

Common mental disorders, return-to-work and sickness absence (CORSA)

Findings from a mixed method follow –up study

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Purpose of the CORSA study

- 1) To identify factors that facilitate or hinder return to work among employees on long term sickness absence due to Common Mental Disorders
- 2) To get an in-depth understanding of how people with common mental disorders experience sickness absence



The Danish flexicurity model



Flexibility for the employers in Denmark:

- Employers can easily dismiss people who are on sickness absence

Social Security for the employees:

- Employees are entitled to sickness benefit compensation
- The state bears the financial burden of sickness benefit compensation
- The local governments have the main responsibility for ensuring return to work

Absence due to disease?

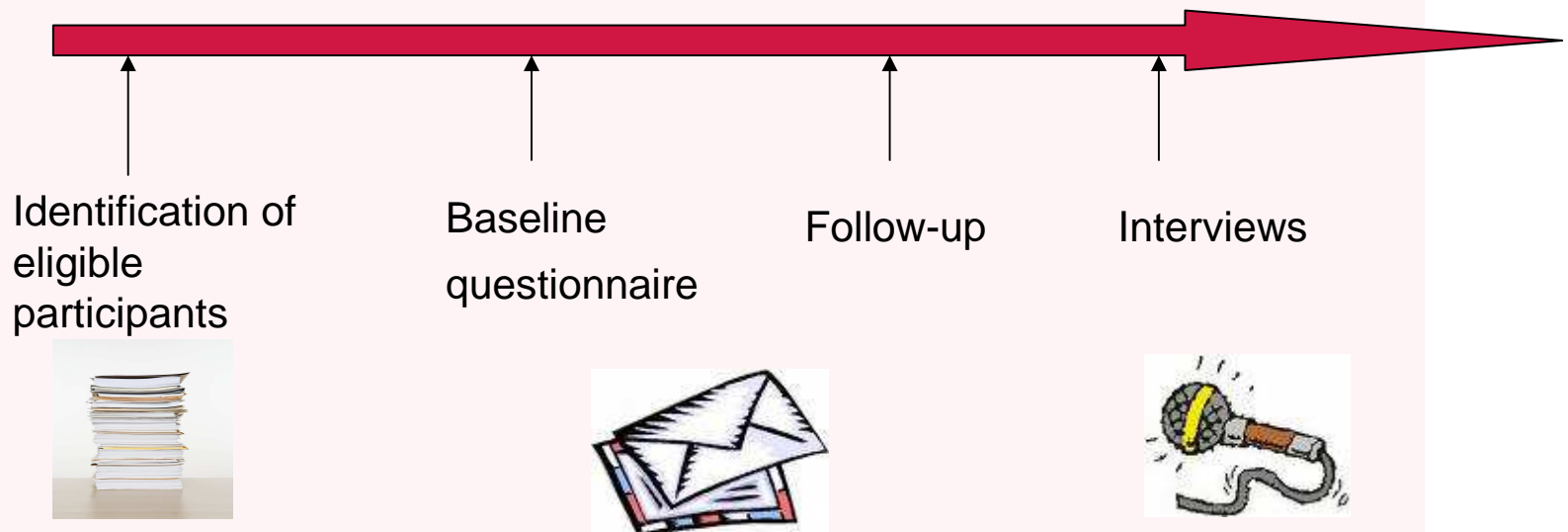
- The legislative category for entitlement to sickness benefit is “incapacity to work due to disease”
- The term “disease” however is not specified in greater detail, which might reflect a wish to keep the criteria fluid and flexible
- A sick listed person can be self-certified until the officials in the local government require a medical certificate



CORSA study design

Work in progress

(April 2007-) (May- December 2007) (February - July 2008) (June 2008 -)



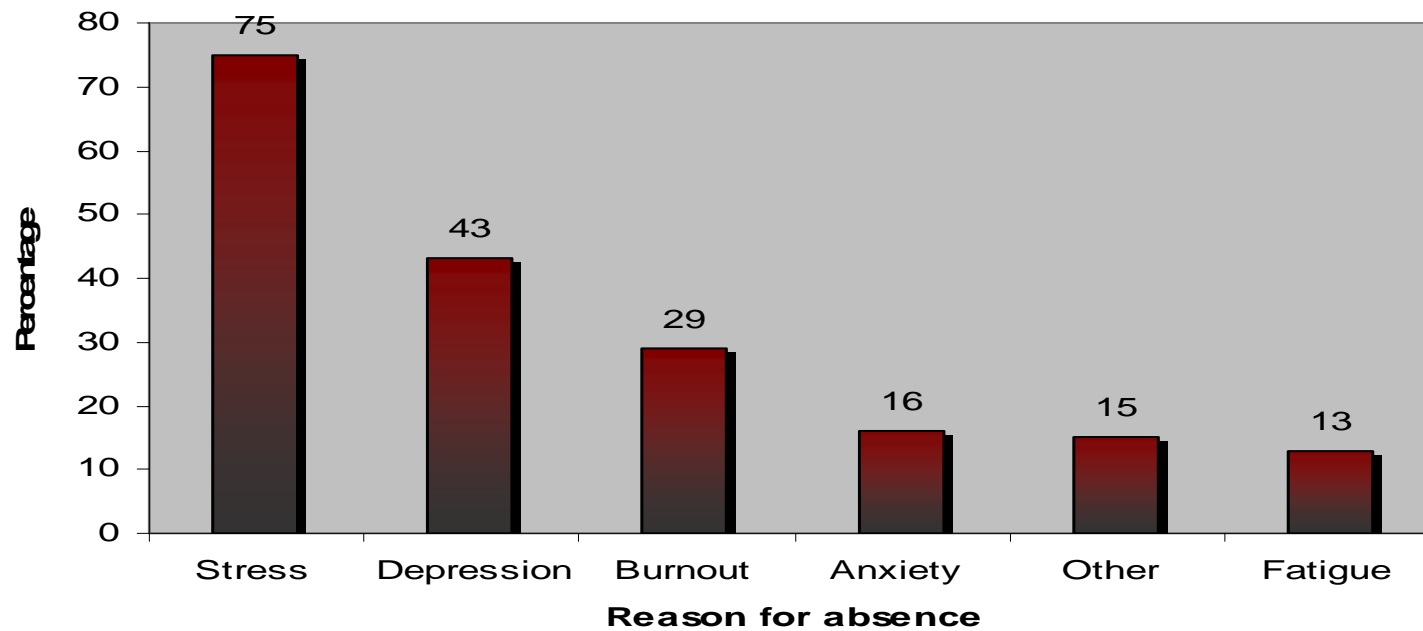
Data collection



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Results from baseline

Self-reported reasons for being on sickness absence



Perceptions about causes for illness

What do you think have had a substantial influence on your illness?

Work	83 %
Work only	48 %
Private conditions	36 %
Private conditions only	7 %
Other reasons	16 %
Do not know	3 %

Qualitative interviews

- We recruited women from the baseline questionnaires
- 150 women agreed to participate in a personal interview
- We aim to interview 20 women
- So far we interviewed 7 women



Is it me or my work?

- The dilemma of personality
 - Women discussed how much their own personality contributed to their illness
 - Too much emphasis on personality could be detrimental to self-esteem
 - Understand why they became ill was important in order to cope with the illness/absence

Negotiating perceptions about causes of illness

- Women constantly had to explain their illness to others – especially with regard to **why** this happened to them
- The issue of blame and responsibility for the illness was very central in relation to the employer

Future analysis

From the follow-up questionnaires we will be able to measure:

- Changes in health
- Work role functioning
- Return to work



Thank you

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