
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A WORK-FOCUSED COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY AND INDIVIDUAL JOB SUPPORT ON RETURN TO WORK FOR COMMON MENTAL DISORDERS: RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED MULTICENTER TRIAL

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Introduction: Common mental disorders are a leading cause of long-term sickness absence and disability pensioning.

Objectives: To evaluate the effectiveness of a 5-15 session work-focused CBT integrating individual job support for people struggling with work participation due to common mental disorders.

Aims: Compared to usual care, increases the intervention work participation 12-18 months post baseline, and does it improve mental health and health-related quality of life as secondary outcomes.

Methods: The study was a randomized controlled multicenter trial with six secondary care centers, but with possibility for self-referrals. A total of 1416 potential participants were considered for inclusion, 197 failed inclusion criteria, 26 did not consent, leaving 1193 participants (67% female) to be randomized. The participants included both people on sick leave, people at risk of going on sick leave, and people on long-term benefits (>12 months). Primary outcome data were registry based, eliminating loss to follow-up.

Results: Compared to usual care, participants in the intervention group had higher work participation (44.2% vs 37.2%, diff: 6.9%, P=0.015) at 12 months follow-up. The difference remained significant after 18 months (diff: 7.8%, P=0.018), and was even stronger for those on long-term benefits (diff: 12.2%, P=0.007). The intervention group also reduced their depression (t=3.44, df=625, P=<0.001) and anxiety symptoms (t=2.06, df=625, P=0.040), and increased their health related quality of life (t=2.45, df=616, P=0.015), more than the control group.

Conclusions: A work-focused CBT and individual job support was more effective than usual care in increasing work participation for people with common mental disorders.