Author’s response to reviews

Title: Effects of a vocational rehabilitation programme on return to work among sick-listed primary health care patients A population-based matched, case-control study

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the comments on the revised manuscript FAMP-D-19-00272R1 Effects of a vocational rehabilitation programme on return to work among sick-listed primary health care patients A population-based matched, case-control study
Anna-Sophia von Celsing, M.D., PhD.; Per Kristiansson; Kurt Svärdsudd; Thorne Wallman

We have now given the comments careful consideration and taken the following actions.

Editor Comments:

1. Consent to participate
In the ethics approval and consent to participate statement, please confirm whether the consent you obtained from study participants was written or verbal. If verbal consent was obtained, please clearly state the reason AND if this was approved by the ethics committee.

Response: The note on informed consent and ethical approval has been clarified (page 15, paragraph 3).

2. Role of funder
Please state clearly the role the funder(s) had in your study in the "funding" section of the declarations.
Response: The role of the funders has been clarified (page 16, paragraph 4).

3. Abstract
The abstract must include the following separate sections, with corresponding subheadings, as per the journal's submission guidelines.
Background: the context and purpose of the study

Methods: how the study was performed and statistical tests used

Results: the main findings

Conclusions: a brief summary and potential implications

Please revise your abstract structure to conform to the journal's submission guidelines.

Response: The abstract has been revised according to the journal’s submission guidelines.

Reviewer #1

1. I realize at this review that the data collection was done 15 years ago? I am not sure if this impacts on the results but society has changed in several ways over the 15 years and I believe this should be included as a possible limitation.

Response: The text has been modified (page 14, paragraph 1).

2. Previously I missed some more information on the intervention. I see that the authors provide me some of this in their response to the reviewer but my goal was to have this information included in the paper. I still believe it is of importance to have some insight of the intervention given as part of the methods. I do not find much of this on the pages 5 and 6 as stated.

Response: The text on this issue has been clarified (page 5, paragraph 4, and page 6, paragraph 1-3)

3. Also, the references to studies from workplace interventions with a more favorable outcome are quite poorly. In my opinion, this should be highlighted in the discussion section. If most interventions in health care centers are of little value as opposed to those taking place at the workplace (?), this is an important observation. In the introduction section the authors state that up to now "no multidisciplinary rehabilitation intervention has been effective regarding sick leave conclusion in the general population". I believe this is true. However, it leaves a question: Why should the founders of this intervention believe this to be successful? What was the idea to create another multidisciplinary initiative if all initiatives previously have been unsuccessful? Were there any new items in this program?
I believe the response to this is that the knowledge on this in 2004 was still based on a belief on multidisciplinary rehabilitation programs, but I suggest it to be mentioned in the manuscript.

Response: The text on this issue has been expanded (page 3, paragraph 4 and page 4, paragraph 1-2, and page 13, paragraph 3).

2020-02-09

On behalf of the author group
Anna-Sophia von Celsing