

Work ability and perceived functioning in everyday life after participating in a person-centred rehabilitation program targeting return to work after stroke

Gunilla Eriksson¹, Therese Hellman², Annika Öst Nilsson¹, Ulla Johansson¹, Elin Ekbladh³, Birgitta Bernspång⁴

¹*Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden,* ²*Uppsala universitet, Uppsala, Sweden,* ³*Linköpings universitet, Linköping, Sweden,* ⁴*Umeå universitet, Umeå, Sweden*

Introduction: Less than 50% of persons having stroke under 65 years of age return to work (RTW) in Sweden. Many actors are involved in the RTW process. Increased collaboration is requested. Support from a coordinator during RTW connecting all involved actors have increased the RTW-rate for other groups, and a coordinator knowledgeable in stroke has been emphasised.

Objectives: To evaluate how a newly designed person-centred rehabilitation program affects work ability, work re-entry and everyday functioning at the end of intervention and at six months after completed intervention in persons that worked before stroke.

Method: A single subject research design A-B-A-C was used. 10 participants that worked before stroke were consecutively included; 3 were females, mean age= 50 years; 7 had a mild stroke. Data on work ability, fatigue, impact of stroke and self-efficacy was collected before, during, after, and 6 months after the intervention.

Results: Preliminary results show that 8 of 10 participants had returned to work, one was still in vocational training and one had had a new stroke. Self-efficacy relating to RTW and fatigue had improved but not significantly. Analysis is ongoing.

Conclusion: A coordinator, an experienced occupational therapist, supporting the persons with stroke and the employers at the work place provided important support in the RTW-process by; giving information to co-workers/managers; individual advice regarding strategies on how to handle the consequences of stroke; performing regular visits at the workplace and continuously collaborate with other actors. The program will be tested for persons with other diagnoses.