

Perceptions of medical advisers on ICF core-sets' use for evaluating work incapacity related to back pain in French-speaking Belgium

Thomas Otte ¹, Saskia Decuman ¹, Wouter Gelade ², Corentin Duyver ³

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 36502361 DOI: [10.3233/WOR-210247](#)

Abstract

Background: There is willingness in Europe to implement the use of a biopsychosocial model such as the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) for assessing work incapacity.

Objective: A preliminary study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of medical advisers on the value of structuring clients' biopsychosocial information in an ICF-based report.

Method: A sample (n = 101) received a perception questionnaire after watching two comparative videos based on a clinical case. Questions relating to work incapacity were also asked. The data was analysed using quantitative methods. Comments were also collected.

Results: Before knowing the ICF-based report, 61.96% of the respondents believed a return to work seems possible by providing adapted work or a different job. There is an increase of 8.69 pp (p-value: 0.077) after reading the report. Opening up the initial sample to more insurance physicians (n = 119), the difference is more significant (p-value: 0.012). Also, 71.9% of respondents believe they have a better view of the client's biopsychosocial situation after reading the report. Respondents recognise the clinical and diagnostic relevance of ICF but say it cannot be used at the moment for various reasons, such as the time required or the need for a multidisciplinary team and effective coordination. Older respondents are less enthusiastic about the appropriateness of using ICF.

Conclusion: The respondents identify an added value in having a biopsychosocial based-report. After learning about the report, more physicians see opportunities for professional re-integration than before. The medical advisers and their team must be strengthened and receive a clear role in order to empower them.

Keywords: International classification of functioning; disability and health; occupational therapy; vocational rehabilitation; work capacity evaluation.