - a pilot project”

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Introduction

In Norway, patients with musculoskeletal disorders and patients with mental illnesses account for the majority of long-term sick-leave. Many actors are often involved to reduce the length of work absence, but often there is little or no collaboration between these actors.

The objective of this project was to improve the collaboration between the Multidisciplinary Return-To-Work (MD-RTW) team at HRD and actors in other sectors, promoting patients with musculoskeletal disorders staying at work. The aim of the project was to 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 (GPs), employers, a patient partner, representatives from 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 GPs at different doctor’s offices, and with leaders of Health Promotion Centers.

Results

Two new working routines for the MD-RTW team at HRD were implemented. First, a new summary was developed with standard headings; reason of the problem, perpetuating factors, the patients goal(-s), suggested treatment, challenges at the workplace, the patient’s responsibility, and information to the GP. The text should be accurate and not exceed one A4 page.

Secondly, it was determined that a theme day should be arranged for patients where advices about health issues and information about rights and responsibilities during work absence should be addressed by representatives from the collaborating actors.

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 MD-RTW team. Collaborating with actors in other sectors develop a common understanding about resources needed from each other to help the

patients. The experiences from the present project have contributed to plans for future projects.