

# Baseline factors can predict return to work with sciatica

January 15 2014

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(HealthDay)—Prognostic factors have been identified to predict return to work (RTW) among patients with sciatica, according to a study published in the Dec. 1 issue of *The Spine Journal*.

Lars Grøvle, M.D., Ph.D., from Østfold Hospital Trust in Norway, and colleagues conducted a prospective evaluation involving 466 patients with sciatica in two samples. Sample A included 237 patients who reported being on partial or complete sick leave or were undergoing rehabilitation because of back pain or sciatica at the start of the study. Sample B included 125 patients who received sickness benefits or [rehabilitation](#) allowances due to back pain or sciatica.

At the two-year follow-up, the researchers found that one-fourth of [patients](#) were still out of work. In sample A, factors significantly associated with an increased probability of RTW at follow-up included younger age, better general health, lower baseline sciatica bothersomeness, less fear-avoidance work, and a negative straight-leg-raising test result, but not surgery. In sample B, significant associations with a longer time to sustained RTW were seen for history of sciatica, current sciatica episode of more than three months, greater sciatica bothersomeness, fear-avoidance work, and back pain. In this group, surgery was significantly negatively associated with time to sustained RTW.

"Less baseline [sciatica](#) bothersomeness, fear avoidance work, back [pain](#), an episode duration less than three months, and no previous episodes predicted faster RTW," conclude the authors.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)

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