

Self-rated work ability as a predictor of sickness – absence in Sweden.

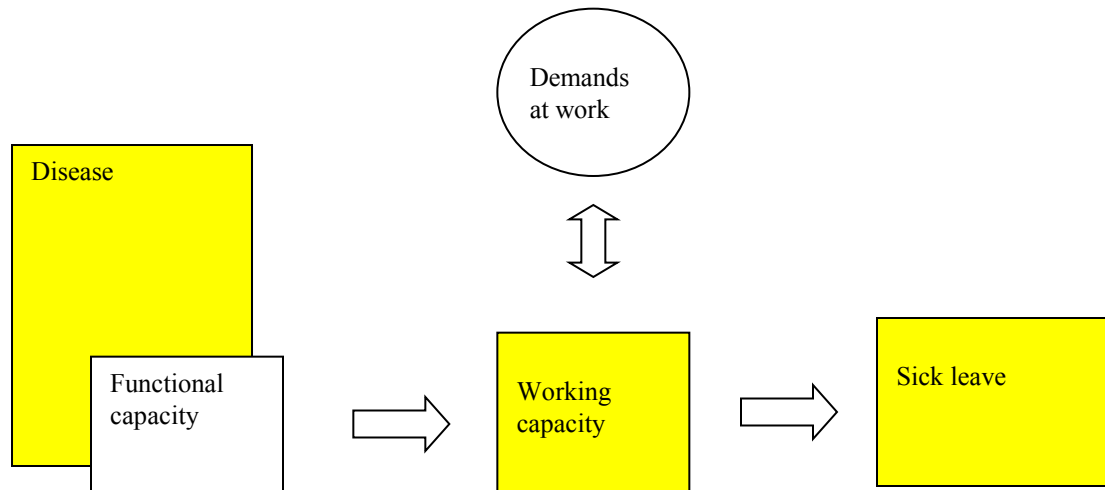
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Background and Concepts

Sickness absence

Two preconditions for receiving sickness benefits in Sweden:
Both disease and inability to work are required.



Alexandersson K, Nordlund A :Scand J Public Health 2004

Work ability – An elusive concept?

- Work ability Index WAI – The most commonly used concept
- Takes into consideration both the physical and mental demands of the work, as well as the worker's health state and mental resources.
- Consists of seven different items.
- Developed by *Tuomi K, Ilmarinen J, Jahkola A et al.*

- Why not use one single question, if one question works, why ask several?
 - In this study we have used only one single question on Work Ability
 - Similarly to the one classic question on self rated health *Bowling A J Epidemiol Community health 2005*

Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to evaluate:

The Work Ability studied by a single item in relation to present and future sickness absence spells.

- **How would you rate your ability to work today**

- “Hur bedömer du din arbetsförmåga idag?”

- **1, Can not work at all**

- “Kan inte arbeta alls”

Perfect ability to work, 10

“Perfekt arbetsförmåga”



Methods - Calculations

Calculations regarding self rated work ability (WA)

The categorization

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1-2 Poor		3-5 Fair			6-8 Good			9-10 Excellent	

Odds ratios (OR) of sick leave were calculated using Logistic regression corrected for age, sex, education and sick-leave days during past 10 years before the follow-up in 2008.

Study population

Baseline 2007: All new sick-listed persons in Nov.-Dec. 2007 in Sweden



RTC-study of early intervention in sickness absenteeism
In December 2008 a questionnaire was distributed (N=22728, response rate 48%)



Present study: The present study include people aged 20-59 who were not on sick-leave in Dec. 2008 and answered yes on the question Do you work today? (n=5847)

Outcome: New sick – leave spells (> 14 days) or disability pension during follow up 2,5 year (Jan 2009 – July 2011)

Sex and Diagnosis in december 2007

Diagnosis in December 2007 n=5761	Male n=2075	Female n=3686
Respiratory diseases	1,3	0,9
Cancer diseases	4,6	4,7
Pregnancy disorders	0,0	3,5
Heart and vascular diseases	9,2	1,8
Gastrointestinal diseases	3,2	1,8
Mental diseases and illnes	7,5	11,3
Musculoskeletal diseases	19,0	16,7
Diseases of the nervous system	0,9	0,8
Injuries, poisoning and accidents	13,6	6,9
Other diseases	28,0	36,2
More than one diagnosis	12,6	15,4
	100 %	100 %

Sex and Work Ability

How would you rate your ability to work today?

	Poor N (%)	Fair N (%)	Good N (%)	Excellent N (%)	Total
Men	12 (0,6)	240 (11,4)	805 (38,4)	1040 (49,6)	2097
Women	26 (0,7)	340 (9,3)	1323 (36,0)	1985 (54,0)	3674
Total	38 (0,7)	580 (10,1)	2128 (36,9)	3025 (54,2)	5771

At least one sickness absence of 14 days or more during follow up and WA

How would you rate your ability to work today?

	Poor N (%)	Fair N (%)	Good N (%)	Excellent N (%)	Total
No case	17 (0,5)	291 (7,9)	1295 (35,3)	2067 (56,3)	3670
At least one case	21 (1,0)	289 (13,8)	833 (45,6)	958 (45,6)	2101
Total	38 (0,7)	580 (10,1)	2128 (36,9)	3025 (54,2)	5771

Conclusion

Work Ability assessed by one single question seems to be useful as a screening tool for identification of subjects at risk for future long-lasting sickness absence spells

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Thank you for your attention!

