A research project:

Life situation and return to work after breast cancer surgery – a prospective cohort study

The aim of this interdisciplinary research project is to gain knowledge on factors that hinder and promote return to work among women who have had breast cancer surgery and on how sickness absence influences their quality of life and health.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis in women. Since almost 90% of the women survive more than five years, but may suffer from remaining symptoms from treatment and disease, research focusing on consequences for their life situation, are needed. So far, few studies have been conducted concerning factors of importance for (return to) work.

In this prospective cohort study, 750 women, 23-63 years old, who lived in Stockholm and had breast cancer surgery, were followed up for two years. A wide spectrum of data have been collected, via six repeated and comprehensive questionnaires, focus group interviews, different registers, and medical records. The women were included in 2007 to 2009.

Results will be used as basis for interventions. Since knowledge is sparse, this extensive data collection is carried out as a first step. The study also offers a unique opportunity to evaluate the recent national “guidelines for sick leave due to breast cancer”, since inclusion started before the introduction. The results may also serve as basis for training of professionals in health care, social security, and work sites.

Project group
Kristina Alexanderson  Professor, PhD, project leader
Emilie Friberg  Researcher, PhD
Linnea Kjeldgård  Statistician
Kerstin Nilsson  Statistician
Mirkka Söderman  PhD student
Agneta Wennman-Larsen  Associate Professor, PhD RN, assistant project leader

Cooperation
We collaborate with other research groups, e.g., in national projects with patients with hematology diseases and kidney transplantation. We also collaborate with research groups in Belgium and the Netherlands, where corresponding projects are ongoing.
Financing
Financing has been obtained from the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare, the Swedish Research Council, the Stockholm County Council, the Swedish Cancer Society, the Cancer and Traffic Injury Found, Radiumhemmets forskningsfonder, The Swedish Breast Cancer Association (BRO), the Health Care Science Post-Graduate School of Karolinska Institutet and Cost.

Publications in the project

PhD thesis

Publications in international scientific journals


Papers/master thesis
2. Bondesson T. Återgång till arbete vid bröstcancer; hälso- och sjukvårdens bemötande och dess relation till aktuell arbetssituation. Magisteruppsats i omvårdnad, Karolinska Institutet, 2010

Abstracts accepted for presentation at scientific conferences


18. Wennman-Larsen A., Alexanderson K, Friberg E. Factors of importance for work (dis)ability during the two years after breast cancer surgery? – a content analysis of women’s open answers. At the 22nd EUMASS Congress: Maastricht, Netherlands, October 2018

19. Söderman M, Friberg E, Alexanderson K, Wennman-Larsen A. Women’s experiences of encounters related to work with healthcare after breast cancer surgery and its association with sickness absence; a prospective two-year follow up. At the 22nd EUMASS Congress: Maastricht, Netherlands, October 2018
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<td>2. Petersson L-M. Återgång i arbete efter bröstcancer. 22-23/10 2009, Västerås</td>
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<td>3. Petersson L-M. Åter till arbetet – cancerrehabilitering och arbetsförmåga. Inbjuden talare vid ”Nationella konferensen om Cancerrehabilitering” 5-6/5 2011, Uppsala</td>
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