

# Cognitive difficulties tied to lower return to work after breast cancer

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Return to work two years after a breast cancer diagnosis is associated with higher cognitive speed performance before and after treatment, according to a study [published](#) online Aug. 19 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Marie Lange, Ph.D., from Normandie Université UNICAEN in Caen, France, and colleagues examined whether cognition, assessed using objective and subjective scores, was associated with return to work two years after a [breast cancer diagnosis](#). The analysis included 178 women with breast cancer.

The researchers found that 20.8% of women did not return to work at year 2. Returning to work was more likely among patients with a higher occupational class (i.e., professional) and less likely among those who had a mastectomy (24.1 versus 54.1%).

There was an association between return to work at year 2 and lower overall [cognitive impairment](#) (1-point unit of increased odds ratio [1-pt OR], 0.32), higher working memory (1-pt OR, 2.06), higher processing speed (1-pt OR, 1.97), higher attention performance (1-pt OR, 1.63), higher perceived [cognitive abilities](#) (1-pt OR, 1.12), and lower depression (1-pt OR, 0.83). There were associations observed between return to work and higher processing speed (1-pt OR at baseline and year 1, 2.38 and 1.95, respectively), higher executive performance (1-pt ORs, 2.61 and 2.88, respectively), and lower physical fatigue (10-pt ORs, 0.81 and 0.84, respectively).

"Cognitive difficulties should be assessed before return to work to propose suitable management," the authors write.

Two authors disclosed ties to the [pharmaceutical industry](#).

**More information:** Marie Lange et al, Cognition and Return to Work Status 2 Years After Breast Cancer Diagnosis, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.27576](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.27576)

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