



**Department of Clinical Neuroscience**  
Division of Insurance Medicine

**Backpain and work disability**

Back pain constitutes one of the most critical public health problems today. The disorder ranks among the most frequent causes of short and permanent work disability (i.e. sickness absence, SA and disability pension, DP) and covers a clinically heterogeneous patient group, ranging from unspecific pain to more specific disorders. Back pain is strongly interlinked with common mental disorders (CMDs, depressive and anxiety disorders), which may additionally worsen work ability. Despite the size of this public health problem, there are still a number of unresolved research questions with regard to the role of CMDs on work disability associated with back pain, the complex interplay with work related, socio-demographic and medical factors and the effect of surgery and social insurance policies.

Our study aims to investigate the effect of CMDs on work disability related to back pain in general and specifically after lumbar spine surgery considering different insurance policies. A further aim is to scrutinise if mental health worsens or improves after granting DP due to back pain.

The study is based on nationwide population based registers.

**Financial support**

AFA Insurance

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**Publications**

Rahman S, Mittendorfer-Rutz E, Dorner TE, Pazarlis K, Ropponen A, Svedberg P, Wang M, Helgesson M. Work-disability in low back pain patients with or without surgery, and the role of social insurance regulation changes in Sweden. *European Journal of Public Health* 2018. Epublished ahead of print. PMID: 30445623

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