Return to work or sickness absence after breast cancer surgery? Impact of encounters with health-care professionals and social-insurance officers - a cohort study

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A prospective cohort study

Inclusion criteria:
- age 20-63
- undergone breast cancer surgery
- living in Stockholm
- treated at one of three major hospitals
- literate in Swedish

Exclusion criteria:
- distant metastases
- pre surgical chemo
- previous breast cancer
A prospective cohort study

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Invited were 933 women and 756 (81%) were included
A prospective cohort study

- **Diagnosis**
  - surgery

- **Baseline**
- **4 months**
- **8 months**
- **12 months**
- **18 months**
- **24 months**

- **Questionnaire:**
  - 1 month
  - 2 months
  - 3 months
  - 4 months
  - 5 months
  - 6 months

Retrospective
A prospective cohort study

1. Diagnosis
   - Surgery

2. Baseline
   - Questionnaire:
     - 4 months
     - 8 months
     - 12 months
     - 18 months
     - 24 months
Aim:

to study the associations between how staff in health care and social insurance offices encourage work or sickness absence and whether the patient is sickness absent or not.
Occupational status at diagnosis:
Of 756 women:
- 8% were old age or disability pensioners
- 88% had paid work (2% were on sick- or maternity leave)
- 3% were unemployed
- 1% were students
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… and these 696 women were included in this study
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Of these 696 women...

- 86% worked ≥75%
- 6% worked 50-74%
A prospective cohort study

1. Diagnosis
2. Baseline: 4 months
3. Questionnaire: 8 months
4. 12 months
5. 18 months
6. 24 months

Retrospective

• Surgery
A prospective cohort study

1. Diagnosis
2. Baseline
3. 4 months
4. 8 months
5. 12 months
6. 18 months
7. 24 months

- Surgery
- Questionnaire: 1 4 months, 2 8 months, 3 12 months, 4 18 months, 5 24 months, 6 Retrospective
Sick leave at baseline:

- 60% on sick leave
- 39% not on sick leave
- 1% had quit job or were missing
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- 60% on sick leave
- 39% not on sick leave
- 1% had quit job or were missing

- 50% one month
- 19% 3 months
- 17% one week
- 9% >3 months
- 5% lacked information on duration
Encounters with health-care professionals:

- 58% often/always got useful advice and support related to working
- 30% were never encouraged to work
- 40% often/always encouraged to work
- 35% were never encouraged to be on sick leave
- 26% often/always encouraged to be on sick leave
- 12% were often/always encouraged both to work and to be on sick leave
Encounters with health-care professionals:

- 58% often/always got useful advice and support related to working
- 30% were never encouraged to work
- 40% often/always encouraged to work
- 35% were never encouraged to be on sick leave
- 26% often/always encouraged to be on sick leave
- 12% were often/always encouraged both to work and to be on sick leave
Encounters with social insurance officers:

396 (57%) had not been in contact with the insurance office

Of those 300 that had:

- 33% often/always got useful advice and support related to working
- 45% never got useful advice and support related to working
- 54% was never encouraged to work
- 30% often/always encouraged to work
- 73% never encouraged to be on sick leave
- 13% often/always encouraged to be on sick leave
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Association between encounters from health-care professionals and sickness absence at baseline

- **Variables**
  - Advice and support about work
  - Encouraged to work
  - Encouraged to be on sick leave

- **Outcome**
  - On sick leave yes/no

**Results:**
- Often/always encouraged to be on sick leave were more likely to be on sick leave at baseline ($p=0.000$).
- Often/always encouraged to work were more often not on sick leave ($p=0.016$)
Association between encounters from social insurance officers and sickness absence:

- **Variables**
  - Advice and support about work
  - Encouraged to work
  - Encouraged to be on sick leave

- **Outcome**
  - On sick leave yes/no

**Results:**

- No significant associations were found between encounters from social insurance officers and sick leave
Thank you!

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