

Overview of Cochrane reviews that measure work participation

Need for a Core Outcome Set on Work Participation (COS-WP)

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Background

In the field of occupational health and insurance medicine, professionals deal with many different types of workers' diseases. Despite the increasing number of core outcome sets in other medical disciplines, a core outcome set for work participation (COS-WP) is still lacking.

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Objective

To evaluate reported outcomes, their terms and definitions; and outcome measurement instruments reported in randomized controlled trials (RCTs).



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Methods: pilot review

Design: Pilot systematic review

Source: Cochrane reviews published through Cochrane Work, that include:

- Work directed interventions
- Work participation outcomes

Analysis: Characteristics and definitions of work participation outcomes and instruments in RCTs

Included:

- Seven Cochrane systematic reviews, including 82 RCTs



Diseases:

- Musculoskeletal & arthritis & back pain
- Cancer
- Multiple sclerosis
- Depression
- Adjustment disorders



Interventions

- Workplace interventions
- Prevention job loss
- Improving RTW & vocational rehabilitation interventions

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Results (1)

Outcome definitions differ widely as RCTs:

- aim to measure **various outcomes** relating to work participation, including: return to work (RTW), sick leave, absenteeism, work status, functional status, productivity or work functioning
- report **different follow up times**; from a few weeks to 4 years after baseline
- used **different time periods** to qualify for RTW such as: 2 weeks, 4 weeks or 8 weeks back at work



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Results (2)

- use **different definitions or cut points** for RTW or sick leave: partial vs full RTW, 100% RTW, workers with no RTW, event data (RTW rate, sick leave rate) vs time to event data
- use **different definitions of work status at baseline**: both patients with paid employment and no employment are selected
- use **different methods / sources to measure work participation**: self-report data (absenteeism days in past week, month or year), existing questionnaires or occupational health/insurance databases

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Conclusion & Core Outcome Set for Work Participation (COS-WP)

Variation in outcomes and outcome measurement instruments is considerable highlighting the need for the development of a consensus based COS-WP.

- The Coronel Institute of Occupational Health in Amsterdam has started an international collaborative project to develop a COS-WP, together with APH COS focus group Amsterdam, Cochrane Insurance Medicine and Cochrane Work.
- We call on the international community of practitioners, clients and researchers in occupational health and insurance medicine to help us join forces for the development of such a core outcome set.



Want to know more about this project? See QR!!



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