

A Randomized Study of Early Intervention in Spells of Sickness Absence in Sweden

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The questions addressed by the study

Do *early interventions (by insurance adjudicators)* in selected spells of sickness absence:

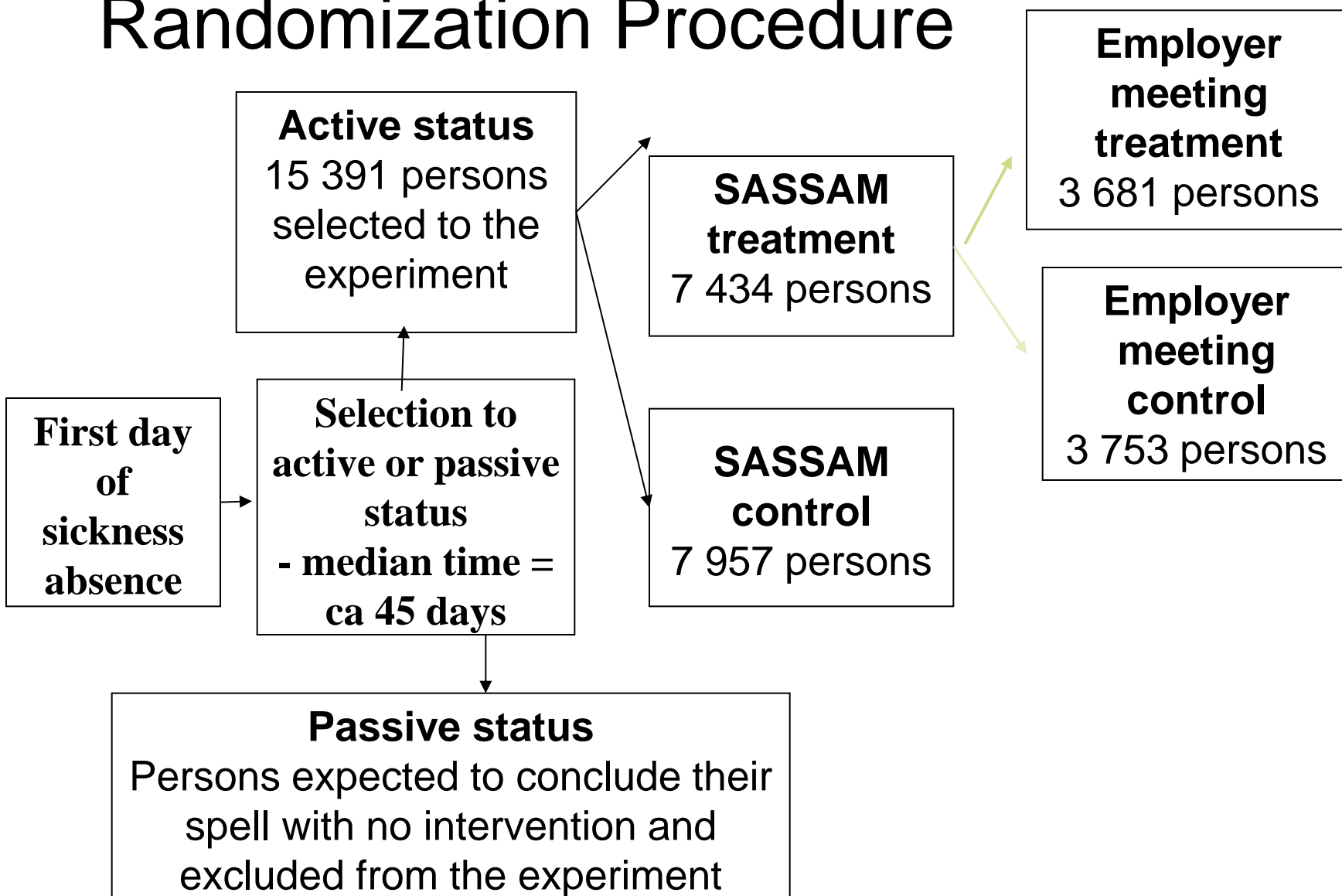
- lead to shorter spells?
- have an effect on disability grants?

