

Evaluation of rehabilitation programmes in work-disabled chronic fatigued patients



Margot C.W. Joosen, MSc, Monique H.W. Frings-Dresen, PhD & Judith K. Sluiter, PhD



Coronel Institute of Occupational Health

Academic Medical Center, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Coronel Institute of Occupational Health

1 Background & Aim

Complaints of prolonged fatigue are considered a major health problem, as it can affect daily functioning and can lead to work disability.

Rehabilitation programmes aiming at re-activation of patients with fatigue complaints may help to reduce complaints and facilitate return to work.



The aim of this study is to increase knowledge about the effectiveness of two established rehabilitation programmes for patients with prolonged fatigue.

2 Methods

Patients:

New clients of two outpatient clinics with fatigue as major health complaint and related functional impairments.

Design and procedures:

Within-subject design with repeated measurements at baseline, 3 and 6 weeks after baseline for prog 1, and 6, 12, 18 weeks after baseline and 3 months follow-up for prog 2.

Outcome measures:

- Quality of Life: MOS SF-36 scales (prog 2)
- Fatigue: Checklist Individual Strength (CIS) (prog 1 and 2)
- Return to Work: percentage (prog 2)
- Client and Employer satisfaction (prog 2)

Analysis: GLM, paired t-tests or non-parametric tests ($p < 0.05$).

3 Rehabilitation programmes

Prog 1: training programme of 6 weeks

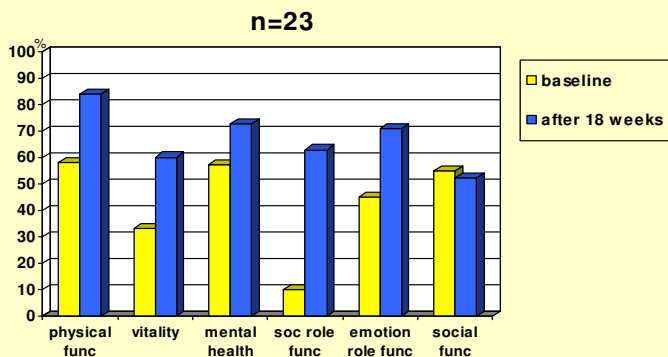
- Physical endurance training
 - Relaxation therapy
 - Breathing exercises
- Three times a week.

Prog 2: multidisciplinary treatment of 18 weeks

- Physical training
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy
 - Return to work sessions
 - Group sessions and individual sessions
- 3 six-weeks periods with decreasing frequency from three times to one time a week.

4 Results

Quality of Life (Prog 2)



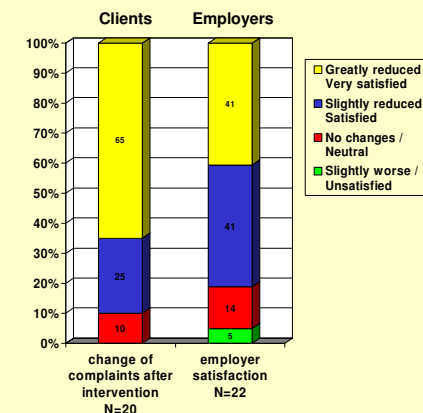
Higher scores indicate better Quality of Life
(all scales $P < 0.05$, except for social functioning)

Fatigue (Prog 1 & 2) and Return to Work (Prog 2)

	N	(T0) Baseline Mean (sd)	(T1) 3 wks Mean (sd)	(T2) 6 wks Mean (sd)	(T3) 12 wks Mean (sd)	(T4) 18 wks Mean (sd)	(T5) 3 m > T4 Mean (sd)
Fatigue (CIS) Prog 1	16	106 (13.3)	87 (22.5)**	78 (21.8)**			
Fatigue (CIS) Prog 2	21	102 (19.0)		87 (33.8)*	76 (36.0)*	64 (35.0)*	
Return to Work (%): Prog 2	31	22 (34.0)				66 (29.3)**	84 (30.6)**

Higher CIS scores indicate higher severity of fatigue complaints (range 20-140)
post-hoc analyses (compared to t0): * $P < 0.01$, ** $P < 0.001$

Client and Employer satisfaction (Prog 2)



5 Conclusions & Recommendation

- After a multidisciplinary treatment programme positive changes were found in quality-of-life and return to work.
- In both the six weeks training programme and the multidisciplinary treatment, significant and clinical relevant effects on decreased fatigue complaints were found.
- 90% of the clients reported less complaints after the multidisciplinary training and 82% of their employers were satisfied with the result achieved.

Email: m.c.joosen@amc.nl

