

Title:	The prognostic value of injured workers' perceptions of the workplace and expectations for recovery in predicting claims outcomes
Research Category:	Category 3: compensation, disability management and return to work
Issue/rationale:	<p>Previous studies (Schultz and Cole) have found patient expectations predictive of return to work in <i>acute</i> low back pain. This has not been studied in sub-acute or chronic cases. Therefore, we are challenged to examine whether it is worthwhile to include measures of workers' perceptions and expectations in the battery data routinely collected by our contracted service providers</p> <p>Within WCB-Alberta's continuum of care model, claimants who remain off work for more than eight weeks are systematically referred for comprehensive work-related assessment. This assessment is to determine barriers to recovery and return to work with appropriate management then undertaken based on knowledge of known barriers. A battery of self-report and performance based measures are performed. Measures of workplace support and recovery expectations are included in the battery of tests undertaken at Millard Health, WCB-Alberta's major rehabilitation centre. Perceptions of workplace support have been found predictive of return to work in workers with carpal tunnel syndrome (AMICK). Worker recovery expectations seem predictive of return to work in cases of acute low back pain (COLE and Schultz).]</p>
Objectives:	To evaluate the prognostic value of measures of injured workers' perceptions of the workplace and expectations for recovery and work resumption, for the purpose of predicting timely and sustained return to work for workers with upper extremity and back injuries.
Anticipated Results/Impact:	<p>This study will help clarify the presence and general magnitude of associations between claimant perceptions of the workplace and expectations for recovery, particularly related to the resumption of normal work activities, and timely and sustained return to work.</p> <p>The study findings will allow rehabilitation providers to make an informed decision about whether to continue to routinely utilize these measures and provide information on how to interpret them for claimants who have been off work for more than six weeks.</p>
Keywords:	Perceptions, expectations, recovery, upper extremity
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Year Funded:	2003
Budget:	\$26,431
Funding Agency:	Workers' Compensation Board–Alberta