

Quick Review of Model System Research

Intervention Bundle to Facilitate Return to Work for Burn-Injured Workers: Report From a Burn Model System Investigation¹

What is the study about?

Researchers were interested in the effectiveness of an intervention that increased the rate of return to work among burn survivors. The study looked at a group of interventions that sought to return employees who had been injured on the job back to work within 90 days of their insurance claim. The intervention bundle included patient, family, and employer education. It also involved contact between the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor and employers, recommendations for work accommodations, provision of employee status letters, and Activity Prescription Forms (APFs).

Who participated in the study?

The study included 338 participants who had sustained a work-related burn injury. All participants received care at the UW Medicine Regional Burn Center between 2010 and 2015. Additional eligibility requirements included: (1) coverage by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries insurance program and (2) evaluation by a VR counselor during outpatient recovery for an acute burn injury. The average age at time of injury was 36 years, and 84% of participants were male.

How was the study conducted?

Researchers reviewed the medical records of participants to learn about the specifics of their injury, interventions provided, vocational services received, accommodations provided, and pre and post-burn employment information. Statistical tests were run to help researchers better understand the characteristics of the participants and their relationships to the time course of return to work.

What did the study find?

The study found that 93.5% of participants returned to work after receiving the interventions. In addition, only 1.3% of the participants in the study returned to work in greater than 90 days. Researchers also identified risk factors for unsuccessful return to work. In this study, participants were more likely to not return to work if they were male, construction workers, required surgery, and had limited range of motion in early outpatient visits. The authors suggest that the strategies used in this intervention may be useful for clinicians who are helping burn survivors return to work.

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¹ Carrougner, G. J., Brych, S. B., Pham, T. N., Mandell, S. P., Gibran, N.S. (2016). Intervention Bundle to Facilitate Return to Work for Burn-Injured Workers: Report From a Burn Model System Investigation. *Journal of Burn Care & Research*, 31, 1, 70-77.