

Evaluation of return-to-work interventions for people with common mental disorders

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Today

- The purpose of the evaluation
- Sickness absence in a Danish context
- The intervention in the municipality of Copenhagen
- The evaluation design

Purpose of the evaluation

- To evaluate return-to-work interventions for people on long term sickness absence due to common mental disorders

The Danish flexicurity model

Flexibility for the employers in Denmark:

- Employers can easily hire and dismiss people

Social Security for the employees:

- Employees are entitled to social benefits if they get sick, fired or are otherwise unable to work
- The state bears the financial burden of the social benefits

The Danish labour market

- The current situation in the Danish labour market is a
 - **shortage of labour**
 - **an aging workforce**
- **An increasing number of people on disability pension due to common mental disorders**
- Therefore there is a wish for responsibly reincorporating people with common mental disorders into the workforce

Sickness absence in Denmark

- The **employer** is obliged to give compensation in the first 3 weeks that an employee is absent due to sickness or ill-health
- After 3 weeks the employer can apply for reimbursement from the municipality
- In Denmark it is possible to obtain compensation for illness related absence from work for a period of up to 1 year.
- The **municipalities** are responsible for getting people on long term sickness leave back to work if possible
- They can outsource this task to private companies

The intervention

- A co-ordinated effort to promote return to work of employees on long-term sickness absence due to common mental disorders
- A co-ordinated effort means to gather the key stakeholders in the return-to-work process
- A multidisciplinary intervention

The intervention

- An intervention-team consisting of a medical practitioner, a psychologist, a physiotherapist and a case manager
- The intervention-team estimates the situation and work ability of the person on sick leave
- The intervention-team makes an individual plan for return to work (a tailored intervention)
- 12 weeks
- The case manager keeps in contact with the person on sick leave

The intervention

Inclusion criteria

- 20-60 years old
- Employees
- Common mental disorders (depression, stress, anxiety)

The evaluation study design

- An effect and a process evaluation using a mixed method approach.

The evaluation study design

The recruitment process:

- All people on sick leave have to attend to a meeting with a social worker from the municipality
- People who meets the inclusion criteria are divided into a (potential) **intervention group** and a **comparison group**

The evaluation study design

The effect evaluation

A baseline **survey** with a 9 month follow-up among the intervention and comparison group.

- **Symptoms (MDI – major depression inventory)**
- **Treatment**
- **Expectations and wishes for return to work**
- **Work Ability**
- **The workplace**

Register data

- **Employment status**
- **Returned to work or not?**
- **Sickness absence in days/ hours**

The process evaluation

- One-on-one interviews with a selection of the participants
- Focus group interviews with the intervention team
- Focus group interviews with the municipality
- Observation of the interventions team meeting with a selection of the participants and the interventions teams conference meeting

Value of the evaluation

- This evaluation can give us knowledge about whether or not this kind of a co-ordinated intervention is a good tool in order to facilitate return to work among people with common mental disorders

Thank you

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