Randomized Experiment

November 5 - December 14 in 2007

- Nationwide – all new cases covered by Sweden's national and universal insurance
- Maximum insurance period for a continuous spell is 30 months,
- but absence from the workplace can also occur as a series of spells over a longer span of time.
- The follow-up analysis has two time dimensions – 30 months and 72 months.

Randomization Procedure



Randomization Scheme

- SASSAM
 - Treatment *immediately (even-numbered day of birth)*
 - Control *wait at least 45 days (odd-numbered day of birth)*
- Employer meeting
 - Treatment *immediately (even-numbered month of birth)*
 - Control *wait at least 45 days (odd-numbered month of birth)*

Did the randomization work?
**- We examine key variables
and the same variables are used in
the analyses**

	SASSAM- treatment	SASSAM- control	t- value	Employer meeting treatment	Employer meeting control	t- value
<i>Women, %</i>	61.27	59.12	2.73	61.59	60.96	0.55
<i>Age, average</i>	46.10	46.39	-1.48	46.03	46.17	-0.50
Education						
<i>Education, 0-9 years, %</i>	19.10	19.99	-1.40	18.42	19.77	-1.48
<i>Education, 10-12 years, %</i>	51.96	52.16	-0.24	52.73	51.21	1.31
<i>University education, %</i>	28.53	27.43	1.51	28.47	28.59	-0.11
<i>Born in Sweden, %</i>	79.80	78.17	2.47	79.71	79.88	-0.19
<i>Number of prior compensated days of sickness, January 1, 2005- October 31, 2007</i>	101.82	99.68	0.88	104.98	98.73	1.78
Benefit category						
<i>Employee, %</i>	79.70	79.11	0.90	79.68	79.72	-0.05
<i>Unemployed, %</i>	13.02	12.73	0.54	13.15	12.90	0.32
<i>Other criteria för sickness comp, %</i>	7.28	8.16	-2.04	7.17	7.38	-0.35
<i>Partial disability recipient at the time of selection, % yes</i>	10.21	9.29	1.93	10.16	10.26	-0.14
Rehabilitation measure						
<i>- no rehabilitation</i>	46.45	46.37	0.09	45.67	47.22	-1.34
<i>- partial return to work at end of case</i>	44.46	45.02	-0.70	44.93	43.99	0.82
<i>- other rehabilitation</i>	4.57	4.37	0.60	4.59	4.56	0.07
<i>- both partial return and other</i>	4.52	4.24	0.86	4.81	4.24	1.19
Diagnosis category						
<i>- Psychological</i>	33.33	32.52	1.07	33.20	33.47	-0.25
<i>- Musculoskeletal</i>	30.79	31.24	-0.61	30.83	30.75	0.08
<i>- Other diagnoses</i>	35.88	36.23	-0.46	35.97	35.78	0.17

Did spells “treated” with early SASSAM have fewer compensated days?

Method: Cox proportional hazard model, including the key variables listed above.

Results:

- Early SASSAM and Employer meetings have no statistically significant effect on the length of spells.
- This result holds for the 30 month overall estimate as well as estimates for 29 of the 30 individual months of the first 30.
- It also holds for a 72 month follow-up.

Was the number of new grants or increases partial disability grants at the beginning of the experiment affected?

Method: Survival analysis using Accelerated Failure Time (AFT) Modeling, with the key variables listed above. Log-normal, exponential, Weibull and Gamma distributions were examined. Gamma gives the best fit.

Results:

- Early SASSAM and Employer meetings have no statistically significant effect on the number of new or changed grants either for the 30 or 72 month follow-up.
- However, if we eliminate persons with partial disability benefits at the outset of the experiment, (only) the Gamma distribution yields a significant (5%) effect, and (only) for the 30 month follow-up.

Conclusions

- Cases “treated” with early SASSAM and Employer meetings did not have fewer compensated days than the control group.
- Did cases treated” with early SASSAM and Employer meetings yield fewer or more Disability grants? The answer from three of four models is no, but yes for the 30 month follow-up and using a Gamma distribution, if we exclude partial disability at the outset – but no for the long-run 72 month follow-up.