

A change of job could help people on long-term sick leave

April 26 2016

A change of job could be a means of prolonging labour market participation for people on long-term sick leave, according to a thesis by Karin Nordström at Karolinska Institutet. The thesis also looks at differences in sick leave between workplaces.

Many people on long-term [sick leave](#) become unemployed or retire due to disability. For her doctoral thesis, Karin Nordström, student at the Institute of Environmental Medicine, has examined if a change of job affects how likely it is that people who have been on long-term sick leave remain on the labour market.

Registry data

To do this, she used registry data from the Longitudinal Integration Database for Health Insurance and Labour Market Studies (LISA), which includes everyone in Sweden above the age of 16.

"Amongst those with 180 days or more of absence by the base year who changed workplace for the coming year were more likely to be in work two to four years later," says Ms Nordström. "A possible reason for this correlation is that it's the healthier people who change job and who also are more likely to stay at work. However, the relationship holds regardless of the length of sick leave in the year before the base year. The study indicates that a change of job could be a way of prolonging labour market participation for individuals who have been on long-term

sick leave. However, it is probable that individuals in this group might have some difficulties finding a new job."

Unreliable measure

A workplace with a low rate of sickness absence is often seen as having healthy working conditions and sound leadership. However, a substudy in the thesis suggests that sick leave can be an unreliable measure of how healthy a workplace is. The findings show that workplaces with a high rate of sick leave are more likely than those with low rates to employ people with a high degree of sick leave the year before recruitment.

"The results also suggest that people who have been on long-term sick leave and who change workplace risk ending up somewhere where the rate of [sickness absence](#) is high, which indicates, in turn, that changes of job for these groups occur within one and the same segment of the [labour market](#)," explains Ms Nordström. "If someone is to have a successful change of job, the [new job](#) ought necessarily to involve some kind of new working conditions or tasks."

More information: Mobility on the labour market, work ability and sick leave. openarchive.ki.se/xmlui/handle/10616/45036

Provided by Karolinska Institutet

Citation: A change of job could help people on long-term sick leave (2016, April 26) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-04-job-people-long-term-sick.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.