Evaluating the Effectiveness of the New Certificates of Capacity in Improving Outcomes of the Management of Musculoskeletal Injuries within the Western Australian Workers’ Compensation System

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OSHGROUP
WorkCover WA introduced new Certificates of Capacity

- It is time
- Encourage GPs to adopt language to support work capacity
- Support biopsychosocial injury management
- Improve communication and flow of information
## Certificates of Capacity

**WorkCover WA - FIRST certificate of capacity**

### 1. Worker's Details
- First name: [Blank]
- Last name: [Blank]
- Date of birth: [Blank]
- Phone: [Blank]
- Address: [Blank]

### 2. Employment Details
- Worker's job title: [Blank]
- Employer's name: [Blank]
- Employer's address: [Blank]

### 3. Consent Authority
I consent to any medical practitioner who treats me (whether named on this certificate or not) to discuss my medical condition with my employer, insurer and other medical or allied health professionals for the purpose of my claim for workers' compensation and return to work options.

Worker's signature: [Blank]
Print name: [Blank]
Date: [Blank]

### 4. Worker's Description of Injury
- Date of injury: [Blank]
- What happened?: [Blank]
- Woman's symptoms: [Blank]

### 5. Medical Assessment
- Date of this assessment: [Blank]
- Clinical findings: [Blank]
- Diagnosis: [Blank]

The injury is consistent with worker's description of how injury occurred: [Yes / No / Uncertain]

The injury is: [New condition / Recurrence of a pre-existing condition]

**WorkCover WA - PROGRESS certificate of capacity**

### 1. Worker's Details
- First name: [Blank]
- Last name: [Blank]
- Date of birth: [Blank]
- Email: [Blank]
- Phone: [Blank]
- Address: [Blank]

### 2. Employer's Details
- Employer's name: [Blank]
- Employer's phone: [Blank]
- Employer's address: [Blank]

### 3. Medical Assessment
- Date of this assessment: [Blank]
- Date of Injury: [Blank]
- Diagnosis: [Blank]

### 4. Progress Report
- Activities/interventions: [Blank]
- Actual outcome: [Blank]
- Changes in symptoms, function, activity and work participation: [Blank]
- Still required?*: [Yes / No]

**Having considered the health benefits of work, I find this worker to have:**

- [ ] Some capacity for work, from [Blank] to [Blank]
- Requires further treatment
- [ ] Pre-injury duties
- [ ] Modified or alternative duties
- [ ] Workplace modifications
- [ ] Pre-injury hours
- [ ] Modified hours of [Blank]
- [ ] Days/week
- [ ] No capacity for any work from [Blank] to [Blank] (outline critical reasons on next page)

**Comment:** [Blank]
Background

- Fit note UK 2010¹
- Legislative change in Finland 2012²
- New Certificates of Capacity in Victoria 2015³

The interventions have common goals:
- Focus on capacity
- Improve communication

2. Halonen et al – Effectiveness of legislative changes obligating notification of prolonged sickness absence and assessment of remaining work ability on return to work and work participation in Finland- 2016.
3. Brijnath et al - A Process evaluation of the new certificates of capacity for compensation claims - 2013
Aim of the study
- Preliminary Evaluation of Certificates

Descriptive study (before-after intervention study).
- Approvals
- Retrospective review of WCWA workers’ compensation data.
- Intervention
  - WorkCover WA new Certificates of Capacity
- Inclusions
- Exclusions
  - Incomplete data.
  - Don’t meet case definition.
33,189 cases were collected.
10,997 cases were ineligible (33%)
   6059 case before intervention (58%)
   4554 case after intervention (42%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eligible Cases</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Intervention (2013)</strong></td>
<td>11,287</td>
<td>51.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After Intervention (2014-15)</strong></td>
<td>10,625</td>
<td>48.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>21,912</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The two groups were compared:

- Gender, age and occupation (chi-squared tests)
- Return to work status.
  - Proportion of accepted claims where injured worker returned to work in full capacity, restricted capacity or was unfit for work (chi-squared tests)
- Median, mean and range of distribution of claims cost (t-test)
- Median, mean and range of distribution of claims duration (t-test)

Conventional criterion of statistical significance (P<0.05) was used.

Data analysed using STATA V.14
Results – Gender and Age Distribution

Gender & Age distribution

- After intervention (Mean age 40.04 yrs)
  - Males: [VALUE]
  - Females: [VALUE]

- Before intervention (Mean age 39.6 yrs)
  - Males: [VALUE]
  - Females: [VALUE]
Results – Nature of Occupation Distribution

NATURE OF OCCUPATION

- Labourers: 19.74% (post-intervention), 19.96% (pre-intervention)
- Machinery operators and drivers: 20.82% (post-intervention), 22.01% (pre-intervention)
- Sales workers: 5.84% (post-intervention), 7.26% (pre-intervention)
- Clerical and administrative workers: 4.50% (post-intervention), 4.56% (pre-intervention)
- Community and personal services workers: 14.80% (post-intervention), 13.63% (pre-intervention)
- Technicians and trade workers: 21.89% (post-intervention), 23.04% (pre-intervention)
- Professionals: 6.98% (post-intervention), 9.42% (pre-intervention)
- Manager: 2.57% (post-intervention), 3% (pre-intervention)
Results – Return To Work

Pearson chi² (2) = 69.598, P<0.00005
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## Results - Claims Duration: No Significant Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-intervention</th>
<th>Post-intervention</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. Observations</td>
<td>11,278</td>
<td>10,625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median (days)</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (days)</td>
<td>135.4</td>
<td>137.1</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI (mean)</td>
<td>133.7-137.1</td>
<td>135.3-138.9</td>
<td>-4.2 - 9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Graphs showing duration distribution](image.png)
## Results – Claim Duration

| Claims duration | Coefficient | Standard Error | t   | P>|t| | 95%CI       |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-----|-----|-----------|
| Post-intervention | 1.68        | 1.26           | 1.33| 0.183| -2.49-2.39|
## Results - Claims Cost: No Significant Change

<table>
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<tr>
<td>No. Observations</td>
<td>11,278</td>
<td>10,625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median ($)</td>
<td>1233.03</td>
<td>1532.14</td>
<td>-299.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean ($)</td>
<td>5303.57</td>
<td>6711.76</td>
<td>-1408.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>15536.46</td>
<td>18049.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% CI (mean)</td>
<td>5016.9-5590.2</td>
<td>6368.5-7054.9</td>
<td>-1853.4 - 963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

RTW status

- A small increase in RTW in full capacity.
- A small increase in the proportion of workers declared unfit.
- A decrease in RTW in restricted capacity.

Claims duration: no impact so far

Claims cost: no impact so far
Discussion

Strengths
- Data collection
- No significant differences in gender/age and occupation.

Limitations
- Psychosocial factors not accounted for.
- Not enough time elapsed to adapt the new certificates
New certificates of capacity may be beneficial.

- Small significant increase in return to work in full capacity.

Failed to impact on other objectives

- Small significant increase in proportion declared unfit.

- No impact on claims duration and cost.

Follow up is required.
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Thank you for your time

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