Importance of vocational rehabilitation in relation to social inequality

Merete Labriola
Associate Professor, Ph.D MHP, OT
DEFACTUM
Social & Health Services and Labour Market & Aarhus University, Denmark
Benefits of work

- Financial
- Time and space regulator
- Status
- Formal & informal interpersonal relations
- Contributor
- Personal- and social identity
- Gives meaning to life
- Rewarding
- Well-being
- Opportunity

Marie Jahoda 1973 and many more
Work:

- Employment is generally the most important means of obtaining adequate economic resources, which are essential for material well-being and full participation in today’s society.
Work is central to individual identity, social roles and social status;
Employment and socio-economic status are the main drivers of social gradients in physical and mental health and mortality
Despite advances vocational rehabilitation interventions here still exists differences in work retention cross structure of social class
Ex..
Inequality in risk for long-term sickness absence

Risk for long-term (8+weeks) sickness absence according to educational level

- Higher education 4+ years
- Higher education 3-4 years
- Higher education <3 years
- Vocational training
- None
Denmark:
Short-, medium- and long-term sickness absence by sector

1  Sector “Agriculture, forestry and fishing” is not included in the figure
Inequality in work exposure
Depression-Related Work Disability: Socioeconomic Inequalities in Onset, Duration and Recurrence  Jenni Ervasti et al.  PLOSone 2013
Results:

- a consistent inverse socioeconomic gradient in work disability due to depression.
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Results:

- Return to work was slower for employees with basic education compared to those with higher education.
- Recurrent work disability episodes due to depression were less common among upper-grade non-manual workers (the highest occupational group) than among lower-grade non-manual and manual workers.
Conclusions:

- These data from Finnish public sector employees show persistent socioeconomic inequalities in work disability due to depression in terms of onset, recovery and recurrence.
Social inequality in cancer rehabilitation – studies of patients' healthcare needs from hospital to municipality

- The chance of returning to work after treatment for cancer is five times higher among highly educated people compared to people with education to no more than elementary level.

- This may not only be explained by differences in demands at work.

- The question is, when the social inequalities are generated, at the time from hospital to municipality, during the patients' healthcare needs

Finn Diderichsen 2011
Social inequality as a predictor of occupational reintegration of chronic back pain patients following medical rehabilitation.

Hofreuter K, Koch U, Morfeld M 2008
RESULTS:

- Of individuals undergoing rehabilitation, those from lower social classes returned to work later than those from higher social classes.
Discussion

- The probability of successful reintegration into working life increases according to the position within the vertical structure of social class.
So...

- vocational rehabilitation is also working with public health in relation to social inequality
What to do!
Vocational rehabilitation! individual level
Vocational rehabilitation! community level
So..

- a sole focus on personal system is not enough to prevent a person to permanently withdraw from his or her productive work life
ensuring an inclusive work culture has been found to be important in order to prevent work disability.
Call For Action

- Include the *workplaces*, not just talk
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- Discuss how corporate social responsibility pays off
But taking social responsibility can is a challenge!
A cure for sick-leave abuse

Employees’ abuse of sick leave costs organisations and the economy dearly. How can this problem be managed effectively?
Thank you for your attention!