

Returning to Work After Myocardial Infarction - Do We Adhere to the Guidelines?

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Background: Ischemic heart disease is common in the working age population, causing significant economic damage. Recommendations on reintegration of post acute myocardial infarction (AMI) patients to work have been published. Cardiac rehabilitation has been proved useful. We aimed to study if the recommended guidelines are realized in clinical practice and how cardiac rehabilitation impacts on post AMI patients on labor reintegration.

Methods: Thirty post AMI workers of the Negev area participated in a cardiac rehabilitation program. Demographic, clinical and work characteristics were collected by phone. The data was compared to a matched-control group who did not participate in any rehabilitation program.

Type of work was defined as white collar (office work) and blue collar (non-office work).

Result: Age (50 ± 9 years), male gender (80%), normal LVF (30%) and type of work (73% involved in blue collar labors) were similar between the two groups. Of the patients participating in cardiac rehabilitation, 90% of them returned to work at the same job after a convalescent period of 64 ± 45 days. In contrast, 73% of the patients in the matched-control group returned to their previous employment after a longer convalescent period of 93 ± 41 days. The table depicts other differences between groups according to type of work and remaining LVF. The mean convalescent period for the overall studied population with normal LVF of 65 days was significantly longer than that recommended in the guidelines.

Conclusions: Cardiac rehabilitation is beneficial for work reintegration after AMI and helps to reduce the convalescent period. However, the convalescent period according to the remaining LVF, also in the rehabilitation patients is significantly longer than that recommended in the clinical guidelines. The reason for this longer convalescent period was not investigated in our study.

Parameters	Rehabilitation group	Comparison group
Convalescent period according to type of work (mean days \pm SD)	White collar: 49 ± 42 Blue collar: 71 ± 46	White collar: 95 ± 55 Blue collar: 92 ± 37
Convalescent period according to LVF (mean days \pm SD)	Normal LVF: 48 ± 26 Abnormal LVF: 73 ± 53	Normal LVF: 82 ± 45 Abnormal LVF: 105 ± 36