

## Return to work after lumbar disc surgery is related to the length of preoperative sick leave

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# Is return to work for LDH patients affected by duration of sick leave?

Working status one year after surgery			
	Not working	Working	p =
n	178	456	
Age, years, Mean (SD)	41,6 (9,8)	43,4 (9,5)	0,033
Males, n (%)	88 (49,4)	259 (56,8)	0,032
Smokers, n (%)	85 (47,8)	142 (31,3)	0,000
Body Mass Index	27,3 (4,7)	26,3(4,1)	0,003
Pre-operative			
Oswestry Disability Index	50,1 (15,8)	47,9 (18,6)	
EQ-5D	0,25 (0,32)	0,27 (0,34)	0,117
SF-36 MCS	27,0 (6,2)	22,2 (6,9)	0,651
SF-36 PCS	35,8 (11,6)	41,7 (11,8)	0,000
Leg Pain	60,6 (30,8)	60,1 (30,7)	0,857
Back Pain	51,7 (30,6)	39,3 (30,0)	0,000
Duration of pre-operative sick leave			
< 1 month	21	137	0,000
1 - < 3 months	48	211	
3 - < 6 months	46	79	
6 - < 9 months	23	15	
9 - 12 months	9	4	
> 1 year	31	10	

## Background

Lumbar disc herniation (LDH) is associated with great morbidity and significant socioeconomic impact as the majority of the patients are in the working age.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate if the return to work rate after surgery for lumbar disc herniation is affected by the duration of sick leave.

## Method

The present study was conducted as a single center study. All LDH patients who underwent surgery at Lillebaelt Hospital from May 18, 2009 through to November 28, 2014 were included. Data were prospectively collected in the database DaneSpine. Questions in DaneSpine include pre-operative duration of sick leave and working status one year post-operative.

## Results

Totally 634 patients were included.

Overall 72 % of the patients were back to work one year post-operative. The rate of patients returning to work decreases significantly with the duration of preoperative sick leave.

Among the patients on sick leave prior to the surgery, 83 % returned to work if surgically treated within 3 months, whereas 50 % returned to work with sick leave extending 3 months.

## Conclusion

The present analysis suggests that the return to work rate after surgery for lumbar disc herniation is affected by the duration of sick leave.

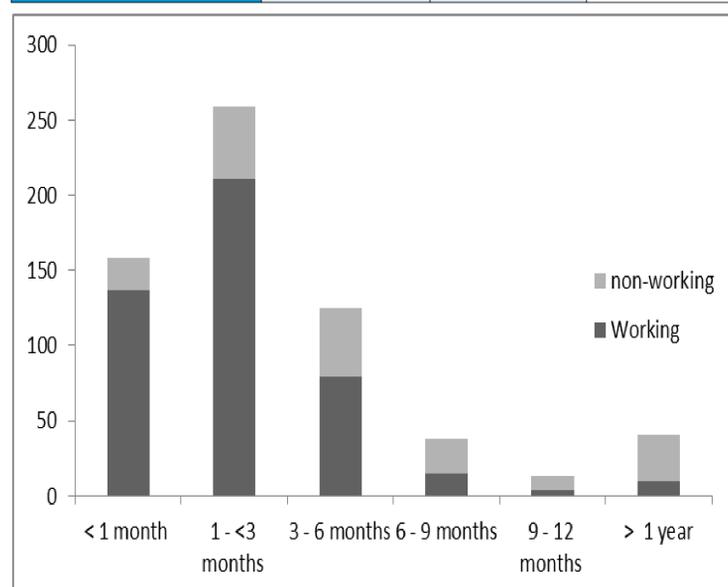


Table 2: Correlation between duration of pre-operative sick leave and working status 1 year post-operative

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