

Factors associated with fatigue among people who have returned to work after stroke: an exploratory study

Ingrid Lindgren^{1,2}, Anna Norlander^{1,2}, Christina Brogårdh^{1,2}

¹ Lunds Universitet, Inst. för hälsovetenskaper, Lund, Sverige., ² Skånes universitetssjukhus, VO neurologi, rehabiliteringsmedicin, minnessjukdomar och geriatrik, Lund, Sverige.

Background: Fatigue is a common problem after stroke that can negatively affect work resumption among younger stroke survivors. Little is understood about how to effectively support people with fatigue to be able to continue working. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the associations between fatigue impact and a) personal and stroke-related characteristics, b) functional impairments and c) work-related factors among individuals who have returned to work after stroke.

Methods: The study comprises cross-sectional data from a comprehensive postal survey one year after stroke. Fatigue was evaluated using the Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS). Different multivariable logistic regression models were created to explore factors associated with fatigue (dependent variable).

Results: In total, 87 working stroke survivors were included in the study (mean age 52 years, women 37 %). Fatigue (FSS total score ≥ 4) was reported by 43% of the participants. Several factors representing all the investigated areas (a-c) were associated with fatigue. In a final pooled regression model, self-perceived low cognitive functioning ($p < 0.001$), low decision control at work ($p = 0.021$) and high quantitative job demands ($p = 0.031$) had the strongest independent effects on the odds for having fatigue.

Conclusions: Among people who were working one year after stroke, fatigue was associated with both personal and stroke-related characteristics as well as functional impairments and work-related factors. This highlights the complex nature of post-stroke fatigue and the need to also consider the work environment as part of fatigue management interventions.