Inclusions
The National Insurance Offices in the cities of Harstad and Tromsø included 999 consecutive sick-listed persons exceeding 2 weeks of absence due to musculoskeletal or mental disorder during October–November 1997 and February–March 1998.

Sickness Certificate 1
Two National Insurance officers and two National Insurance medical consultants assessed individually the following question: Do you think that modifications to working conditions could reduce the ongoing period of sick leave? The following cases were randomly extracted:
   a) 501 cases assessed using only Sickness Certificate 1.
   b) 498 cases assessed using Sickness Certificate 1 and the history of sickness benefits.

Self-assessments
496 of the sick-listed persons were invited to give their assessments on whether modifications to working conditions might reduce their ongoing sick leave. Responses were received from 159 persons.

Sickness Certificate 2
The same four assessors reassessed the 343 cases where a Sickness Certificate 2 became available with access to history of sickness benefits, Sickness Certificate 1, and Sickness Certificate 2.

Reproducibility study by medical consultants
Reproducibility study of 20 cases randomly extracted from cases with self-assessments and a Sickness Certificate 2:
   a) Assessments based on Sickness Certificate 1, performed by ten consultants.
   b) Assessments based on Sickness Certificates 1 and 2, performed by seven consultants.
   c) Assessments based on Sickness Certificates 1 and 2 and the self-assessments, performed by nine consultants.