



Title	Prescribed Sick Leave – Causes, Consequences, and Practices
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Aim

The *aim* of the report was to:

- Assess the scientific evidence about positive and negative consequences of being sickness absent
- Review the research on sick leave, current knowledge of its causes, and physician sickness-certification practices
- Identify areas where further research is needed

literature databases (MEDLINE, PsycINFO, SSCI), reference lists, and personal contacts. The quality of studies found to be relevant, were analyzed according to criteria established for this report.

Conclusions and results (some examples)

In general

- That individuals having the opportunity to influence their working situation have a lower risk for sick leave
- That the design of the sickness insurance system influences the level of sickness absence
- That members of lower socioeconomic groups have a higher risk for disability pension

Back and neck diagnoses

- That poor work satisfaction increases the risk for sick leave due to acute back problems

Physicians' sickness-certification practices

- That physicians view the task of sickness certification as being problematic
- That sickness certificates often are of poor quality

Recommendations

Only a limited number of studies address the essential aspects of sick leave, and SBU recognizes the need for qualitatively better research (such as longitudinal studies and intervention studies at the individual and group levels, eg, at workplaces).

Methods

A systematic search and assessment of scientifically published studies was undertaken by a multidisciplinary, 11-member team. The search for studies was broad, using