

3.L. Regular workshop: Diabetes and work disability - causes and consequences

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The burden of diabetes ranks in the top 10 as measured by disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), and that burden is increasing, which makes diabetes a major public health issue. Type 2 diabetes is a common chronic condition among working-aged populations as its onset is typically in middle-age. In addition to individual burden of disease, diabetes also has a vast economic burden for example, due to healthcare costs and costs due to lost productivity.

Sickness absence and disability pension rates are higher among people with diabetes compared to those without although very little is known about the patterns and reasons of absence, or reasons and risk factors behind them. Diabetes itself is,

however, a relatively uncommon diagnosis in sickness absence and disability pensions, which suggests that diabetes is often a secondary, contributing disease to other reasons for work disability although we are not aware of prior studies that have been published testing these hypotheses.

So far, there are very few studies linking diabetes and working life outcomes. The proposed workshop aims at consolidating the evidence in this field of research by presenting new, unique studies on not only the basic statistics about diabetes and work disability but also regarding the specific questions on the association between diabetes and work disability, such as risk factors for sickness absence and disability pensions when having diabetes as well as possible consequences of being sickness absent or on disability pension in this patient group. We will also have an international approach by presenting recent research from four European countries - Sweden, Finland, France, and the UK.

We conclude that research in different settings and countries is needed to get knowledge on associations between diabetes and work disability as well as on associations of work disability with premature death.

Four presentations of about 12 minutes each, then joint discussion

Key messages

- Diabetes is linked with work disability and premature death, and the effects are found even before the diagnosis. Comorbid depression increases work disability across different occupational cohorts
- Association between diabetes, work disability and premature death remains even after mutually considering sociodemographic and socioeconomic covariates, and time dependent health conditions