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Team-based rehabilitation in primary care for patients with musculoskeletal disorders

Experiences, effect- and process evaluation

Akademisk avhandling

Som för avläggande av medicine doktorsexamen vid Sahlgrenska akademin, Göteborgs universitet kommer att offentligen försvaras i hörsal Arvid Carlsson, Academicum, Medicinaregatan 3, torsdagen den 12 december, klockan 13:00

av Annika Ekhammar, leg sjukgymnast

Fakultetsopponent:

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Avhandlingen baseras på följande delarbeten

I. Ekhammar A, Melin L, Thorn J, Larsson M. A sense of increased living space after multimodal rehabilitation. *Disabil Rehabil. 2016 Dec;38(25):2445-54(1).*

II. Ekhammar A, Grimby-Ekman A, Bernhardsson S, Holmgren K, Bornhöft L, Nordeman L, Larsson MEH. Prevention of sickness absence through early identification and rehabilitation of at-risk patients with musculoskeletal disorders (PREVSAM): Short term effects of a randomised controlled trial in primary care. *Disabil Rehabil. 2024 May;13:1-14.*

III. Ekhammar A, Larsson MEH, Bernhardsson S, Holmgren K. The PREVSAM model, 'Prevention of sickness absence through early identification and rehabilitation of at-risk patients with musculoskeletal disorders', is seen as beneficial for patients risking persistent musculoskeletal disorders but may be difficult to implement – a focus group study. *Disabil Rehabil. 2024 May;27:1-11.*

IV. Ekhammar A, Larsson MEH, Samsson K, Bernhardsson S. Process evaluation of a randomised controlled trial - Prevention of sickness absence through early identification and rehabilitation of at-risk patients with musculoskeletal disorders (PREVSAM). *BMC Health Serv Res.2024 Oct 26;24 (1):1286*

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Abstract

Aim: The overall aim of this thesis was to evaluate team-based rehabilitation in primary care for patients with musculoskeletal disorders; to explore patients' and healthcare professionals' experiences of team-based rehabilitation, and to examine effects and the implementation process of a new rehabilitation model.

Methods: To explore experiences of change related to team-based rehabilitation, individual interviews were conducted with patients with chronic musculoskeletal disorders and analysed with systematic text condensation (Study I). To evaluate effects and implementation process of a new rehabilitation model in primary care for those with acute/subacute musculoskeletal pain and psychological risk factors, and the staff's experiences of working according to the model, three studies were conducted: one randomised controlled trial (Study II), one focus group study analysed with focus group methodology (Study III), and one process evaluation (Study IV).

Results: For patients with chronic musculoskeletal disorder, all parts of the team-based rehabilitation were perceived as important, although at different times during the rehabilitation process, to facilitate a positive change. This was thematically interpreted as "A sense of increased living space". No statistically significant differences were found in sickness absence between the new team-based rehabilitation model and treatment as usual, and both groups improved in patient-reported outcomes. The new rehabilitation model was well received by healthcare professionals working according to the model. The model's essential components were delivered to a high degree, but contextual challenges were identified which may have affected the trial's outcomes.

Conclusion: Team-based rehabilitation in primary care contributed with positive experiences for people with musculoskeletal disorders of different durations and for the healthcare professionals who provided the intervention. In the prevention of sickness absence and development of long-term problems in those with acute/subacute musculoskeletal disorders, no statistically significant differences were found between the new rehabilitation model and treatment as usual. The healthcare professionals found screening for risk factors important but not enough to capture those in need for more comprehensive rehabilitation. To provide individualised rehabilitation, sufficient time is needed for an assessment with a person-centred approach to clarify the patients' goals, expectations, resources, and motivation to engage in their rehabilitation.

Keywords: musculoskeletal disorders, team-based rehabilitation, primary care.

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