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Effectiveness of early part-time sick leave in musculoskeletal disorders

Submission date	Recruitment status	[_] Prospectively registered
19/12/2007	No longer recruiting	[X] Protocol
Registration date	**Overall study status**	[_] Statistical analysis plan
21/01/2008	Completed	[X] Results
Last Edited	**Condition category**	[_] Individual participant data
26/06/2013	Musculoskeletal Diseases	

Plain English summary of protocol
Not provided at time of registration

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
322139

Study information

Scientific Title

Study objectives

Our hypothesis is that employees whose work time is temporarily reduced and work load adjusted during early stage of disability will have less disability days and faster return to regular work duties than employees on conventional sick leave.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved by the Coordinating Ethics Committee of Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa on 20 December 2005 (HUS 461/E0/05). Amendment was approved on 24 October 2006.

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Single-center randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Not Specified

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Musculoskeletal disorders

Interventions
Intervention: Part-time sick leave (daily work load reduced by restricting work time by about 50%, and, if necessary, remaining work tasks modified so that working should be possible despite the symptoms)
Control: Full-time sick leave

Intervention Type
Other

Phase
Not Specified

Primary outcome(s)
1. Number of days from the initial visit to the return to regular work activities
2. Total number of part- and full-time sick leave days during one- and two-year follow-up

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Pain, measured using numerical scale 0 to 10 (0 = no pain, 10 = unbearable pain) at 0, 1, 3, 8, 12 and 52 weeks
2. Self-assessed function (Oswestry back questionnaire; shortened Disabilities of the Arm, Shoulder and Hand questionnaire [Quick DASH]; Comprehensive OsteoArthritis Test [COAT]) at 0, 1, 3, 8, 12 and 52 weeks

Costs and benefits to the employee, employer and society will be estimated in both study groups.

Completion date

30/06/2009

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Employees who seek medical advice in the occupational health service primarily due to musculoskeletal pain in the neck or shoulder region, back or upper or lower extremities, are eligible to the study. The symptoms and related disability must warrant prescription of full-time sick leave according to the current practice, but the physician considers the employee to be able to work part-time without the risk of the health condition to deteriorate.

Specific inclusion criteria:
1. 18 to 60 years of age
2. Permanent or long-term employment (30 hours or more per week)
3. No sick leave or other absence exceeding two weeks during the preceding month
4. Not more than 30 days on sick leave due to any health problem during three preceding months
5. Employee is not listed for any surgery that requires more than one week of sickness absence
6. No plan for longer absence from work during 12 months after enrollment
7. An employee can be enrolled only once

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 Years

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. General exclusion criteria:
1.1. Acute infections
1.2. Major accidental injury
1.3. Active inflammatory arthritis
1.4. Suspected occupational injury or disease
1.5. Malignant tumour diagnosed or treated during the preceding year
1.6. Severe mental disorder;
1.7. Pregnancy
1.8. Severe pain (>7 on a scale from 0 to 10)
1.9. Pain interferes with sleep severely (>7 on scale from 0 to 10)

Pain area specific exclusion criteria:
2. Back region:
2.1. Muscle weakness in the lower extremities related to back pain
2.2. Positive straight-leg-raising test

2.3. Pain-related trunk list
2.4. Painful spasm of the back when bending forward
3. Neck and shoulder region:
3.1. Muscle weakness in the upper extremities related to the pain
3.2. Head compression or movements induce radiating pain below elbow level
3.3. Painful torticollis
4. Shoulder and upper extremity regions:
4.1. Muscle weakness related to the pain
4.2. Severe pain in movements interfering with most functions
5. Lower extremities:
5.1. Pain prevents walking

Date of first enrolment
01/01/2008

Date of final enrolment
30/06/2009

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Finland

Study participating centre
Topeliuksenkatu 41 a A
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Sponsor information

Organisation
Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

ROR
https://ror.org/030wyr187

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Social Insurance Department, the Finnish Work Environment Fund (ref. 106304)

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Not provided at time of registration

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	results	01/03/2012		Yes	No
Results article	results	01/01/2013		Yes	No
Protocol article	protocol	25/02/2008		Yes	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes