

Fear of work activities:

Personal factor for workers with a Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD)

Interpretation:

Fear of work activities have a negative impact on return to work and can prolong the duration of absence of workers with a MSD.

Proposed measurement tool (★★★):

"Work" subscale (7 items) of the Fear-Avoidance Beliefs Questionnaire (Waddell et al., 1993). Minor modifications were made ("back" was replaced by "injury" in the fifth item) to be applied to all MSDs.

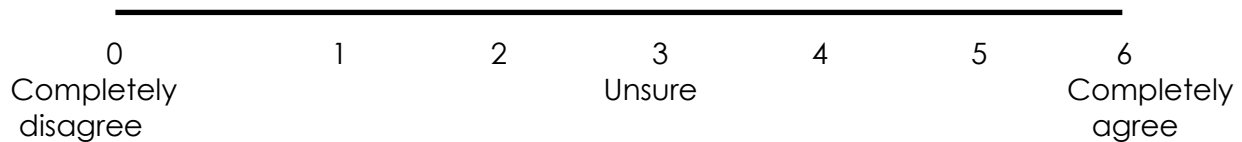
Caution:

This factor can only be evaluated by accredited professionals. Venturing into the evaluation of this factor is therefore prohibited. If you suspect that this factor may be involved, you must rely on the professionals in question. Self-administration or the administration of a questionnaire by an unqualified person may lead to undesirable consequences such as the calculation of erroneous scores and the misinterpretation of results that may result.

However, the elements (items or portion of interview) constituting this tool can provide additional information to other return to work actors or stakeholders, such as the actors from the organization (employer, human resources, supervisor, union representative, etc.). This allows for a better understanding of what the factor implies, which in turn can help to target some more specific elements or needs that would require (1) a possible intervention (using an accredited professional) or (2) adjustments of the organization, especially in terms of prevention.

“Work” subscale of the Fear-Avoidance Beliefs Questionnaire (FABQ)

Here are some of the things which other patients have told us about their pain. For each statement please indicate any number from 0 to 6 to say how much physical activities such as bending, lifting, walking or driving affect or would affect your pain.



The following statements are about how your normal work affects or would affect your pain. Please write down the number (based on the scale above) that corresponds to your situation.

- ___ My pain was caused by my work or by an accident at work
- ___ My work aggravated my pain
- ___ My work is too heavy for me
- ___ My work makes or would make my pain worse
- ___ My work might harm my injury
- ___ I should not do my normal work with my present pain
- ___ I do not think that I will be back to my normal work within 3 months

→ Final score (sum of 7 items): / 42 (possible range: 0 – 42)

Scoring instructions

Sum of the scores for the 7 items, giving a total score ranging from 0 to 42.

Interpretation of scores

Higher scores on this subscale mean greater fear of work activities, which has a negative impact on RTW.

A score of 29/42 or higher would increase the risk of work absence of up to 4 weeks, in a patient undergoing therapy for acute back pain (Fritz and George, 2002).