RETURN TO WORK AFTER CORONARY REVASCULARIZATION PROCEDURES AND A PATIENT’S JOB SATISFACTION: A PROSPECTIVE STUDY

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Abstract
Objectives: Research into work reintegration following invasive cardiac procedures is limited. The aim of this prospective study was to explore predictors of job satisfaction among cardiac patients who have returned to work after cardiac rehabilitation (CR).

Material and Methods: The study population consisted of 90 cardiac patients who have recently been treated with coronary angioplasty or heart surgery. They were evaluated during their CR and 12 months after the discharge using validated self-report questionnaires measuring job satisfaction, work stress-related factors, emotional distress and illness perception. Information on socio-demographic, medical and occupational factors has also been collected. Results: After adjusting for demographic, occupational and medical variables, baseline job satisfaction (p < 0.001), depression (p < 0.01) and ambition (p < 0.05) turned out to be independent, significant predictors of job satisfaction following return to work (RTW). Patients who had a partial RTW were more satisfied with their job than those who had a full RTW, controlling for baseline job satisfaction.

Conclusions: These findings recommend an early assessment of patients’ psychosocial work environment and emotional distress, with particular emphasis on job satisfaction and depressive symptoms, in order to promote satisfying and healthy RTW after cardiac interventions.

Key words: Depression, Job satisfaction, Work stress, Return to work, Cardiac rehabilitation

INTRODUCTION

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is the most common cause of death in Europe. It accounts for 1.8 million deaths each year, and involves major economic costs as well as human costs for Europe [1]. In recent decades, thanks to advances in diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, and thanks to improvement in rehabilitation programs, death rates have been falling and the prevalence of older workers with CHD, after a surgery/rehabilitation, has been consistently and constantly increasing [2]. The main goal of cardiac rehabilitation (CR) is to facilitate the return to social and professional life as similar as
In view of the positive effects of job satisfaction on health status and professional outcomes, it is important to understand which factors can promote job satisfaction among patients who returned to work after a long-term sick leave due to cardiac health problems. To the best of our knowledge, no prior studies have explored this issue and such research is needed in order to promote sustained and positive RTW after an acute cardiac event.

Therefore, the aim of this prospective study was to explore predictors of job satisfaction among cardiac patients who have returned to work after a coronary angioplasty or heart surgery. What is more, we investigated whether job satisfaction levels differ between workers who had a full or partial return to work.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study design

The study population consisted of consecutive patients who have recently undergone a coronary angioplasty or cardiac surgery and were admitted to a Scientific Rehabilitation Hospital for multidisciplinary cardiac rehabilitation (CR) in Northern Italy, between 2006 and 2011. The participants met the following enrolment criteria:

- recent percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA), coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) or cardiac valve surgery (CV),
- being employed before the intervention,
- understanding and speaking Italian,
- being fit for follow-up evaluations.

A 12-month prospective longitudinal design was used. Data were collected at a baseline during the patients' hospitalization for CR (approximately 25 days after the cardiac intervention) and at 12- month follow-up assessment during a daily hospitalization.

A total of 121 patients was included in this study. Ninety cases (74.4%) were considered as eligible, 15 (12.4%)